



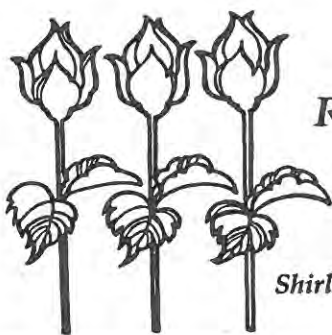
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

Newsletter



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December-January, 1993



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

It was Monday night at the "Y", where I was teaching a vigorous class of backbends and inversions to the delight of some students and the dismay of others. To warm up the body, and develop the awareness necessary to execute backbends without injury, some of the class were working with *Yoga Karunta* (rope work). We have a limited number of ropes and with a full class it takes a little time for everyone to go through the backbend series, so I had given alternative asanas to be practised while they waited their turn. I was emphasising the importance of working the legs as a protection for the back.

Monday night is a longstanding class; half the students are teachers themselves. Some of us have been together for over twenty years of yoga exploration, and most of the others have been coming regularly for quite a while. There is a feeling of camaraderie and empathy, which manifests from time to time in various quips and jokes as they get on with the work they have been doing for many years and come to terms with the understanding that they are going to have to continue for many more - in fact, for the rest of their lives!

At one point, a student, face to face with some fear and resistance, started to prevaricate and make excuses. Knowing her capability and having prepared her for this work, I said something to the effect of "just do it!" The person next to her said, "you should know better than to look for sympathy

in this class", and everyone laughed. I responded, "What would be the point of sympathy - when you've overcome this obstacle there will only be another one to face?" Amid more laughter, the first student conquered her fear and did the posture.

Many people come to yoga looking for sympathy for their problems, physical and psychological. Sometimes there are very sad stories, and very severe obstacles to overcome. But what use is sympathy? At times of trouble it may be an appropriate response from one friend or relative to another, but it is not appropriate in a yoga teacher.

I learned this lesson in my very first workshop with Swami Radha. It was called a *Straightwalk*, and was developed from an ancient Buddhist practice. The purpose of this workshop is to help you see situations more clearly and get in touch with what you want and where you stand in life. Through the symbolism of their bodies and their response to other symbols, students learn to distinguish between facts and emotions and develop a technique which Swami Radha calls "straightwalk thinking".

There was a woman at this workshop who had a very sad tale to tell of herself as the victim of an alcoholic husband who took advantage of the support, sympathy and kindness she bestowed on him. As I listened to her, my eyes full of tears, I felt sorry for her and so did everyone else - except Swami Radha. To my surprise, without wasting a moment on sympathy, free from emotion and going directly to the heart of the matter, Swami Radha pursued a line of questioning which explored options, choices, alternatives, all of which were met with the response "Yes, but....." As I observed this interaction, a little shocked at first, I began to see that at this particular time, this woman did not want to change her situation but wanted pity. She had come to the wrong place!

Some people do have terrible life situations, but a Yoga-Master doesn't waste time commiserating with you over your predicament, instead he or she

will plunge right in to show you ways out of this predicament. This is truly a blessing, although it is sometimes difficult to see this right away.

The woman with the alcoholic husband was caught in a mind set of "poor me", or what Derek and I sometimes paraphrase as the "ain't it awful" syndrome. Rather than being grateful for the options Swami Radha was presenting to her, she felt unfairly treated, and left the workshop never to return. Some of the other participants also got caught up in how unfair Swami Radha had been and how unyogic of her to speak harshly to such an unfortunate woman.

As I reflected on what had unfolded I could see that Swami Radha was not harsh at all but simply direct, asking penetrating questions, bringing the woman back on track to look at the central issue. The questions were a variation of a theme: what are you going to do (not what would you like him to do). Are you going to leave or stay in this relationship? If you would like to leave, here are some ways you could go about it? If you feel you can't leave at this time, how can you modify your behaviour so as to make the best out of a difficult situation.

It is a basic stress management technique to explore these four options for coping with stress: remove it or remove yourself, modify it or modify yourself.

There was another question, however, which Swami Radha asked this woman to consider, and that was how she had contributed to the intolerable situation in her marriage. Her sympathizers said Swami Radha was laying a guilt trip on this poor woman, but I could see that this was not the intention but rather to show her that since her actions had in some way contributed to her situation, she also had the ability to do something about it. She was not a helpless victim. It was obvious from what we had heard that no amount of complaining, cajoling, pleading, chastising or appeals to logic and plain common sense had been able to make this man change his destructive way

of life. If she chose to leave him, it would be difficult because she was a middle-aged woman with no job and no money but Swami Radha showed her that she was not without assets, and there were many ways she could begin to build a better life. If she chose to stay then she could either continue to be a martyr or take full responsibility for her choice, and make the best of it. Again, she was encouraged to look at ways of how she might do this.

At no time did Swami Radha tell this woman what she should do, but initiated a brainstorming session to stimulate the search for a solution to her dilemma. Whenever anyone came up with an idea which demanded some action on the part of the woman rather than her husband, she rejected it. Yes, but..... In fact, this woman sabotaged all attempts to extricate her from her difficult situation, and chose to remain a victim - at least, for the time being.

Having spent considerable time on this woman, Swami Radha moved on to others in the group. When the *Straightwalk* was over there were mixed reviews. Some people, like myself, got our first glimpse of what would be demanded if we chose to stay on the yogic path. While not relishing the difficulties which obviously lay ahead, I saw that it could be a path of freedom. Others, dismissed Swami Radha saying that this was not yoga, yoga was, after all, all about love and compassion. These people consoled this "poor woman" as she shed copious tears, and after the workshop they had nothing but criticism of Swami Radha and her teaching.

I felt differently. I saw true compassion in Swami Radha's treatment of this woman. Of course, it is always easier to see what others need to do, but I did continue to work with Swami Radha, and since that time I and other members of my family have benefitted from her honesty and compassion on many occasions - and none of them have been easy. It never is when you are confronting very strong attachments, fear and resistance to change.

When I finally went to India and stood face to face with another Yoga Master, B.K.S. Iyengar, my work with Swami Radha had prepared me for the impact of this man and his teaching. I was able to see the compassion in him, even when he was at his most fierce and demanding. It was a struggle, but I was able to put aside my pride and remain open to learn from him. I trusted that it was indeed in my own best interest to make an effort, do the work, face my fears, strengthen my resolve, get on with it - fostering the spirit of the warrior and facilitating the search for truth.

It was never easy. It will never be easy. This is the truth which is staring us in the face. Look at your life. Look at the lives of those around you. Look at the world in which we live. Warrior or wimp, which is it to be?

When I was a child, in England, I attended a beautiful old Norman church with wonderful acoustics. We had a fiery Irish vicar who loved ceremony and ritual, and the choir and clergy would walk down the aisle banners flying, their voices and ours joining joyfully in praise of God. I loved it; the church was full of spirit. One of my favourite hymns was "Onward Christian Soldiers", which we sang often, perhaps because we were in the midst of a real war. My feelings, though, had nothing to do with the fighting men and women, although I honoured and supported those in the armed forces along with the rest of us on the homefront. I could see even then that one needed to be a warrior to follow a spiritual life, and that would demand passion, strength and stamina. My vicar knew this, but unfortunately for our church, he was promoted, became a Bishop, and was replaced by an intellectual aesthetic Englishman who solemnly went about removing all the ritual, joy and, in my opinion, most of the spirit from the church. We did not walk the aisles and celebrate our faith, but crept in silently hardly daring to breathe let alone lift our voices to the Lord.

I gradually drifted away, and it wasn't until many years later and thousands of miles away that,

through the Eastern teaching of Yoga, I returned to the spiritual path. It takes vigour, valour and vitality to tread this path, but what choice do we really have? As the Greek philosopher Cleanthes succinctly put it:

"Some follow the Gods willingly,
The rest are dragged."

Thanks to Swami Radha and Mr. Iyengar, I have been dragged a little less often than would have otherwise been the case.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Victoria Yoga Centre,

I would like to subscribe to the Victoria Yoga Centre newsletter as it contains useful information about yoga happenings in Canada. I am an Iyengar yoga teacher, but am glad that the newsletter seems to incorporate several "kinds" of yoga. Myself and my husband are both teachers and have recently moved to Halifax from Scotland. We find it difficult to "network" with other teachers/centres across Canada, so would find it useful if you can suggest any other sources of information (newsletters, directories etc.)

We are both interested in attending Iyengar's visit to Toronto in August. Could you advise us if any booking arrangements are in place yet, as we would like to make plans, and ensure our place.

We would be interested in contributing to your newsletter if you think it appropriate. As well as yoga, we also work with reflexology, herbalism, Bach Flower Remedies and kinesiology (Touch for Health).

Thank you for your help - I am looking forward to receiving the newsletter.

Elizabeth Kingland
Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Dear Ms. Daventry French,

I recently received your November, 1992 Yoga Centre Newsletter. Let me thank you for your newsletter and commend you on your "Reflections" column. The "Ah So" approach is very relevant to my life as an American Trial Lawyer. I appreciate your struggles.

I must inform you that I attended several classes at the "Y", and also one of your classes in the summer of 1991. I met my wife in Victoria after I had taken part in one of your classes - we met at the swimming pool at the Grand Pacific Hotel. Since marrying in December 1991, we moved to St. Petersburg, Florida, and I started practicing Law down here. Quite a change!!!

I can tell you that we both miss Victoria tremendously, and look forward to returning in the next several years. Unfortunately the closest Iyengar School with legitimate Iyengar instructors is located in Miami (Instructor: Bobbi Goldin). Therefore, supervised Iyengar practice on a daily or even weekly basis is out of the question for me. This is all the more sad as I understand your comment in "Reflections" - "... I know from experience (Iyengar Yoga) penetrates deep within, putting us in touch with our higher self." So true. Each day that passes and I return from another battle at work, I sigh at the thought of not having an instructor of your calibre in the area. To practice on one's own is beneficial so long as bad habits do not form - tough to do if you're a beginner. In any case, when I visit Victoria next year, I will plan to drop in to one of your beginning classes.

Thanks for your newsletter. And bless you for teaching and spreading the good news about Iyengar Yoga.

Yours truly,
Scott Bird.

St. Petersburg, Florida

Dear Shirley,

After reading your Reflections column for the first time, I felt I should say some words of comfort or whatever. I think you must say 'ah so' to the situation that has arisen within your Yoga community. I have read many different Sufi stories that point out that this is the exact sort of thing that one must expect from the present human condition. These stories almost point out that mankind is alive and 'healthy' (?) when this sort of thing happens. I can only recommend that you continue putting up their material and hope that one day they will reciprocate. I understand that Yoga practice is totally non-competitive. This must apply to the teaching of it as well.

I learned something from trail building. There is a certain area in the Gowlland Range where we recently put in a new trail. There were a couple of other trails which sometimes go over sensitive areas that we generally avoid. Some people were wondering how we could tag our trail and not have to worry about people going on these other tagged trails. I said, "The answer is simple, just make the best trail and the most people will use it." You must realize that you are a good teacher and that is all that matters.

Thank you once again for helping me with my back. All of a sudden other parts of my body are clamouring for attention when a couple of months ago they couldn't have cared less!

Dwain Jarvis.

P.S. By coincidence my favorite all-time book is called Reflections.

Dear Shirley,

I hope this note finds you filled with sunshine and joy. I doubt I shall be able to attend the benefit workshop on December 13th, but I would like to contribute to the cause. One day I hope to be in the same room with you and Mr. Iyengar. I am not there yet, although I do have the goal, to be ready as a student. I have such a long way to go - to arrive.

I lost my way for a while. However, I am finding my way home again, slowly, one step at a time.

Ah so!
Doris Small
Parksville, B.C.

THANK YOU

from Leslie Hoya

In a recent article in the Victoria newspaper, a journalist interviewed Shirley Daventry French. This was a tribute to those who help enrich "Our Victoria." In the article, the reporter attributed the writing of the Yoga Centre Newsletter to Shirley. She laughingly said, "We all know that was a mistake."

Perhaps not such a big mistake after all! with so many of us away in Pune this fall, Shirley wrote three out of the four locally written articles for the November issue. Also three of the ads for upcoming events are workshops that Shirley will be leading.

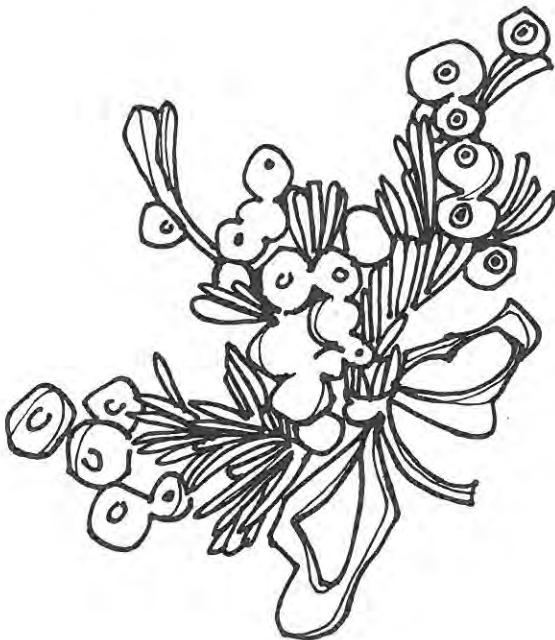
All of us who are long time Yoga Centre members know Shirley provides much of the energy that keeps our yoga community alive and functioning. Many others of us, including me, serve on this or that committee and then withdraw energy from the executive for a while, help again and then, again, take time out. Not so Shirley!

As founding member, continuous member of the executive, senior teacher, long time contributor and now assistant editor of the newsletter, she is always filling many roles. It is her continuous dedication to the art of yoga and her personal practice which is the foundation and source of energy, I'm sure, for all she does.

While I was in Pune this October, I sent many silent thank yous to Shirley. I know the reason I was able to travel to Pune and why I was able to keep pace with the Intensive was due mainly to Shirley's inspiration and influence.

Since it was my second trip to Pune, I know this was also a factor in being able to absorb what was being taught. People often say you can never really be prepared for what an Intensive will bring. But I know, for myself, working with Shirley, or someone of her calibre, is one of the best preparations I could have had for the Iyengars.

Thank You Shirley



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VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
Presents a
SNAPSHOT OF INDIA

Friday, January 15th, 1993

*Join the local yoga teachers who participated in the
Canadian Intensive held at the Iyengar Institute in
Pune, October '92:*

*Linda Benn, Leslie Hogg, Ann Kilbertus,
Marlene Miller & Linda Shevloff.*

*The 'Y' Yoga Lounge will be transformed by the
images, spirituality and music of India.*

6:00pm Asana Practice

7:00pm Pot-Luck Supper

Do you have a favourite Indian dish?

Supper to be followed by slides and discussion

EVERYONE WELCOME!

HOW I TAUGHT MYSELF PRANAYAMA

by B.K.S. Iyengar

Edited from "Pranayama Symposium"
From an interview with B.K.S. Iyengar by Neela
Karnik, December 15, 1985.

Published in Yoga '90, the magazine of the Second
North American Iyengar Yoga Convention, San
Diego, California.
June 23-July 1, 1990.

Guriji was hardly sixteen years old when he went to
Mysore to study yoga under the tutelage of his guru,
T. Krishnamacharya. During this period he was
more concerned with strengthening his body and
with vigorous and intensive practice in asanas.

The first thing every morning when I arise at four
o'clock, I always do pranayama. I ask myself, how
does my first breath start, if I am born today? That's
how I started pranayama today. It may interest you
all to know how my mind thinks. I learned
something from that, also.

Being a sick person, I started yoga in 1934, and I
had no strength to stand and my lungs were
inexpansive. Naturally, breathing was impossible. I
started doing asanas. Then, circumstances forced
me to teach yoga, and through yoga, because I had
to teach, I had to learn. And in order to learn I had
to unlearn and relearn, so that links of the chain of
learning move on and on, and are still moving.

Naturally, at that time it was not possible for me to
do pranayama, nor was my Guru willing to teach
me. My chest was collapsed and narrow. I did not
do pranayama at all up until 1942. When my Guru
visited me in Pune in 1940 and I asked him about
pranayama, he just gave an outline. My age
probably would not have taken more than what he
said. He said do the deep breathing, which I tried,
but I didn't succeed at all. If I took a deep

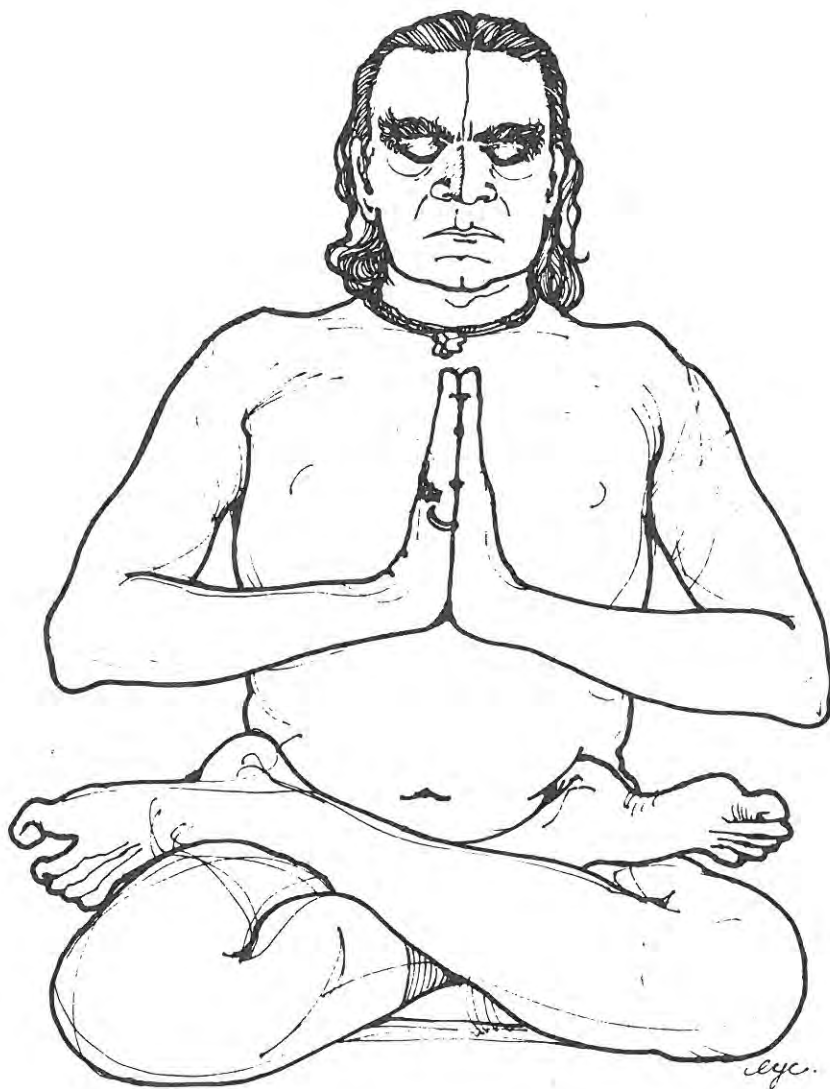
inhalation, deep exhalation was an impossibility. If
I did deep exhalation, the deep inhalation was an
impossibility. When I questioned him and said I
was not getting it and what have I to do, he said,
"Continue. It will come." And it never came.

In early morning I would get up with that fervor in
my mind that I should sit. I had the bad habit of
drinking coffee, even in my early days. I used to
have a cup of coffee, then, nature called, then I used
to sit in padmasana. "Now I'll do pranayama." So I
sat in padmasana for about a minute, and within one
minute, my mind said, "no pranayama today." The
moment I kept my fingers on my nostrils, the
nostrils used to rebel, and I used to feel gasping. So,
naturally that day is gone.

It went on and on. Even after I got married, I used
to wake my dutiful wife, saying that I have to do
pranayama, give me a cup of coffee. She would
prepare coffee, and until it was ready, I was lazy and
used to stay in bed. When the coffee was ready I'd
have to clean my teeth, then I took coffee, and my
wife would go to bed again. Then I sat, and within
two minutes - no pranayama - I can't do it. So I
tried and tried, but believe me, I never succeeded at
all.

Then I started doing trataka, gazing. I used to make
a circle of black paint with rays, like the disk of the
sun, on a big card. I said I can't do pranayama, let
me do trataka. So I started gazing, without blinking
the eyes. So my prananyama ended with trataka. I
had read some books that said if you do trataka you
get this power, you get that power. I used to gaze
for a very long time, but nothing came to me. It so
happened that trataka gave me some ill feeling in
my eyes and in my brain, and I learned the bad
effect of trataka. Many people who do it are dead
blind. So I learned many things like that.

Then, I was trying the pranayama called ujjayi -
deep inhalation, deep exhalation. It never came. I
said, let me try to do nadi sodhana pranayama,
which everybody said is a very good pranayama. In



1944 I had an opportunity to go to Mysore with my wife. As she was pregnant with Geeta, I went to take my Guru's blessings. He was a terror in pranayama in those days.

He never did pranayama in the presence of anyone. He used to do it in his own room, so there was no chance to see his practices. It so happened that one day in a hall, he was sitting and doing pranayama and I saw his fingers on his nose, and that was the only lesson I had from him.

I only observed three or four minutes, but I saw how he placed his fingers on the nose. And that was the first lesson I had, indirectly, from my Guru. I observed how he placed the fingers on the nose, how he sat - I saw the spine, and that is how I started.

I returned home and started trying. I could not sit straight at all, like him. Because I did a lot of backbends in the early days, the spine used to curve if I sat straight. It never used to resist. So naturally, without resistance I could not sit and pranayama never came. My pranayama was a thorough failure, up to 1960. It's a long process, but you have to appreciate my patience and impatience, balancing together. Others would have left, but I never left.

Every morning, as a religious person, I used to get up at four, never missed, and sat for pranayama. I'd sit for two or three minutes, and then, "today I can't do pranayama." "I have to open my mouth," or "If I do one or two breaths, I have to wait for five minutes to take another deep breath." I was restless throughout. I used to sit in padmasana and pranayama was not coming. So I tried lying down. After one or two breaths, I used to feel heavy in my head. No, let me sit again and try. Restlessly, I tried pranayama in padmasana, in virasana, in baddha konasana, thinking that something may come in some pose. But it continued and continued. Believe it or not, I was teaching pranayama also, only on an individual basis, when people would ask me. I could never teach more than one person at a time.

Everyone says that when you are out of mood, you do pranayama and you come back to mood. I'm the only man who says that if you are moody, you can never do pranayama; and at times when there is an upset in your mind, you cannot do pranayama, though all the yogis say, you do pranayama. That is how I learned some points.

Sometimes I used to feel very fresh, so at that time two, three breaths would come. But I used to become moody, when heaviness in the lungs and tension in the brain would come because I never knew how to relax to inhale.

Somebody gave me a book written by a gentleman in the 1800's which said when you exhale, if you keep a cotton near the nose it should not shake. So then I started exhaling and I couldn't inhale at all, because if the cotton shakes the exhalation is too heavy. You have to control the breath. I started keeping cotton like that, looking at it, and if the cotton moved I said no, it's not exhalation. Everybody, all the books, were explaining about exhalation. What about inhalation? How difficult it was to learn!

I was teaching Krishnamurthi in Pune in 1948, and his theory of passive alertness is the same thing like cotton which should not shake. There is no difference at all. He coined new words, but the action was the old. Then I started doing inhalation with that passive alertness, saying that as in exhalation the cotton should not shake, when I inhale, even in my nostrils I should not feel it. Then when I did it, my heart started beating put-put-put-put, like that. So I was caught in between, not knowing how to do. So I began to do soft inhalation with a gentle touch on the inner carpet of the nose. I felt a sensation of exhilaration and quietness. This, I thought, must be the right method and I began manipulating the intercostal muscles of the chest, the fingers on the nose, and so forth.

In 1960, I was in Gstaad, Switzerland, and the weather was very good. There also, I used to get up, prepare my own coffee, and practice pranayama.

One day, I felt that delight, or the fragrance of that inhalation, which was not too cold, not too warm. Some sensation came into my nose when I was controlling with my fingers. That sensation gave me the key to taste the in-breath and the out-breath. That's the first feeling I got, only in Switzerland.

As I said, I was doing too many backbends and the spine could not hold. In 1958 I used to stay in kapotasana for fifteen minutes. But one day I said, let me do janu sirsana - I couldn't stay fifteen minutes. The pain in my back and spine was so great I couldn't bear it in forward bends, although everyone says there will be no soreness in forward bends. It was as if somebody were using a sledgehammer on my spine when I used to do forward bends.

So in 1958 I determined that as I can stay in backbends, I should learn to stay in forward bends. Since then, even today, I keep a day for forward bends, and my pupils follow the same. In that learning, my spine started resisting in such a way that it was not collapsing when I used to sit for pranayama. Forward bending is as essential as the backbends.

From that fragrance I got in 1960 in Switzerland, because the air was very fresh, natural air, I felt certain sensations. Since then I started learning placing the fingers on my nose as I had seen my Guru do in 1944. My own student, Yehudi Menuhin, was also my Guru, though he never knew that I learned from him. I observed how he used to pull the violin strings, and what space he was creating; how he used to flex his knuckles and how the knuckles were behaving, how the flesh was behaving on the back side, which part of his finger he used to keep. I noticed all those things. Then I started playing on my nose, and that's how I learned pranayama. It took me nearly twenty-two years to begin pranayama.

Note: This article is excerpted from a fascinating interview which is printed in its entirety in the commemorative volume, 70 Glorious Years of Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar.

YOGA & YOUR BACK

with

**Dr. Derek French and
Shirley Daventry French**

**Saturday, February 27, '93
1:30 to 4:00 pm at the Y
880 Courtney Street**

**Y & Yoga Centre Members: \$25.00
Non-Members: \$30.00**

Take time to relax and ease that aching back. This workshop will explore the causes of common back problems, and how the practice of yoga can play a role in their prevention and management.

Ensure yourself a place in this special workshop by registering early at the Y Main Desk. For further information, phone Shirley at 478-3775.

SAVASANA

Excerpt from a Pranayama class given by Geeta Iyengar on October 13, 1988 (Canadian Intensive, notes taken by Francie Ricks)

Students were instructed to lie on a large bolster with two folded blankets supporting their heads and to bandage their forehead and eyes.

"You need sufficient height even if it hurts the back a bit. Hook your body up on the pillow so you won't remain sliding. On a narrow pillow the side chest does not get much support, so a broad pillow helps the front chest broaden. Feel the freedom in the lower pelvis, groins descending, when the pillow is properly adjusted. Do not tilt. Open the sides of the clavicle as you did this morning in full arm balance, from the centre to the side. See that the head is well supported, downward from the crown of the head as if everything is descending. With the bandage you have to feel as if the brain cells are falling from the outside inward, from all the eight corners of the brain. The brain has to become smaller inside. Relax the temples, the throat; deflate in that manner. Relax the tongue, facial muscles, facial skin. Drop your feet, drop your toes. Feel the width of the shoulders. When you roll the shoulders back you feel the bottom nipple/rib area getting open. Raise the chest to get the proper shape before you relax; there should not be any cavities at the chest. Then keep the muscle fibers passive so you don't create tension.

Slow, soft, smooth exhalation, relax the facial muscles, facial skin. So slow soft, quiet exhalation, slow, soft inhalation. First observe the breath, creating a rhythm. At the beginning, it's a mess inside. Do normal breathing so this mess will be cleared, the intercostals, ribs, everything resting inside. Separate the outer body from the breath. Witness your breath in that manner. Let go your body, let loose everything so the very existence of the outer body will not be felt but the breath will be felt, witnessed.

The clavicles are spread, the trapezius rolling back, shoulders going to the side without rigidity. In asana it's done with will power but here the mannerisms must come naturally. If you practice in asana you can do in pranayama without physical force."

Savasana was followed by instructions on Viloma II. Students remained lying on the large bolster. Then they sat for Ujjayi and Antara Kumbhaka. At the end of the class, they lay back flat on the floor with one folded blanket under the head and the bolster on the thighs.

"You have to face the problems, the difficulties. You can't always expect to be comfortable.

Relax the face and let go everywhere. As you have energized the chest in pranayama, be quiet now. The mind must be internalized towards the naval in exhalation, involution. As you exhale, all the energies must descend to the naval. The mental, psychological, etc. forces return back to the naval.

Quieten the tongue, quieten the teeth. Keep the passage between the nose and the thoracic cavity absolutely free from tension.

Don't allow a single thought to enter with the exhalation. Surrender a thought as soon as you notice it. Internal mauna (vow of silence). Let go in such a manner so there won't be any thinking process. Quiet each cell; pacify each part. You have to apply the psychology of soothing to that area. In a similar manner each cell must be soothed, as words can soothe a person. It's a silent "talk" within, silent speech, where you create a soothing sensation and establish every time that quietness. There should be a tremendous involvement for that process. Supply that kind of kindness, humbleness, humility, motherly attachment to each cell so the cell listens to you and gets quietened."

Reprinted with permission from Yoga '90, the magazine of the Second North American Iyengar Yoga Convention, San Diego, California
June 23-July 1, 1990



THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and THE VICTORIA YM-YWCA



present

PRANAYAMA

with

Shirley Daventry French

During the Christmas/New Year break, we are pleased to offer two special classes in Pranayama. Traditionally the Christmas season is a time of peace, joy and light on earth. Nowadays for many people, it has become a time of heightened stress; its true meaning and purpose obscured or forgotten.

These two classes will focus on breathing awareness, basic pranayama techniques and deep relaxation. For those who are already practising yoga-asana, pranayama leads naturally into a state of relaxation and contemplation. The first class will take place on the Winter Solstice, the day of the year with the least hours of daylight. What better time than to focus on the Light within and find the real spirit of Christmas?

Where: The Yoga Studio of the YM-YWCA, 880 Courtney Street

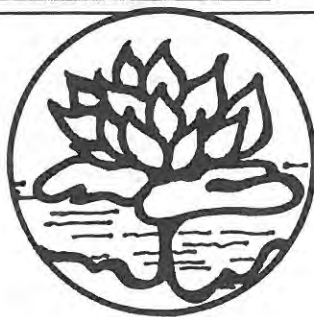
When: Monday, December 21, 1992
Monday, December 28, 1992

Time: 5:30 to 7:00 pm

Fees:	Two classes:	Y and Yoga Centre Members	\$25.00
		Non-Members	\$30.00
	Single class:	Y and Yoga Centre Members	\$15.00
		Non-Members	\$18.00

*Please pre-register at the Y's Main Desk - Registration is limited
Wear warm, loose clothing*

Information: Shirley Daventry French at 478-3775 or Victoria Y at 386-7511



Leslie

Excerpts from letters home and journal in Pune.

October 3: Hello all from Bombay! I can hardly believe I'm really here, so far from home.... The streets are full of people. It's like arriving in the midst of a carnival with so many people everywhere. There are tiny stalls and vendors crowded onto the edges of the sidewalks selling shoes, shirts, peanuts, fruit drinks, post cards, trinkets, etc. One must constantly watch for holes and crevices in the sidewalks and streams of water or ? who knows what or from where, since it hadn't been raining!

Later, even behind the glass of our air conditioned room there is a constant flood of noise, a cacophony of honking vehicles.

October 6: There's so much to say - it's only my second day in Pune! The train ride was a good way to see the countryside without being on the roads. Pune, being on a 600 meter plateau, necessitated a steep climb with spectacular scenery. We went through twelve tunnels in about twenty minutes.

When we stopped in a station, vendors would clamber on board chanting, "Coffee, chia, coffee, chi-aa(tea)", and flogging sandwiches, chips and other mysterious substances. One down side was that they now sell hot beverages in styrofoam cups, an unfortunate export to India since my last visit.

Yesterday, our first full day we woke up at 6am. to an explosion of sound as tropical birds in the trees outside our hotel all burst into song at once and the first light streaked the sky. Otherwise, our hotel is one of the quietest in Pune (thanks, Jim, for the recommendation). We're in a suburban area and surrounded by professional people's homes, beyond which is an open field.

After tea and toast and enjoying the sunrise, Linda Shevloff and I went out for a walk and, by chance, quickly discovered an archeological, historical site, The Pateleshwara Caves (600 BC). It was beautiful and peaceful.

We could hear chanting, which we followed to a Siva temple on the next piece of land. We got swept into a ceremony as the climax of chanting and drumming surged around us. The energy and emotion was intense. After we moved through the

various stations, we emerged and spoke to a Badhu who had been living at the temple for twenty years. Before that he had raised a family and labored in a factory. He was quite delightful. He has been reading and studying all that time and "trying to understand my own mind," he chuckled.

As we arrived back in our hotel lobby about 6.30am, feeling full of good will, Marlene, Linda Benn, Anne and Vicky were just coming out. As we related the events of our walk I was called to the phone. Apparently I had left my security money (\$70.00) pinned to my clothes and then sent it to the laundry. The now wet \$70.00 was returned midst gales of laughter at my forgetfulness.

We decided that the whole morning has been a very good omen and we felt very secure about how we would be treated at our hotel.

October 7: Classes have begun! Geeta seems pretty tolerant so far, explaining everything thoroughly and patiently. As we walked out to lunch my legs were like jelly from so many standing poses --- three weeks to go!



LINDA - VICKY - MARLENE - ANN



THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and THE VICTORIA YM-YWCA



present

**RESTORATIVE ASANAS
BREATHING AWARENESS
and RELAXATION**

with

Shirley Daventry French

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. Invest in your health and well-being by attending this relaxing workshop.

Where: The Yoga Studio of the YM-YWCA, 880 Courtney Street

When: Saturday, January 30, 1993

Time: 1:30 - 4:00 pm

Fees:	Y and Yoga Centre Members	\$25.00
	Non-Members	\$30.00

Shirley Daventry French is a long time student of Mr. Iyengar and one of North America's most experienced teachers of his method of yoga. She has been teaching at the Victoria Y for over twenty years and gives workshops nationally and internationally.

*Please pre-register at the Y's Main Desk - Registration is limited
Wear warm, loose clothing*

Information: Shirley Daventry French at 478-3775 or Victoria Y at 386-7511

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Classes commence January 12th

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for experienced students -

Saturday mornings

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May 8th \$20 per class

A Day of Yoga

Asana, Pranayama, Philosophy of Yoga

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

Information: 478-3775



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THE PRACTICE OF PRANAYAMA, A PERSONAL JOURNEY

By Anna Delury

Pranayama. Just the word evokes a myriad of responses from me. I have to place myself in time to actually discern my feelings and thoughts on the subject, for pranayama is an art which has come to me with great difficulty.

My initial contact with it, some eleven years ago, was in a non-Iyengar setting. The various breathing techniques that were presented, and the funny sounds they made, reminded me of games I had played as a child. I had no sense at all of the deeper spiritual aspects of pranayama and probably wouldn't have cared. Needless to say, not an ounce of discipline or interest in pranayama developed in me.

My next exposure to pranayama was extreme. I enrolled in a three month, five days a week, four hours a day yoga course, only to find that each session began with an hour of sitting pranayama. Not only was I not strong enough for the rigors of this type of practice, I was also completely unprepared for the emotional and psychological demands. The experience was horrifying. My nerves ended up jangled and frayed, my sciatic problems worsened, terrible headaches plagued me, my digestive system went haywire and I began having nightmares. Each class left me more and more depressed and angry. The blissful jewels which pranayama supposedly bestowed upon practitioners did not come. As a result, I wrote pranayama off as some New Age, airy fairy hype. At the end of those three, tortuous months, I ran happily back to standing poses.

Still a novice and only twenty one, I was given the opportunity to study in Pune with Mr. Iyengar. What a shock! For the first time I began to understand the depths to which yoga could be studied; and although the pranayama classes were

much too sophisticated for me, I received a slight glimmer of what might be possible. But this flicker of insight quickly buried itself in the deep recesses of my brain.

The experiences of Mr. Iyengar and India propelled me back into college on my return to the U.S. The combination left me with a great need to find out more about how the body functions. In fact, I felt it was my duty to study more if I intended to continue teaching yoga. So I entered UCLA and took on the pre-med major of kinesiology. During this time my asana practice came and went with greater and lesser intensity and discipline. I was still staunchly avoiding any pranayama practice, since I had convinced myself that it wasn't really something I would ever need. The truth was that it represented everything I had ever hated. I was deathly afraid of it. So much so, that the one class in college I suffered through the most, and almost failed, was respiratory physiology. A coincidence? I struggled to understand some of the simplest concepts.

Bit by bit I was able to absorb pieces of information such as the fact that it isn't the lack of oxygen that triggers the inhalation response but the build-up of carbon dioxide. On a very basic level I began to understand some things about respiration.

The respiratory anatomy is divided into two zones: the conducting zone consists of the structures through which air passes on its journey to the respiratory zone at the alveoli (air sacs). It is here at the alveoli that the circulatory system, via capillaries, contacts the respiratory system. This is where the exchange of oxygen (incoming) and carbon dioxide (outgoing) occurs. At the microscopic respiratory zone the gases diffuse across the tissue walls along pressure gradients from high to low. Changes in gas pressures are also responsible for the movement of air in and out of the lungs at the macroscopic conducting zone, only now the pressure difference occurs between the air outside the body and the air in the lungs.

I also found out that the neural centers that regulate breathing reside in two regions of the brainstem (hind brain), and that they can either excite or inhibit the breathing phenomenon depending on what the body needs and how it is affected by blood chemistry and posture. All of this occurs unconsciously, automatically. However, conscious control over breathing patterns can occur by manipulation of higher brain centers (brain centers physically located above the hind brain).

Somehow, after the course was over, these and other concepts began to sink in and make sense. I began to consider the prospect of starting a pranayama practice. In fact, I spent about three months considering it. All the while my asana practice grew stronger, more disciplined, more involved.

Then one morning a soft, slow, rhythmic breath woke me up. For a while I watched and listened to it in the dreamy, not quite awake place of early morning. After a bit I realized that this wonderfully quiet, soothing breath was mine and not my snoring husband's. This phenomenon continued to happen without any thought from me. After a few days of this, I suddenly realized I had fallen into the beginnings of a pranayama practice. So I continued to keep still and simply watch how the breath flowed in and out of my body on its own. I did not attempt to do anything with the breath except even it out, smooth it out. This kept me occupied for six months.

As luck would have it, at this point I returned to Pune for an intensive with Geeta and Guruji. In three weeks the pranayama portion of the course covered simple deep breathing, ujjayi with and without kumbhaka, and viloma 1 and 11, an excellent foundation with enough information for at least two years of practice.

My reaction to this process was like a condensed review of every encounter I'd ever had with pranayama. I spent the first week terrified by the mere notion. I even dreamt up schemes for skipping pranayama class but I continued to go. I tried and tried to see what Geeta was explaining. I tried and tried, harder and harder, to relax and control my breathing. And I became more and more tense, more and more angry until at last my head and body felt severed from each other because of all the tension in my neck.

Two weeks into the intensive, I broke down and spent an evening sobbing in my room. Broken, I surrendered and gave up completely on the possibility of ever being able to do this ridiculous breathing stuff. The next class I resigned myself, gave up control, let go of any and all judgement, and simply listened to Geeta. Miraculously, the peaceful soothing feelings of my pre-intensive practices returned and the pranayama took hold of me firmly but gently.

After that class I couldn't wait for each day's pranayama session to arrive. I began to hear more of what Geeta was teaching: that softness and slowness come first, and then length and depth; that the different techniques have different effects and can be adjusted for different conditions and people; and, most importantly, that the fierceness with which asanas are approached must be given up and replaced with quietness and gentleness when doing pranayama.

From these experiences pranayama, once a dreaded thought, has sprung into and flourished as an active, daily practice. It binds me strongly into my asana practice, which has deepened as a result. I give thanks each day for the grace and insight of Mr. Iyengar's teachings and methods. Light on Pranayama, once an indecipherable book, has become a constant companion and guiding force.

I have begun to change in very subtle ways. Faith helps me through the days when pranayama doesn't come well. Patience and calmness, both of which I have begun to learn from my struggles with pranayama, guide the raw beginnings of my sitting practice. I am taking it slowly and softly, knowing that little by little the whole process will lengthen and deepen. Time has become spherical, and as it loops around itself I watch in fascination and amazement the way pranayama, which I loathed so much, is now rooting me in God.

Anna Delury practices and teaches at her home in Studio City where she lives with her husband, Art Dielhenn and their two cats, Jennifer and Sara.

Reprinted with permission from Yoga '90, the magazine of the Second North American Iyengar Yoga Convention, San Diego, California.
June 23-July 1, 1990.

MY PERSONAL PRACTICE

by Jonne Strand

"When I practise, I'm a philosopher.
When I teach, I'm a scientist.
When I demonstrate, I'm an artist."

B.K.S. Iyengar.

Why should you practise yoga? This was a question I asked myself a few years ago, in the hope that by taking up this discipline, I could become connected with that divine spark that is within.

In my adult life I have experienced numerous physical activities to increase my strength. When I started to practise yoga, my only awareness was that it would increase my flexibility and possibly offer a complement to my other sports. Instead, it has become the main focus of my training, leaving my other activities in the complementary position. Yoga must be viewed as an ongoing process which develops and transforms over a lifetime.

One of Mr. Iyengar's beliefs is that "Everyone has a dormant spark of divinity in him which has to be fanned into a flame" (IYENGAR: His Life and Work p.70). Yoga practice offers an opportunity to experience the integration between the physical and psychological aspects of the body and that divine spark. Following are some of my experiences in developing this discipline over the last few years.

Becoming familiar with the bone structure and muscle groups of my body is an essential dynamic in my understanding of yoga. Bare feet and comfortable clothing allowed me to become more aware of my body's potential. Being inside my body was an unfamiliar feeling, and initially I felt hypersensitive to this experience. Restriction in many asanas increased my awareness of the body. When doing a seated forward bend, I found myself restrained by the limitations of lower back, buttocks and legs. I learned that a limb which is well-aligned offers greater strength than one which is misaligned.

When practising asana, I learn how to focus on and release specific parts of the body. For instance, quadriceps or thigh muscles which have become tight and tense from over-exertion can be released and lengthened by breathing into them. When my body offers resistance, yoga has taught me to explore this resistance. Good body awareness is essential in every practice as different stresses and strains develop. When increased flexibility is gained from regular practice, the feeling is comparable to a young child during play and frolic.

If I am not feeling emotionally well, yoga practice can offer me a revitalized sense of spirit. My body changes dramatically between morning and evening practice; so does my psychological awareness. In the early morning, although physically I am more restricted, emotionally I tend to be freer. In this state I can explore new asanas without self-defeating conceptions about what I can or cannot accomplish. In contrast, my evening

practice offers me a greater range of physical movement, yet I encounter psychological barriers that have been constructed throughout the day. In a forward bend my leg, back and buttock muscles might be obliging, but an emotional upset stored in my gut holds me back from moving forward. Therefore, an optimum practice involves a variety of asanas practised at separate times within the day.

Over the past twenty or so years, many teachers have struggled to gain support for the ideal of practising this Eastern philosophy in the Western world. One of Victoria's pioneering practitioners, Shirley Daventry French, is an advocate for the increased spiritual benefits of yoga. After a recent trip to Mr. Iyengar's Institute in Pune, India, she returned to Victoria to share her reaffirmed convictions. She reiterated the importance of integrating the Eastern spiritual experience into her day to day Western life. "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." (Reflections, January 1992)

"Yoga", according to B.K.S. Iyengar, "helps one to understand the weaknesses in one's fellow man and to cultivate the art of forgiveness and to surpass incidents which cause emotional disturbances?" (IYENGAR: His Life and Work, p. 114)

Since I have begun yoga, my friends have commented on my increased levels of emotional and physical integration. My range of emotions is more firmly grounded in the present rather than the past or the future. My emotions are triggered by what is happening now instead of events of my past. "The body is the temple of spirit. Let the temple be clean through yoga" (IYENGAR: His Life and Work, p. 16)

Iyengar Yoga offers me a strengthened connection to a way of life that I choose for my own. The local yoga community is like a family, offering me support for my emotional trials and encouragement to further my extension beyond physical limitations.

I share a lineage to a living master who dedicated himself to sharing his knowledge with old and young students from around the world. It is my good fortune to study with teachers who have an ongoing connection with Mr. Iyengar's Institute in Pune, India. I learn best from example, so my teachers' consciousness is one of my strongest guides and a constant encouragement to continue with the practice. I am grateful to all those who have guided my way.

To finish my practice I chant the following to put me in touch with my potential :

"Wearing all my feathers as I fly high.

Wearing all my feathers as I fly high.

I circle around, I circle around, the boundaries of the earth."



Yoga Centre of Victoria

BOOKS FOR SALE

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.

STANDING ON A FIRM FOUNDATION

A Yoga Workshop with Linda Shevloff

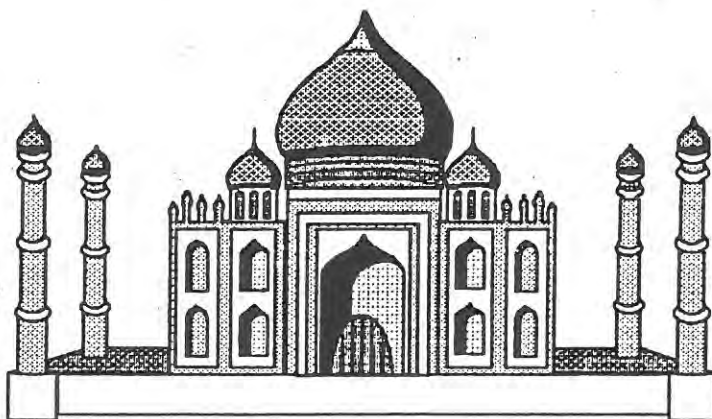
Sunday, January 24
10:00 - 1:00

Linda recently returned from a second visit to India where she studied with Geeta Iyengar. In this workshop she will share some insights from her experience.

Refreshments will be served after class
Cost: \$20 for members, \$25 for non-members

At the Yoga Studio, Victoria YM-YWCA

To register phone – Linda Shevloff (479-5847) or Celia Ward (388-7839)



A LIFESTYLE CHANGE

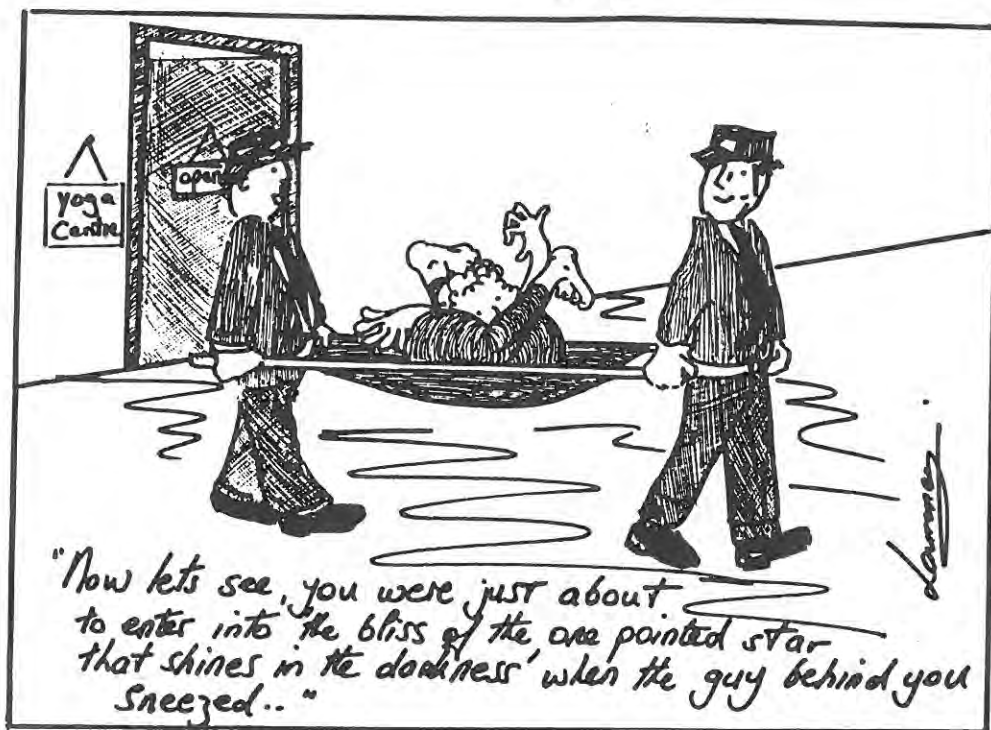
I've been taking yoga classes now for about five years. For two years prior to beginning yoga, I had been chronically ill (with lupus), and had almost resigned myself to the fact that exercise would no longer be a part of my life. Besides the ever-present fatigue and achiness, the skin and joints of my feet and hands had been affected to the point where even walking was painful. There was little hope of returning to my once-loved modern dance classes, running and basketball.

All I knew about yoga was that it didn't involve running or even walking, so perhaps I could manage it. The first few classes were painful and I almost quit. Yet somehow I kept returning to class. What I noticed was that no matter how fatigued or achy I felt in class, I always had a feeling of "wellness" the following day.

Another positive by-product occurred to me one day as I sat waiting in yet another medical specialist's examining room. I used to spend precious time sitting in fearful anticipation, my body turning cold under the thin, white gown, my mind desperately trying to get involved with mindless Reader's Digest stories. Until I suddenly realized that I needn't sit there any longer. I could do some much needed yoga practice! Now I'm disappointed if the doctor comes in too soon. It also makes for interesting conversation when the doctor walks in while I'm in the middle of a pose!

So here I am, five years later. Yoga keeps me feeling strong and relaxed and I look forward to the classes and to my sporadic practices at home. Yoga was the first of several lifestyle changes which I have made over the last few years to help me learn how to co-exist peacefully with chronic illness. I'm glad I "discovered" yoga.

Bluma Powell
Victoria



RADHA HOUSE

Victoria

1500 Shasta Place
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(604) 595-0177

January 10:

OPEN HOUSE 3-5 PM.

Everyone welcome, come and meet us.
Refreshments served.

January 11:

CLASSES RE-OPEN.

11 weeks in this session.

January 15-16:

KUNDALINI OVERVIEW.

Introduction to the Kundalini system.

Friday 7.30-10.00 pm. Saturday 10 am to 6pm.

New class to be formed, Tuesdays, 5.30-7.30pm
10 weeks, \$110.00 + GST.

January 31:

THE HIDDEN LANGUAGE HATHA WORKSHOP

Sunday morning in Tree pose 9.30am to 12pm

followed by potluck lunch. Limit 10 people.

\$25 + GST

February 7:

GURU-PUJA.

We honor our inner and outer teacher in a Satsang
of gratitude.

Sunday morning 10.00 a.m.

Sunday evening, potluck supper followed by video.

Everyone welcome.

REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION 595-0177

A DAY OF YOGA

Asana and Pranayama
in the Iyengar Tradition
with

Shirley Daventry French

SATURDAY,

February 20, 1993



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

"Y" CLASSES
Holiday Schedule
ALL LEVELS
 Monday, Dec. 21st & 28th
 10:00-11:30am
 Wednesday, Dec. 23rd & 30th
 5:30-7:00pm

IT'S A GO!
THURS. ALL-LEVELS
 6:00-7:30pm
 with
ANNA BARANOSKY
 -Victoria YMCA-

CREDITS

Cover illustration linocut by Wiener Werkstatte,
 ca. 1910, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

YOGA CALENDAR

JANUARY:

9: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.
10: Open House at Radha House.
11: Classes open at Radha House.
15-16: Kundalini Overview at Radha House.
15: Yoga Centre Gathering; See ad this issue.
24: Workshop at the Y with Linda Shevloff. See ad this issue.
30: Teachers meeting followed by Restorative Workshop
31: Hidden Language Hatha Workshop at Radha House.

FEBRUARY:

6: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.
7: Guru-Puja at Radha House.
12: Yoga Centre Gathering. Goods and Services Auction to raise funds for Mr. Iyengar's visit to Toronto.
14: Workshop at the Y with Linda Benn and Anne Kilbertus.

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

20: Day of Yoga in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.
27: Teachers meeting followed by workshop with Shirley Daventry French and Derek French. "Yoga and Your Back."

MARCH:

6: Pranayama with Shirley Daventry French in Metchosin.
14: Workshop at the Y with Marlene Miller.
19: Yoga Centre Gathering. Guest speaker Michael Greenwood, co-author of The Paradox of Healing.
27: Teachers meeting followed by a workshop with Shirley Daventry French. "Yoga, Women and The Change."

APRIL:

3: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.
18: Workshop at the Y with Leslie Hoggia.
24: Teachers meeting
30: Yoga Centre Gathering. Big Big Practice led by Shirley Daventry French.

MAY:

8: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.
29: Teachers meeting.

JUNE:

4-6: Iyengar Yoga Retreat on Saltspring Island with Shirley Daventry French.
26: Teachers meeting.

JULY:

3-9: Iyengar Yoga Summer Intensive led by Shirley Daventry French.

AUGUST:

16-20: Mr. Iyengar's visit to Toronto, Iyengar Yoga Convention.

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: _____

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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 FEBRUARY ISSUE: JANUARY 16th, 1993.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

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



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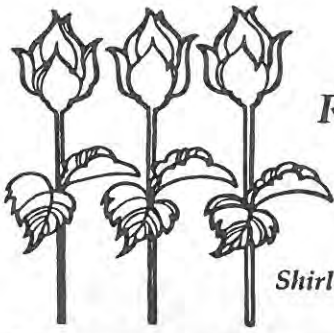
Newsletter



Through a child's eyes

Please Subscribe

February, 1993



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

In Mr. Iyengar's autobiography/biography *IYENGAR - His Life and Work*, there is a chapter entitled "How Pune became my Home" in which he describes his early struggles. He was sent to Pune by his Guru because he was the only person in the Yoga school who knew a little English. He had to finance the trip himself, and sought teaching engagements along the way. He stopped at a town called Hubli, where he had taught previously and a benefactor found him a place to stay and a few students to teach. In the book, Mr. Iyengar describes his experience as follows :-

"I started teaching five or six students along with my hosts. It was arranged that all of them should contribute towards my expenses and pay my railway fare up to Pune. I also planned to go to Dharwar to take my chance there.

My schedule was very hard. Every morning at 6 am I left my place and walked a distance of about three miles to catch a train to Dharwar. The fare from Hubli to Dharwar was two annas (twelve paise) only. The response at Dharwar was disappointing. Whereas in the previous year I had taught about thirty pupils, this time I could get only one pupil on the understanding that he would only provide for my lunch. After the lesson, followed by lunch at 10:30 am, I walked back between Hubli and Dharwar - in all eighteen miles daily."

Now, when hundreds of people attend conferences and conventions in Mr. Iyengar's honour, and wait years to be accepted in a class at his Institute in Pune, it is good to remember from time to time the struggle of his early years, and appreciate the single-minded sense of purpose that enabled him to keep going.

A little later in a section entitled "Darkness before Dawn" he says :-

"My services with the Deccan Gymkhana Club were to terminate by the end of August 1940. I had taken a loan of 100 rupees from the Gymkhana in April 1940 for the marriage of my younger sister Jayamma. By July 1940, I had cleared half the amount. When my services came to an end the Gymkhana deducted the balance of the loan along with interest, and all I had at the end of August 1940 was a sum of four rupees. My lodging bill was still unpaid.

At this stage of my life I did not know where my next meal could come from. I had no roof over my head since the room which I was occupying had to be vacated. My only reason for staying on in Pune was that it was better to continue in a place where I had established some contacts for three years rather than start afresh in an unknown place."

The early part of the book chronicles many such ups and downs, and you can't get much more down than this! Fortunately, for all those yoga practitioners throughout the world who directly or indirectly have benefited from his teaching, Mr. Iyengar did prevail.

I had the good fortune to edit *IYENGAR - His Life and Work*, so I knew very well about Gururji's early struggles, and this morning I thought about them as I reflected on an incident which happened yesterday.

For several years, I have been offering pranayama classes once a month in my home studio. The response has been varied, partly because these classes are on Saturday morning at 8 am and I live fifteen miles out of town - a thirty minute drive on a reasonable stretch of highway in a part of Canada which very rarely experiences hazardous driving conditions.

I chose this time and place for many reasons. First, it had to fit into my fairly tight schedule. Secondly, it had to be at a time when the students' stomachs were likely to be empty, which limits the choice to early morning, late afternoon or early evening. To do pranayama you have to be relaxed, to relax you have to be warm, so I needed a clean, warm place and some equipment such as blankets, blocks, bolsters. This narrowed the choice down to the "Y" studio or my yoga room.

There was another factor, which tipped the scales in favour of using my home studio (even though many people behave as if it's in Tuktoyaktuk instead of the western outskirts of Victoria), and that was my desire to safeguard my Saturday morning asana practice on those weekends when I had no other teaching commitments.

I came up with the idea of teaching an early morning pranayama class, choosing 8 o'clock to give myself time for my own pranayama practice beforehand. On completion of the class students are offered tea, juice and toast, and they can leave after this or stay and practice yoga-asana along with me while I do my own practice. After this a light lunch is available where we have interesting discussions about the practice of yoga, its application in our daily lives, and life in general.

When I first offered these monthly classes, there was a flurry of interest and I always had a waiting list. Gradually this whittled down to a few dedicated people who came rain or shine, sometimes staying for the whole morning, sometimes leaving directly after pranayama in response to other demands.

Before Christmas there were so few students I was wondering whether to cancel these classes and do something different in the new year which might appeal to more people. Then I taught the last class of 1992 to three people - three people who have attended regularly for two years, who are open and eager to learn. As the class came to an end, I realised how much I enjoyed teaching these students, and how this class challenged me to deepen my own practice so that I can pass on what I have learned with some clarity.

Most of the time I prefer to practise on my own, but on these Saturdays I thoroughly enjoy practising with others and the companionship we share then and afterwards during lunch. As I thought about my schedule for 1993, it seemed ridiculous to mess around with something which was working well for me and for those students who did attend. There is an expression which Derek sometimes quotes: "If it ain't broke, why fix it?" When I thought about it, the only thing which needed fixing here was my attitude. The way the classes were set up suited those who were coming, they valued the classes and were committed. It suited me too. I looked forward to them. Why change them? I decided to continue and set up the schedule for this year.

It's not the number of students which is important, but the quality of the work. How often does that lesson have to be learned? Probably until it really doesn't matter, either financially or in any other way, whether there is one or twenty students, and I know without a shadow of a doubt that the teaching is worthwhile in and of itself regardless of numbers. Why is it so hard to learn this lesson? I've already mentioned one reason, the financial one, but unlike Mr. Iyengar, I have never been in the position of wondering where the next meal is coming from.

I remember a conversation I had recently with a colleague of mine, Jessica Sluymmer, who is the director of Radha House Victoria. There, they face the same unpredictability of the yoga marketplace, and sometimes choose to give workshops and classes to a small number of students rather than cancel, because passing on the teachings of yoga is their primary purpose. She said to me that she didn't mind teaching the small classes because it really didn't make any difference once you had begun to teach; what she found difficult was afterwards when people said to her "How many students did you have?" and she was forced to reveal the truth, "two" or "three" or whatever small number there were - and how this was all about ego. I nodded, and we laughed at ourselves.

Writing this, I also remembered something I read in Swami Vivekananda's book on *RAJA YOGA* : "If one proposes to teach a science to increase the power of sense enjoyment, one finds multitudes ready for it. If one undertakes to show the supreme goal, one finds few to listen."

If B.K.S. Iyengar, Swami Radha and Swami Vivekananda can accept this and teach those who come no matter how few, what arrogance to expect it to be different for me!

This point was finally driven home yesterday, after the first Saturday morning pranayama class of 1993 when we were having lunch and discussing this topic, and I was telling those present about my dilemma whether to continue these classes or not. I stated that what prompted these ruminations was that "nobody was coming", and Jennifer Rischmiller, one of the regular students, quick as a flash, looked across the dining table at my husband Derek, another regular participant, and said: "How do you like that? *We're nobody!*" Her timing was perfect. Her delivery impeccable. We all laughed, but she had made her point, and I thank her.

It seems appropriate to let Mr. Iyengar have the last word on this topic with the following statement:

"If pupils come, say: 'thank God, I have someone to teach'. If pupils do not come, say: 'thank God, I am free. I can practise for myself'"

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

The Yoga Centre accumulates money from workshops for the Scholarship Fund. When you attend a Sunday workshop, the Saltspring Retreat, the Intensive, and other events, or make a donation to the Victoria Yoga Centre, part of the proceeds are designated to the Scholarship Fund. Through our Scholarship Committee we offered a number of scholarships during the year to yoga students and teachers.

A recipient can be nominated or apply to the Scholarship Committee for funds. Our hope is that scholarships provide encouragement to a student of yoga to help in her/his personal growth.

Please contact your yoga teacher for information.



THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE PRESENTS A SERVICES AUCTION

WHAT IS A SERVICES AUCTION?

It is a money-raising event where individuals offer for auction their expertise or time. One does not have to be a professional in a particular field to participate.

For example, at a previous Yoga Centre Auction people offered to cook a gourmet meal, do some gardening, ironing, teach computer skills and so on. Of course, more specialized services could be auctioned too depending only on the skills and knowledge of the people participating.

WHY IS THE YOGA CENTRE ORGANIZING THIS?

The Canadian Iyengar Yoga Conference in Toronto this summer will be a costly event and the Yoga Centre has been asked, along with other Yoga Centres, to help defray the costs of travelling for Mr. Iyengar and his entourage. Victoria would like to provide funds to organize and run the conference. An auction could be both lucrative and amusing, something everyone can do.

WHEN AND WHERE WILL THE AUCTION BE HELD?

Friday, February 12, at 7:00 p.m. in the Y Lounge.

HOW WILL THE AUCTION OPERATE?

Between now and the auction date, yoga teachers and members will be asking students to sign up their services. There will also be a sign up sheet on the bulletin board in the Y Lounge (Yoga room) in case you are not personally approached. Participants will say what they would be willing to do, and give their phone number. These lists of services will then be catalogued in a brochure which will be available the night of the auction. An entrance fee of \$2.50 will be charged at the door. Refreshments will be served. "Mary-Beth" Hogya returns to help Jim Rischmiller as auctioneer, taking bids on various items offered. When you buy an item, you will receive a receipt which will act as a ticket for the benefit you purchased.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Sign up by **February 9, 1993**. Be imaginative and daring. Come to the auction. Bring your friends and relatives. We need your help to make the event a success.

INTIMATE WITH THE MOMENT

BY GAY MEAGLEY

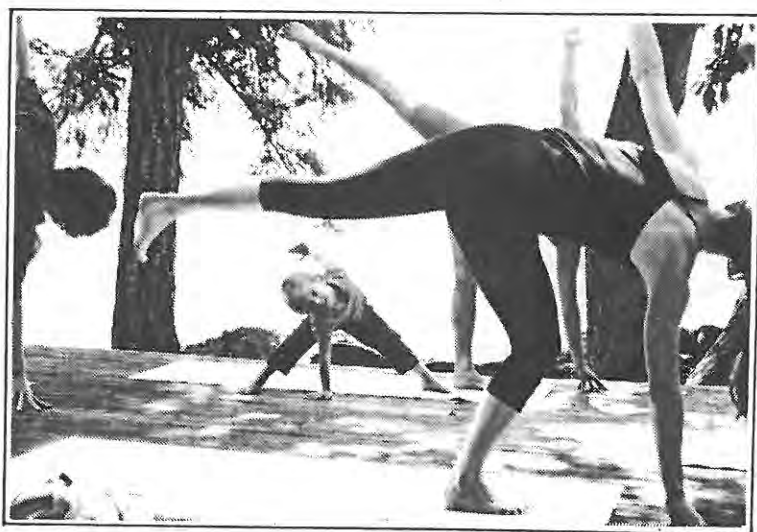
One of my most delightful yoga experiences was teaching 3, 4, and 5 year old children. In a few minutes they were teaching me how to hiss like a snake and to meow like a cat. Downward dogs were barking as the entire yoga menagerie came alive! They moved quickly from pose to pose, like hummingbirds in a flower garden. Great enthusiasm and noise in the chanting followed by the world's briefest relaxation.

Sixteen years later, I encouraged parents to bring their children to class. We all benefit! Even if they don't participate, the children absorb the yogic atmosphere. My three year old son, Misha, astounded his dad with a yoga lesson. He used his interpretation of my style in a very amusing way. Children are great mimics. Last year I had many children attend class with a parent. One six year old boy did a two hour class diligently every week for many sessions. I felt honored to have him there.

Last year I found an article about children on the door of a yoga studio in Port Townsend and I'd like to share it with you:

"Look at the children. They are the ones who will reflect whether or not our practice is working. Yoga means union. Union is the state of being in which every moment is complete within itself. This means nothing more or nothing less is required. Yoga isn't religion, but a way of life. It is a way of life opposed to greed, desire and attachment. It is the way of spirit. Spirit has many qualities and manifests itself in many forms, one of which is love. It is through the power of love that our children, our planet, will be saved. First we must accept where we are as people. Then we must love ourselves in spite of it, or because of it. It is at this moment change can begin to happen.

Look at the children. Look at them and remember, for this is the ground from which we all begin. Look at them and learn, for they are the ones still intimate with the moment."



MISHA MEAGLEY



VICTORIA YM-YWCA

CHILDREN'S YOGA CLASS

Young people will delight in the flexibility, speed and power gained from the yoga asanas (postures). The balanced physical practice and the development of quiet awareness are of benefit to people of all ages.

STARTING JAN. 7th

THURSDAYS

3:30-4:30pm

Ages: 8-12

CO-ED, In The Lounge

Teacher: Leslie Hogya

See the 'Y' Brochure for
many other Yoga classes



A GRANDMOTHER'S YOGA

For several years, Leslie Hogya wrote a column for this newsletter called "A Mother's Yoga". This past Christmas holiday, I discovered the joys of a grandmother's yoga, when my daughter, her husband and their two young children were staying with us for ten days. A mother's yoga is hard work and contains many challenges: a grandmother's yoga is more relaxed, because when things get tough you hand the child back to the parents.

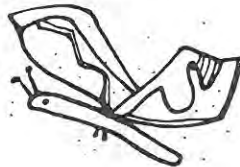


SHIRLEY & ADRIANA

On the first day of their visit, I took my granddaughter downstairs to show her the delights of my play room - the yoga studio. Adriana is twenty one months old, and she liked grandma's toys. Once she knew I spent some time in the yoga room each morning, as soon as she was up and about she wanted to play too. I learned to sneak down there quietly for some serious practice, and later on she would join me. She taught me a lot. For instance, while I had always thought that the primary purpose of backbenders was to lie over them and open your chest, apparently not. According to Adriana, they were built for hide and seek. And while it is quite good fun to hang upside down from a pelvic swing, it is much more fun to swing in them like the swings in the park. Benches became balance beams, my wooden blocks were perfect for giant building blocks, and two new props were brought into use: a small trampoline and a rocking horse.

She even demanded that her three month old baby brother be brought down to share in the fun, but when she insisted on my hiding him under the backbender, I did wonder about her motivation!

There is a bumper sticker which says: "If I had known that grandchildren were such fun, I'd have had them first." They certainly are fun, and it's a such a blessing to be able to share some of their experiences as they explore the world with curiosity, wonder and delight. Now they have returned home, but some of this lively and questing spirit remains in my yoga room bringing a freshness to my daily practice.



THE HEART OPENING



Yoga Workshop

Exploring asanas to soften and open
the shoulder, neck and chest areas.

DATE: Sunday, Feb. 14th

TIME: 10am to 1pm

PLACE: YM/YWCA Lounge

COST: \$20 (Y & Yoga Centre Members); \$25 (Non-members)

WORKSHOP LEADERS: Linda Benn & Ann. Kilbertus

Both Linda and Ann have recently returned from India where
they studied with Geeta Iyengar.

Refreshments

To Register Phone:

Linda Benn (598-8277) or Ann Kilbertus (360-0916)



THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and THE VICTORIA YM-YWCA



present

YOGA AND YOUR BACK

with

**Dr. Derek French and
Shirley Daventry French**

Take time to relax and ease that aching back. This workshop will explore the causes of common back problems, and how the practice of yoga can play a role in their prevention and management.

Where: The Yoga Studio of the YM-YWCA, 880 Courtney Street

When: Saturday, February 27, 1993

Time: 1:30 to 4:00 pm

Fees:	Y and Yoga Centre Members	\$25.00
	Non-Members	\$30.00

Derek French is a physician in general practice in Victoria with a special interest in musculo-skeletal problems, chronic pain syndromes, hypnotherapy and stress management. He first became interested in yoga when he injured his own back.

Shirley Daventry French is one of Canada's leading yoga teachers; she has been teaching yoga in Victoria for over twenty years and gives workshops nationally and internationally.

Derek and Shirley are longtime students of the Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar of Pune, India and Swami Radha of Yasodhara Ashram, B.C.

*Please pre-register at the Y's Main Desk - Registration is limited
Wear warm, loose clothing*

Information: Shirley Daventry French at 478-3775 or Victoria Y at 386-7511

THE EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTORS OF THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE, 1993



WENDY BOYER SECRETARY

I have been on the Yoga Centre Board for the past year and am enthusiastic about being involved as a Director for another term. In my third year as a student of Iyengar Yoga in Victoria, I continue to be amazed at how deeply this asana work penetrates. The most obvious changes occur on a physical plane: one's posture improves, one is aware of old habits recorded in the body that need to be examined, and of how much focussing it takes to bring one's shoulders down for more than five consecutive minutes! There are emotional and spiritual changes too, which take place gradually over time.

From nine to five, I work at the Art Gallery on Moss Street - my position in charge of public affairs for a busy institution makes me a good candidate for yoga! I encourage other students to get involved in the Centre. We need your support. If you can manage it, please buy a membership.



MARLENE MILLER

Marlene has been an active member of the Victoria Yoga Centre since 1979 and served on its Executive for most of this time. Presently she is a Director and co-ordinator of the Iyengar Teachers Group of the Yoga Centre.

JENNIFER RISCHMILLER

When I was a school child I enjoyed the mornings over the weekend. I liked not having to rush about getting ready for school; I liked not having to go to school!

When I was a teenager I enjoyed the mornings over the weekend. I liked not having to get out of bed and go to work, being able to cook leisurely brunches of bacon and egg.

When I was a parent of young children I enjoyed the mornings over the weekend. I didn't have to rush to get lunches, iron shirts. On Sundays I stayed in bed until noon, uninterrupted by my family who knew this was my quiet time.

As you can see, I formed the habit of leisurely weekend mornings over a long period of time and I became attached to the way things were!

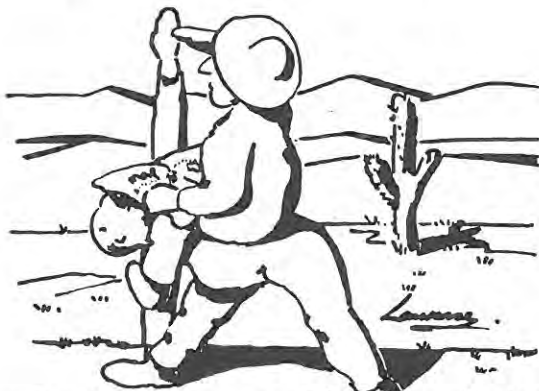
All of a sudden, I was asked to change the pattern. Yoga workshops, Gita readings, starting to demand that I get up early, bathe, dress and be coherent - many times even before I had followed another longstanding habit, drinking my morning coffee. Sometimes I was too groggy to notice how I felt about this change but often I had lingering regrets about the way things used to be.

No more regrets.

As an older woman I enjoy my morning over the weekend. I get up early and most Saturdays I am in town by 8.30 a.m. to begin the Gita readings with a group of people at Radha House. Often I'm up early on Sunday mornings to do a Yoga Workshop. Most weekend mornings I am busy by 8.30.

What a gift - to find out how to enjoy those leisure hours. How well the work makes me feel, how energized I am. To start the day focusing on me, on how I feel; where is my centre; that sends me on my way, on the right path.

Thank you for the work.



The Triangle pose or Trikonāsana teaches alignment and is useful in developing a sense of direction.



LINDA BENN

Linda was born on a beautiful but debt-ridden orchard in the Okanagan. Her first significant event was when she presented Louis St. Laurent, the Prime Minister, with a silver bowl of peaches and was duly kissed by the country's leader. In the summer of the next year wild roses lured the six year old lass to a ninety foot plunge down a cliff. In Grade Nine Linda led a student rebellion because girls were not allowed to wear slacks to school even in frigid winter. During her days of student radicalism she was tear-gassed in Berkeley and quit university twice. It was a time of poverty, intellectual excitement and wonderful adventures. Innocence was lost and passion discovered. Eventually, Linda married a good man with four children after knowing him for only a month.

She began yoga about the time her oldest step-daughter ran away to live on the streets of Victoria.

This is the person who now teaches yoga and helps to organize the programme at the Y. Linda also manages the book sales and the video library for the Yoga Centre. She is happily married to Don and has five reasonably mature children, two cats, several goldfish, and finally a room in which to practice yoga.



SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH



DEREK FRENCH VICE PRESIDENT

I have been involved in the Yoga Centre as a member and a Director since its inception. I believe that it continues to meet some of the needs of the Yoga community as a way of helping people of like minds to come together, and it is my privilege and pleasure to offer support.



**JEAN HUBAY
ERIC GRUNSKY**

We first studied and practiced Iyengar Yoga at the Yoga Centre of Toronto from 1983-1988. In 1988 we moved to Perth, Australia and attended Iyengar Yoga classes at the Western Australian School of Yoga. During our time in Perth we attended several intensives and workshops and learned a distinctive "Australian" style. In 1991 we moved to Victoria and spent some time practicing under the direction of James Traverse. Shortly afterwards we started attending the Victoria YM/YWCA and joined the Victoria Yoga Centre.



MARGARET FEEHAN



JERRILYN WASS

TREASURER

I have been taking yoga classes at the Y for the past nine or ten years. Throughout that time, many knowledgeable instructors have taught and encouraged me.

I am an Assistant Registrar, Records and Admissions, at Royal Roads Military College. In my leisure time I enjoy walking, kyaking and dabbling in bird-watching.

In the past year as treasurer for the Yoga Centre Society, I like the duties. I've had many opportunities to learn. The advice, experience and examples of former treasurers have been most helpful. I appreciate it very much.

JIM RISCHMILLER

PRESIDENT

My Spiritual Journey.

Jim Rischmiller. January 1993

In early 1991 the economy finally started to affect the company I work for and I lost my boss and some peers. So of course my workload went up. I talked a lot about time management in my Kundalini

I remember. Then in the summer after a routine medical I was advised I may have a heart problem. Since I come from a family history of heart problems and I was 51 it was not a big surprise. My doctor asked me to consider whether or not I should make my trip to India in the autumn. Well he didn't ground me right there so my consideration took about 2 seconds! I felt I really needed some time out. So we set up a date for more tests sometime in the future after I got back.

As the summer of 1991 progressed it did occur to me that I might die eventually. Worse still I might have to have surgery and drugs. I decided to put off that decision until the time came and I went and bought a Herbal, which is a book on how to use herbs. Sure enough in the first few pages I discovered hawthorne tea was the solution. Later as I was buying herbs to make the tea I was told the shop may have to stop selling hawthorne berries. Apparently they worked so well the drug profession was losing business and wanted to ban them. Music to my ears. As a vegetarian my diet was ok so I kept on running and practising yoga, being busy and drinking hawthorn tea. However this time I chose to go to India a week before the intensive instead of arriving the evening before it started as I usually do.

Finally I arrived at the airport in Bombay and found the bus for the trip to downtown. It was hot and I sat in the bus contemplating the masses of people and the brownish airport gardens. People got on the bus and then some time later got off. As usual I was not quite sure I was on the right bus or if it would ever leave. An enormous backpack with a slight young Japanese girl hidden underneath arrived at the bus stop and using a phrase book she tried to find out how to get downtown from the mass of Indian helpers lounging on the pavement. I took pity on her and winking her out of the mass helped her into a seat where she sat clutching her backpack to her bosom. A flight of crows started to argue about an invisible spot on the road next to my window. I admired their tattered dexterity in flight and noted they speak the same language as crows at home.

My companion had fallen asleep, backpack now a rest for her tired head. I got off and was assured once again that this was the right bus and we would be leaving very soon. My friend awoke and after a little panic as her surroundings came home we tried to communicate. Her english was really pretty bad but immeasurably better than my japanese. I established she wanted to catch the train to Dehli. I tried to suggest a night's rest in a hotel and let the roomboy get the tickets was a much better plan, but no, she had to go today. I mentioned that the train did not go every day and it took a week to get tickets but to no avail. At last the bus driver arrived. Also his brother and another friend. They all sat in the drivers seat sharing the power over Ms Japan and myself. The conductor arrived and promised to let me know when I should get off for the YMCA. As a backup plan I pulled out my Bombay map from a previous trip and selected my own departure points depending on the route we took.

An hour later in the middle of downtown Bombay after having dropped off the drivers brother and friend, I recognised a landmark and shouted stop. The driver looked up in alarm and continued cracking along in the rush hour traffic. I shouted again and he turned around to shout back. At this point I decided I preferred him looking where we were going and shutup. Eventually he pulled over and we got off.

I selected a direction which would take us past the railway station and after a swig from my water bottle we set off. It was mid afternoon now and the sun just beat down. I had my video camera and flight bag strung around my neck and my pack on my back. I hoped I would use my 35mm camera, various lenses etc, that seemed to be awfully heavy.

My companion was striding along dodging refuse and the permanent crowd on the pavement. I was sweating so much now that I could not see clearly so I followed even though I knew she did not know where she was going. We stopped on a bridge for another swig of water and after washing my eyes I

was suprised to hear a train close at hand. In fact it was under our feet. We walked to the other end of the bridge and there like the exit ramp of the freeway in rush hour was the door to Central Station. I entreated my friend to take a taxi to a hotel but she was resolute and vanished into the oncoming crowd.

After going round the block twice I discovered the international YMCA nestled on a quite back street next to a sports ground. I had booked a room by phone and telegram several weeks prior, and also got a card from the Y in Victoria accrediting me as an employee. Even so I was doubtful that this would result in a room. 15 minutes later I was standing in a nice clean room on the third floor a wide grin on my face. I was here.

Dinner was next on my agenda and after a simple repast of rice and dahl in the dining hall I hung out over the balcony of my room and watched the sports. The nearest end of the sports field had a soccer pitch with a well matched game under way. I was a little astonished when another couple of teams arrived and started to play on the same pitch. They played at right angles to the game already in progress. Somehow it worked. Directly beneath me a group of street children begged and then played in between clients. As the sun went down I listened to the BBC on shortwave and then fell asleep with the cry for the faithful to come to prayer filling the night and my soul.

I woke before the sun next morning and sat writing my diary as the sports field came alive. A number of people had spent the night there and were busy getting ready for the day. A portly man was doing suprisingly well on a set of practice bars in the corner. Another was doing Hatha Yoga at a great rate moving from pose to pose like a whirling dervish. The youngest of yesterdays children was crying, a tot of 2 or 3 years, and the eldest of the group who could not have been in his teens came and provided solace. No room for power games between them, one needed and one gave. I want their lives to be good, but in my diary I recognised heaven and hell are the same place.

I spent the next couple of days in Bombay, collecting Shirley Daventry French and then Liz Mcleod from the airport and helping them settle in to the Oberoi Hotel. Returning to the YMCA one day I took the city train at rush hour from the main station to Bombay central.. I intended to stand since it is only a few minutes however the crush of people wedged me against a partition so that my feet did not touch the floor. I asked the chest of a very tall gentleman next to me how we got off the train and in beautiful english he said shout and they will let you through. Bombay Central arrived, I shouted, we all fell out on the platform, they all jumped back on the train and waved at me as it left with them hanging on the sides and I sat on the platform.

Guruji turned up on the first day of the intensive and announced he would be teaching the whole three weeks. One of his daughters had just had a baby and as tradition demands had come home to have it. Geeta Iyengar, as the senior lady of the house, would be attending to the mother and child and unable therefore to teach the Intensive.

Oh it was hard that first week, the second and third as well come to think of it. Usually I am very happy upside down but I had terrible chest pains in halasana, needing a bench under my toes. Guruji didn't correct me very much concentrating on Shirley and other students at the front of the room for most of the demonstrations. As the course progressed we went farther and deeper into asana's and I felt stiffer than I had for years. I sat with Liz and Shirley at lunch after class and we discussed the postures. Having two senior teachers available at these times is a great help, particularly since Shirley was so often used by Guruji for demonstrations. I could see how Guruji connected the asanas together in sequence, always focusing on the point he was making.

At times Guruji would be full of fun and laughter, then upset when we discussed the students of his who still use his name but not his teachings. Also the India vs Pakistan cricket series was on the television and after class Guruji would sit on the floor of his house with the door open surrounded by his friends offering advice to the players and umpires. In fact one day he moved the class time so he could watch a particularly important game.

Several times during the intensive Guruji made the point that having take the time to come to him in India we should work hard to get as much learning as we could, because he would not be here for ever. Finally in the last week I saw how not only did the classes flow through the asanas day by day but also week by week. The whole intensive was one big class, modified to meet our individual needs but with one central clear thrust, to allow us to get in touch with our souls. If we could do this by intellect and words we would. Guruji's message to me was, I can know my soul by taking the time, and doing.

After the Intensive I said goodbye to Shirley and Liz, as it turned out my last goodbye to Liz. One of the other attendees of the Intensive was Nollie Senden who lived and taught in Auroville. Auroville is a community that follows the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and is situated on India's east coast just north of Madras, close to Pondicherry. I had planned to spend my last couple of weeks in India travelling somewhere so at her invitation I decided to spend them in Auroville.

For the first time that I can remember I finally gave myself some time. I took some yoga classes, I visited the wonders of Auroville and met the people. I rented a scooter and toured Pondicherry and rediscovered poetry.

HOW YOGA TRANSFORMED ME

BY B.K.S. IYENGAR

It is embarrassing to write about oneself, but if it enthuses my friends and pupils with keener interest in the practice of Yoga, false modesty should not keep me back from showing how my own interest in Yoga gathered momentum.

I was born in Bangalore during the world influenza epidemic of 1918. As my mother was also in the grip of the fever, there was little hope of my survival, but thank God we both lived. I was a sickly child with thin arms and legs, a protruding stomach and a top-heavy head. My appearance was not prepossessing and my physical weakness caused my despair. No one could guide me to health. I was a burden to myself and to my family. My condition deteriorated and suspected tuberculosis of the lungs brought me almost to the point of death.

In April, 1934, at Bangalore my sister's husband, Shri T. Krishnamacharya, offered me the chance of going with him to Mysore. He was the head of the Yogashala (school of Yoga) in Mysore, patronised by the late Shri Krishnaraja Wadiyar Bahadur IV, Maharaja of Mysore.

While there I began a few Yogasanas under his guidance. My body was so stiff that I could hardly bend down and touch my toes. Thus was the seed of Yoga implanted in me, and for that I call him Guruji.

Perhaps even today my Guru would not believe that I could persist in the practice of Yoga, for though I struggled hard I had no confidence that Yoga would do me any good. I did not turn to Yoga naturally for I was not born in the house of saints or Yogis. It was rather a stroke of good luck that Yoga pursued me rather than I it.

In my two years in Mysore, however, my Guru hardly encouraged me nor did he explain to me either the principles or the more subtle points of Yoga. In two years he did not teach me for more than forty days and never showed me how to get rid of the excruciating pains I had to endure. On the contrary he was frighteningly fearful. Had circumstances not forced me I would never have gone on. People wanted me to teach them Yoga and I was forced to practise. It was as simple as that. My interest was for the sake of earning my livelihood.

In 1936 on a lecture tour in the northern part of Kamataka a number of people, including ladies, requested us to start classes. In those days women were very shy about the practise of Yoga and so I, as the youngest of the group, was put in charge of the ladies' class by my Guruji. Thus was the seed of my teaching career planted and it has grown into a mighty tree with branches in all the five continents. In 1937 the Deccan Gymkhana Club requested my Guruji to depute a teacher to teach Yoga in Pune. As no senior student was willing to go to Pune to teach Yoga in some school or colleges for six months, the chanceless choice fell on me. I accepted the offer and with it my responsibilities were very heavy for I was younger than the college students who were also bigger and more cultured than I. I weighed at that time only 75 pounds, my chest measured 22" and you could count my ribs. But it was a challenge and I faced it boldly. I had not theoretical or practical qualifications. Another problem was the language. I was forced to practise with determination and effort what little I knew. I was faced with the option of acquiring second-hand knowledge from books or living first-hand from the experience gained from intense practice. I opted for this latter and started practising ten hours a day.

This happened thus; our family deity Lord Venkateswara seemed to smile on me and bless me in a dream. I was told that I had no other vocation but the practise of Yoga. With one hand he blessed me and with the other gave me a few cereals of rice. The benevolent deity told me that from now on I should not worry about my physical survival. The very next day pupils called on me for lessons and from then onwards my star has been in the ascendant as the grace of God has been with me. My one regret is that I am not as ready to thank him now as I was to curse him then in the hard days of my trial. From 1934 to 1946 then I can say that Yoga was attached to me willy-nilly. Today it is I who am attached to Yoga. However, it has not been all that easy since then. In 1958 I felt I was losing my grip on the postures. I felt dizzy, heavy and stiff. Correspondence with other Yogis including my Guru brought me no relief. I was told only that age and married life must take their toll. Even the forward bends were very painful. However, after another three years of effort I am glad to say that I regained control and have not lost it till today.

I will not say that I have completely mastered this art and science even today. Perfection always eludes us, but this should not reduce our efforts. The more I work the more insignificant my efforts appear to be. I have to be content with this divine discontentment which drives me on.

Yogic discipline lifted me from a sub-human level and made me a man of conscience, hardy and honest. If yoga could do that for me, who was not blessed with the good things of this life, how can those who have started life in more fortunate circumstances refuse its lessons? The science of Yoga is vast and progress there seems agonisingly and disappointingly slow. But Yoga has helped me to overcome physical, mental and spiritual obstacles, so that today I am sipping the nectar of Yoga. Now that God has blessed me with strength,

courage and clarity, I cannot hesitate to share my experience with those of my fellowmen who come to this new abode of Yoga, the Ramamani Iyengar Yoga Memorial Institute, dedicated to my pupils, friends and admirers to my beloved wife Ramamani.

Reprinted from the December, 1988, issue of the newsletter of The B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association of Australasia Inc.



One man's experience of From the Mating Dance to the Cosmic Dance.

David Bakkom

Reprinted with permission of Ascent, The Journal of Swami Radha's Work, Box 9, Kootenay Bay, B.C. V0B 1X0 Canada.

Douglas Adams' sci-fi book, *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* has a sign on the cover reassuring the reader with the words, "Don't Panic." A similar reassurance on the cover of Swami Radha's new book *From the Mating Dance to the Cosmic Dance* would be a most helpful option. This is not a book for the fainthearted, nor is this another new-age book on spiritual relationships in which everything is rosy. No. Swami Radha is very direct. I was confronted and challenged right from the start.

I started the book late in the evening and was up until 2 a.m. "This book is different," I thought, as I continued to read to the end of the chapter 3 on Sex...and stopped. "Quite different," I thought again as I could feel my emotions beginning to surface.

I was a bit riled up. More accurately, I wandered around the Ashram for two days just bristling. My emotions were running rampant. I was thinking, this book shows no value for men. It views them simply as seeders. I felt disregarded, left out, valued only if I behaved. It was two weeks before I picked up the book again.

At the same time this was happening, I began a Kundalini Overview course at the Ashram. We had reached the Sixth Chakra and I was trying to unravel the semantics of subjective and objective mind. To do so, I began a study of my past relationships with women, starting with college days. The complete history of those relationships is stored in me somewhere. Yet over time my pattern is to selectively remember only certain pleasant associations, leaving in the cobwebs the other, more difficult aspects. I have just begun and already I am

experiencing unresolved sadness, guilt, and anger with those memories of perceived injuries on both sides, of broken dreams and energy improperly used. Swami Radha's book gives me food for reflection. In the chapter on Karma, she says:

"First of all look into the wrongs you know you have committed in this life. Some events will come into your mind first: you have deceived somebody, you have been dishonest, you have pretended to love someone when you did not. Then you might realize that you have swept the worst things under the carpet so it takes some effort to remember them. To balance each negative action that you recall, you can put the person involved into the Light, or do some other spiritual practice, with the thought that the light of understanding and awareness will become active in the person's life, as well as in your own."

Her words give me a potent warning but also the encouragement to honestly and thoroughly search my memory. I needed to find a way to heal the residual guilt and anger, and I now see that there is a way.

I have been wondering, too, about celibacy, sexual abstinence, and appropriate sexual activity. Themes of green and white have been coming up for me in dreams, Hatha and in a Straightwalk I did this summer. I was waiting in the white where it was still, quiet, inner, and yet I was frustrated and impatient, waiting to move to the green where it is lush, fertile, active and alive with life. I finally found a key to understanding this in the book:

"...the activity of the sexual energy, the creative force, must be balanced with celibacy. These two forces of powerful energy are like fiery horses that must be reined in, controlled, directed."

Something clicked for me when I read this. These are two forces to be balanced: the green, sexual, creative force and the white force of celibacy, brahmacharya. It is not one thing or the other, or one superior to the other. Rather it is a dance of

these two. Also, if the sexual force is a creative force, what a waste of energy intercourse is if nothing is created! On the physical level, the purpose of sex is procreation. This is an interesting word - pro-creation, for creation. How can I really use this creative sexual energy in an act of creation? Intercourse is only one way. There are countless other ways we can bring about creation. Swami Radha says,

"...At some time we must make a conscious decision to stop listening to the body's cries, and recognize that they are hindering our liberation from the wheel of life and death.

Sex is a tremendous force and it can be used in many ways. Each of us must choose what we will do with the creativity that is bound up with sex."

Swami Radha writes a great deal about Divine Union. "Union" makes me think of reunion - a coming together once again. Part of me seems to understand something about the nature of a true union. That part has at some time experienced it and longs for it again. Swami Radha puts it very well for me:

"The yogi or yogini who is dedicated to the goal of Cosmic Consciousness is swimming against a river of life. That seems to be cruel and demanding, and difficult to understand, but we must realize that we are in exile and have to make our way back to the country of our origin. It is as if we had emigrated from heaven down to earth and are struggling to return to heaven."

I have read and heard about how we can search for the Divine Union in our physical partnerships. Now I am beginning to sense the truth of that. I have looked for something in physical relationships that they could not deliver and I have left discouraged, mostly about myself. Yes, there were aspects of my character that made it very difficult to remain in a relationship. But I think it was also a case of looking for the right thing in the wrong place.

This summer has really been the first time the concept of Divine Union has moved from being a theory to being a part of my ideals. Even with this ideal still in its infancy, I feel the potential power and freedom of the internal union. The messages of *From the Mating Dance to the Cosmic Dance* resonate with some part of me, uncovering some older knowing. These knowings will not easily be covered up again.

Many of my beliefs have changed. Having finished *From the Mating Dance to the Cosmic Dance* for the second time and having reflected on it for a while, I can now see that I would ask myself some very direct questions were I to embark on another relationship. What is the purpose of my life? Of my partner's life? Can this relationship enhance these purposes? What is our motive? Can I commit to that goal? Where does sex fit in? These questions, inspired by Swami Radha's teachings, cut through the romantic notions that have often directed my involvement with partners in the past.

There is no room for romantic notions if one reads *From the Mating Dance to the Cosmic Dance*. If you are about to embark on this reading journey, I'd suggest starting on a quiet evening. Read through chapter 3 on sex, and then slip into a warm bath, breathe and calm down. Then start over from the beginning. At this point you can probably make it through the rest of the book with only mild emotional explosions. And remember, explosions are a release of energy. It might help to think of them as the sound of illusions disintegrating.

Available through Radha House, Victoria, call 595-0177. Also available through Timeless Books, Box 9, Kootenay Bay, B.C.



Pune, October 8, 1992

Journal Extracts:

Linda Shevloff and I spent the evening with her Indian friends, Jyotsna and Harish Thakkar. They included me in a family celebration for the goddess Durga which made me feel very lucky to be Linda's roommate! The Thakker home is a spacious, modern apartment off of Law College Road. In one corner is an altar for family prayer. For this festival a special pot was placed before the altar with a small flame flickering within it. We sang some Indian chants and then all of us piled into their little car - six in all with their son and sister-in-law and us. We drove down to the river's edge and launched the pot as a symbol of Durga returning to her own realm for another year.

Mr. Thakkar, Harish, told Linda and I how important this festival is for him. He feels it is important for men to express their emotions so they don't get bottled up inside. These festivals give men that outlet for feelings to be expressed through the chanting and watching the temple dancing. On our way back home, we stopped at a massive tent, erected for the Durga festivities, full of people dancing and singing. The room was so thick with incense and smudge pot smoke I had to hold a handkerchief over my nose. There was an array of

special foods for sale that Harish said he really enjoys. A huge, beautiful statue of Durga dominated the stage, chanting, drums, cymbals, jangling, the smoke and women swirling and chanting with their smudge pots balanced in one hand - all contributed to the intense atmosphere.



Linda holding the Durga Pot

Friday, October 9: Our fourth class was so incredible! We did head stand almost the entire first hour with a few dog poses in between to learn the lift of the shoulders. I was trembling from head to toe with the effort to keep myself up there. Standing poses were so challenging. At one point I looked at the clock (a mistake) class wasn't even half over and I was dripping with sweat and trembling with exhaustion. In the afternoon we had our second pranayama class. It was really the first time I've been able to do sitting pranayama without extreme discomfort in my back, trying to sit erect and bring the chin forward.

Saturday, October 10: So what to do on a free Saturday? A group of us took a rickshaw out to Parvati Temple. It was so beautiful and peaceful up there. A good place to enjoy some vistas of Pune, walk in the flower gardens and sit in the harmonious temple grounds. There was a sitar and tabla player at one of the smaller temples on the grounds. We were so lucky! We had a private little concert. The resident sadhu gave us some prasad afterwards - a dab of sweet yoghurt dolloped into my hand. I was worried about catching some

dread stomach ailment if I ate it, or offending him if I didn't. Then I figured, it's blessed by the gods - I ate it. As I said goodbye he gave me some temple flowers that others had given in offering. He said it was the prasad of the gods! It rained when we got back to our hotel, so I curled up with my novel and dozed. A perfect way to recoup after the first intense week of classes! (They knew what they were doing when they named these courses intensives!)

Sunday, October 11: I didn't have a good class. I felt weak in back bends. At one point I was lying flat on my back with my chest heaving trying to catch my breath. I could barely remember what we did, my notes are very poor. I was really doubting why I had come. Who do I think I am? To add to my doubts, Iyengar himself was there for the first time. The atmosphere was definitely more electric with him in the room. He kept interrupting the flow of the class and made comments and did demonstrations. I'm sure he gets very frustrated when he walks in and, as he says, we're supposed to be teachers and we can't even stand in Tadasana!



Part of the Thakkar family in their kitchen



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



SUMMER YOGA INTENSIVE

July 3 to 9, 1993

with

Shirley Daventry French, Jessica Sluymer and Dr. Derek French

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

Fee: \$350.00

Shirley is a student of the Yoga Master, B.K.S. Iyengar, and one of Canada's leading teachers of his method of yoga. Jessica is a student of Swami Radha, and the director of Radha House, a spiritual centre in Victoria. Derek is a physician who has practised yoga for many years and seeks to integrate the ancient wisdom of yoga with the practice of modern medicine.

For out of town students: Victoria is a popular tourist centre with a wide selection of hotels and motels. The Residence at the Y has a limited amount of inexpensive accommodation for women. Billets will also be available with members of the local yoga community.

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

All Levels Yoga Workshop

FRESH PERSPECTIVE

Investigating Inversions

(Experiencing your world upside down!)

with

Marlene Miller

Marlene has recently returned from her third trip to Puna, India where she studied Yoga at the Iyengar Institute with Geeta Iyengar.

Sunday, March 14, 1993
10:00 am - 1:00 pm
in the Yoga Room at the YM-YWCA

Refreshments will follow the practice.

Yoga Centre members \$20.00, non members \$25.00

Please make your cheque payable to the Victoria Yoga Centre.

To register: call Marlene at 652-8570 or mail registration to:
7805 Scohon Drive, RR #2
Saanichton, B.C. V0S 1M0

Or register with your Yoga Teacher.



**IYENGAR YOGA CONFERENCE
TORONTO CANADA 1993**

*August 16 to August 20, 1993
Glendon Campus, York University
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Question and answer periods with Mr. Iyengar • Forums on various topics of
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(Accommodations extra)*

For general information contact
Donna Fornelli, 235 des Bourgeons Ave., Aylmer, P.Q. J9J 1R8 Telephone (819) 685-4431

For registration information contact
Linda Singleton, Yoga Centre Toronto, 2428 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario M4P 2H4
Telephone (416) 482-1334

RADHA HOUSE

Victoria



February

7: Guru Puja

7: Potluck Supper and Video

27: Saturday Morning with Forward Bend

March

25: Last Class of Winter Session

26-28: The Two Selves

29: Spring Classes begin (11 weeks)

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

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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721-3477

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

YOGA CALENDAR

FEBRUARY:

- 6: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.
7: Guru-Puja at Radha House.
12: Yoga Centre Gathering. Goods and Services Auction to raise funds for Mr. Iyengar's visit to Toronto.
14: Workshop at the Y with Linda Benn and Anne Kilbertus. See ad this issue.
20: Day of Yoga in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.
27: Teachers meeting followed by workshop with Shirley Daventry French and Derek French. "Yoga and Your Back."

MARCH:

- 6: Pranayama with Shirley Daventry French in Metchosin.
14: Workshop at the Y with Marlene Miller. See ad this issue.
19: Yoga Centre Gathering. Guest speaker Michael Greenwood, co-author of The Paradox of Healing.
27: Teachers meeting at the Y.

APRIL:

- 3: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.
24: Teachers meeting
30: Yoga Centre Gathering. Big Big Practice led by Shirley Daventry French.

MAY:

- 8: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.
9: Workshop at the Y with Leslie Hogg.
29: Teachers meeting.

JUNE:

- 4-6: Iyengar Yoga Retreat on Saltspring Island with Shirley Daventry French.
26: Teachers meeting.

JULY:

- 3-9: Iyengar Yoga Summer Intensive led by Shirley Daventry French.

AUGUST:

- 16-20: Mr. Iyengar's visit to Toronto, Iyengar Yoga Convention.

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: _____

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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 MARCH ISSUE: FEBRUARY 15th, 1993.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

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



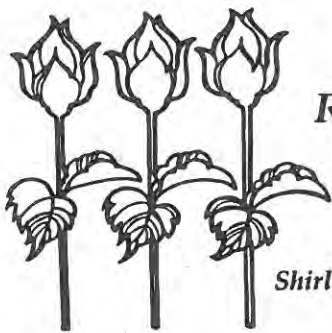
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

Newsletter



Please Subscribe

March, 1993



Reflections

by

Shirley Daventry French

It snowed yesterday. How ironic that the previous weekend I was in Alaska where, instead of snow and freezing cold, I experienced blue skies, sunshine and relative warmth. On my return, when I stepped off the plane at Victoria airport, it was into an unexpected chill, which persisted and brought the unwelcome snowfall.

To most Canadians, snow is a fundamental part of winter, with which they cope month after month. To Victorians, it is an affront, especially when it arrives at the time of our annual flower count; those few days in February when our Chamber of Commerce encourages us to go into our parks and gardens, and count the flowers which are brightly blooming there heralding the end of winter and coming of spring. This count is then broadcast across Canada, acquainting our less fortunate compatriots with the blessings of living here on the temperate southwest corner of the country.

The snow not only interfered with the flower count, it interfered with a Day of Yoga I was offering at my home. When I woke up and saw the snow, I wondered if anyone would come. Victoria shuts down when it snows. Once, a friend from Toronto, joked that our Victoria newsletter should be called "As Victoria turns", after a popular soap opera. Well, I can assure her that when it snows, Victoria doesn't turn much at all!

One couple has a four-wheel drive vehicle; I thought they would come - and they did. So did most of the others, but not before several telephone

calls enquiring about the state of the roads out here in Metchosin (fifteen miles from downtown), and some cancellations from up-islanders where the snow was much heavier and road conditions quite hazardous.

It was only a dusting, but it's snowing again today, and this time it's a little more persistent and settling on the roads. The forecast is for flurries for the next few days, so we are going to have to deal with it - as if life wasn't difficult enough in February. It's hilly here, we don't have much of a budget for snow removal, many cars are not equipped for winter driving, and only skiers and those who have migrated from other parts of Canada know how to drive on snow and ice. Cars get stuck on the hills, skid into ditches (and each other), and when you venture out you are not sure if you are going to get safely back home. For Derek and I, the question is will we get up our steep, winding driveway or have to dig it out and sand it first - not our favourite pastime.

Eventually we learn to cope with all this uncertainty, go on with our lives and acquire new skills. We learn to adapt and practise concentration and mindfulness in our driving habits. We re-examine our priorities, and find a way to fulfil important commitments while letting go of others.

As I watched the snow, I reflected on some of the difficult journeys in my life, physical, mental and spiritual, and the obstacles in my path - many of them self-created. I thought of my travels to Pune, the difficulty in freeing up the time and money to undertake this journey, and the physical problems in getting there and staying there.

Many international airlines fly to Bombay, the port of entry closest to Pune. You usually arrive in the middle of the night feeling very tired, and once there you are faced with the task of arranging transportation to Pune, about a hundred miles away. You have a choice of three ways: road, rail or air.

Reservations on Indian internal airlines, made in Canada, rarely stand up when you are in India; flights are always being cancelled, and when they do fly they are overbooked. On one flight, my neighbour's seatbelt separated from the seat.

Another took off half an hour early because the Governor's wife came on board. A friend was on a flight which took off without clearance and on landing was surrounded by police who would not let them leave the plane. Once, on an old propeller driven plane, I was given cotton wool to put in my ears which did reduce the noise a little but didn't disguise the shuddering and shaking.

By road you can take a long distance taxi or bus, for half a day's journey on accident strewn roads. You have to go through the mountains, and as you enter one particularly dangerous pass with many narrow hairpin bends, the driver stops to make an offering at a roadside shrine. You recognise this as a wise decision when you see the many wrecked buses, trucks and cars which have gone over the edge. I have done this journey many times, and learned to cope by not looking at the oncoming traffic, the sheer drop on one side of the road or the rock face on the other, instead I avert my eyes, breathe deeply and repeat a mantra.

The train is perhaps the least stressful and my preferred way of travel. Train reservations can only be made three or four days in advance, and for obvious reasons are much sought after. First class compartments are almost always fully booked. If you have friends in Bombay or are planning to stay at a first-class hotel, you can get them to make the reservations for you at the appropriate time.

On my first trip I had not yet learned this, so Derek and I went down to the ornate Gothic railway terminus to buy tickets for ourselves. It took over an hour to find out which of the many windows sold first-class tickets to Pune, and as soon as we got into line, the wicket closed so that the railway employee could have his lunch. No-one else came to take his place and no-one left the line. We waited for another hour until he returned, only to

learn that we did not have the appropriate form which you had to fill out to get a ticket. Fortunately, some kind Indian noticed this and handed us a form just before it was our turn.

The train is slow, and first we planned to fly back, until we heard about several plane crashes on this route, one of which had killed a yoga student on his way to the Institute. We decided to take a taxi, until we heard of all the road accidents. The train, we agreed, would be safer and having bought our tickets for the return journey, we picked up a copy of the Times of India only to learn there had been a fatal rail crash just outside Bombay!

Apart from the difficulty of getting to Pune, whilst there you have to cope with dreadful air pollution and many other hazards to your health. Why do we do it? Why do I keep going back? Because I believe the best yoga classes in the world are taught there: not the most pleasant, never easy, always challenging. This work will threaten our entrenched beliefs, reveal thoughts and feelings buried in secret places, destabilise and unsettle us. As a result of all this disturbance, if we persevere, we find inner strength and stability, get in touch with our true self, and become free from many self-imposed limitations.

These days there is a renewed interest in mythology, and many popular books explore the relevance of ancient, cultural and universal myths to life in the late twentieth century. Many of these myths involve a journey in search of a wise person who may reveal a certain truth, or teach skills and proffer tools to help the seeker towards a certain goal.

A journey to Pune is a quest of this kind where we can come closer to learning the truth about ourselves and our lives, where we are given tools and trained in their use, where we are given glimpses of what it means to be free.

Such a prize can never be gained by playing it safe? Isn't it worth the discomfort of a difficult journey and the risk of being stripped bare of illusions in return for the opportunity to study and practise under the tutelage of a living Master of Yoga? Your life will not become easier, this is not the promise of yoga, but it will be infinitely more worthwhile.

NOTE: Yoga students can undertake a more direct route this summer to Toronto where Mr. Iyengar is attending the Canadian Iyengar Conference organised in his honour from August 16th to 20th (see advertisement this issue).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Shirley,

I thought of one advantage of having an all women's class while reading your article on men and yoga in the November newsletter. An advantage for those who enjoy savasana. Whenever a man enters the class - the first thought crossing my mind - does he snore during savasana? If you have 5-6 men in a class, it can be a cacophonous orchestra.... one echoing another. Even though the purpose of final relaxation is an emergence in a different world, having somebody next to you producing almost a choking sound takes a fair amount of energy to screen out and depletes the effect of this wonderful time.

Are there any anatomical differences between the male and female that cause this? Even my male cat sometimes snores while having his blissful naps. Is it ethical to ask people who snore to have a different relaxation pose (on their side)? What are your experiences with this?

Sincerely,
T. Schneider
Ottawa.

Dear Friends,

During the summer of 1993 there will be a yoga studio operating at the historical two-room schoolhouse in Victoria-by-the-Sea, Prince Edward Island. This is a beautiful old building with high ceilings, hardwood floors and lots of space surrounded by farm fields and the wide Northumberland Strait. Courses are offered as a repeating series of 6-day classes, Monday to Saturday, 10am to 12.30pm. The asanas are beginner and intermediate level. The fee for each 6-day course is \$150.00 and includes 2 passes on the excursion sailboat that operates out of Victoria-by-the-Sea. Class size will be limited to 12 students. All necessary blankets, bolsters, mats, belts, etc. will be provided.

This is an opportunity for a wonderful sea-side holiday and an opportunity for beginner yoga students to work at the entry level and for more senior students to review the basics while adding and practicing more advanced asanas.

The instructor is David Prior, a student of Iyengar Yoga and teacher at the Iyengar Yoga Studio in Halifax. Classes begin Monday, July 19 and end Saturday, September 4. Please remit full payment by March 31, 1993, so we can confirm your reservation. A full refund will be made if you fail to make it.

Many thanks,
David Prior.
R.R. #1 Lahave,
Nova Scotia, Canada. B0R 1C0

EDITOR'S NOTE:

We apologise to those readers who did not receive their December/January issue of the newsletter. You will note that these issues have been mailed out with the February issue. There has been a change in the mailing list process and things should run smoothly from now. Thank you for your understanding.



Yoga Centre of Victoria *presents* Inspiration From India

A series of workshops given by local yoga teachers who have recently returned from an intensive course at the Ramamani Iyengar Institute in Pune, India.

Sunday, March 14

A Fresh Perspective

Explore inverted poses from a fresh perspective.

Workshop leader: Marlene Miller

Registration: Phone Marlene at 652-8570

– All Levels –

Sunday, May 9

The Warrior in Sirsasana

Explore the action of headstand in standing poses, forward bends and headstand itself.

Workshop Leader: Leslie Hoya

Registration: Phone Leslie at 383-6301

– For students already introduced to headstand –

Location

Yoga Studio

Victoria YM-YWCA

Time

10:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Fees

\$20.00 – Yoga centre members

\$25.00 – non-members

Registration

Phone individual teachers



**FRIDAY NIGHT GATHERING:
March 19th
"Riding the Dragon"
with Dr. Michael Greenwood**

Our guest speaker for this month's gathering on Friday, March 19th is Dr. Michael Greenwood. His talk, which is entitled "Riding the Dragon", offers a unique and stimulating view of the process of transformation and healing.

Dr. Greenwood was born in Singapore and came to Canada at the age of five. He was trained at St. John's College, Cambridge and St. Mary's Hospital, London University. He interned at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria, followed by a year of practice in rural Australia. He has been in family practice in Victoria since 1977 and, in addition, is currently the Medical Director of Meridian Holistic Health Centre. Michael's search for an answer to his own chronic back pain led him on a fascinating journey to a new understanding of health and illness, and how the deep inner aspects of ourselves affect all areas of our lives. His main focus is on the holistic approach of complementary therapies that integrate the mind/body. He recently co-authored the best selling book *Paradox and Healing*.

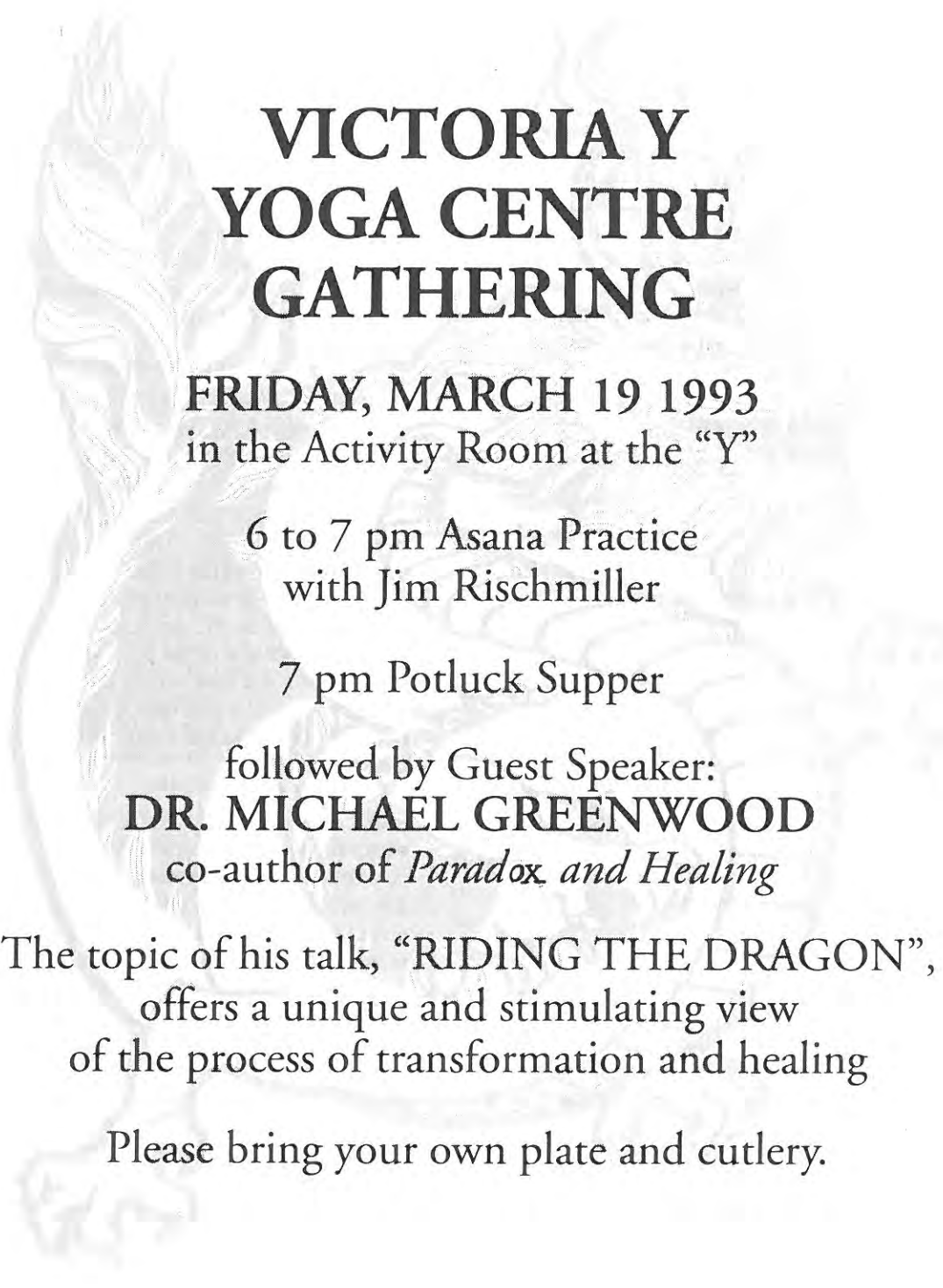


GOODS AND SERVICES AUCTION

Thank you to everyone who helped make the auction a success. Jim Rischmiller and "Mary-Beth" Hogya were aggressive and funny auctioneers who raised approximately \$700.00 for Mr. Iyengar's travel fund. Thank you to the people who donated goods and services, thank you to the people who came to the auction and spent their money. Thank you to Jim and "Mary-Beth".



Virabhadrasana I, or the "Ancient Indian Warrior hanging out his washing pose".



VICTORIA Y YOGA CENTRE GATHERING

FRIDAY, MARCH 19 1993
in the Activity Room at the "Y"

6 to 7 pm Asana Practice
with Jim Rischmiller

7 pm Potluck Supper

followed by Guest Speaker:
DR. MICHAEL GREENWOOD
co-author of *Paradox and Healing*

The topic of his talk, "RIDING THE DRAGON",
offers a unique and stimulating view
of the process of transformation and healing

Please bring your own plate and cutlery.

B.K.S. IYENGAR - MY GREAT MASTER

BY AADIL B. A. PALKHIVALA

Reprinted from the July-August, 1990, issue of the newsletter of the Iyengar Yoga Institute of Washington State.

Few people, by the lifetime dedication to their art, achieve the status of becoming masters. B.K.S. Iyengar is one of them. Fewer people arise to such eminence in their field as to become institutions all unto themselves. B.K.S. Iyengar is one of them. Very rare indeed is the man who, by the authority he commands and the stories that whisper through the glades about his achievements, becomes a legend in his own lifetime. B.K.S. Iyengar is such a man.

Iyengar is a yoga master sans parallele. Undoubtedly the greatest hatha yoga teacher and practitioner of our time. His life is an inspiration, from its painfully humble beginnings to international glory and renown; his body is a piece of vital art.

To watch him practice is to watch the artist at work, in the live quest for perfect form and beauty, moulding his statue out of conscious clay. To watch him perform is to watch living sculpture, the mind of an inspired Michelangelo crafting an eternal David with precise commands to willing marble; a yogic sculptor, chiselling with awesome awareness and control his mobile form, his own final masterpiece.

Iyengar is a living example of a man with the life force flowing freely through his veins, unhindered by physical, mental or emotional blockages. The master is in tune with the true nature of his essence. When you look at his movements from afar, you see the royal gait of one who has found awareness in each cell of his body. When you look into his eyes, alive and glowing, piercing and deep, with the clear intelligence of one who knows, you see the eyes of a man who has brought control into every part of his

corporeal frame, toppled the walls of emotional surgings, and conquered the fluctuations of his mind. The light of vibrant life which flows through every healthy cell of our bodies, shines out through his eyes.

To be in the presence of such a man has been, for me, a constant reminder of what life should truly feel like. A remembering that living is not improverished survival or ostentatious success, but being aware and in tune with every part of my body, mind, breath and spirit. This is what he lives by and this is what he is trying to teach. Yoga is a means, a handle to grasp so we may grip firmly and pull and pull and pull at the old and stuck, swollen, dark, and malaligned window of our body until it begins to open, a crack at a time, letting the brilliant sunlight of the soul enter slowly, until it finally flies open, flooding our bodies and minds with its warmth and grace.

When you see Iyengar, you feel a deep connection with him, an affection at a very deep level. Karmic connections notwithstanding, I now understand that this love for the master comes to us since we feel a part of ourselves in him, because we are feeling life in him. It is this connection that makes me realize that though his work is gargantuan in size and monumental in nature, it is not beyond our reach. Iyengar has shown us that we are capable of accomplishing what he has accomplished if only we sets our minds to it and do the necessary work, the daily practice.

Many famous yogis shared very little of their understandings, and died taking their knowledge with them, leaving their students in a quandary.

Iyengar keeps no secrets, sharing freely of his laboriously earned insights with his sincere students. It is this quality of generosity (be it with his knowledge or his purse) that makes him greater still. Many years ago, when I was invited to the West to teach, I asked him what amount I should charge for my yoga instruction. His reply was yogic in simplicity and typically Iyengar. "It does not matter what you charge, but make sure that you give more than you receive. That is all."

Perhaps the single major reason why Iyengar yoga is the fastest growing yoga in the world today is because we all trust Iyengar. No one dare point a finger at his morality. His impeccable character shines with as much glory as the sun itself. Despite the tremendous powers that have come to Iyengar from the practice of this great art, he has never abused them, nor fallen prey to temptations of the flesh. We trust him implicitly, for he has never taken advantage of his position as a teacher to get his way with students outside class. Therein lies a secret of his success. When I first left India to teach in North America and Europe, he took me aside, and with gentle fatherliness outlined the pitfalls of immoral conduct, especially sexual, and explained to me the necessity for absolutely resisting any temptations of the flesh to make any yogic progress at all. Taking his advice to heart, I now realize that he stands like a king, talks with kindness, chides with clarity, and laughs like a child because he has nothing to hide. I continue to follow his glowing example of chastity and rectitude.

I have total faith in him. It is so easy to have faith in a man with the chaste lifestyle of a lifetime. The unswerving confidence he has in himself while teaching makes us believe his words and put trust in them, knowing that he has gone through each pain, explored each pang himself. So, it is a blessed learning experience in my life to have a teacher who truly knows and practices his art with unswerving integrity. I do anything he asks me to in class, without question or pause.

Iyengar's need for bringing the body into harmony with nature has bade him make his teaching very precise. Striving for the knowledge of how the body works with nature, he has found precision to be the key. Also, the body has to match the inner self for a harmonious existence, and the inner self is extremely precise and balanced, practically perfect. The universe

itself works on the principles of extreme precision and balance - whether it is the formation of a snowflake or the whirling of heavenly bodies in space - and it is only natural that our bodies should work in the same way.

Through precision comes awareness, and knowing Iyengar is realizing that he is the yoga he has created. His movements are precise. His body is aware. In yoga, at work, or at play, whether writing a book or playing with his grandchildren, his actions are purposeful and smooth. With his clear eagle eyes, from across the room he sees the slightest error in my asana (sometimes with his back turned!) and shouts out my name in what I know to be affectionate reproach. He holds a yogic respect for all things, knowing that the Divine dwells in everything, treating all things kindly, from material possessions - his clothing, his books, his home - to his supreme triumph, his own body, the temple harboring the spirit.

Those students who understand his compassion, know that he is one of the rare masters who actually cares deeply about each student's progress. He challenges your limitations, he demands your effort, he extracts your essence, bringing it to the surface so that you may bask in its warmth and revel in its beatitude.

I have been greatly fortunate in knowing B.K.S. Iyengar since my birth and have studied him and under him for over 23 years. He has been my master, my teacher, my inspiration, my friend. Iyengar's counsel has always been wise and he has sternly and powerfully in class, and patiently and lovingly outside class nurtured my body and mind

out of stiffness into flexibility, out of disease into health, out of ego into confidence. How can anyone ever repay such a debt?

Guruji, whom I affectionately called Iyengar Uncle until I was 18 has, from my birth until today, never spoken a harsh word to me during yoga class which has upset me. Knowing that his sternness in class is for my progress and his softness outside for my understanding, I consider him one of the kindest and gentlest men I have ever encountered.

All the members of my family have B.K.S. Iyengar as their yoga teacher, my parents having started studies with Iyengar in 1958. Today, my mother as well as all three of us Palkhivala brothers are teachers of the Iyengar method. I still recall how I quietly bore the pain as silent tears rolled down my seven year old cheeks when Iyengar Uncle sat on my aching back in paschimotanasana. My upbringing bade me hold without so much as the thought of complaint. I was being taught endurance, resistance to pain and the development of my will power. Today I am eternally grateful for those times, since the problems of life seem so much lighter after the body has learnt to endure. Very few problems bother me and I have Guruji to thank. As a boy of seven I have both cried and laughed in his classes; as a youth I have worked hard, long and well; now, as a man, I continue to use him as my mentor, my afflatus.

When I look deep into Guruji's eyes, whether he is shouting at me for not bringing awareness into the perimeter of my body, or whether, in the quietness of the Indian garden in the sleepy afternoon he is quietly explaining to me the subtle obstacles I must overcome while living in the West, I can only see a deep compassion, a sincere love.

We who are fortunate to know him well count him as one of our choicest blessings. Now it is up to us to work as he has showed us so that he may count us as one of his.

HUMILITY

Can I be

the potent soil

from which the mighty tree

draws nutrients,

rather than

the looming

branching presence

that all I can see?

*Margaret Feehan
Victoria*

WORSHIP

Worship is a breath

deep in my center -

still

silent

accepting.

*Margaret Feehan
Victoria*

THE TWO SELVES

By Swami Sivananda Radha

This article is based on a talk given by Swami Radha at Satsang, a nightly meeting held at the Ashram, on April 7, 1974, and is reprinted with permission.

Man's belief that there is something immortal in himself places him on the crossroads of life, forcing him to make decisions about himself and his relationship to life and the universe. It is from this innate belief in his own immortality that man may have developed his various religious philosophies. The present system of psychology is of little help in solving man's riddle. The gross classification of mental states that psychology employs cannot serve as a secure foundation to assure the individual of eternal life or self-perpetuation. The essential questions that man must answer if he is to discover the riddle of his immortality are: What is consciousness? How does Energy produce consciousness? Modern psychology does have specific "energy processes" in mind when it refers to mental states such as "intellectualizing" or "rationalizing."

However, we become uneasy or even hostile when someone considers that there might be other energy processes which do not fit into the pre-established patterns or names and which can form the basis for a working hypothesis on the nature of human consciousness. The Power inherent in man, that immortal spark, or soul, or Self, or call it what you will, has always eluded psychological classification and scientific investigation. The scientific attitude only leads man to a painful sense of his own limitations - a pain that is obviously self-created. And, on a social level, if we were to recognize this Spiritual Spark or Self as the common denominator of all men and all races, we would more easily accept the cultural, racial, economical, and political differences which, in contrast to the Self, are all man-made.

From a yogic point of view, man evolves through many, many lifetimes to the growing awareness of himself as an immortal soul. He begins to understand that what he conceived of as two selves - a mortal and an immortal being - is only an appearance of the ONE Energy manifesting as many. Within some Eastern schools of thought man has been classified in terms of five stages of evolutionary development - 1) mineral man, 2) vegetable man, 3) animal man, 4) man-man, 5) god-man. With each stage, consciousness is increased; awareness and the power of perception expand. The various expressions of life become more and more refined, and man's potential comes to full unfoldment like a flower. In the first stage, when man belongs to the mineral kingdom, he is devoid of ambition but can do what he is taught. His actions and reactions are almost entirely mechanical. His simplicity of life is chosen not by insight but by instinct; he is preoccupied with survival. His development into the next level, however, is none the less painful even if he is not yet awakened.

In the second stage, man is like a vegetable. Like weeds pushing through the ground, he is without discrimination or understanding of his own actions. He pushes ruthlessly like the weeds, without intelligent purpose. In modern times this kind of mentality is the force which pushes up skyscrapers, houses and highways, like weeds in a jungle over which man soon loses control. The Buddha had warned his disciples not to follow such examples, as they express the wrong kind of ambition. There is no foresight in this kind of thinking but only a moving in circles without end. The turning wheel of

life in Buddhist thought symbolizes man being strewn around as the victims of his own ambition. The Buddha pointed out to his disciples, in his sermon at the holy city of Benares, that all such ambition does not lead to the development of oneself but is only a trap. He told them, "Do not try to change the world, or nature, but rather be like the lotus that pierces the murky waters and remains unstained."

Next there follows animal man and then man-man, which I put together for the purpose of this discussion because they overlap so closely. Having learned to handle different situations, man now develops skillfully selected masks, by which he quickly changes from one personality aspect to another in the mistaken belief that he is one or any of these personalities. His wrong identification gives him temporary self-gratification but puts him under the stern dominance of his ego. Pain is the only master that a person at this stage can recognize. It forces him into the awareness that there may be something greater than the bundle of personality aspects he has assumed. Little by little he cultivates himself and acquires new skills, such as in the arts and handicrafts. His creative forces take on new dimensions.

Slowly man begins to "walk the rainbow" of which it is said only the gods can walk. In other words, man is on his way toward becoming god-man, toward realizing his true Self. This realization is the final goal of evolution that every man not only can but must follow. Evolution is the inevitable path of self-mastery. The god-man's concern is of a different kind from that of his predecessors. He is consciously in search of greater values in life. His life is no longer limited to the struggle for survival or the obtaining of physical sustenance or social success. He is interested in developing a practical philosophy of life that transcends the mere accumulation of possessions. He realizes the purpose of human life and sees himself in the stream of evolution with which he seeks to consciously cooperate. This

makes the god-man truly human. To be truly human is to be a fully developed person, capable of understanding others, warm and responsive, considerate and compassionate.

Having gone the full cycle of evolution, let us return to the dilemma of man on the way toward becoming god-man. This is where man experiences the painful sense of duality between his two selves; his self with a small 's' and his Self with a capital 'S'. Here is where he falls into the trap of identifying with his small self and its many different personality aspects. He takes his personality aspects as real and fails to recognize that he is skillfully shifting from one to another with terrific speed and cleverness. He, therefore, deludes himself about his proper identification. Deep within ourselves is the knowledge that man is something more than merely a bundle of personality aspects held together with a rope that we call 'ego'. Cut the rope and all the sticks that represent the different personality aspects will fall apart. Or, we can compare it to peeling an onion. Removing layer after layer, skin after skin, finally you come to the centre from which the shoot will develop. If you peel off all your personality aspects, little by little you come to the true inner centre of what you are, that Higher Self, that Inner Light. The Higher Self is only one, but when it manifests in one way or another then we think there are two. To make another comparison, when you switch on a light, you never divide the electricity behind the switch from the electricity that finally makes the light. It is the same electricity. The current is permitted to flow by turning on the switch which had prevented it from flowing. The ego is such a switch, such a block. Or, the ignorance which believes that there are two separate selves is such a switch. In the same way as it is one electricity, you can think of yourself as being one.

Eastern philosophy can also help us here, since one of its principle beliefs is that many things are only apparent, created by the mind. In order to experience the truth of this I have sometimes suggested to people that they attend a public performance of a hypnotist. He can create an illusion in people's minds of an apparent reality, which is so strong that despite all inhibitions, when a person is told, "You are a great pianist and we want you to give your best concert." he will stand on the stage and start to play earnestly. Does he really play? There is no instrument on which to play. This is a good demonstration of how the mind will take a suggestion and carry it to a level of practical reality beyond the mind. With this, we can begin to see how the duality that man makes for himself is only a very powerful mental image with no actual basis in fact. Modern man, with his habit of dividing everything for the sake of organizing it, is not aware that by so doing he is the creator of his own dilemma; his apparent duality.

Consider the physical duality in man, between his right side and his left side. We have a right hand and left hand, a right eye and left eye, a right ear and left ear. But are both our hands, legs, eyes and ears separate? Assuming there has been no accident or illness, we see with both eyes at the same time and hear with both ears at the same time. In daily living, we use both hands and both legs. We do not think of ourselves as divided even though at some time we might use only the right side or the left. The right and left belong to the same body. A person may have acquired, through cultural background or convenience, certain habits of doing some things with his left hand and some with his right. At sometime in the remote past, we have acquired greater strength with the right hand, so we have come to think of the right as being better or more correct and the left as being sinister and wrong. But is it? Or is it simply more convenient to accomplish work with the right hand? And is it this convenience that makes us associate right with 'correct?' For a dancer the right leg is not the most

important one. The left leg is what is called the 'stand leg.' Many positions are balanced on the left leg, and one has to train oneself to be able to stand on this leg. So the division between right and left, good and bad, seems to be a matter of cultural convenience rather than of actual fact.

Yogis say that we take in spiritual energy with the left side and give it out with the right side. We have to rely on their information, based on their many years of yogic practice. This has given them a hypersensitivity not only in the development of their five senses but also in the functioning of the two main nadis or psychic nerves. Ida and Pingala. Ida starts on the right side of the spine and ends at the left nostril; it is the channel of activity. Pingala starts on the left side of the spine and ends at the right nostril; it is the channel of passivity. To understand what this means, we may consider that meditation is an action in non-action. In the quiet of meditation, the pranic flow is active but the receptivity to it is inactive. This is the experience of people who have a very finely developed perception. Similarly, the word 'Hatha' Yoga comes from 'Ha' which means the sun, energy, life-giving, active, hot; while 'tha' means the moon, receptive, cool. Hatha Yoga, as a system of specific postures, is only physical in the early stages. There is much more to it than the physical benefits. It is also a mystical science dealing with the pranic interaction between the left and right, the passive and active, the cool and warm. But it is only in the combination and integration of these apparent opposites that there can be a whole person.

If we now look at the division between male and female, we can perhaps understand the yogic point of view which considers them as two halves within an individual. Lord Shiva is shown in some statues as half man, half woman, reflecting a person's dual nature. The male is associated with reason and logic, the female with the irrational and illogical. A man would be a brute if he did not have the finer qualities associated with the female, and a woman could melt in her emotions if she did not strengthen

herself with complementary qualities such as reason. Life forces these lessons of integration upon us. That very feeling of being two people is the inspiration to get in touch with one's self. It is just these emotions and inner conflicts that need to be looked at and dealt with, and through this painful process, discrimination and integration will develop.

Life is a mystery which cannot be fully understood and penetrated by logic alone; both parts are necessary. In every male there is a sixth sense, his intuition, which is not rational at all. The male must learn to accept the intuitive and the irrational within himself. A woman has that by nature, by the very fact of being a mother and giving birth. She must find her balance with the rational, otherwise she is rejecting one part of life. She must accept facts, however difficult and cruel they may be. But the irrational, the illogical, the mystical aspects are also in all human beings, even if in some these aspects are suppressed. When we do accept these two sides of our human nature, we come to that very first marriage in ourselves between the male and the female aspects. This is the first mystical marriage. A truly harmonious human being, who is capable of compassion, understanding and warmth, emerges only by accepting both aspects, the rational and the irrational, in himself or herself. The two together make one.

When an individual has experienced the oneness, the mystical marriage in himself or herself, then he or she is ready to join with another to make another whole. To me it is rather interesting and a little bit amusing that Eve gave Adam the apple. Did she know that each of them was a half and together they made up one whole, like one apple? Maybe. And perhaps it was in their giving up of that oneness that Paradise was lost. Two halves, male and female, are needed for the creation of another life. It is the mystical marriage within oneself that is the foundation for the oneness on the physical level with another person. If I say, "I am here," why would I say that? It would not make any sense at all unless

there is also a 'Thou.' The 'I' is irrelevant unless a person relates to another person, to 'Thou.' When there is one, there must be the other. And each is half of the whole; together they make a whole. What can the male accomplish by himself? What can the female accomplish by herself? The male and female are together instrumental in the creation of new life, a process that nature has intended to keep life as an on-going process, leading finally to ever finer stages of evolution. But sex has become so unnatural that man tries almost desperately to dodge procreation. This happens because man cannot accept death and so fears and tries to ignore birth, not realizing that both birth and death are interlinked. Death is the inevitable destiny of existence on the physical plane, as is birth, and both are dual aspects of the same course of life.

A man and woman who have both completed the mystical marriage within themselves are the ideal combination for bringing new life into the world. Very few people have achieved this state, yet if we look at evolution, we can see that it is the goal of evolution and in each lifetime we are given another chance. Within the male-female relationship, there is again an inner duality. Each partner may feel like two people divided. There is the sexual self that wants its expression and the spiritual self, which may be in conflict with it. Yet there does not have to be such a conflict. This can be avoided when any developed person accepts responsibility not only for his or her own actions, but also for the other partner. It is essential that in a relationship each person bring out the best in the other, assisting as much as possible during the many trying events of life to fulfill the goal of self-development. When two self-developed human beings unite physically with each other, they do not use or take advantage of one another; there is no self-gratification. The physical expression is an exchange of love on a deeper level. The physical love is an enhancement of the spiritual love, which is reflected in their respect for each other. The physical sexuality is lifted from animal

instinct to a different level. It becomes more than a biological function, a routine, a habit, a psychological response. However, it will not be this way unless the other is equal, is 'Thou.' Only two halves make one whole. Neither must diminish or domineer the other. It is very wise for anyone who is not yet bound to another to pray to meet the other half and to decide very definitely that anything less than the other half will simply not be good enough. Then there will be no failure. There will still be struggle, as each struggles towards a higher consciousness, but each will support the other instead of hindering one another. Together, just as harmony and peace walk hand in hand, so a man and woman will walk hand in hand on the spiritual path, the Royal Highway toward greater awareness and expanded consciousness. All this comes down to a very simple sentence; Bring quality into your life. Spiritual life is not denial. If there is any denial, it is in giving up the trinkets that are valueless anyhow. Go for the best. Rather wait instead of settling for less. The waiting will certainly be worthwhile.

In order to be a true half of another, together making up a whole, one must refrain from one thing and that is over-individualization. It is easy to understand the emphasis on over individualization in a country or world that is moving towards mass production not only of goods but of people too. The desire to be an individual becomes increasingly strong. However, it is necessary to work at keeping a balance. Over-individualization keeps a person from the proper balance of 'I and Thou.'

I have spoken of praying for the "other half." There is a school of thought which believes in the existence of a twin soul, and this soul might or might not be existing in a physical body. Esoteric schools of Christianity consider that Jesus and Mary are twin souls, for example. In Margery Eyre's book *The Revealing Light* (Vincent Stuart, 1962), there is an account of her other half. The book presents only a small portion of the seven volumes that she wrote,

conveying the teachings of her other half. These volumes were kindly sent to me by her daughter and son-in-law when I wrote to ask if there were any missing portions from her published version, just after she had passed on. In this lifetime, on this planet Earth, Margery Eyre was married to a politician in England and was the mother of four children. Her other half was not in a physical body on earth, but told her, "I have guided your steps in many lifetimes and waited for you to have a deep desire for the search of the Most High, and I am glad that you now give me the opportunity to help you."

According to her daughter and son-in-law, she had a very beautiful marriage, which was a preparation for the other. So Margery Eyre, it would seem, had found her twin soul. I am not saying that this is undeniably so, but simply that it is a hypothesis worth investigating. If your other half, your twin soul, is not in the physical body, as some might be aware, this circumstance may be a blessing in disguise by allowing you to take another step toward the oneness of your consciousness with the Cosmic Consciousness.

When the first mystical marriage of the male and female aspects within the individual is accomplished after many lifetimes, a person may aim, over many more lifetimes, towards another mystical marriage; the joining of his or her individual consciousness with the Cosmic Consciousness. When this goal has truly become one's desire, then there is little desire for any other marriage. It may appear that people take a big leap, but it would be more reasonable to assume that each of us, wherever we are now, has spent many lifetimes reaching that point. And each life is an expression of another opportunity, another decision of that great creative force, that Cosmic Intelligence that we call God. That is God's Love. As a good parent, you give your children a chance to do better, to do more. In the same way, the Creative Force gives to us, as spiritual children, another chance in each life to have a slow awakening, an increased understanding, a greater will to action, and

an adding of quality to our life. Each of us is the totality of all past existences and the bringing of these into harmony is an accomplishment that makes each life worthwhile.

In the striving for Higher Consciousness there again occurs a painful sense of duality between 'me' the physical being and the person endowed with mind, with a consciousness that can live in a totally different world. At times, it feels as though we are living on two different planets at the same time. Science tells us that some planets are great moving masses of gaseous substances which do not have the solidity of this earth; this is comparable to the mind. The mind can roam in space and time and can sometimes be overcome by its own ability to create. There is an awakening of the consciousness when the mind perceives a different space and time from that which is understood by the body-mind. The consciousness which can roam the heavens, though, still needs the physical vehicle of the brain. This division between the body-mind and the Higher Consciousness is therefore only apparent. It is like when you walk with your right foot and with your left foot. Remember the Straight Walk. In each step as you shift your body, you re-establish the balance, because each step belongs to one and the same movement and both your legs belong to the same body. The feeling that "I am walking with my right leg there and my left leg there" is again only apparent, like the division between the body-mind and the higher mind.

In the West, this concept of duality has troubled the mind greatly. A large part of Western mythology can be seen as an expression of man's concern with duality. For example, in Greek mythology there are the twin brothers, Castor and Pollux, and in Roman mythology there are the two brothers who built Rome, Romulus and Remus, also twins. That twinship is an expression of man's self-made sense of duality. Perhaps this conception has such deep roots because of the awareness that one part of an individual will die, in the physical death, but that

another part, the consciousness, is an indestructible vortex of energy. This division is only apparent because it is that indestructible consciousness which is able to recreate another body and has done so many times in the past. As Jesus said, "The power that created the eye can see." That power is indestructible. That power will not die; it is part of that vortex of energy. You will find greater peace of mind within yourself by understanding that this division of two selves is only a play of the mind on a certain level. When you step to a higher level of awareness the division does not exist. When you answer the question, "Who am I?" you will not say, "I am the body and I am the mind." You are the Higher Self, the Inner Light, which can create another body over and over again. This is what you have done over many lifetimes.

Many people are worried about what is going to happen after death, when consciousness moves out of the physical body and has its own existence somewhere else. Energy can move anywhere. The scientist searches for life on other planets and he may find it; he may also miss it unless he can go beyond his present belief that life must exist as this physical body does. There may be other forms of life, other dimensions, that we do not yet understand or conceive of because our mind functions on a three-dimensional level. This fact makes it extremely difficult to accept that there might be a fourth dimension. But science is indicating the possibility already. Or maybe there is a fifth, sixth or seventh dimension. There may be more than three levels of consciousness. Man still has a great deal to explore about himself. When we talk about the physical aspects of life, we cannot help but look into mythology which tells us something very strange and different. It speaks of the perpetuation and creation of life on the level of the mind, by means of mind over matter. According to mythology, there was a time on earth when man could create with his mind controlling matter and could reproduce himself by the power of his mind.

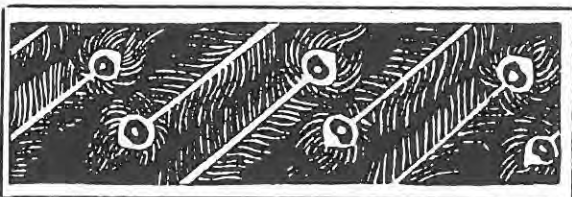
In some of the East Indian scriptures it is held that "Braham created his first four mind-born sons." This would suggest that the immaculate conception is not limited to the story of Jesus and Mary. There are many such claims in mythology. I remember that one writer in Germany located about one thousand individuals who were not born in the same way as other human beings and yet they appeared on earth. It was claimed that they were not born through the process of physical union. Recently I bought a book called A Dictionary of Angels because I was fascinated to see what a dictionary of angels could be and how many different kinds of angels there would be. I was astounded. I had not looked into it before and therefore I didn't know this existed. Perhaps man needs to study his own history to understand himself.

To sum up, when you feel torn between two separate people, good and bad, rational and emotional, spiritual and worldly, think of yourself as being a bridge between two worlds. The bridge, the Higher Self, unites the two worlds in which you function and live. In such a way you might be able to find peace of mind. Sometimes, when looking at a rainbow, I have thought of the saying, "Only the gods can walk the rainbow." Think, whenever you see a rainbow, that symbolically it is the bridge between two worlds, between your physical, mental, emotional world and the spiritual world of consciousness and energy. By letting your mind dwell on that you may enter a new level, a fourth dimension, and you may find some peace of mind, some inner harmony, which will lead you to discover the God within. There is a God within and a God without, and it is the same. It is not two Gods. The Energy manifests in different ways but it is all the same Energy. Let your mind dwell on the Oneness.

Swami Padmananda will be leading a workshop entitled *The Two Selves: A Union of Opposites* which will examine the polarities that exist within us and tend to cause conflict and a sense of separation. Understanding these polarities is the first step to

bringing them into balance and bringing harmony in our lives.

The workshop will be held at Radha House, Victoria, on March 26-28. Registration is full but there is a waiting list. Contact Radha House, 595-0177, for more information.



Motive is essential to ignite the fire within yourself.

You have to take a chance, then balance comes.

Stand erect or you cave in the very self.

Your energy has to flow in the body
as between the banks of a river -
no disturbance to the banks, or they collapse.

Never forget that the pupil
also teaches the master.

On the outside, treat your pupils as your pupils,
but within you treat them as having
the same spark of divinity within them as you have.
Be humble inside and strong outside.

Injuries come by doing aggressive movements,
not by doing Yoga.

Giving does not impoverish,
nor does withholding enrich us.

It is the job of the spine to keep the brain alert.
The moment the spine collapses, the brain collapses.

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



Pune, October 14, 1992

Journal Extracts:

I met a very nice woman, Utpala, on my journey to Pune and she invited me to lunch on Sunday in her modern, clean apartment on the outskirts of Pune. Both Utpala and her husband work at high powered jobs in the computer industry. Their daughter, Sunetra, is three and a visit to her class was arranged for me today. There were 52 children in the class. It took a long time just to take attendance; the teacher told me it took her two weeks to learn their names! In their little checked uniforms, cropped dark hair and shining brown eyes it's no wonder - they all looked quite alike. One girl was celebrating her birthday. She was allowed to wear a party dress and her mother brought in a cake plus a little gift for each of the 52 classmates!

After a snack the children played in a small play yard outside. The teacher was called to the office and, suddenly, there I was surrounded by 52 Mahrati speaking children. There seemed to be a constant melee of falling, bumping bodies and children crying over tussles. I prayed none of them would start bleeding, or disappear down a drain while the teacher was gone.

During story time a lizard crawled out of a crack in the wall. The children were delighted, they nicknamed her Lucy the Lizard. The teacher seemed very kind and courageous to me, just trying to play a game in a room with 52 desks took courage. As they crawled around trying to be elephants there was a traffic jam and about 20 baby elephants got stuck behind the piano. The piano was the main feature in the room. There was no evidence of blocks, books, puzzles, dolls or other materials associated with early childhood education. There was one small locked cupboard that presumably held all - but it had to be a meagre amount of materials. And this was supposedly one of the best schools in Pune.



Play yard at Sunetra's school in Pune.

The most amazing part of the day is when the children are let loose at 12.30. The rickshaw drivers are given contracts by families to pick up their children and deliver them to grandparents, or to their own homes. At the magical hour of 12.30 all of the 450 children under six who attend the school are let loose and go swarming over the school yard. There was no system evident to ensure all children were actually accounted for. The rickshaw wallahs cram 7 or 8 little kids in one vehicle designed to hold three small adults, hand in the lunch kits on a hook and off they go. With open sides, no seat belts! This kind of contract is very good for a rickshaw driver, he has an assure income and steady clientele - it behoves him to ensure none are lost and all arrive safely at their arranged destinations!

Sunday, October 18

We had a wonderful opportunity today to be present as Margot Kitchen interviewed Geeta. It was a treat to hear her speak of her mother and her view of women and their strengths. She said we are all liberated if we just look inside and not depend on someone else to define us.



Making baskets in Laxmi Road market.

Later we went to the market and had fun watching Ann buy a sari. Then we wandered off Laxmi Road in the old market which is crammed with goods and people; colored powders, peppers, eggplants, potatoes in mountains, towering piles of sugar cane, bananas and people selling thousands of glass bangles and making baskets.



Jewelry in crowded alley stall in Pune.

Wednesday, October 21

The Intensive is drawing to a close. I have lots of mixed feelings. In some ways it feels as though we have just adjusted to the pace. Although each class is always asking me to do more than I thought I could! Today we must have held headstand - one headstand, no coming down - for 20 minutes. Then we did a full round of poses.

Thursday, October 22

We were told to begin class with a bolster, strap and blanket. There was an almost audible sigh of relief. We did a restorative class with all supported poses. However, they were not poses just to let loose in. We were still very active and the continual lift of the knee caps was part of many poses. We were told to do this practice for the first few days or week after our return to build up lost reserves from the travelling, dehydration many suffer from being sick, and just generally the effect of working so hard during our stay.

Friday, October 23

The last day of classes was devoted to questions and answers for the first hour, then we did a balanced practice. The rest of the day took on a frenzied pace as we, Linda Shevloff, Ann Kilbertus and I, decided what to do to get to Madras. The paper announced our flight was cancelled. We went to the train, but everything was fully booked for at least a week. Then we decided to hire a car. The cost would be about the same as our flight. Later in the day I got cold feet as I thought of travelling in India on the poor roads for three days. Yet I had initially suggested it! In the evening we went to say goodbye to the Thakkars. Harish went with us to the car rental company and felt assured that we had hired a reliable company. We all felt better and went to bed. Tomorrow we begin our journey across the Indian continent!



On the road to Madras.

Pondicherry, Tuesday, October 27

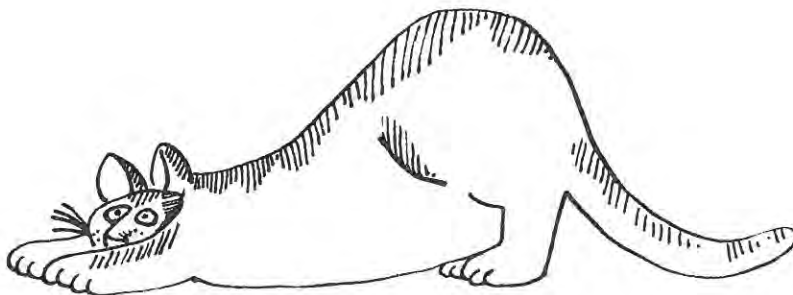
I didn't write anything as we journeyed across India. We were so exhausted each night. The trip was actually accomplished in two days, 12 hours of driving each day. We began auspiciously with a stop in the pre-dawn Pune morning at a flower stall. The driver bought a wreath of flowers for the car and a rose for each of us. The rose proved helpful later in the day. I would press it to my nose to help screen out the diesel and dust fumes that constantly blew upon us.

The vistas of rice paddies and fields of sunflowers, rocky piles of boulders and streams of small villages were fascinating. Pune came to seem to be more and more a mecca of metropolitan eateries and accomodation as we drove hour after hour and never saw a restaurant or coffee shop that clean or inviting. One place we stopped there were birds roosting in the rafters overhead and all kinds of fall out landed on the diners below. Our hotel in an unnamed town somewhere north of Bangalore was dirty and the management arrogant and rude.

Three white women alone and travelling was not to our advantage at that point. My bag was swarming with roaches in the morning. As I screamed, the room boy kept assuring me it was "no problem, madam". No problem to him maybe!

Bangalore was a paradise of fountains and green parks in comparison but, unfortunately, we arrived there at 10.30 in the morning - we couldn't even eat lunch yet and far too early to stay over! So on we went towards Madra and more strange way stations and eateries. Once our driver left us at a modern looking building with a fancy new sign, while he had a tire checked. We discovered we were in a bar, it was mid-morning, there was no food, tea or coffee served! We could have some whiskey but none of us were so inclined. Finally someone sent out to the nearby tea stall and brought us back a cup of chi.

And now I'm sitting on our pristene balcony at the Park Guest House listening to the surf pounding in the Bay of Bengal. No complaints.



DOWNWARD FACING CAT STRETCH
(ADHO MUKHA CATASANA)

• THANKS TO KLIBAN •
FROM ALAYNE

RADHA HOUSE

Victoria



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

Saturday Morning in Shoulderstand
April 24, 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

A Hidden Language Hatha Yoga exploration of
Salamba Sarvangasana, followed by a potluck lunch.

Fee \$25.00

Dreams: Gifts of the Night
Friday, Saturday, Sunday, May 14-16

In this workshop you will have the opportunity to
explore your dreams in depth and to use a variety of
creative techniques for unlocking the secrets of your
subconscious mind and Higher Self. Emphasis is
placed on applying dream messages in daily life.

Fee \$125.00

A Day with the Bhagavad Gita
Sunday, June 13

In this workshop we will get acquainted with the
Bhagavad Gita and explore how its poetic and
moving words can guide us in our own battlefield of
life.

Fee \$50.00

Rose Ceremony
Saturday and Sunday, June 19 and 20

The Rose Ceremony is a personal dedication to the
Divine, a time to re-establish your commitment to
the very finest within.



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



SUMMER YOGA INTENSIVE

July 3 to 9, 1993

with

Shirley Daventry French, Jessica Sluymmer and Dr. Derek French

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

Fee: \$350.00

Shirley is a student of the Yoga Master, B.K.S. Iyengar, and one of Canada's leading teachers of his method of yoga. Jessica is a student of Swami Radha, and the director of Radha House, a spiritual centre in Victoria. Derek is a physician who has practised yoga for many years and seeks to integrate the ancient wisdom of yoga with the practice of modern medicine.

For out of town students: Victoria is a popular tourist centre with a wide selection of hotels and motels. The Residence at the Y has a limited amount of inexpensive accommodation for women. Billets will also be available with members of the local yoga community.

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 '93

Conference in Toronto - August 16th 20th

For students of Iyengar Yoga, the highlight of this summer is the visit to Canada of Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar and the conference in Toronto which is being organised in his honour. This visit is part of a tour which includes the United States, where he will attend a convention in Ann Arbor, and England for a conference in London. Mr. Iyengar has been twice to western Canada, but this will be his first visit to the East.



Intensive in Victoria - July 3rd to 9th

For those students unable to travel across the country this summer, we are offering the fifth annual Victoria intensive at the beginning of July. This year's course will be led by Shirley Daventry French with guest teachers, Jessica Sluymer and Derek French. All three are respected Canadian teachers with many years' experience between them.

Full page advertisements with details of both these coming events may be found in this issue of the newsletter.



SURRENDER

*I take in breath
inflating both lungs with hope
eyes widening
into the endless wave
that curls over me
embracing.*

*I am a moving
mass
in a ubiquitous sea -
I either allow the tide
to direct my movements
or my struggle
depletes oxygen
and I drown.*

*Margaret Feehan
Victoria.*



**IYENGAR YOGA CONFERENCE
TORONTO CANADA 1993**

*August 16 to August 20, 1993
Glendon Campus, York University
Toronto*

5 day conference • 4 day visit from Mr. Iyengar • Daily asana and pranayama classes
Question and answer periods with Mr. Iyengar • Forums on various topics of
interest to students and teachers • Evening events and festivities

*Early registration - \$400.00; after Mar. 31/93 - \$440.00 + GST
(Accommodations extra)*

For general information contact:

Donna Fornelli, 235 des Bourgeons Ave., Aylmer, P.Q. J9J 1R8; Phone (819)685-0491

For registration information contact:

Linda Singleton, Yoga Centre Toronto, 2428 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario M4P 2H4
Telephone (416)482-1334

YOGA CALENDAR

MARCH

- 6: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French .
14: Workshop at the Y with Marlene Miller. See ad this issue.
19: Yoga Centre Gathering at the Y with guest speaker Michael Greenwood, practice led by Jim Rischmiller.
27: Two Selves workshop with Swami Padmananda at Radha House.

APRIL:

- 3: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.
24: Teachers meeting.
24: Saturday morning in shoulderstand at Radha House.
30: Yoga Centre Gathering. Big Big Practice led by Shirley Daventry French.

MAY:

- 8: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.
9: Workshop at the Y with Leslie Hogya.
14-16: Dreams: Gifts of the Night. Workshop at Radha House.
29: Teachers meeting.

JUNE:

- 4-6: Iyengar Yoga Retreat on Saltspring Island with Shirley Daventry French.
13: A Day with the Bhagavad Gita at Radha House.
19-20: Rose Ceremony at Radha House.
26: Teachers meeting.

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

JULY:

3-9: Iyengar Yoga Summer Intensive led by Shirley Daventry French.

AUGUST:

16-20: Mr. Iyengar's visit to Toronto, Iyengar Yoga Convention.



A Poem to You, My Grand Daughter, Madalyn

*I have known you a thousand years
Your birth I knew was meant to be
I've known you before.
Do you remember me?
I hold you, you gaze
with dreamy eyes.
You do
know me from other times.
Now is my turn to nurture and love
you as you've cared for me in times gone by...
I hold your tiny body,
beautiful and fair,
Your life stretches like a golden cord,
strung with love and purpose
This lifetime I will share
to guide and help,
as you did for me
in other days
so long ago.*

**Betty McLachlan,
Victoria.**

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 15th, 1993.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

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

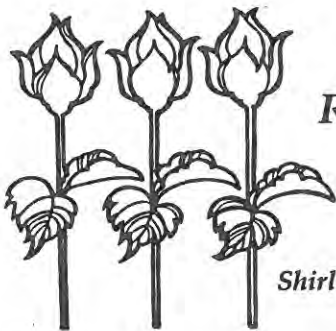


VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
Newsletter



PLEASE SUBSCRIBE

APRIL, 1993



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

This morning I spoke to Mr. Iyengar on the telephone regarding some arrangements for his forthcoming visit to Canada. Now that we have direct dialling to India, it is a lot easier to get through than it used to be. I was lucky. Not only did I get through right away, but Mr. Iyengar was there and the line was relatively clear. Pune is thirteen and a half hours ahead of Victoria, so I made the call in the early morning between my pranayama and asana practices. Afterwards, during my asana practice, I was aware of a strong sense of Guruji's presence, his influence on my work, and my good fortune to have a living master with whom I can speak directly, from whom I can learn directly.

My first knowledge of Mr. Iyengar's work came from his book *Light on Yoga* which was highly recommended by my first yoga teacher. In fact, she thought it was the best book available, and in class we sometimes worked from the book. Then, a few years later, at Yasodhara Ashram, I met a woman, Norma Hodge, who had studied with Mr. Iyengar in India. The way she taught the asanas was very different from the way we practised them from the book. For the first time, I was corrected and adjusted. For the first time, I was not allowed to work around my weaknesses, favour my strengths, avoid my areas of stiffness, and indulge my areas of flexibility.

I was not sure I liked this. After all, I was an established teacher - and who was she to tell me what to do? But at the same time, I could see that

she knew a thing or two, and if I were able to put aside my sense of self-importance, I might be able to learn and make some beneficial changes. I did persevere, and my appreciation of this method of working grew with each class. I wanted to learn as much as I could, and began to set my sights on a trip to India.

In North America, in the mid-seventies, there was an explosion of interest in Mr. Iyengar's work. Many yoga teachers, like myself, who had initially been trained in other methods, began to study and practise the Iyengar method.

In 1979, I finally had the opportunity to go to India to study with Mr. Iyengar himself. Before going I wrote to Swami Radha, to tell her about the direction my work was taking. Her reply encouraged me to go, saying that if I wanted learn Iyengar Yoga, then of course it made sense to go to the source if at all possible. She had recently seen the film *Ultimate Freedom*, which shows Mr. Iyengar teaching and practising. She wrote that she saw a tremendous difference between what was being widely interpreted as Iyengar Yoga over here, and what he was doing in the movie. In her opinion, most people were teaching preliminaries rather than classical yoga postures.

Looking back now, I can see there was a lot of truth in this observation. We had become so caught up with precision and proper alignment, that this had taken on a life of its own independent of the asanas. Preparing, opening, working with partners and props, were all taking precedence over practising and holding the asanas, so that in some classes there was hardly a moment to oneself.

You could tell the teachers who were returning regularly to Pune to study, because their work was more grounded in the tradition of yoga. They did teach asanas, they encouraged their students to hold the postures, and whilst recognising the importance of precision and alignment, they understood that this was only one element in a multi-dimensional spiritual practice.

It was on my third visit to Pune, that this became clear to me. I was on an extended visit, attending the public classes. On Wednesday mornings there is a women's class, and one week Geeta Iyengar began by lecturing the Indian women in the class about their lack of practice outside of class. She told them that even though they had duties to their families, they also had a duty to themselves and that they should make time to practise - especially the standing postures. I was one of five or six western women in the class, and as Geeta lectured the Indian students, I was feeling rather self-satisfied, because I knew I practised and I knew that Geeta knew. Each day, in addition to the class I attended, I also went to the Institute a second time to do a personal practice.

Well, there is no place for self-satisfaction in the Ramanani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, and having voiced her expectations of the Indian students, Geeta pointed to the small band of western women and said: "They practise - but what do they practise?" Then she spelled out in no uncertain terms, that we were doing a little of this and a little of that with no consistency and no understanding of the order and sequence in which postures must be practised to derive the most benefit.

"There is a method," she said, "there is a rhythm to the practice, and this is not understood!" As she spoke, I knew she was right. We were practising bits and pieces, because we did not have a clear understanding of the whole. In subsequent classes she continued to spell out this message quite clearly, emphasising the importance of practising asanas in certain sequences and not at random. Geeta also emphasised something which is abundantly obvious to all who have the privilege to take classes from Guruji, that his work, while innovative and fresh, is firmly based in the tradition of yoga.

When I returned to Canada, and looked through the notes I had written on my first visit, I could see that throughout the course the postures had indeed been taught in certain sequences. It was all there, clearly set out in my own hand, but I had not seen it. This takes time. The work is so vast, that we cannot possibly grasp it all at once.

And this is why it is so important to return to Pune, if you can. On a visit in 1985, in an interview which was published in our September 1986 newsletter, the following exchange took place :

"Mr. Iyengar: Some people come for three weeks and go away saying they have learned many things, but they don't come back. If they come back, well and good. Those who come back - next time they are sober here. But the first time when they come they are not at all sober. They think they are already far ahead, so they come with pride. If they come three or four times that pride is gone, and the teaching is very easy for us. (Laughter)

Shirley: You can't come a second time in ignorance. (More laughter)

Iyengar: You can observe all my senior pupils here; they are very sober now. They catch us easily, they understand us easily. The beginners who come - no! They come with pride. They have done very well with so many advanced senior students of mine, but they forget that I am the seniormost teacher for all these senior teachers. It doesn't strike them at all. They think 'Oh, I have learned from so and so.' Who taught all these teachers? Remember that man is standing here! (Laughter)

Jim Rischmiller: Yes, I must admit that I find that every day I learn more about what I don't know."

It is not easy to get a place in classes at the Institute, and before going students are expected to study with senior teachers in their part of the world so that when they do arrive in Pune they are as well prepared as possible. It's difficult, but not impossible, and everyone I know who has made it a priority to go to the source of the teachings, has eventually made it. If your life situation really prohibits you from trying to make this pilgrimage, you can still have direct contact with Mr. Iyengar when he travels to the West for conferences and conventions such as those being held in Toronto, Ann Arbor and London this summer.

Patanjali's yoga-sutras, which are an integral part of Mr. Iyengar's work, are one of my interests. I have studied them, read many commentaries, and reflect on one or other of them almost daily. I am aware, however, that my understanding is diminished by the fact that I do not know sanscrit, the language in which they were written, and have to rely on interpreters. I have many books on the sutras, and the translations and commentaries vary considerably. Despite this drawback, I have not made it a priority to learn sanscrit, nor do I intend to do so in the foreseeable future.

With Mr. Iyengar and his work, I made a different choice, preferring not to rely on interpreters but to maintain as direct a line as possible to the Master himself. While there are many fine teachers around, from whom I have learned a great deal, I have sought the opportunity to learn directly from Gururji whenever possible - in Pune and on his visits to North America.

Mr. Iyengar is honouring us with a visit to Canada this summer, and I urge everyone who can - and especially all those who teach Iyengar Yoga - to make it a priority to be there, in Toronto. Whether you have a lot of contact with him or a little, his presence there will permeate all the classes and all the interactions, in and out of class. All the conferences I have attended have been times of intense learning and good fellowship with our

teacher and others who follow this particular spiritual path.

There is another important aspect of attending a conference where a great living Master from whose work we benefit so much is the guest of honour, and that is the opportunity for us to honour him and show gratitude for his teaching and his work - however directly or indirectly it has come to us.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Shirley Daventry-French,

I am an eager student and beginning teacher of Iyengar yoga who recently found some wisdom of yours particularly potent.

Awaiting ten students one morning before my macrobiotic cooking class, the phone began to ring. One student cancelled. And ring. Another student sick. And ring. The class dropped to two students in the minutes before class. My heart literally sank. With phone in hand to call the class off, I hesitated. I had read in a borrowed Victoria Yoga Centre newsletter an account of workshop you held once, somewhere remote.....very few students attended. When you mumbled to those who did attend, something about 'nobody coming', one shot back with 'we're nobody?' The point was well made.

Well, my cooking class went on and the small group of us, able to interact more equally than ever, got high on comraderie and accomplished a terrific amount.

Thank you for the inspiration to 'go on with it.' Your newsletter does what good writing should. It communicates. Please sign me up for a subscription to it.

Betsy Duncome Lieber
San Geronimo, California.



yoga centre of victoria

Join Your Teachers for a

Big Big Practice

led by Shirley Daventry French

followed by PotLuck dinner

followed by discussion on Establishing a Practice

In this month's Reflections, I wrote about the difficulties students experience in knowing what to practise and how to sequence a series of postures in order to obtain the maximum benefit from that practice. Recently, after an unstructured group practice, I voiced my concerns on this topic. I had noticed the random order in which some of the students had been practising, and mentioned the need for a class or workshop on how to establish a personal practice. The students agreed that they would appreciate some guidance and Jennifer Rischmiller suggested we make this the topic for one of our Yoga Centre gatherings, perhaps on the evening of our "Big Practice" which will bring this season of gatherings to a close.

And so it has been scheduled that on Friday, April 30th, I will first lead a practice, to be followed, after the pot luck dinner, with a discussion of how, when and where to practise, and how to sequence a series of asanas. All students of all levels are invited to join your yoga teachers, and the Yoga Centre executive for this special group practice, and the discussion to follow.



Date: Friday, April 30, 1993
Place: YM/YWCA Yoga Lounge
Time: 6-7 p.m. Asana practice
7-8 p.m. PotLuck dinner
8-9 p.m. Discussion

DREAMS: GROWING WITH A SYMBOL



by Swami Durgananda

What is a dream? Where does it come from? What is its purpose? These are a few questions that we might ask ourselves about the personal dreams that we are given each night in the form of dreams. Who presents them? Do we create them? What are these strange stories, characters, symbols that often seem to have no connection to our waking life?

This seeming lack of connection might discourage us from looking more deeply to see if there is something worth investigating. Instead of scoffing at this apparent "nonsense", however, we might find that there is a treasure chest of beauty and wealth partially buried in the depths of our unconscious. But like anything of value, it requires our attention, effort and perseverance to bring it to the light of understanding. As Swami Radha says, "The 'Pearl of Great Price' exacts its price."

A dream symbol may emerge or develop in a number of ways. An example of expanding meanings in a symbol occurred recently when I was reviewing my dreams of the 1970's, typing them up

and adding insights that came to me from the perspective of my inner growth and what has transpired since those days when I was living a very different kind of life. I was specifically working on the dreams of 1975.

I came to the dream of September 8, 1975. This alone is significant as 14 years later I was to receive my initiation into sanyas on that date. At the time of this particular dream I had not yet been to Yasodhara Ashram, but I had met Swami Radha and had attended some of her lectures in Philadelphia where I was living.

This was the dream: "I have a picture of which I am getting criticisms from various people. It is a painting and it is a strange pine tree with standing trees behind it and a light coming from behind the one tall pine tree." I might have overlooked this dream if something had not happened in my waking life at this present time to make a connection. We were going over pictures for the

new program calendar, and one of the pictures we chose was of the tall Ashram ponderosa pine tree named Raj, hundreds of years old and always a strong symbol at the Ashram. Raj is an Indian word that suggests one who reigns, like a king or prince. The picture showed this tall pine tree in front of some other trees with the light shining behind it, streaming through its branches. With this image fresh in my mind, I was stunned when I read the dream of September 8, 1975. It was describing the picture of Raj.

What had brought these incidents all together at this point in time, the dream of 18 years ago, the picture chosen for an Ashram publication, and the review of that dream at just the right moment? After typing the dream out that evening I lay awake for a long time reflecting on what this might mean. Then I realized that on my first visit to the Ashram in 1978, three years after the dream, I had had another experience of this stately tree. I had seen it outlined against the sky in the expanding brilliance of early morning light from the sun rising behind it.

After much reflecting on this symbol I came to realize that for me Raj is the silent witness, that part within me that is ageless and has observed my growth over many lifetimes. My inner Raj is not an authoritarian king-like figure. It is rather a regal symbol for the creative life force manifesting the many wondrous miracles in my life. She is a symbol of that which gave birth to a new growing part of me that has led to my spiritual commitment. As Raj stands strong and tall, watching over the Ashram, my inner Raj watches patiently over my spiritual development day by day. I knew of her unconsciously when I had the dream, long before I came to the Ashram, but my conscious mind had not caught up with that knowing. I now have a fresh feeling of awe and reverence for the mysterious workings of the inner knowing part of myself and the wonders of the laws of the universal life force around me.

There is still an aura of mystery surrounding these events and I ask myself, "Why did this happen to me now? What is the purpose? What do I do with it?" And this is the most important question of all. When we are given an unusual dream or a special dream/waking life connection, it calls to us to honour it. It comes to us to get our attention. I may not be able to explain the workings of mind and consciousness that brought the series of events into manifestation, but I can follow through in some way. I have received what might be called an injection, a transfusion of vitality and life force that encourages me to rededicate my commitment, to explore ever more deeply what that means. And the symbol of Raj bathed in Light gives me the means to approach the Divine in humility and wonder. This powerful connection has stretched my mind and its limited understanding of time and space and Divine purpose.

I can use the image of Raj, the silent witness, as I move through my day watching my interactions with others from a higher vantage point so that I do not get drawn into unnecessary emotional reactions. I can use the symbol of Raj to recall in my spiritual diary some small miracle in my day, helping me to be more grateful for this precious life that I tend to take for granted. In words or images or actions in my life, I can give expression to that creative life force that Raj represents in me, rooted deeply within and reaching toward the Light.

Swami Radha has said that dreams are the safest way to get to know the unconscious. Dreams are a gift given to us by a compassionate force within us, showing us picture after picture of who we are, how we are behaving, what we are thinking; like a slide show to help us understand ourselves so that we can accept what is good in us and make changes in the areas that are not serving us well. But we must be willing to give some time and attention to our own language of symbolism. It is a journey of discovery that can bring us unexpected riches and blessings on many levels.

For those interested in exploration of dreams there will be a weekend workshop at Radha House May 14-16, 1993. Participants will have the opportunity to explore dreams in depth and to use a variety of creative techniques for unlocking the secrets of your subconscious mind and Higher Self. Emphasis is placed on applying dream messages in daily life.

PHOTO CREDIT: SWAMI DURGANANDA

PRANAYAMA PRACTICE

by Judith Lasater

The first and most natural act each human being experiences is to take a breath of air. Yet somehow, when a yoga student decides to begin a regular pranayama practice, breathing becomes a decidedly mental process rather than a simple physical one. Some students start and stop pranayama many times over a period of years; some students finally quit altogether after an initial short-lived attempt, while others eventually establish a regular practice. But it is the rare student who starts only once.

There are a number of important points to remember when one is contemplating starting the practice of pranayama. First, who should start? The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali state that when "asana is perfected" the practice of pranayama can begin. Those of us who have studied with the Iyengars know immediately the impossibility of such an occurrence. But realistically, the asana student who has established a regular practice, who has a quality of stability and lightness in that practice, who has a reasonable amount of openness in the chest, and whose lifestyle reflects the broader teachings of Yoga, is a good candidate. If at all possible, it also helps to be studying regularly with an experienced teacher.

Once the commitment to the practice has been made, there are several practical points which can help the student stay on track. First, practice at the same time every day. It is difficult to get the pranayama habit in part because the benefits are slow to be experienced. The opposite is true with asana practice; one can see the changes and benefits sometimes after only one class, and certainly after three months time. It usually takes longer for the benefits of pranayama to become apparent.

By practicing at the same time every day, the time spent with pranayama becomes part of the day, and one is not so attached to the outcome. Soon practicing pranayama becomes something that one does daily without fail. This daily aspect has the added benefit of creating discipline for the mind. The mind can and does rebel against pranayama in all kinds of ways, by producing states of laziness and boredom, or by refusing to put the body down on the floor to do the practice. A French doctor of the last century became famous for curing constipation. His cure was to have his patient eat an apple under the Arc de Triomphe every morning at 7 am. It was a very successful cure because it created regularity in the patient's lifestyle; of course this regularity caused the intestines to work in a regular way. Practice at the same time every day, whether that be first thing in the morning, late afternoon, or in the evening. This regularity will create a positive momentum which will carry one through hard times.

Another point which may help the beginner to establish a practice is to plan to practice for only 10 minutes daily. Lie down for savasana for a few minutes until you are relaxed, and then plan a 10 minute pranayama practice. It does not sound like very much time, and in fact, one often practices longer than 10 minutes. But if one decides to practice for a grandiose 30 minutes every day, that plan usually lasts about one day. Start with a small commitment that the mind will not fight so much, then there will be a greater chance of sticking with it.

As far as what to practice, the same general advice holds. Start with a very simple practice as prescribed in *Light on Pranayama*. Spend a year lying down with the simplest forms of pranayama. If sickness or fatigue affects you, even if you are more experienced, again return to lying down and simplify the practice. Just as in asana practice the simplest poses are usually the most satisfying, in pranayama simple inhalation and exhalation with awareness can be the core of the practice.

Most importantly, enjoy your practice. It will encompass all forms of emotions, from boredom to joy, from peace to disgust. Use these precious few minutes each day to be with yourself, to breathe, and to feel the harmony your body and breath have with the earth and universe. Become aware of how beautiful the art of giving and receiving breath is and feel the silence that is always at your core.

Judith Lasater is a certified Iyengar yoga teacher who has been a student of Mr. Iyengar's since 1974. She is a registered physical therapist with a Ph.D. in East-West psychology. She lives with her husband and three children in San Francisco.

This article re-printed from *Yoga '90*, the magazine of the Second North American Iyengar Yoga Convention, San Diego, California.
June 23- July 1, 1990.



THE GIFT

By Nan Brown

Back when the world was young and I was just sweet sixty, my daughter introduced me to Shirley Daventry French. It wasn't really a formal introduction, but a Mother's Day Gift from my daughter. The gift was a session of yoga classes.

"That's nice, dear," I told my daughter. "It's about time I got myself in shape and this should get me started." Little did I know.

My idea of yoga, culled from television and some of the more popular books, was nice, gentle stretching exercises to improve flexibility and promote relaxation. "So relaxing, you know. Never push too hard, never go further than your body wants."

Hah!

Being big on relaxation and not pushing is not the ideal basis to approach yoga with Shirley. It gets you in the door and it doesn't incur any wrath. It does get you a firm push in the offending stiffness and "there - see there was all that space there all the time."

Er, yes.

Am I now in shape? No.

Am I started? And how.

But it's the mind as much as, if not more than, the body that's achieving a new flexibility.

Classes under Shirley can be tough (fortunately, she also has days when she's big on relaxing and restoring) but they're satisfying. An admittedly shaky headstand with the wall for support is a triumph, at least in my mind, and there looms the vision of a steadier version without the wall one day in the future.

A centimetre of movement in hip and shoulder joint provides hopes of more of that well-known aim for 'more space' as the years move on. But it's the mind that profits the most. It gets to see more and more of those character faults and that (I tell myself) is part way down the road to curing them. I know in my case it's probably just the 'primrose path to hell' which my mother used to tell me was paved with good intentions - but my feet are on some kind of a road anyway.

I leave each class with more and more questions. There was the occasion when Shirley was talking about her sometimes tearful experiences confronting her devils and shortcomings with her guru. Why, I asked, is she so kind to us? "Because I'm not your guru," was the short reply. She's not. Why not? What is a guru? Do I need one?

The tree - arms stretching upward - brings a question from Shirley. "Reach upwards, what are your aspirations?" What indeed? Must I aspire to something? Can't I just sit back and let life carry on?

Virabhadrasana III - the third warrior pose. "The warrior is away on his mission. What is your mission?" Well, right now, standing on one leg while reaching forward is mission enough. But still the thought persists. What is my mission?

Now the world and I are both a year older.

Storms, winds and oceans have eroded and flooded away soft soils and carried infinitesimal grains of sand from hard granites, while cataclysmic upheavals beneath the earth have reshaped the surface. The battered planet is reeling from the unnatural effects of mankind, obsessed with populating, paving and polluting the earth and atmosphere.

The year has aged me too. More wrinkles, more white hair - all the outward effects of sun and wind. Subsurface upheavals have reshaped me, too. But yoga has added a new dimension and consciousness of the natural and unnatural effects of time, and the more destructive self-inflicted wounds.

My daughter's gift to me was more than a course of exercise. It was a gift of an open horizon and eternal challenges ahead, and of beckoning mirages without which a person dies.

So, remember, if those are your kneecaps, pull them up; if those are your shoulders, get them down; and clenching your jaw won't flex your hips into the lotus position. When all else fails, forget your troubles in Savasana.

Thank You, Shirley



CHAIN LETTER

By Lauren Cox

Once a month I receive a 'chain letter'. It doesn't come with a promise of money, postcards from all corners of the earth, or even a deluge of recipes. Neither does it threaten me with an inevitable accident, loss of money or a mild curse on my pet dog. It usually arrives near the end of the month - sometimes dropped off personally and other times left in my mailbox. I don't dread its appearance and almost look forward to it. I look forward to it the same way one looks forward to receiving the baton in a relay. I want it in my possession so that I can just do it and pass it on.

This 'chain letter' is the monthly newsletter for the Victoria Yoga Centre. It begins with much thought, work and compiling of ideas between the two editors - Jennifer Rischmiller and Shirley Daventry French. They do their best to get me all the material in one neat package. But the usual procedure is for ads, articles and photographs to be picked up a day later, to be delivered two days later and to be handed over during Thursday's class. Now I've learned to hold back on heating up the waxing machine - instead of plugging it in on day one, I plug it in on day five, or six, or maybe seven.

Today, I brought the completed layout to the printers. My part in the 'chain letter' was completed. I breathed fully as I left the building and was singing as I arrived home to join my family (who has had a part in all this too - they've had to share the kitchen table and living room space for the past five days).

When I came home from a family bike ride I got a call from the printers - their copier broke down and the job which was to have been completed at 4.00 p.m. will now be delayed till Monday afternoon. Fine, I called the person who was to have picked it up and left a message on her machine to now not

pick it up until Monday. Then at 4.30 p.m. the printers called again - they had fixed the machine and the job was completed. I tried calling Margaret to relay the good news. Thank goodness the line was busy. I didn't know it at the time but it was a blessing in disguise. I received another call at 4.45 p.m. from Jennifer and Shirley, now with news of a typographical error which meant a necessary correction and re-printing of a page and a brochure.

Shirley asked how to stop Margaret from picking up the newsletter - that was already taken care of. Then Jennifer talked about ways and means of correcting the error. That too was soon taken care of. I had the originals and when I approached the error it turned out to be a simple job of 'whiting out' the three letters and just penning in two letters. Once again, I breathe and think the 'letter' is taken care of till next month.

Despite my story with all its ups and downs - the positive rewards outweigh the frustrations. I feel that the little part that I do in helping to make the newsletter a reality brings pleasure to those who receive and read the articles. It is a good way of sharing and passing on information. So I will continue to cut and paste-up till someone else or something else (a computer) wishes to experience the mixed joys of helping to put together the Victoria Yoga Centre's newsletter. This process has really taught me a lot about letting go. It really doesn't matter - when I get news over the phone about an article being late, or an ad having to be couriered from Toronto I can laugh and know it will come when it comes and the newsletter will be completed when it gets completed.

P.S. The 'chain letter' doesn't stop here! Perhaps next month you'll hear from the people who collate, or the person responsible for distribution, or



Yoga Centre of Victoria *presents* Inspiration From India

A series of workshops given by local yoga teachers who have recently returned from an intensive course at the Ramamani Iyengar Institute in Pune, India.

Sunday, May 9

The Warrior in Sirsasana

Explore the action of headstand in standing poses, forward bends and headstand itself.

Workshop Leader: Leslie Hogya

Registration: Phone Leslie at 383-6301

– For students already introduced to headstand –

Location

Yoga Studio
Victoria YM-YWCA

Time

10:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Fees

\$20.00 – Yoga centre members
\$25.00 – non-members

Registration

Phone individual teachers



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



SUMMER YOGA INTENSIVE

July 3 to 9, 1993

with

Shirley Daventry French

Guest Teachers:
Jessica Sluymer
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 '93

Iyengar Yoga Intensive in Victoria

July 3 to 9, 1993

The Victoria Yoga Centre, in association with the Victoria YM-YWCA, is pleased to present its fifth annual summer yoga intensive with respected Canadian teachers: Shirley Daventry French, Jessica Sluymmer and Derek French.

This course is intended for teachers and students with experience in Iyengar Yoga, who wish to deepen their practice of asana and broaden their understanding of yoga philosophy and psychology. There will be daily classes in asana and pranayama in the Iyengar tradition, discussions on how to practice, how to teach and teacher/student relationships. Seminars will include: Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, the Bhagavad Gita, Symbolism of the Body 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

Saturday, July 3

5:00 to 6:00 pm	Reception & Orientation
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Sunday, July 4 - Thursday, July 8 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

Friday, July 9

9:00 am to 12:00 noon	Asana
12:00 noon to 12:30 pm	Lunch Break
12:30 pm	Wrap up panel and discussion
2:30 pm	An afternoon of rest and relaxation at the French's residence and nearby Witty's Lagoon Beach and Park
6:00 pm	Buffet supper and party at French's

THE TEACHERS

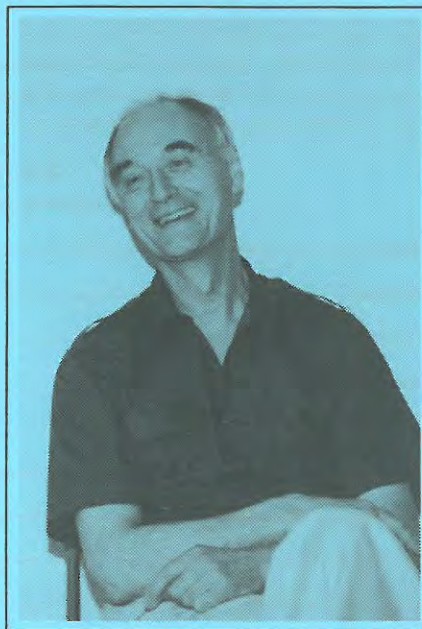


Shirley and Jessica

Jessica Sluymmer is the Director of Radha House, a spiritual centre established in Victoria by Swami Radha. Jessica came to Victoria in 1981 from Ontario, where she taught yoga for many years. In Victoria she continued her studies of yoga under the direction of Swami Radha and Swami Padmananda. During this time she also studied Iyengar Yoga with Shirley Daventry French. After a period of residence and intensive study at Yasodhara Ashram, Jessica returned to Victoria to assume the position of Director of Radha House.

Derek French is a physician in general practice in Victoria, BC with a special interest in musculoskeletal 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. He has studied yoga intensively with B.K.S. Iyengar and Swami Radha.

Shirley Daventry French is a longtime student of the Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar and one of North America's most respected teachers of his method of Yoga. She has been teaching in Victoria for over twenty years, and gives workshops nationally and internationally. Shirley has studied in India many times with Mr. Iyengar to refine her knowledge and practice of yoga. She has also studied extensively with Swami Radha of Yasodhara Ashram. Shirley's teaching is clear, precise, insightful and integrates the philosophy and psychology of yoga with the physical work of asana and breathing. Her classes are challenging, enlightening and fun.



Derek

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 one-week package for seven nights: \$217.62 for a single room with shared bathroom, \$322.92 for a double room. Prices include tax. A deposit should accompany your request for accommodation (\$36.27 single; \$53.82 double). Early reservations are recommended.

Bed and Breakfast - \$20.00 a day

University of Victoria Residence - Single room \$32.68 per night, double \$47.81 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 3 TO 9, 1993

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

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by Jennifer Rischmiller	20	Jul



THE FRENCH DRAGON THEORY OF BACK PROBLEMS

The following is a transcript of a talk by Derek French, M.D. at the Medical Forum of the International Iyengar Yoga Convention held in San Francisco from August 24th to September 2nd 1984. It was previously published in the November 1984 newsletter.

Mr. Iyengar, Mr. Chairman, Honoured Guests, Fellow Panelists and Fellow Travellers . . . I wasn't quite sure whether that was a safe term to use down in the United States yet, but I think it is at the moment!

I was delighted to be invited down here to take part in this Conference. Doctors in yoga are still fairly rare and it's very pleasant to have the chance to meet with other doctors to talk yoga-medicine shop. We had a very nice dinner the other night at which we did just that.

I personally am enjoying the conference very much - taking part in the classes, listening to the many speakers - and I'd like to express my personal gratitude to those very hard working people who first of all had the idea of putting it on, and then carried through with the enormous amount of hard work that goes into that.

I have also been impressed as I listened to the various speakers in the evening by the very beautiful clothing that everybody wore - and the lovely colours from many different nations, and I was wondering what would be an appropriate thing to wear at a meeting like this. It seemed to me that probably the rarest and, therefore, perhaps the most exotic piece of clothing I could choose would be a collar and tie. *(laughter)*

I've had the good fortune to work with many of the fine teachers from the San Francisco area. They've seen me working in their classes, and the G track that I work with this week has also seen me work, so you can feel fairly certain that I wasn't invited down here because of the renown of my asana work. *(laughter)* I'm still working with that. But I'm very perceptive, so I came to the conclusion it had something to do with the fact that I have a medical degree and am also working in yoga.

I reflected on this, and I wondered what it is that Medicine has to offer yoga. I reflected a quite a lot on that, and I didn't really come up with too much. *(laughter)* I think there is a developing technology that we have now, a scientific technology that is able to verify in an objective fashion some of the changes that yogis have alluded to for thousands of years. So in a sense Medicine here follows on behind yoga, and I think there is some value in the ability to check that out. In our particular culture we are very attached to scientific, objective evidence which I think has its value, and so it seemed to me that as physicians in yoga the four of us on this panel are really the audience, and you people are the speakers - a rather strange reversal of the usual events.

As was mentioned in the introduction, part of my training was in Anaesthesia. I was astonished, after some years in yoga, to look back on some of the work in anaesthesia and discover that the Bible of Anaesthesia points out that they are unable to offer a theory of unconsciousness (which is what we produce in anaesthesia) because as yet they hadn't developed a theory of consciousness. *(laughter)* This is at least very honest, but I think that we have then to turn to the East, because there are obviously very well developed theories of consciousness there.

When I asked the question: "What does yoga have to offer Medicine?", then it seemed to me it was much easier to respond to that question.

Yoga, as I understand it, is a tested method. It's really an empirical science for exploring inner realities, and I understand that Bruce Carruthers, who's the last speaker this evening, will be discussing the nature of that special kind of knowledge.

I do believe that there are some changes happening in Medicine. I think that for the last two to three hundred years we have been preoccupied with the analysis and measurement of objective phenomena. This knowledge is quite useful. There are lots of things we can do now - and if I had to have my appendix out, I would be very pleased that the surgeon knew where to go and how to take it out, and that we had modern anaesthetics. So I think it's important not to get caught up in throwing out the baby with the bath water - as tends to happen in some yoga communities.

When we look at the nature of these technologies, somehow there's been an imbalance. There has been a tendency to look at mankind as if it were a very complex and complicated mechanical electrical chemical machine, rather than the whole person that we understand by 'man'. This is a very reductionist view of mankind, and I think yoga helps to balance that.

This limited map of the territory of mankind doesn't take into account the awesome power of the mind and spirit to create illness or to promote healing. This is a thing that has puzzled me for some time, because when I talk to patients - these are people who have come in off the streets instead of scientists - everybody knows about the awesome power of the mind to create illness: it's part of our folklore! There are many, many sayings which attest to that. I'm worried sick! I have a broken heart! And so on. You can fill in your own phrases there, but it's very common. It also puzzles me that people are often not able to see that the same mind with that awesome power has the power to heal, and we have to bring that into some kind of balance.

You'd hardly believe it from the introduction, but my mandate is to discuss back problems. *(laughter)*

I think that back problems present a beautiful illustration of the nature of the dichotomies of the two kinds of knowledge - Western and Eastern, and I'd like this evening to talk about a general approach to back problems.

I did bump into one lady as I was getting on the bus coming out of class today, saying: "I really hope you're going to talk about sacro-iliacs." I'm not going to do that tonight. It would be impossible here to go into those kinds of specifics; I'll do that in tomorrow's workshop. I'd like to talk about a more general approach tonight.

For anybody who's thinking of attending those workshops, Mary Schatz has just written a really excellent article on Backs in the July/August issue of the Yoga Journal which would make excellent background reading.

When I went to Medical School and in my early years of practice, back problems then, as now, were very common. Quite frankly I thought they were very boring too. 80% of the population at one time or another is incapacitated by a severe back problem, and in 80% of those there is no demonstrable pathology - which makes it very boring for medical students who love to see juicy pieces of pathology. Isn't that right, Mary? *(laughter)* (Dr. Mary Schatz is a practising Pathologist) And probably 80% of these back problems resolve themselves spontaneously as long as somebody doesn't meddle with them.

And so who really needs a doctor?

Well, the problem is that some of these problems can be extremely severe and very persistent and/or recurrent, and where the investigations are also persistently negative you start to get suspicions of neurosis. The treatment available ranges from the conservative approach of bedrest, analgesics and

physiotherapy - playing for time and hoping that the percentages would be in favour of the patient - to the extreme of surgical intervention where the percentages are really dismal. Only about 11% of the patients who've had a back operation are pain free two years later. It's that awful! Now surgeons, who basically like to do surgery (that's why they're surgeons), become very cautious about intervening in back problems. It was probably a person with a back problem that caused an Orthopaedic Surgeon to observe that "the bones of patients are filled not with red marrow but with black ingratitude". *(laughter)*

Now for me, 'boring' changed to 'extremely interesting', when I developed my own painful and recurrent back problem. *(laughter)* Of course, the x-rays were negative, and of course I wasn't neurotic *(laughter)*, and of course, nobody's going to come near me with a knife! *(laughter)*

The injunction 'Physician heal thyself', is all very well, but as I discovered, the objective knowledge I had acquired by reading anatomy books, dissecting and operating on other people's bodies - whilst very useful in many circumstances - proved to be inadequate for my own task.

The resolution of my dilemma began when I observed my wife, Shirley, practising yoga asana. I started to follow in her footsteps in this, as in many other areas of my life. *(applause)*

In the beginning I brought to yoga my objective, rational attitude - a talking, intelligent head ordering a stiff and stupid body around. At first I didn't want anything to do with the strange foreign philosophy that I sensed lay behind what I thought of as physical gymnastics; but it worked, my pain eased and I was hooked on yoga.

Krishna's flute plays many tunes.

As I continued to work with asana, the unity of body and mind ensured that I came to face the inner paradoxes of my life. This search led me to spend three months at the Yasodhara Ashram under the guidance of Swami Radha. Here, in this supportive environment, I was able to drop, at least temporarily, some of the attitudes that kept my eyes closed. Here, I was able to open my mind to the possibility that I had a spiritual dimension. Here, I began to be open to the possibility that the body-mind was a vehicle or temple for a spark of divinity. And here, to understand that because the body is a manifestation of the mind and spirit - back problems were not simply mechanical dysfunctions but reflected an imbalance at many different levels.

At the Ashram, I also learned to question the symbolism of my body and to ask questions like: Why am I unable to bend over backwards? Did a stiff upper lip (I'm English) lead to a stiff neck and a stiff back? And as I heard Vera Sida say in our class on Monday, "If you have a stiff neck you have a stiff brain" - and what does that mean? I think it refers to something that other people have called 'psycho-sclerosis'. *(laughter)* The other term which I like for that is 'hardening of the categories'. *(laughter)*

Well, the pace of my search and understanding quickened when I had the opportunity to study with Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar in Pune.

I was totally unprepared for the energy and depth that this man of genius brings to his teachings. But then I have yet to meet anybody who claims they were prepared. *(laughter)* So I'm not alone in this. Everybody has their "When I met Mr. Iyengar" stories, and I would like to tell two that relate to my understanding of back problems.

On one occasion, Mr. Iyengar had the three doctors in our group lying on the floor. I believe that Gururji obtains some mischievous pleasure in teasing doctors (*laughter*), and on this particular day he was in very good form. He was pointing out how poorly we breathed despite our knowledge of anatomy and physiology. For me, it was a dramatic example of the different forms of knowledge and the immense value of Mr. Iyengar's contribution to knowledge and understanding.

Quite frankly, I thought that most of the detailed instruction in the pranayama classes went over the top of my head. I couldn't even sit properly. But as the years followed (it took about five years actually), I began to understand that some part of the teaching had remained and in fact forms the foundation of my current studies. In my medical practice, when I work with a patient who has a back problem - I start with the breath!

Now the second story happened when I went to listen to Dr. Bruce Carruthers give a talk on Medicine and Yoga to the Pune Branch of the Indian Medical Society. The talk was along the lines that our much vaunted Western technology didn't really cure anything, that it was in fact what he called a "half-technology", and that perhaps they should look to their own culture, and specifically yoga, for answers.

I'm not too sure that the doctors in this group enjoyed the talk. I got the impression that some of them felt the goalposts had just been moved again. (*laughter*)

However, I found myself sitting next to Mr. Iyengar and took the opportunity to ask a question. I had noticed the powerful emotional reactions within myself and other members of our group - did Indian students react in the same way? The reply - an emphatic "No!"

I have reflected on this difference. I don't have any first-hand experience of Indian family life, but it seems reasonable that anybody growing up in an environment where they were nurtured emotionally as children, would not be using energy to hold in unresolved conflicts in the body.

I came across a passage in a book called WE by Robert Johnson. He makes the observation :

"One of the most striking and surprising things I observed among traditional Hindus was how bright, happy, and psychologically healthy their children are. Children in Hindu families are not neurotic; they are not torn within themselves as so many Western children are. They are bathed constantly in human affection, and they sense a peaceful flow of affection between their mother and father. They sense the stability, the enduring quality of family life. The parents are committed permanently; they don't hear their parents asking themselves whether their marriage is 'going to work out'; separation and divorce do not float as specters in the air."

I would like to ask Dr. Karandikar, when we come to the discussion part of this evening, if this is an idealistic or realistic description of Indian families, and whether this is reflected in a lower incidence of musculo-skeletal problems in general and back problems specifically.

Certainly, in California, it would not be news that emotional problems affect the body: there are many body-mind therapies that originated in this area to testify to that. But I suspect that we need to look further.

As I walked around the streets of Pune, I was impressed by the many little shrines - a feeling that religion and spiritual concerns are part of the fabric of daily living and that children would be exposed not only to an affectionate and stable family life, but to a spiritual life. This is a dimension that I believe may well be lacking in our culture.

Robert Bly, the American Poet commented in an interview about the difference between East and West, that in the West we are still fighting our giants and dragons - the stirrings of the unconscious, whereas the East went through its dragon fighting period perhaps two thousand years ago. There are stories about Lord Krishna, who is reputed to have fought and conquered giants and dragons whilst only one year old. He seemed to handle them quite easily.

In my own experience, reinforced by watching the progress of patients, in order to effect a cure for backs it is necessary to effect a cure for souls. By 'cure', I mean 'made whole' - a process that can only happen for the body when the mind and soul are manifest in harmony.

This is a very difficult pilgrim's progress, and there are dragons afoot on that journey - dragons that Patanjali called *klesas* in the third *sutra* of the *SADHANA PADA*. I don't have Dr. Karandikar's lovely way of rolling off those terms, but I'll use the English, which describes them as 'obstacles to enlightenment' - ignorance of our spiritual nature, self-centredness, attractions and repulsions, and fear of death.

Dragons can only be defeated when let out and faced. Attempts to confine them will only feed them energy. Large confined dragons are very destructive. The container disintegrates under the stress. I would call this THE DRAGON THEORY OF BACK PROBLEMS.

It is an old English custom (in English Medicine - certainly) to attribute all nasty problems and diseases to the French. (*laughter*) So I could call this THE FRENCH DRAGON THEORY OF BACK PROBLEMS! (*laughter*) I thought it had a nice ring to it, but I don't think it would fly in either the Canadian or American Journals of Medicine.

I came across a saying on a Hospital notice board:

"Genius does what it must -
talent does what it can!"

It has been Mr. Iyengar's genius to show the way in which impeccable use of the body is connected with impeccable use of the mind, whereby Asana becomes Prayer leading to the unity which is Yoga.

It behooves those of us who follow to use our talents as best we can. I do not believe that as a physician I cure anybody. I use my training and my talents to create the optimum conditions for people to heal themselves. I do believe that illness is a powerful signal for change, and that this change has to occur at many levels. In this sense I am a teacher, and Mr. Iyengar is a teachers' teacher.

The role of teacher isn't really new for physicians. I know it's not the current role in many cases, but if you think about the history of medicine going back itself thousands of years, then physicians played many roles. In one sense they were priests; they also played the role of teachers. At the moment we're very much concerned with being technologists, but I believe it's possible to be a blend of all three of those roles, and this would create the most beneficial healing state.

Perhaps, we have little choice. Cleanthes, a Greek philosopher of the Stoic school who lived about 300 B.C. (roughly around the same time as Patanjali) expressed this poetically :-

"Lead me O Zeus, and thou, O Destiny,
whithersoever I am ordained by you to go.
I will follow without hesitation,
and even if in evil mood, I would not,
none the less must I follow."

Seneca in Rome translated this into a much more
pithy saying :-

"Some follow the Gods willingly.
The rest are dragged!"

Being dragged is very harmful to the back!

Discussion of the Student/Teacher Relationship

by John Schumacher

In this newsletter I'll continue with the ongoing
discussion of the student/teacher relationship which
began last spring. Thus far I have talked about the
first two of the four issues I described as primary
aspects of the relationship: trust, respect,
personality and power. That brings us to the
question of personality.

Why am I considering personality as an important
issue in the student/teacher relationship? Primarily
because, rightly or wrongly, it colors much of the
interaction between the teacher and the student, and
also because it seems to be the source of much
confusion and dispute. What role does personality
play in the practice of Yoga and in the relationship
between student and teacher? What role should it
play? How much attention should we give it?

Since I have relied up to this point on Webster's II
New Riverside Dictionary to define terms. I'll
continue to do so. Personality is defined therein as
"(t)he distinctive qualities and traits of an
individual."

In Western society personality is very important.
We place a lot of emphasis on having a "good
personality". Indeed much of the vast
psychotherapy industry is concerned with helping
us get our personalities well-adjusted. We often
elevate our entertainers to "star" status because of
it. We choose many of our cultural heroes
according to it. Lots of us even elect our political
leaders largely as a result of how we perceive their
personalities. And of course a huge industry exists
to create the sort of image or personality that these
movers and shakers think we want to see.

In Yoga, however, personality is considered as
more of either an amusement or a nuisance than
anything else. The reason for this lies in the
definition: "the distinctive qualities and traits of an
individual."

The fundamental concern of Yoga being to develop
awareness of Reality and to establish us in our true
nature, pure consciousness, from the Yogic point of
view that which makes us "distinct" and

"individual", our personality, is actually the stuff of
illusion; it is unReal, Maya.

While on one level we are all unique as snowflakes,
on another level, just as each snowflake ultimately
finds its way to the ocean, Yoga says that we too
ultimately merge with the infinite ocean of Reality.
Still, before they slip into the sea, snowflakes can
both slick the streets and set the steeples asparkle.
Likewise, before we slip into the infinite ocean of
Reality, our and others' personalities can cause us to
cuddle or cringe. What we need to be careful about
to avoid confusion in our discussion is mixing
levels.

What does all this have to do with the
student/teacher relationship?

For the student it is tempting and commonplace to choose a teacher based on that teacher's personality. I like him/her, or I don't. There is actually some merit in choosing this way, at least in the beginning. If we choose someone we like, we are much more likely to be receptive to what they are offering. We'll hear what they say and follow their lead. But of much more importance is what the teacher knows and how well she/he can lead us toward a deeper experience of Yoga. Unfortunately, the ability to this well doesn't always go with a pleasing personality.

I'll use my experience with my teacher, Mr. Iyengar, as an example. As with my feelings towards everybody else in my life, there are things about Mr. Iyengar's personality that I like, and things I don't like. Actually for the most part I like his personality a lot. But plenty of people don't. Many people perceive him as temperamental, arrogant and harsh. In fact, that's very much how I saw him when I first studied with him. After I finished my first three week intensive, I was determined not to go back. Yet six months later I was writing to return to study with him again.

Why?

Because in that six months my yoga practice had changed more than at any other time during the eleven years I had been practicing. I didn't like him much (while at the same time being fascinated by him), but Mr. Iyengar had unquestionably made a remarkable difference in my practice and in me. A year later I was back in India. I have been back three times since then. My opinion of Mr. Iyengar's personality is much different than it was after that first visit. He still does things I don't like, but I have had enough time and experience with the man to come to love him. Even so, that is not the main reason I go back. The main reason I return is that each time I do my practice changes and grows significantly.

On the other side of the equation, teachers can be drawn and deterred by students' personalities. Truth be told, all of us who are teachers have students whom we like and students whom we don't like. Each of us bases our likes and dislikes on different reasons, but being human, we have our preferences. Again to use my relationship with Mr. Iyengar as an example, I think Mr. Iyengar, for whatever reason, likes me. When I am in his class, I get a lot of attention (a mixed blessing); he uses me to demonstrate things; he was willing to be a guest in my home. Similarly, I have students whom, for various reasons, I give more attention to, use to demonstrate things, talk with outside of class.

On the reverse side of the coin, I have seen Mr. Iyengar ignore or be obviously irritated with some students, and I confess to having responded to some of my students in similar fashion.

As I said, teachers are human, most of them anyway. But just as it is important for the student not to be swayed from the task at hand by the teacher's personality, it is just as important for the teacher not to be distracted by the student's personality. Both teacher and student must work, by being constantly observant and one-pointed, to see past the distraction of personality, delightful or irritating though it may be, and direct their eye and their energies toward recognizing and uncovering the Light that radiates from within.

John

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THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

is pleased to present

The 1993 Weekend Retreat at The Saltspring Centre

with

Shirley Daventry French

Friday, June 4, 6:00 pm thru Sunday, June 6, 2:00 pm

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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 many times to study at the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Pune. 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.

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and mail to: Celia Ward

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For further information, phone Celia at 388-7839

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Sunday, June 13

In this workshop we will get acquainted with the Bhagavad Gita and explore how its poetic and moving words can guide us in our own battlefield of life.

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For registration information contact:

Linda Singleton, Yoga Centre Toronto, 2428 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario M4P 2H4
Telephone (416)482-1334

YOGA CALENDAR

APRIL:

- 3: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.
- 24: Teachers meeting
- 24: Saturday morning in shoulderstand at Radha House.
- 30: Yoga Centre Gathering. Big Big Practice led by Shirley Daventry French.

MAY:

- 8: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.
- 9: Workshop at the Y with Leslie Hogya.
- 14-16: Dreams: Gifts of the Night. Workshop at Radha House.
- 29: Teachers meeting.

JUNE:

- 4-6: Iyengar Yoga Retreat on Saltspring Island with Shirley Daventry French.
- 13: A Day with the Bhagavad Gita at Radha House.
- 19-20: Rose Ceremony at Radha House.
- 26: Teachers meeting.

JULY:

- 3-9: Iyengar Yoga Summer Intensive led by Shirley Daventry French.

AUGUST:

- 16-20: Mr. Iyengar's visit to Toronto, Iyengar Yoga Convention.

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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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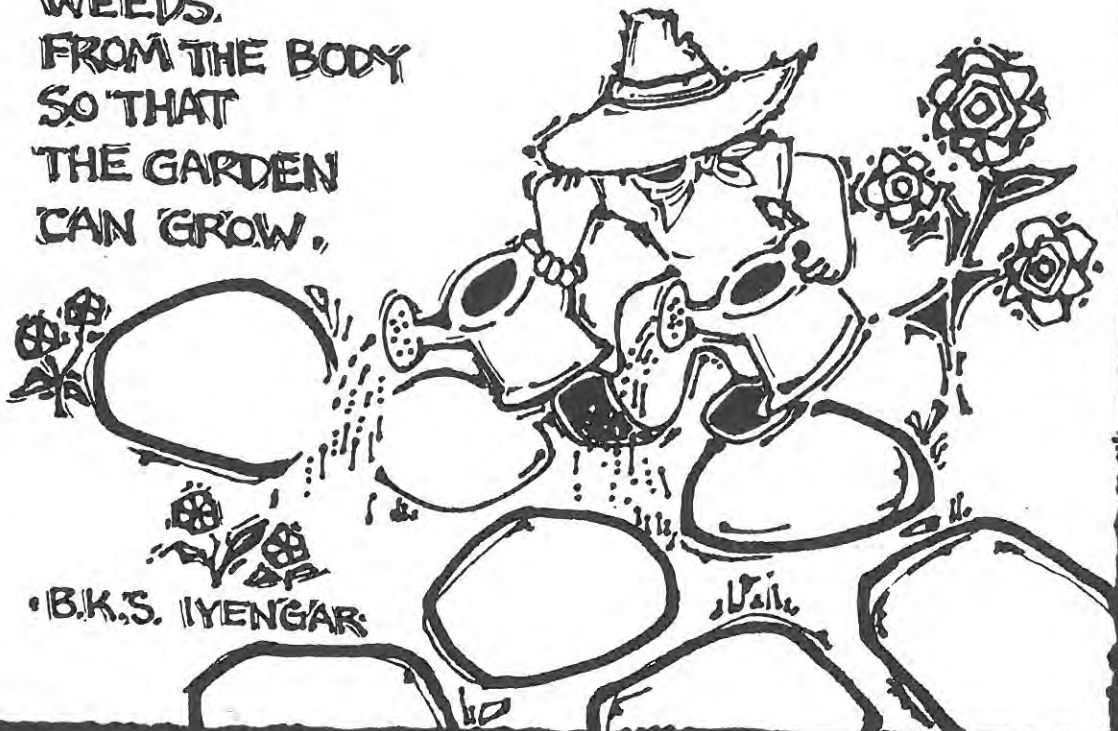
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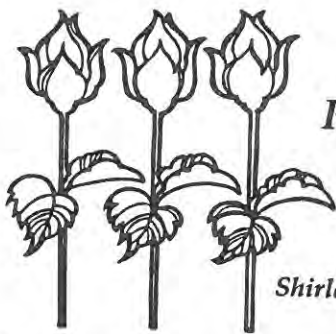
Newsletter

THIS PRACTICE OF YOGA
IS TO REMOVE
WEEDS.
FROM THE BODY
SO THAT
THE GARDEN
CAN GROW.



PLEASE SUBSCRIBE

MAY, 1993



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

"Karma-Yoga is a system of ethics and religion intended to attain freedom through unselfishness and by good works."

Swami Vivekananda.

T-shirts seem to come in large (which is sometimes called medium), larger and extra large. Small is a word which seems to have gone completely out of fashion. Even after I have washed them and attempted to shrink them in the dryer, most of my t-shirts come down almost to my knees. If I decide to tuck them into my tights (which is essential when going upside down, if you want to retain a modicum of modesty), they form an unsightly bulge around my hips. Apart from the appearance, this feels uncomfortable. To remedy the situation, most of my t-shirts need to be shortened - an easy task, but one which never seems to be a high priority on my agenda.

For some time I have had a row of t-shirts hanging in my closet which I did not wear because they were too long. One day I shortened one, which didn't take much time, and thought about shortening some others only to find I didn't have any thread in the right colours. I made a note to replenish my stock, but did nothing about it.

A couple of months ago we held a Goods and Services auction to raise funds for the yoga centre. One of my students who likes to sew, was offering to do some alterations. If I had been there I would

certainly have bid on this item, but I was out of town and didn't think to make an advance bid and grasp this opportunity.

After the auction, I was talking to this student and saying that I wished I had been there to bid for her services, explaining that I had all these t-shirts which needed to be shortened. "Bring them in," she said, "I'd love to do them for you! I like to sew, and yoga has given so much to me, I'd love the opportunity to give something back." Looking at her, I felt the offer was genuine. She seemed eager and enthusiastic, and for a moment I believed that she would actually enjoy doing this for me.

Then I went home and thought about it. I couldn't possibly accept her offer. I ought to do them myself, or at least pay someone to do this work.

The next week the topic came up again, my student repeated her offer. This time I said to her, "Do you really mean it?" and she said, "Yes", and again reiterated that yoga had done so much for her, she appreciated all the work I do in the yoga centre, and she would love the chance to do something in return. I told her, "There are quite a lot of them!" "Fine," she said, "just pin them to the length you want".

This time, when I went home, I went so far as to take the t-shirts out of the closet, tried one on, pinned it, thought about it, took out the pins, and put them all back in the closet.

Then I began to think about why it was so hard for me to accept what I truly believed was a sincere offer of help. I realised that this is a product of my upbringing which encouraged me to be independent, learn to rely on myself, and neither expect nor accept favours. Of course, it is important to become self-reliant and responsible, but it is a myth to believe that we can be totally independent.

Growing up in England, I learned how to politely reject most offers of help. I also learned that many of these offers were insincere. It was a game of manners. If someone, with a country home said: "You must come down and visit us", you knew that this was a figure of speech and not an invitation. If they said, "drop in anytime", you didn't sustain the idea for one second.

I had heard that things were different in North America, where people were much more gregarious, didn't lock their front doors (this was thirty years ago) and were always dropping in on each other. I wasn't sure I liked this idea, but Derek and I arrived in Victoria with the name and address of friends of a physician Derek worked with in London. In England, we would not have contacted them; but, we thought, Canada is different. One day Derek phoned this family, identified himself, and received a "how interesting" response which would have been equally at home in England. We never did get to meet.

Undeterred, a few years later, we took another risk. While skiing in the state of Washington, we met an American couple and spent several pleasant après-ski evenings in their company. They had a cabin at this ski resort, and assured us that we were welcome guests there anytime - *anytime!* So when we were planning another ski trip to this same area, we discussed the possibility of taking them up on their offer. All our conditioning said, don't do it, they didn't really mean it. On the other hand, they are Americans, they are different, they are really hospitable, over here people do things like this, we must try and adapt to this culture. So we phoned them.

It was obvious they didn't remember us. There was an awkward pause and, faced with an embarrassing situation, they told us the cabin would be full that weekend with family members. Saving our red faces as best we could, we did a tactical withdrawal, and vowed not to make this mistake again. Americans were not so different, after all!

Is it a mistake to take someone at their word? Is it a rejection when you find they did not really mean what they said, but were only being polite? How do you ever know if you don't take a risk?

The row of t-shirts continued to haunt me every time I opened the closet. One day I decided to take what would be an unusual step for me, and accept this offer to shorten them. Having pinned them to the appropriate length, I put them in a holdall ready to take to the next class. But I didn't do it. They sat there for another week before I decided this was ridiculous, and gave them to my student who did not seem at all fazed.

That same day I was having lunch with Swami Padmamanda from Yasodhara Ashram who was in Victoria for a few days. I told her about the t-shirt saga, and how difficult it had been for me to accept this offer of help. She laughed, and said she understood very well from her own experience, and that it was really a form of pride. "You don't mind helping others, do you?" I replied that I didn't, and, in fact, often went out of my way to do so. I could also see that I do a lot of work in the yoga community, and, as a part of that community, wasn't it just as important to allow others the opportunity to offer a service and practise karma yoga.

Swami Padmananda told me a story about a recent struggle she had had with a similar problem. She has assumed the role and duties of President of Yasodhara Ashram, and has taken on a great deal of work and responsibility. Recently she moved into new quarters at the Ashram, and Swami Radha told her she should get someone to clean the apartment for her, telling her that she had earned this privilege. What me, she thought, I've always done my own work. I couldn't ask someone else to do that for me. Then she realised that this was a form of false pride. If she gave in to her reluctance to accept help, at the same time she would be denying another member of the Ashram the opportunity to

do some selfless service or karma yoga. She acquiesced to Swami Radha's suggestion, and arranged for someone else to do the housework.

For those who have no fondness for housework, this might seem to be an easy occasion to surrender, but pride reveals itself in many disguises in a variety of situations. It can be a matter of pride to be rich or poor, humble or elitist, always able to cope, always needing help. Perhaps the only form of pride which is acceptable, is pride in a job well done - as long as we let go of that immediately after the feeling emerges and has been experienced.

For instance, if you are a teacher, and someone whose opinion you respect tells you afterwards that that was a good class, it's not a problem if you simply accept this gracefully. But if you hold on to this compliment, and keep repeating it afterwards either outwardly to others, or even silently in your own head, then pride has gained the upper hand.

As Swami Padmananda and I talked on these and other matters, we laughed at ourselves, the silly games we play, and the obstacles we place in our own way. It is not hard to accept offers to do work for the ashram or yoga centre; this is impersonal. Personal favours are more difficult to accept, which is strange when this acceptance frees us up to do some other work in yoga. There is always plenty to go round. Whether it's cleaning an apartment, doing alterations, teaching, writing, administration, accounting, or any of the myriad jobs which sustain the work of an ashram in the country or a yoga centre in the city, if these jobs are done in the true spirit of karma yoga - they are all of equal value.

This article is written with gratitude to Betty McLachlan for helping me overcome one of my obstacles, and for her very substantial gift of shortening fourteen t-shirts in the spirit of karma yoga.

REFLECTIONS

*Memories surround me, flood me, float,
Coloured prisms that reflect
radiant days of years gone by.*

*Memories like faded photographs
pasted to mirrors reflecting
days which dim with time's unyielding passage.*

*Smiling faces, brown bodies baking in the sun,
Shrieks from my brave children who dive
into cold depths of icy water,
Ducks float by like bath tub toys.*

*My canoe slips past rocky shores,
dark pines, sun lit beaches,
cottages hidden in the woods,
Stops for otters to watch their hide and seek.*

*Evening air alive with birdsong, crickets and frogs,
Strange----jungle sounds so far north!
Breezes whisper messages through luminous leaves,
Moonlit sky casts light across sleeping water.*

*Inside our home,
halos of lamps light interiors,
reflect against cedar beams.
Echoes of laughter and song cheer the dark.
Firelight warms the walls and our spirits.*

*Those days are gone forever.
Those memories find a home in my heart.*

*Where is the dividing line between joy and sadness
when memories and reflections of those years
evoke both smiles and tears?*

*Betty McLachlan
Victoria, March, 1993*



THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

is pleased to present

The 1993 Weekend Retreat at The Saltspring Centre

with

Shirley Daventry French

Friday, June 4, 6:00 pm thru Sunday, June 6, 2:00 pm

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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 many times to study at the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Pune. 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

Dear Victoria Yoga Community

As many of you know, our daughter, Nicola Benn, recently died of cancer.

Nicola was a vibrant and generous spirit and we miss her very much. A very healing memorial was held at the Victoria Y's Camp Thunderbird near Sooke. It was a beautiful day to be in the woods and many of those who attended took time to explore this wonderful facility, Glinz Lake and numerous pathways.

A fire warmed the dining hall where Jim Leggat and many other of Nicola's former camp buddies had set up chairs and arranged greenery and spring flowers. They even had a bed set up for Don, my husband, who was immobilized by a back problem. Nicola's manager at Ocean River Sports, James Malcolm, helped organize the informal afternoon. Several of Nicola's musical friends played her favourite music and others spoke of their friendship with Nicola. I've never been hugged by so many kind people, we didn't realize that we had so many supportive friends.

The reason I am writing this letter is to say how grateful we are for all the support we have received during Nicola's illness and after her death. The yoga community especially stood by me. Several yoga colleagues attended and helped with the refreshments at the memorial. Shirley Daventry French creatively led over 200 people in the Divine Light Invocation. I know that the practice of yoga gave me the strength to go through this ordeal and to speak at the memorial.

Many times I had to call on other yoga teachers to cover my classes and always there was someone there for me. The yoga students not only forgave me for the disturbances to their classes but they sent cards and baking and much support. Everyone asked if they could help in any way but there wasn't a lot I could request of them. Just knowing that so many people cared gave some balance to the distress. I think that I have learned to accept help more gracefully. I am particularly grateful to those who offered help but not more confusing advice. All the yoga people fell into that group.

I have learned much about illness, life, death and myself. I highly recommend a book written by Ken Wilber in conjunction with his wife, Treya, "Grace and Grit".

Once again, Thank you all.

Linda Benn and family



Nicola Benn Sponsorship Fund for the Wilderness Experience Program

The Nicola Benn Sponsorship Fund has been created to recognize Nicola Benn's love of children and the out of doors. The Benn family and YM-YWCA Camp Thunderbird felt that the sponsorship would be a suitable way to recognize Nicola and her achievements in life.

Nicola spent many of her formative years at Camp Thunderbird, first as a camper and from 1985 to 1989 as a staff member. Nicola was committed to the resident camp experience and the potential for personal growth for program participants. Nicola was an active and committed member of the Camp Staff and alumni.

The sponsorship fund has been created to honour and recognize Nicola Benn's contributions to all people she touched. The fund is designed to carry on into the future and will be a lasting memorial for Nicola Benn.

Each year a designated amount of funds will be allocated to sponsor young adults into the Wilderness Experience Program, a 12-day wilderness program (ea) West Coast Trail, Ocean Kayaking, Canoe Tripping.

Donations can be made out to the Victoria YM-YWCA c/o Nicola Benn Sponsorship Fund. Receipts will be issued. To make a donation, people can donate in person or by mail to:

Nicola Benn Sponsorship Fund
c/o Victoria YM-YWCA
880 Courtney Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8W 1C4

Phone: 386-7511
Fax: 380-1933



THE IYENGAR YOGA INTENSIVE VICTORIA, 1992

Reflecting on last year's Intensive, the following words of Jessica Sluymer come to mind. Instructing us in Savasana, she offered this truth: "The body believes every word it hears".

In yoga, one of the beliefs is that the body is a crystallization of the mind. What we think, how we feel about ourselves, how we perceive the world around us - all of this solidifies in our bodies. As we practice yoga, we begin to 'decrystallize' this mass - releasing held energies, reprogramming our bodies and minds, bringing Light into the dark hollows of our being.

The 1992 Iyengar Yoga Intensive was a week tailored to facilitate this change on every level. Twenty students were offered a full week of focused action; a chance to expand spiritual and mental awareness and explore body knowledge through the work of Yoga. The experience was a rich one: Iyengar Yoga was synchronized with the teachings of Swami Radha's Hidden Language as well as Pranayama, the Yoga Sutras, Yoga Psychology and Philosophy and the medical aspects of Yoga. For me, it was a wonderful marriage of body, mind and spirit.

Shirley Daventry French brought her wealth of experience to the workshop through the precise and challenging work of Iyengar Yoga. Jessica Sluymer, representing the teachings of Swami Radha and Yasodhara Ashram, led us in exploring the symbolic aspects of the asanas through the work of Hidden Language, the practice of the Divine Light Invocation and through a discussion about the ancient yogic text, The Bhagavad Gita. Dr. Derek French added his expertise in the instruction of the muscular-skeletal aspects of Hatha Yoga as well as offering specific exercises for back and neck problems.

I have come to understand that personal evolution is a process that takes a long time; perhaps many lifetimes. Practising Yoga is not just a physical exercise; it is a slow revealing of our inherent Divinity. Sometimes, however, we are offered 'a greenhouse' where our learning is intensified. This may come in the form of a Guru, a Teacher, a Workshop, or from others who are seeking the same self-understanding that we are. I have received a wealth of help in my journey of consciousness. Clearly, the 1992 Iyengar Yoga Intensive was one of them.

Margaret Feehan
Victoria





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



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Shirley Daventry French, Jessica Sluymer and Dr. Derek French

- Daily classes in Asana and Pranayama•
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Shirley is a student of the Yoga Master, B.K.S. Iyengar, and one of Canada's leading teachers of his method of yoga. Jessica is a student of Swami Radha, and the director of Radha House, a spiritual centre in Victoria. Derek is a physician who has practised yoga for many years and seeks to integrate the ancient wisdom of yoga with the practice of modern medicine.

For out of town students: Victoria is a popular tourist centre with a wide selection of hotels and motels. The Residence at the Y has a limited amount of inexpensive accommodation for women. Billets will also be available with members of the local yoga community.

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



Food took on a tremendous importance while I was travelling last October on my journey to India. Food is important to me at any time! I was born into a family of people who cook well and appreciate fine food. My parents often plan the dinner menu while eating breakfast. In my home, I have cooked the majority of the meals for the last 27 years and spend a lot of time shopping and considering what will be good.

When I travelled half way around the world to work intensely physically, mentally and emotionally to face myself in many ways, it is no wonder meal time became a focus. Everything was different: the people, the culture, the climate, expectations, routines, time zones, the heavy demand of classes. So to face a menu filled with unfamiliar foods day after day sometimes got to be too much (What is a Kulcha anyway?).

Usually I think of myself as a fairly adaptable person and I am willing to try new foods. I have travelled a lot and have had strange dishes, such as Egusi soup, placed in front of me and I ate it (in Nigeria).

However, on this trip I had a few moments when I regressed to the petulant stage of a two year old who only wants peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in a Szechuan restaurant.



Tea is served to Leslie on the balcony of her Pune hotel.

The first incident happened early on in the trip - very early. The first evening in Singapore, in fact! (Or did we arrive the night before and was it really breakfast time in Canada? - who knows, after 17 hours of flying and a day across the date line, no wonder I was petulant!)

We had spent most of the day walking through old Singapore and exploring the Chinese market. Then we travelled across town on buses and walked some more with our Lonely Planet Guide to good restaurants tucked under our arm. Finally, we arrived at a Cantonese vegetarian restaurant and sat down in a rather starkly lit and austere room. Menus were presented. I looked and looked and turned the pages and re-read it. There was nothing I wanted to eat. And I was hungry! This Cantonese cook's idea of vegetarian fare was to make everything taste like it was made of meat. They take some gelatinous

substance and add heaven knows what to flavor it so that it tastes like port. One of the reasons I stopped eating meat was because I no longer liked how it tastes. I sat there, I could feel my cheeks turning red as everyone took a turn ordering. I wanted to cry, I wanted to go home, I wanted peanut butter and jelly!

Pune was easier. All the preceding Iyengar students have found a myriad of good restaurants to choose from. We settled into a routine of tea and toast for breakfast and walking into Savera or some other favorite place for lunch. Ann Kilbertus was a great source of inspiration because she had travelled previously in India and unravelled the mysteries of some foods like Dai Wada.

There were even places that knew how to make grilled cheese sandwiches. A particularly good snack bar near our hotel made the best ones and when I craved comfort food that's where I would head. Plus there were the fancier hotels with things like baked beans on toast or french fries.

Travelling again across rural India, after the Intensive, brought out my regressive behaviour. By the time we arrived in Madras I hit my lowest point in terms of health. I had had a splitting headache for 24 hours and my stomach was upset. We went to dinner in a very nice hotel with pool, elegant shops, women dressed in silk saris, live music on the sitar. I opened the menu and was faced with aloo gobi. I forced myself not to go into hysterics. Where was the pasta, the pesto, the romaine lettuce? I took a deep breath and managed to keep from having a major melt down.

The day before we had eaten aloo gobi (which is cauliflower and something) in quite different circumstances. Driving along the India sub-continent, wrapped in turbans to keep the dust from choking us, we searched for a long while for a promising place to eat. Finally we saw a billboard advertising a garden restaurant. Our driver pulled into the yard and we were greeted and escorted from the car by a tall, thin, greying, elegant looking



Fish for sale in Singapore market.

gentleman. His clothes were faded and worn, but he carried himself with pride, a towel over one arm. We stepped into the yard and the ducks and hens flapped and fluttered around our feet as he walked us proudly to his establishment. He ushered us into a bleak cavern and turned on two giant air conditioners. We found ourselves abandoned in a windowless room, walls covered in grey, bare tables and spindly chairs. The room smelled of mildew and didn't look to have been used in the last decade or so. After a few stunned minutes of perusing the menu we ventured out into the day light and sat in the outer room. Finally, Linda Shevloff said, "I thought this was a garden restaurant. Let's see if we can sit in the garden."

Low and behold what looked like anaemic spindly plants in the front of the building turned out to be the garden. There were tables walled in separately by these plants and, with great ceremony, we were placed at one, chairs were produced and the table given a hint of a wipe. Ann, Linda and I looked around and shook our heads in disbelief, then ordered our aloo gobi. It wasn't bad. Our elegant owner served it up himself in the English fashion with two spoons, one on top of the other. It seemed expensive for being out in the middle of nowhere. I think the bill was two or three dollars or 80 rs. Everything is relative.

As we waved goodbye to the fading Don Quixote figure, we laughed for quite a while and realized we had most likely made his day, or possibly his month. Probably he kept the place going from our receipt for a good long while.



(II.16) *Heyam duhkham anagatam*

The pain which is to come can be avoided.

You do not know what pitfalls lie ahead. There are nine types of diseases. They are physical diseases, mental diseases and spiritual diseases. They are described in sutra I.30. The last of these is *Anavasthitatva* (failure to maintain a level). You have reached the light, the seasoned intelligence has taken you to within sight of the soul and the Self has engulfed your body but you must recognize the possibility of falling from that state. You may lose the power you have gained: you may become a beginner once more if you lose that vision.

If you want an example, I will give you one. What about Rajneesh? You all know what heights he went to and where he ended up! He reached a certain state (*avastha*) and then he thought, "I have everything" and he forgot. He fell from that height but he would not accept his downfall and come all the way down to start once again from the base. That was his failure. There are so many examples of evolved souls who have fallen. They had genius but they did not keep cultivating it. The second chapter is for them as well.

Reprinted from Dipika, Journal of the Iyengar Yoga Institute, London, England. No. 24 January 1993.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE



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For registration information contact:

Linda Singleton, Yoga Centre Toronto, 2428 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario M4P 2H4
Telephone (416)482-1334



*Patanjali, surrounded by serpents
who are the guardians of esoteric lore.*

PATANJALI

I salute Patanjali, the revered sage,
Who brought Yoga for serenity of mind,
Grammar for clarity of speech, and
Medicine for purification of the body.

I salute Patanjali,
Whose upper body has a human form
Who holds a conch and discus in his hands, and
Who is crowned by the thousand headed shining
cobra.

The sage Patanjali, the "father of Yoga", lived in India approximately 2,200 years ago. A great scholar and philosopher, he was the author of classical treatises on Yoga philosophy (The Yoga Sutras), Sanskrit grammar (the Mahabhasya) and Indian medicine (Ayurveda). Patanjali showed his mastery of Yoga and language by codifying the entire Yoga system (Darsana) in just 196 sutras.

Tribute is made to Patanjali in the above traditional sloka (verse). The second verse describes Patanjali's symbolic form. The thousand headed cobra represents infinity, the conch calls us to Yoga practice and the disc symbolizes the wheel of time and the law of cause and effect. In reciting the sloka we pay respect to the three aspects of Patanjali's work - Yoga, Pada Shastra (grammar), and Ayurveda - and to Patanjali himself.

PEARLS OF WISDOM THE YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI

*Yogena cittasya padena vacam
Malam sarirasya ca vaidyakena
Yoga karottam pravaram muninam
Patanjalim pranjalir anato'smi*

*Abahu purusa karam
Sankha cakrasi dharinam
Sahasra sirasam svetam
Pranamami Patanjalin*

PHOTO
CREDIT: ENCYCLOPEDIA DICTIONARY OF YOGA
by GEORGE FEUERSTEIN
published by
PARAGON HOUSE

Friends, to speak on the subject of Patanjali's sutras is not easy. As you all know it is a concise and concentrated book. Without Patanjali's blessings it is difficult to penetrate the essence of his words. But today is a happy day, and you have a chance to learn about this great book. So may the blessings of Lord Patanjali be on you, may his wisdom dawn on you, so that the flash of his understanding may come to you.

My request to you all is, when you start your classes, if you cannot attempt the recitation of the Sanskrit original, that you recite the translation of this Patanjali *sloka*. In this way we may invoke his presence at the thime of our practices. We do this for the simple reason that he is the father of Yoga. I have become convinced after many years of practice that we should think of this great founder who gave us grammar for right speech, medicine for health and Yoga for the mind so that our minds may be tuned to the good thoughts of this great man.

Before I start, you should know a little of the background of Patanjali. He is said to have been born some time between 800 and 200 B.C. Nobody can give the exact date because in India, the dates of the lives of the great sages were always given approximately. Similarly in some of the books they say Patanjali was born in Chidambaram in South India and some say he was born in Bengal. Nobody knows for sure but everywhere there is a temple of Patanjali, all over the south and all over the north.

Patanjali is a *svayambhu* (*svaya* - *ambhu* - with one's own will-power). He came into existence by his own will. He has no parents and, according to Indian mythology, he is the incarnation of Lord Adisesha. Adisesha is a great King Cobra who gives his body as a seat for Lord Vishnu. It is said that once Lord Shiva, king of dance, invited Lord Vishnu and other deities to see his famous dance, Tandava Nrtya. As Lord Shiva danced, Lord Vishnu's body began to vibrate to the graceful movements of Lord Shiva. As Lord Vishnu was seated on Adisesha, the great cobra

became breathless under the weight and started to gasp for air. When the dance came to an end Adisesha asked the Lord, "How is it that you were so heavy when you were dancing, and as soon as the dance stopped you became light?" He replied, "I was so completely engrossed in the movements that my nerves and body vibrated as if I was myself dancing. That is why you felt it". Seeing how impressed the Lord was with the dance, Adisesha decided to learn dance himself. (That is why many dancers in India say that Patanjali is also the father of dance). However, Lord Vishnu said, "You must wait. Lord Shiva is going to ask you to do some work. At that time you can be incarnated on the Earth and then you can learn dance." That time arrived and Lord Shiva asked him to write a commentary on grammar. Adisesha saw that his master Lord Vishnu's prediction had come true and he accepted. Then he looked for a woman who was both a yogini and a *tapasvini* (one who had done much yoga and fervent penance) to be his mother. He waited to find the right person, someone who would allow his goals to be fulfilled. After some time he found a lady called Gonika who had no children and who had done penance for several years. She was praying to the rising sun, saying, "My time has come to an end and whatever knowledge I have gathered it was only through you, O Sun God. So, as I have no son or daughter to pass it on to, I return my knowledge to you". She took some water to offer as an oblation, and she closed her eyes to pray. Then as she opened her eyes to make her offering of water to mother Earth, she saw a small worm moving in the water in her palms. She was terrified and said, "What polluted water I have taken!" Then immediately the worm began to take human form and begged the yogini to accept him as her son. She was astonished that he could speak and she accepted him as her son.

This story is the origin of Patanjali's name - *pata* means snake or fallen and *anjali* refers to the folding of the hands during prayer; thus Patanjali means "in the form of a snake that fell into the palms at the time of prayer".

As he grew Gonika became more and more impressed by the boy and she passed on her knowledge to him. Eventually Patanjali completed his first duty, the commentary on grammar. It is very hard nowadays to imagine how one man could be a master of grammar, a master of medicine and a master of yoga. Because of this some Western scholars have conjectured that Patanjali, the author of the grammar which was based on the work of the grammarian Panini must have been the son of Panini. However that is not so according to the Indian tradition.

Next, Patanjali determined to learn dance because he wanted to please his master. As he was learning dance, the idea struck him that the various movements of the body could be used for the improvement of health. The name of the system he then devised is Ayurveda: Ayus means life and veda means knowledge, so Ayurveda is the knowledge of health, not the knowledge of medicine. This is an important distinction. (Patanjali was also the writer of *Sushruta Samhita* which deals with the surgical branch of Indian medicine.) He realised the value of health through dance and he produced a book on the subject of "life" or "energy" and thus gave us the "knowledge of life".

When he had finished these two great works he was very unhappy; he thought, "I have given the grammar for the use of right words and I have shown various ways to develop health, but I have not said anything about cultivating the mind. Some commentators say this is why the first sutra, *Atha Yoga anusasanam* begins with the word *atha* which means "now". Some people translate this sutra as "Now, the exposition of Yoga", interpreting the "now" to mean that Yoga had not been in existence before. But Patanjali was not creating Yoga; instead, he was bringing what had been in the past into the present. In this sutra "now" does not indicate a new idea. It is like in our classes, when we say, "Now, come on, do *Trikonasana*." or "Now, do *Parsvakonasana*!" Don't we say that? This use of the word "now" is to bring the hearer's attention to the present situation. So Patanjali was bringing the

attention of his readers to a past tradition which had been evaded or neglected. Also, in the original language *anusasanam* did not mean exposition (as it is usually translated in English), but referred to the oral tradition of the sages (sayings passed down). *Sasana* also means "code of law", like the law codes of this world. However, this book is a code for human spiritual development and contains directed instructions for a code of living, a code of conduct. So, the sutras begin, "Now, what is the code of conduct?"

So Patanjali thought, "I have dealt with two parts of the body, how to speak and how to keep the body healthy; now let me speak about the mind. Then he integrated the different texts referring to Yoga which are scattered among the different Vedas and Upanishads and he systematized them and presented Yoga as a subject which would be comprehensible for those who are truly interested. Then, when the book was finished he disappeared from this world, in order to please his master and to dance before him and so this ancient text has survived to this day. As I said, there is still discussion about the exact date of its writing, but as students of Yoga we are concerned about what Patanjali said, not when he was born.

THE YOGA SUTRAS

The Yoga Sutras are the seed for the total growth of a human being and in the first three sutras, Patanjali sums up the essence of the whole work.

(1.1) *Atha Yoga anusasanam*

(1.2) *Yoga citta vrtti nirodhah*

(1.3) *Tada drastub svarupa avasthanam*

As I said, *anusasanam* is a code, a discipline. What do you develop through this discipline? You are able to restrain the mind (1.2). But how can the mind (*citta*) be restrained (*nirodhah*)? It is uncontrollable, thoughts are uncontrollable. Before we can begin to control the mind, we must first understand the functioning of the mind. This understanding will come as we discover the profound meaning of the terms that Patanjali uses in this first sutra.

Patanjali concludes this summary by saying that when the mind is restrained, the core of the being surfaces and rests in its abode (1.3). This is like the cobra which does not raise its hood unless it is awakened. Usually the mind prevents the hood of the self from surfacing. And that is why the mind must be restrained because only then can the soul (*drastuh*) be awoken and brought to the surface. The moment the mind is successfully restrained you enter a state of beatitude and freedom because the mind is dissolved in the seat of the soul and the soul acts directly.

It is very simple. In three sutras he has covered the whole subject. Then why the hundred and ninety extra sutras? The ancient texts of India always began with the conclusion and then moved onto the elaboration. Books today are quite different; we begin at the base and move towards the summit. In ancient books the initial summary was there to attract the intellectuals, to allow them the freedom to ponder its meaning, and then to draw them into the main text.

Anusasanam in the first sutra is intimately related to *yama* and *niyama*. Patanjali explains later that these ethical disciplines are involved in the character building of *anusasanam*. We are made up of three *gunas* (qualities), *tamas* *rajas* and *sattva*. The mind is sometimes dull, sometimes vibrant and sometimes serene. You have all experienced these states. They come in a flash and disappear in a flash. Patanjali explains that how through the science of Yoga we can learn to free our mind from the states of inertia and vibration and keep it everlastingly in a state of serenity. In order to maintain that serenity, what methods should we practise? To explain this, Patanjali has arranged the sutras in four chapters. In order, they are, *Samadhi Pada*, *Sadhana Pada*, *Vibhuti Pada*, and *Kaivalya Pada*.

CHAPTER 1 - SAMADHI PADA

First let us examine the first *pada* (chapter) *Samadhi Pada*. *Samadhi* contains two words *sa* means "alike", "similar", "auspiciousness", "goodness", and "virtue" and *adhi* means "the base". When Patanjali says in sutra 1.3 that the core of the being should be awoken so that it finds its true seat, it follows that the virtuousness of that core should be diffused throughout the body, it should illuminate our fibres, our blood cells and our nerve cells. That is the meaning of *Samadhi*, not merely "trance". *Adhi* refers to the core of our being which is the base of our existence, and in *Samadhi* the goodness of this core fills the entire human system. So the first chapter, *Samadhi Pada*, deals with these internal practices (*antaranga sadhana*) and it is very difficult to understand these on the normal intellectual level.

CITTA

So why did he choose to talk about the most difficult subject first? He begins by defining the fundamental terms. Therefore he must first explain the constitution and functioning of the *citta*. I feel this is especially important for Westerners, because the Indian sages distinguish between several different aspects of what Westerners just refer to as "mind". *Citta* includes three different aspects of the human being, which I have called "mind", "intelligence" and "consciousness".

Suppose the mind dominates the entire brain. Then the intelligence and consciousness are compressed, while the mind is enlarged and appears to be the whole of the brain. Suppose, however, you are given some deep thought to think about. Then the intelligence swamps the brain whilst the mind and the consciousness are compressed. However, if you are totally absorbed in something without the functioning of the mind or the intelligence, then it is the consciousness which appears like a ray of light shining from the soul.

This is where Westerners fail to distinguish between the various compartments of the "mind". For them it is all the same. But Indians have precisely described the mind as the outer cover of the intelligence, the intelligence as the outer cover of the consciousness, and the consciousness as the outer cover of the soul. These are the three inner layers of the five layers they call the *annamayakosha*, *pranamayakosha*, *manomayakosha*, *vijnanamayakosha* and the *anandamayakosha* - which I am sure you are all familiar with - the anatomical body, physiology body, psychological body, intellectual body and the causal body.

CITTA - VRTTI: THE FLUCTUATIONS IN CONSCIOUSNESS

These three layers - mind, intelligence, consciousness - that make up the citta all have their origin in the soul; they "sprout" from the soul. These different aspects of the citta create *virtis* - usually translated as "thought waves". It is the presence of these thought waves that creates what we term a "disturbed state of mind". Patanjali analyses these thought waves and divides them into five types (1.5 - 1.11). You can experience thought waves by direct contact (with objects), through the reception of ideas or where the mind works together with the senses to ensure correct perception (because sometimes the senses of perception can misperceive).

These are known collectively as *pratyaya*, the first type of *virtti*. The second *virtti* is known as *viparyaya*. Here the senses of perception deceive us. The example often given is of the observer who claims that the rabbit he is watching has horns. In the same way a jaundiced personality cannot see colours correctly. The senses are not well trained and wrong perceptions arise in the form of various thought waves. The third type is *vikalpa*, "misconception". In this case, although the senses of perception work, the mind cannot conceive correctly and thought waves are produced according to those misconceptions. The fourth *virtti* is *nidra*, sleep. In sleep everything is silent. If there is no silence, sleep will not come. It is only when you wake up that you

remember your existence, "Oh, I slept well". However that "I" is the witness who remained throughout. The yogi says that you must search for that part of you which witnessed your sleep. In this way a *virtti* can be a guide to understanding. *Nidra* should not be confused with dream. Patanjali uses the word *abhava* - "*bhava*" means existence, "*a*" is the negative. There is no feeling of existence, only emptiness; so Patanjali is referring to deep sleep. For the ordinary person the part of their experience which is nearest to the state of *samadhi* is sleep. In sleep there is no pain. Even a cancer patient sleeps. During sleep he or she is not aware that she has cancer. It is only when she awakes that the impressions return, "I am a cancer patient!" So sleep is the highest state that an ordinary individual encounters. If we can retain that mind free of fluctuations in our waking life; if we can achieve "consciousness sleep", then that is *samadhi*!

The last *virtti* is *smrti* - memory. According to Patanjali, memory is both a friend and an enemy, a hindrance and a help. Later on Patanjali talks of the profound level of memory (1.20), but here he is referring to the superficial functioning of memory. He explains that this memory consists of the imprints which come from the other four *virttis*, direct perception, misperception, misconception and unconsciousness. How do you bring to the surface your past experience of these states? By using the memory. Can you use your memory to recollect these experiences and use them to cultivate yourself and bring illumination? This does not mean that you stay in those experiences. You use them as a springboard to move on from those previous experiences. That is the transformation of thought waves that takes place through *smrti*. So *smrti* must be understood in connection with the other four *virttis*.

VRTT

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VRTTIS AND THEIR ASSOCIATED KLESAS

Patanjali goes on to say that as there are five kinds of vrttis, so there are also five kinds of pain and five kinds of pleasure associated with them. The vrttis can be painful (*klishtha*) or pleasurable (*aklishtha* - literally "non-painful"). (However it is more complicated than that since a pleasurable thought wave can sometimes result in pain and similarly a painful one in pleasure). We must then ask ourselves, "But what are these five pains and five pleasures?" The five pains are explained, fifty one sutras later, in the second chapter. There he defines the five *kleshas* (11.3). *Klesha* is derived from the same root as *klishtha* and although it is usually translated as "affliction", has essentially the same meaning. You will see how difficult the Yoga sutras are to understand; how the different parts of the work are interrelated in a complex way.

Avidya, the first klesha, means "ignorance". He means specifically the ignorance of right understanding and spiritual knowledge. *Asmita* refers to the attitude of the know-all who, as someone is telling him something, before the speaker can even finish, says, "Oh, there is nothing to that, I know that!" These two - *asmita* and *avidya* - are intellectual defects, intellectual diseases, intellectual pains. The next two are *raga* and *dvesha* - "attachment" and "aversion", respectively. The order he puts them in is important for joy leads to attachment and attachment then leads to hatred and pain. Patanjali describes the process but how do we avoid attachment in the first place? We must develop equipoise of mind. Otherwise we will develop these emotional and mental problems, which are now termed psychosomatic and psychological diseases. We run to the psychoanalysts for help. But we must be our own psychoanalyst and get to grips with the problems of *avidya*, *asmita*, *raga* and *dvesa* within ourselves. That is what Patanjali is saying.

The last klesha is *abhinivesa* (attachment to life). This is an instinctive defect. We know that sometimes the instincts rise to the surface. The yogi must transform this instinctive knowledge into interior knowledge - the core of being. What does intuition mean? It is tuition from inside. What teaches us from the inside? It isn't our intelligence but something beyond that. It is knowledge communicated directly from the cells. This is intuition. So, by this process, instinct disappears and is transformed into intuitive knowledge. So when the yogic sadhana has conquered the cells then all the vrttis are stopped.

ABHYASA -VAIRAGYA: PRACTICE AND RENUNCIATION

How do we stop these vrttis? Let us return to the first chapter. In sutras 1.12 - 1.16 Patanjali says that we accomplish this by practice and renunciation. But why does the idea of renunciation appear so soon? Surely this is not practical? How can the uncontrolled mind be renounce? It is uncontrollable, is it not? So how can we renounce it? Patanjali has given the answer to this in the fourth sutra.

(1.4) *Vrtti sarupyam itaratra*
(Otherwise the consciousness is involved in the fluctuations).

Through restraining the mind you reach that exalted state in which you see the soul but you cannot maintain this state. The mind likes to be supreme, to have control, and as the mind reasserts itself, the *atman* (absolute consciousness) recedes. Like a powerful magnet that draws iron ore, the mind draws the self towards the thoughts. Patanjali says you must renounce that. As soon as you renounce this pulling of the self by the mind towards the thought waves, then consciousness will draw the mind towards the soul. Then there is a distance from the thought waves. If the soul goes towards the mind, you are trapped; but if the mind goes towards the soul, you are free.

This process is known as *abhyasa - vairagya* (practice and renunciation). These two aspects cannot be separated. You have to go on practising. What must you practise? He has not described any practice yet. He is referring to *anusasanam*, the code of conduct, discipline. As I said, *yama* and *niyama* are *guna vrtti nirodhah*. By conquering your habitual patterns of behaviour, your character you stabilize the mind. If the character is stabilized so is the mind. This is the important connection that Patanjali makes.

Now what is the practice?

(1.14) *Sa tu dirgha kala nairantarya satkara asevito drdha bhumih.*

When the effort is continued without interruption, for a long period and with devotion, the foundation of practice becomes established.

Everybody who comes here asks, "How long do I have to do Yoga before I experience these things? When will I achieve self-realization?" Isn't that so? Patanjali has already answered these questions. Uninterrupted practice, for a long time, with dedication and devotion makes the foundation firm. He doesn't speak of the final goal. He talks about the base. What is that base? He means that state in which the mind, which is the origin of all disturbances becomes stable. He does not speak of *samadhi* but of stability.

And when that stability comes, you can control the mind. He uses the word *vasikara*, which means keeping a grip (1.15). So, keeping a grip on that state is *vairagya*. *Vairagya* is negative as *abhyasa* is positive. In the same way *yama* is "what not to do" while *niyama* is "what to do". So *vairagya* is to be free from attachment. In the second chapter he describes how happiness leads to *raga* (attachment) (II.7). *Vairagya* is to stay free from that *raga*. Again do you see the intricate connection between the chapters? But we must not jump about too much. However, it is good that you see how the different chapters are intertwined and that you understand

how this makes an exposition of them very difficult. So *abhyasa-vairagya* is the practice of methods to keep the mind closer to the soul than to the body.

TYPES OF PRACTITIONER

Patanjali says that there are four types of practitioner (*sadhaka*), *mrddhu*, *madhya*, *adhimatratvat* (I.22) - feeble, average and keen and *tivrasamvegin* (I.21) - supremely enthusiastic. The Hatha Yoga texts also describe four types of practitioner. Many commentators count only the first three in Patanjali, but the *tivrasamvegin* is also a type; he is the supremely enthusiastic *sadhaka* who already has a restrained mind and for him true freedom is at hand. For him it is timeless but for the other three types this freedom is time-bound.

Many commentators have pointed out that for those who have succeeded in renunciation, freedom is quickly and easily realized. But each individual can only renounce so fast. It is only when they reach the highest level, the level of genius, that freedom is attainable. But they are geniuses as a result of their previous efforts. They have been practising in the way that Patanjali has described for many lives and the imprints of these previous lives have moulded their genius. We may say that we do not believe in karma, past lives and reincarnation. But are we not refining our actions every day? The process of refining has to continue; the quality of consciousness that we develop in this life is the seed of our future life. There is a continuity.

So Patanjali says "train!", even if you have not had success. And we must encourage all: those who say, "Oh, I practise once a week", those who say "I do it twice a week", "three times a week" and so on. This is *mrddhu*, *madhyama*. And also those who say "I am practising five hours a day" - this is *adhimatratvat*. But remember, this does not mean hours of teaching, do not include teaching time, teaching is not practising, not *abhyasa*. So the student who devotes five or six hours a day to practice is the keen student. Intensity of practice can similarly be graduated. If

you are at a low ebb when you practise that is *mrduh*., average intensity is *madhya* and high intensity is *adhimatratva*. Whatever the hours spent or the intensity of the practise Patanjali encourages all to continue; it will take time.

THE FOUR ASPECTS OF THE BRAIN

When the practice is continued, the controlled and uncultured mind becomes a cultured mind. In the cultured mind *pramana*, *viparyaya*, *vikalpa*, *nidra* and *smrti* are replaced. *Vitarka* (thought) becomes *savitarka* (auspicious thought) and *vicara* (analysis) becomes *savicara* (auspicious analysis); Patanjali is describing a controlled and auspicious way of using the thinking and analysing faculties of the mind. Not just analysing everything that comes along. As yet, he is still dealing with the code of conduct, he has not entered the area of Yogic experience. As *savitarka* is auspicious thought and *savicara* is auspicious analysis so *asmita* becomes *sasmita* - the pain of egotism is transformed into auspicious self whilst *ananda* becomes *sananda*, auspicious bliss.

These aspects are found in the four parts of the brain; the front brain is the analytical brain, the back brain is the reasoning brain, the bottom brain is the emotional brain where pleasure and pain are experienced and the top brain is the seat of the soul. See how Patanjali's analysis mirrors the functional and structural divisions of the brain in modern medicine, although he does not use their terminology. So the analytical brain thinks rightly, the reasoning brain thinks reasonably, the emotional brain attains auspicious joy and the top brain establishes the stability of the self.

Of these four aspects, *asmita* and the related concept of *atman* are most difficult to explain. In the second chapter, *asmita* is translated as ego, but in the fourth chapter a different meaning is intended in *nirmana cittani asmita matrat* (IV.4). The meaning differs because he is describing a cultured mind. The mind which has been created as intelligence, through the methods Patanjali describes, acts as the individual self. It is an offshoot from the original

consciousness so when it matures through practice, it loses its identity. It is here in the fourth chapter that people are unable even to glimpse the meaning that Patanjali intends by the word *asmita*. As long as it does not lose its identity it is *asmita*. So the *citta* which originates in the core of being has to be matured with wisdom. This is the seasoned intelligence, the *rthambhara prajna* mentioned in the first chapter (I.48). This arises when the mind is fully absorbed in an object of meditation. Since *asmita* is an offshoot from the absolute consciousness when it is completely mature, the sense of "I am-ness" is lost and *asmita* becomes soul. Through this process of cultivation the four parts of the brain, the analytical brain, the reasoning brain, the joyful brain and that part which feels I-am-ness, come together. Then they blossom out; but they must first be brought together.

VIRAMA PRATYAYA: THE STATE OF SILENCE

When these parts are interconnected, Patanjali says that you experience a state of silence. This is known as *virama pratyaya*. There is a pause in the brain's functioning during which the four levels of the brain are integrated. Many commentators call this state *asamprajnata samadhi*; however, for me this is not a sufficient explanation. The word *asamprajnata* means only, "I am not aware of that state". Even in Vyasa's commentary it is translated as "It has not come to my surface, to understand what it is." However, the next sutra in Patanjali's account is an explanation; in it he says that the person who enters *virama pratyaya* experiences a bodiless state.

In sleep we all experience a bodiless state. Traditional commentaries have taken this sutra to refer to deities or angels, but Patanjali is always concerned with the situation of the practitioner, the development and understanding of each individual. Yes, deities and angels have no bodies; they are *prakritilayan* who are undisturbed by the five elements. But what happens in sleep? Is sleep not an *asamprajnata samdhi*? Then why is it called

nidra? Patanjali describes this experience we all have in sleep and then goes on to say,

(I.20) *sraddha virya smrti samdhi prajna purvaka itaresam*

(Continue with) faith, vigour, memory, complete absorption in practice and total awareness.

He is telling us not to stop after we have had such experience but to go on working. You may experience the state of unconsciousness, of freedom from the body in this pause, this space between periods of consciousness. At this time the mind and the self are separate and in that state both can rest. But that is not the end, he says. You have had a flash of the divinity so now continue in your sadhana to establish your connection with that state. Continue with faith (*sraddha*) he says. He introduces faith here after 19 sutras, because in Yoga you do not start by simply believing; you experience. Subjective truth surfaces and so you gain faith. Faith comes after experience. From this experience you also gain vigour (*virya*). Further vigour and confidence come through the discipline that has been required to cultivate the four parts of the brain. You have done it and the truth has come out! So carry on with your practice.

YOGA AND GOD

Next Patanjali introduces the idea of God, a God without form expressed in a syllable not by symbols. Patanjali was the first person in Indian tradition to develop this quality of God. The other five of the six orthodox philosophies, Samkhya, Nyaya, Vaaiseshika, Vedanta and Mimamsa are dependent on the authority of the Vedas not on God and there is no God in the two heterodox systems of Buddhism and Jainism. Patanjali introduced this alternative and he defines this God as he "who is free from the reaction of his actions" (I.24). Thus he has neither pains nor pleasures. God is invoked through the syllable AUM. You have "a", "u" and "m" in your language, do you not? The original sound is known as *Sabda Brahman*. In order to communicate, you must first

open your mouth, to continue you must move your tongue and when you finish communicating you close your mouth. Thus the base of all communication is A-U-M. That is why it became the seed syllable, the *bija mantra*. According to Indian spirituality if you surrender yourself to this *bija mantra* you surrender yourself to the *Sabda Brahman*. You know, of course, that there are many mantras which develop from AUM and which convey many different meanings. However, that is a vast subject which we cannot cover now. The important thing is that Patanjali takes that seed mantra and says "meditate on that" (I.28).

MEDITATION

The moment the word "meditation" is introduced, the present generation misinterprets it. They think this is an easy method. When you ask them what they are doing, they all say, "I am meditating". But Patanjali gives a variety of methods because he knows that meditation is not possible for all. The *citra-vrttis* keep playing, wandering here and there, and even if you have controlled senses and a controlled mind, you do not know at what time you may fall back. So he says, continue your sadhana. For intellectuals he says that meditation is the right method. But do you have the capacity to accept your weaknesses and surrender? Have you heard of Ramakrishna Paramahansa? When he was suffering from terminal cancer all his followers pleaded with him. "Sir, the shakti is under your control, why do you not ask the shakti to give you the power to expel this cancer?" And do you know what his answer was? "Have I done meditation all these years just to ask for this disease to be taken away?" Do we, you and I, have that kind of mentality? Now do you understand what meditation is. And yet we do not read Patanjali to see for whom he has given meditation as a method! You have heard of Ramana Maharshi - he also had cancer and the cancer had spread to such an extent that the doctors said that they would have to give him an anaesthetic in order to amputate his arm. He immediately said, "You want my arm don't you?"

Well then, what do I want with an anaesthetic? Cut it off!" Do you have that courage? So the way of meditation is only for the *tivra samvegin*, for those who are supremely intense, who are very close to the soul. For them it is easy to achieve their goal. Do you see how jumbled up we are in our misconceptions about meditation?

ALTERNATIVES TO MEDITATION

Then Patanjali asks, if meditation is not practicable directly what is the next step?

Pracchardana vvidharanabhyam va pranasya (II.34)
An alternative way is by the retention of the breath after exhalation.

So he comes to Pranayama. Can you see the significance? In the same way the cancer sufferer only has two choices, to accept his illness and surrender or to fight it without negative thought, to challenge the disease, so Patanjali says that to surrender and accept is meditation. However, he adds, if you cannot achieve meditation then find other means. And what are these other means? The first alternative he gives is to watch your exhalation breath and stop it. What happens? As you exhale your mind moves into a passive state and in the pause before inhalation a deeper passivity comes - learn that state. Then you understand what it is to control your thought waves in a state of control - at least during exhalation.

Alternatively, he says, whatever subject attracts you, go wholeheartedly and completely into that (II.35). So I go totally into the asanas; I am totally absorbed in them. If you understand and accept what Patanjali says you cannot call asanas merely physical yoga. Any subject, if it attracts you enough for you to become totally absorbed in it can become a path to *Samadhi*. Look at the dedication of the greatest scientists. For twenty four hours of every day their minds and bodies will be fixed on one subject alone. In that respect, according to Patanjali, they are yogis.

In the same way I am involved in the asanas and pranayama. The terminology which my critics use to describe my practise is based on misconception. They are suffering from *vikalpa* from misconception. Consequently they do not approach this subject, which they do not know, with an open mind. I am open to learning. Just as the scientist wants to break down the atoms to understand the workings of matter, so I am interested in breaking down the elements of my body to discover the internal processes. I have to continue exploring the quality of movement, the quality of effort. If I say, "My head aches but head-balance brings relief", is that the end of it? No! What more can *Sirsasana* give? How can I forget the body in *Sirsasana* while keeping the body alert? How can I draw my mind away from the body? Can you do that? I can and I have shown you the process. But this can only be understood when the student is ready. Then there will be total absorption.

If this is not attainable, Patanjali suggests another alternative.

(II.36) Visoka va jyotismati.

Or contemplate the serene and luminous light in the heart.

What is this sorrowless light? This is Atman. But can we go directly to the Atman? Do you see how difficult this is? So the next sutra says, take those who have experienced and transcended sorrows, for your object of concentration. Can you see the connection between these two sutras? He says, "Take ideal persons such as Ramana, Ramakrishna, Christ or any other; take them as examples. Develop your character by studying their ways of behaviour".

CITTA PRASADANAM: THE DIFFUSION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

When you use these approaches and begin to develop, what happens? Consciousness finds avenues and begins to diffuse itself, evenly, throughout the body at every level as water that is spilt, spreads evenly over the floor. It diffuses through the system and find its resting level. He describes this process in the phrase *citta prasadanam* (II.33). That means equating the *citta* with every part, every cell and every molecule of the body. When that is achieved, he says, the mind loses its power because the memory has become broad. When you extend the whole body and experience the whole body as a single *citta*, a single consciousness then the memory loses its power to restrict and block.

(1.43) *Smrti-prisuddhau svarupa sunyevarthamatra nirbhasa nirvitarka*

When memory is purified (*smrti-parisuddhau*), memory and experience of the mind cease to exist. Then consciousness shines purely without reflection. This is non-analytical Samadhi.

Like a fruit that has fully ripened, memory falls from its previously held position. Since the mind and memory are inextricably linked they ripen together and fall together. They no longer function in the seat of the brain and when that happens a new light dawns. A new knowledge dawns. Memory and mind lose their contact with the knowledge from outside world and instead contact the knowledge coming from the inner world which is the soul. From that time on the *sadhaka* gains intuition and through this intuition comes that perfect intelligence and seasoned awareness which never wavers, *rtambhara prajna*(1.46).

Then when intelligence is unwavering, do not set your memory in motion again by saying, "I want such and such an experience" or "Oh, today I had a wonderful experience of a seasoned state of mind". In such moments the memory takes charge and you are caught. The mind, which you have just brought to maturity and dropped, comes once more to the surface and rots in your head. So, Patanjali says, be careful. The knowledge you gain from successful meditation will also disturb you, so that must be thrown away too. Throw away your experiences and see what happens.

(1.47) *Nirvicara vaiisharadhye adhyatmaprasadah*

With the attainment of purity in non-deliberate contemplation (*samadhi*) there flows a profound and serene spiritual light

In that moment, instead of merely *citta* filling the body, now the soul, the very self engulfs that frontier which is your body. It occupies everywhere and there is no support from mantra, from concentration on inhalation or exhalation, or on an ideal human being. You are yourself in the sorrowless light. This state is known as *Nirbija Samadhi* because in it there is no support for the further development of the intelligence. And so he finishes the first chapter with this *Nirbija Samadhi*. Again it is important to note the unusual order of the four chapters. The first chapter culminates with this supreme state of *Nirbija Samadhi* and then immediately he begins the second chapter with basic instructions for unevolved souls. But is this not also for evolved souls, because although you may reach *Nirbija Samadhi*, you do not know when sorrows may come to you.



yoga centre of victoria

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June 4,5,6, 1993**

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and

**Iyengar Yoga Intensive
July 3 to 9, 1993**

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YOGA CALENDAR

MAY:

- 8: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.
- 9: Workshop at the Y with Leslie Hogya.
- 22: Teachers meeting.

JUNE:

- 4-6: Iyengar Yoga Retreat on Saltspring Island with Shirley Daventry French.
- 13: A Day with the Bhagavad Gita at Radha House.
- 19-20: Rose Ceremony at Radha House.
- 26: Teachers meeting.

JULY:

- 3-9: Iyengar Yoga Summer Intensive led by Shirley Daventry French.

AUGUST:

- 16-20: Mr. Iyengar's visit to Toronto, Iyengar Yoga Convention.

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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.

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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VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

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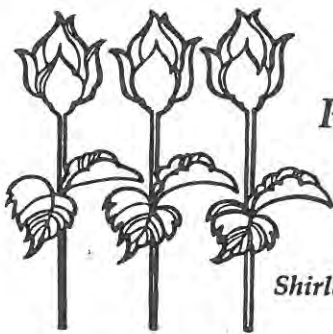
Newsletter

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June, 1993



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

It is a warm evening in Victoria and I am teaching the infamous "Monday Night Class" (the source of much material for this column). About half the students are yoga teachers, who, along with most of the other students, have many years of experience in Yoga. They have dealt with a lot of their easy stuff and now, when they practise, again and again they come up against well entrenched attachments and hardcore resistance to change which surface in many clever disguises. How do I recognise this? From my own experience, of course!

The weekend prior to last Monday's class I had been in Toronto where I was involved in a series of organisational meetings for the Iyengar Yoga conference to be held there in August. I flew back to Victoria late on Sunday, and on Monday morning I did a restorative practice to ground myself and overcome the fatigue of long distance travel across several time zones. I had an afternoon rest, and drove in to teach the evening class feeling rested and in good spirits. These evaporated rapidly during the latter part of the class when, after a series of backbends, I was teaching twists: ardhha matsyendrasana to be exact.

This posture necessitates bending one leg, placing the foot horizontally under the buttocks with sole of the foot perpendicular to the floor, and sitting on the foot with the buttock of the same leg on the heel and the other buttock on the front of the foot. If the little toe presses the floor and the outer arch is

active, energy is drawn from the ground which, when transmitted through the leg to the pelvis, gives life and lift to the spine which can then rotate more easily. The pose is grounded and uplifting; an ideal we strive for in all postures.

On the other hand, if you allow the foot on which you are sitting to collapse and be inactive, the lower leg will remain dull, the buttocks and pelvis sink into that leg, the knee hurts under the stress, the foot protests as the weight of the body sinks down onto it and grinds the bony parts of the foot into the ground. From here on, whatever effort you put into turning the upper body will be wasted, because the posture is not grounded.

For some time, I have been trying to get the idea across to my students, that to avoid all this distress they must activate their feet, and in particular the one on which they are sitting. This action is fundamental to this posture. One of the ways I have been doing this is by asking them to put aside their mats, blankets and others forms of padding and work directly onto the floor.

I learned this lesson myself in a class with Aadil Palkhivala when we were working on a hardwood floor and he made us remove our mats and place the foot directly against the hard surface. Of course, it hurt, and we protested, but despite our protests he insisted, and when I was able to get rid of my resentment towards him and begin to hear what he was saying, I suddenly discovered the right action to remove my discomfort, and the pose came to life.

I had a similar experience once at Feathered Pipe Ranch in a class with Judith Lasater, where we were doing pincha mayurasana or elbow balance without mats on a very rough and uneven wooden floor. The next day I had an abrasion on one of my outer elbows, which reminded me for some time that too much weight was being placed there, and too little on the other arm. The mat I normally used, mitigated the pressure and interfered with the communication coming from my arm.

On my last visit to India, a similar lesson was learned in an even more dramatic way during a forward bend class which occurred in the middle of the middle week of the course, when one's resistance is usually at the maximum and one is beginning to question whether this really is the right path. We were using blocks in various ways to create awareness. At this particular time we were holding a block firmly between our inner feet, and moving it as far away from our pelvis as possible, in the process activating and lengthening our inner legs.

I have bunions, and consequently it was not only difficult for me to hold on to the block, but it rubbed against the surface of the bunion and hurt. (Normally I have no pain whatsoever in these joints, despite their deviation) I persevered stoically, knowing that with Mr. Iyengar teaching there was really no other choice, until I saw that one of my feet was bleeding profusely. At this point, I became very sorry for myself - for having bunions, and at the unfairness of being wrongly accused so many times of having created them myself out of vanity and carelessness. All the pent up frustration, anger, resentment and humiliation accrued over a lifetime of living with bunions, fueled by so many unkind, thoughtless remarks, started to flow out in a stream of tears.

In India, with an open wound and with nothing to wear but sandals, I'll probably get an infection, maybe even septicæmia, I thought to myself. Profoundly moved by this idea I wept quietly on and off until the end of the class when, without looking at or speaking to anyone, I went quickly down to the washroom and washed my feet to find only a very small mark in the skin, the size of a pinpoint, which you could hardly see. Instead of crying, I began to laugh. An innate wooden block and a little discomfort taught me a lot about use of the legs and feet in forward bends, and at the same time helped me to let go of some ancient history.

Do I like hurting myself? No, but in each of these cases I learned something useful. These incidents

increased my awareness and helped me make some changes I needed to make. I learned some actions which are helpful not only in the postures but in life in general. A change of action often leads to a change in attitude.

Reading this article, the question will no doubt arise: are some Iyengar Yoga teachers sadists? Are those who follow this method masochists? What about the Yama ahimsa, non-violence? And what about compassion?

Mr. Iyengar has often said that underdoing is ahimsa as much as overdoing. Is it compassionate to allow a student to go on practising a posture with dead or dull arms or legs, when they are capable of something better than this, and when through some temporary discomfort they can learn an action which will remedy this problem. Is it compassionate to provide support which will pad their discomfort so they don't feel it, and allow them to continue in their lack of awareness? Or could it be that a teacher shows true compassion when he or she assaults your entrenched resistance and into the ensuing breach introduces some more sophisticated spiritual tools.

Pain is a message, a warning. Something is not right. Something is out of balance. The body is saying: listen to me! Pay attention to me! Don't do this to me! If you are in a yoga posture when you are experiencing this pain, one obvious option is never to do this posture again. Another is to modify the posture.

There are basically three ways of working in a posture :-

- (1) Traditionally, i.e. practising with little or no use of props.
- (2) Therapeutic or restorative practice, i.e. modifying the postures because of problems such as injury, illness or fatigue; offering support which will create a healing environment and promote rest, relaxation and recuperation.

(3) Adapting the posture to emphasis a certain point i.e. putting a block under the elbows in dog pose to restrain the negative action of collapsing the arms and teaching a positive one of lifting the elbows and maintaining a firm connection between upper and lower arm.

Removing the mats from underneath the feet of hale and healthy students in ardha matsyendrasana falls into the third category (as do all the other examples I've given above).

Last Monday night, despite repeated and clearly enunciated instructions to remove all mats, blankets etc. and place the little toe side of the foot directly in contact with the floor, many students (not for the first time) ignored my instructions and retained their padding. I ran out of patience, and went around the room pulling and kicking the mats and blankets out of the way, frustrated at my inability to get this message across and their passive-aggressive resistance.

This desire to cushion discomfort surfaced again at Saturday's teachers' meeting, when I was showing how to do paschimottanasana seated on a chair. "My heels hurt," said the student, and before I had a chance to give him some corrections to alleviate this problem, some "kind" person had brought him a folded mat to put under his feet. Again, I kicked it aside, and once more endeavoured to show the value of this pressure as a message that the legs are inactive or working inappropriately, and that the intelligent and yogic thing to do is ask why is this pressure there, and what can I do to remove it?

Recently I reread an interview in an old Yoga Journal with author, meditator and scholar, Ken Wilber, a noted authority in the field of transpersonal psychology. He stated: "If you're doing meditation correctly, you're in for some very rough and frightening times. Meditation as a 'relaxation response' is a joke." A similar statement could be made about yoga, whose purpose is not to make you comfortable but to make you so uncomfortable with your way of acting and being in

the world that you will change. While it is decidedly unyogic to suffer pain indiscriminately to the point of damaging the body, it is also unyogic to seek an analgesic to remove every twinge of discomfort the moment it arises. To travel this path we must learn to be uncomfortable and learn from our discomfort.



PRANAYAMA
in Metchosin
with
Shirley Daventry French

Saturday, June 19th

8.00 to 9.30 am	Pranayama
9.30 to 10.15 am	Tea break
10.15 to 12 noon	Asana Practice
12 noon	Brunch

Fee: \$20.00

For information and registration:
Phone 478-3775

WORKING IN ISOLATION

by Jan Hollebon

This topic arose incidentally during conversation at a recent yoga teachers' monthly meeting in Victoria. This has been a recurring theme for me and when Shirley French invited me to write some impressions for the next newsletter, it seemed a good opportunity to address this subject.

Some of you will have met me, or at least seen me, in yoga classes at the Y, or at Shirley's home. I am a yoga teacher from the South Island of New Zealand, studying yoga techniques here and in U.S.A. for approximately four months. I plan to extend my journey, or quest, rather archetypal in nature, to Britain, Europe and Japan, in order to experience more yoga, contact friends and teach English.

I have just spent four weeks in Seattle, staying with Felicity Green, who no doubt needs no introduction. I have high regard for the clarity of her step by step instructions and the balance between her unrelenting exactitude and compassion in her teaching. Imagine then, my ambivalence when, due to a family bereavement, our one:one intensive became a peripatetic affair as Felicity moved back and forth from Seattle in order to support her family before and after the event. Without warning, I was plunged into the administrative side of yoga, Felicity style. In effect, this means long periods grappling with direct phone calls, as well as numerous telephone answering machine messages from just about anywhere, with just about any request! Good experience, you may say.

Then came her call to tell me she'd decided to remain in San Francisco for a further week. My social contacts at that point in time were limited to a very pleasant next door neighbour and one or two International Peace Dance acquaintances. Certainly there were piles of relevant books to read, assignments to prepare, yoga videos to watch....

I'm an eternal student. I've been working apart for much of my life. I hadn't come all this way just for this. I felt isolated, and more.

But the phone calls kept coming. I had a job to do. Besides, it was worse for Felicity, I reminded myself. As I explained the circumstances on the phone, I began to realise that I wasn't alone in a strange country. Responses were warm, concerned, not only for Felicity, but for me. Before long, I was having to turn down doubled up invitations. I had lost some of Felicity's precious instruction only to gain new yoga contacts, other experiences, and friendships. Self-examination of my reactions to this dilemma added further insight to aid my spiritual growth.

So to the Victoria yoga meeting. I found the supportive atmosphere of teachers in the group quite inspiring: ideas for resource materials to share, exchange of ideas, questioning one another's values, especially in relation to those not following B.K.S. Iyengar's methods, assistance with teaching/personal problems, even the opportunity to lead the yoga class preceeding meetings.

Thus it came as a surprise, when during this aforementioned conversation, one teacher broached problems associated with her geographical isolation from the yoga teachers' group, that were obviously contributing to a certain sense of dislocation. This I well understand. Yoga, in my city has been intermittent, and in New Zealand, by comparison with Canada and U.S.A., is in its infancy. I have often felt frustrated at this lack of interest and opportunity; yet more recently, a nucleus of women began to develop a resource network and the support I have received both in my city and from the nearest one to the north, has been very encouraging. Two deficits remain. Where are the men in yoga - both students and teachers? Two male Iyengar colleagues seem to prefer to work in isolation. I quote one, with whom I've worked independently: "It brings me out in spots to be with a group of yoga teachers". The second lack is for someone reliable and efficient to organise initially, and sustain such a group as I've witnessed in Victoria.

So what can be done to assist this sincere teacher, distanced from the hub in Victoria due to her location, and the sole Iyengar advocate in her community? Most of us will be able to relate to this situation in one form or another. Perhaps this offers another idea for debate at a future meeting.

Isolation is only relative within a yoga community. Yoga networks can be very powerful. My personal experience can endorse this. I would like to take

this opportunity to thank Felicity, Shirley and Derek, Barbara Laurenson of Calgary and Joyce Deutscher of Regina, among many others, who have selflessly been prepared to share their homes, their knowledge, their time, and give me a glimpse of their lives. Namaste.

Jan Hollebon is an Iyengar Yoga teacher from Dunedin on the South Island of New Zealand. She visited Victoria in April 1993.

PEARLS OF WISDOM

THE YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI

BY B.K.S. IYENGAR

**THIS TALK WAS GIVEN BY
B.K.S. IYENGAR
AT THE IYENGAR YOGA INSTITUTE,
LONDON, ENGLAND,
ON JULY 15, 1990**

Continuation of article from May issue.....

CHAPTER II - SADHANA PADA

THE KLESAS

Patanjali begins Sadhana Pada with the Klesas - the pains,

(II.3) *Avidya, asmita, raga, dvesa, abhinivesah klesah*

Again, his subject is what to do when meditation fails. It is in this second chapter that he states the cause of pain. The cause of pain is *Drashtavya* (II.17) - the coming together of the seer (*purusa*) and the seen (*prakrti*). So, he says, do not allow the core of being to come into contact with *prakrti*. This is a supreme philosophical statement. It may remind you of the sayings of Krishnamurti. Like him Patanjali says, "Do not get involved", "If you keep away from contact with the world, you are free from pains and sorrows physical, mental or spiritual". But Patanjali does not stop there. He goes on to explain the origins of this attachment; how both evil actions and good actions in past lives react in this life. Here, in chapter II, he is drawing on samkhya philosophy. Samkhya philosophy states that the contact of *purusa* with *prakrti* is the origin of pain and similarly it states that the impressions of present actions determine a man's future. (The difference is that in Samkhya, unlike Yoga, there is no God). However, both systems state that a man's future is entirely his own responsibility. You sow the seeds of your future lives. You cannot blame God. so, Patanjali says, since your life is moulded by the impressions of past actions, you must correct and develop yourself so that you are not trapped by these past impressions. Do you see how clear this exposition is? You are responsible for future karmas, so begin to build favourable karmas now!

Then he turns to the level of practice. He says that the vehicles and instruments of the soul (the organs of action, organs of perception, intelligence, mind and consciousness) are all there to help the seer (the *purusa*) to come to an understanding of himself.

These objects are there in order that the seer can progress. This is known as the evolutionary path, the way of evolution. These coverings of the seer are there for the seer to progress towards transcendence and as long as that progress continues they are aids, not hindrances. This is explained fully in the fourth chapter, Kaivalya Pada. Here in the second chapter he gives the seed of that explanation, that you should cultivate yourself by using the organs of action and perception, the mind and intelligence to bring the seer to see the true light and true knowledge. Why does he say that the seer must see? Because the seer may be caught again.

The citta continually drags the seer towards the external world. So although these instruments are there to serve the seer who is the Lord, unfortunately the Lord serves them. That is what is happening in the world, in day to day life, is it not? But Patanjali shows how to train these elements so that you do not get caught. Through yogic discipline one gains command of them.

CONTROLLING THE SENSES

Then Patanjali explains the method of gaining control. Just as the pranayama texts tell you to tame the breath as you would tame a tiger, so Patanjali says to tame your senses by *Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana* and *Samadhi*. The Yamas tame the organs of action. As you know, they are *Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya* and *Aparigraha* (non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, chastity and freedom from greed for unnecessary possessions). These are all connected to the organs of action. Suppose your mind tells you, "I want to hit this man", "I want to kill this man". It says such things often but if your hands and legs refuse to move, can you kill him? If you want to tell a lie but you keep your mouth closed, can you do it? So Patanjali begins with the peripheral body for dull and average practitioners.

Next, the *Niyamas* - *Sauca*, *Santosha*, *Tapas*, *Svadhyaya* and *Isvara - pranidhana* are concerned with the inner body. *Sauca* means cleanliness, but this is not just a question of taking a bath. The asanas are practised because they give an internal bath through circulation; they purify the inner cells of the body. You may take a bath and clean the skin, but what about inside? We are all fighting against pollution in the atmosphere, but what about pollution of the internal environment. How do we discharge these impurities? *Sauca* means that both the internal and external environments should be purified and made congenial. Second, *Santosha*, happiness, and third *Tapas*, austerity, are primarily concerned with internal controls. *Svadhyaya* - the study of the self - entails joining the soul to the body and the body to the soul; this too is accomplished through the medium of the *Jnanendriyas*, (the senses of perception). Just as the mind is the connecting medium between the external body and the internal body so the senses of perception are the medium between the external body and the mind.

The brain is the central nervous system, whilst the autonomic nervous system is divided into the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems which are controlled by the central nervous system and the peripheral nerves which are controlled by the skin. That is how drugs affect people: first they feel the effects on the skin; only later does the brain react, the triggering takes place on the skin. So the yogi learns to get the same feelings naturally. *Sauca* controls the peripheral nerves, *Santosha* the autonomous nervous system and *Tapas*, *Svadhyaya* and lastly, *Isvara pranidhana* (surrender to God) affect the central nervous system. So Patanjali moves on from physical happiness and mental poise to the central body. The autonomic nervous system is semi-voluntary but only a person who has achieved complete mind restraint is capable of directly controlling the central nervous system which is normally involuntary. That is how yogis are able to stop the heart and to stop all brain function.

ASANAS AND THE CELLULAR SYSTEM

So the *Jnanendriyas* are cleansed by *Niyama*. But the cellular system must be attended to because the physiological body is the medium linking the skeletal body and the mental body. Unless we discover for ourselves these links we cannot properly study Yoga. When you gain control of the peripheral nerves through the senses of action and perception there are sudden changes; there is a "jump forward" in the human system and unless the cellular system is healthy, illness will follow. The cells must be made healthy.

Let me illustrate this by referring to a few of the asanas. When you do *Trikonasana* and both legs are stretched, you stretch the cells towards the feet (if you can connect all the links within the movement of the pose). That means that the energy is moving from the upper body to the lower body. However, when you do *Parsvakonasana*, you bend your knees and then the cells are moved upwards from the lower legs. So there is circulation upwards. In *Trikonasana* you direct the circulation down in both knees; you cannot suck up. You can stretch the skin (up), you can stretch the fibres but you will not feel the blood moving upwards. But in *Parsvakonasana* you will observe that the blood flows to the knee and from the bottom foot it flows also to the knee. Haven't you felt it? This is very difficult subject! Even the doctors do not understand what happens unless I explain it!

Now then, next, if you observe in *Virabhadrasana I* the blood circulation is from the bottom of the knee towards the pelvis. In *Parsvakonasana*, when you bend the knee, you can see the blood flowing forwards. But the moment you change to *Virabhadrasana* you can see the blood flowing backwards. In this way, by the correct performance of a range of asanas, the entire leg must be cleansed. In order to do this I have to first find out how to move the blood in these different areas by feeling the warmth generated by the circulation. In *Parsvakonasana* if you feel warmth in the outer leg but not in the inner leg, then the circulation is

happening only on the outside and not on the inside. When the circulation is balanced on the inside as well as on the outside then that means a healthy pose. That is cleanliness, that is *sauca*. Otherwise the blood does not reach the flesh; the inner leg cells do not receive nutrients and they die; only the outer cells are healthy.

So when, by your own conscious effort and attentiveness the blood is supplied evenly throughout the body then the cells are healthy. In one of the Upanishads they say *ratna puritadhatu* which means that the quality of the blood is so good that it is equal to a pearl. They have not used the word *pakta*, blood, but *ratna*, a jewel. So the quality of your blood should be brought to the level of a jewel. And that is the effect of the asanas, which build the cellular system to such an extent that the body can take care of itself - the mind cannot enter it.

Now take the example of AIDS. This is important here because research has shown that the cellular system possesses its own intelligence, its own memory. It does not work from the dictates of the brain. That has been proved. So, similarly, it follows that Yogic science can work directly on those parts without the use of the mind and that as long as the practice of asanas is continued the cells will look after themselves. That is another reason why Patanjali says not to discontinue your practice. Even if you have experienced Samadhi you may fall from that state of grace. That state, *avastha*, becomes an *anavastha*. Those modern yogis who say "Oh I have experienced such and such, so this practice is no longer required" but who can barely stand, let alone walk, they have nothing to teach. Where is their health? They have neglected their practice and lost their power.

MASTER OF ASANA BEFORE PRANAYAMA

Then, in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, there are eight parts of Yoga, *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*. They are not steps to be carried out chronologically so that once you have mastered one you forget it and carry

on to the next one. The only sequence that Patanjali indicates, like the writer of the Hatha Yoga *Pardipika*, is that *Asana* comes before *Pranayama*. He says that with the mastery of *Asana* effort ceases (II.47), then he says that the dualities within the body-mind and the mind and soul disappears (II.48). It is only then that *pranayama* can proceed.

(II.49) *Tasmin sati svasa-prasvasayoh gativicchedah pranayamab*

Having achieved this (perfection of asana) the regulation of inhalation, exhalation and retention (is to be practised). This is *Pranayama*.

Many underestimate the meaning of these sutras. They see sutra II.47 and translate it as "any comfortable pose is enough and you may go ahead". But that sutra, *Prayatna saithilyanantasamapatibhyam*, means that when the effort ceases the mind becomes one with the soul, and it rests in that timeless state which is the soul. You must experience that state in an asana to understand this meaning. When asana is mastered the effort becomes effortless and then the pose becomes *sthira* (stable) and *sukha* (pleasant). You should understand this way and experience it. This applies to any asana.

Do you see how yet again the real meaning of the sutras is so commonly distorted? People do not study Patanjali or the subject thoroughly. Can they quote from Patanjali? No, but I can. They may sit five minutes in one pose, then five minutes in another, but can they give the effects of the asanas? They overlook the true significance of this important sutra which describes the effects of correct asana practise.

(III.47) *Rupa lavanya bala vajra samhananatvani kaya sampat*

Beauty, grace, strength, and adamant willpower constitute the perfection of the body.

These are the effects, the fruits of asana practise, the qualities gained from the mastery of the asana. If you just sit in any comfortable pose is there any beauty, grace or strength in it? This is Patanjali's

terminology not mine! And yet our yogis speak in the name of Patanjali, and this hurts me.

PRANAYAMA

So when the cellular system has been cleansed and the nervine system purified, the breath can then pass through the channels without obstruction. That is why Patanjali has said, *tasmin sati svasa-prasvasayoh gativicchedah pranayamah*. Here is the only ladder in the practice of the eight aspects given in the Yoga Sutras. He does not say that you have to practise Yama, then Niyama and then Asana, absolutely not, he says only that Pranayama should be practised after the mastery of Asana.

Many commentators say that Patanjali explains very little about pranayama and that it is the Hatha Yoga Pradipika that describes it. But let us examine what Patanjali actually says. First he describes the aspects that we all know, *Puraka* (inhalation), *Rechaka* (exhalation), *Puraka kumbhaka* (inhalation retention) and *Rechaka kumbhaka* (exhalation retention). What is the connecting link between *Puraka* and *Rechaka*? It is *kumbhaka*. Patanjali does not use the word because, as a grammarian, he is aiming for condensed language; however he deals with all these phases of pranayama in one sutra (II.50). This brevity makes it difficult for us to penetrate its meaning.

The *Kumbhaka* he describes here is *Sahita kumbhaka* which I have explained in depth in my book on Pranayama. Then he explains that there is a second type of Pranayama in which the mind becomes absorbed. (The Hatha Yoga texts call this *Kevala Kumbhaka*). In this state you are not aware of the breath. It is like when you are by the ocean as the sun is setting and you become absorbed in the vision of beauty. At such a time you do not know if you have inhaled or exhaled or retained the breath. This is unconscious *kumbhaka*. This *kumbhaka* is non-deliberate and unintended. Patanjali calls this the fourth type of *kumbhaka*.

Then he continues in II.52 to say that when the first

four aspects of yoga are mastered, then the clouds which cover the mind and brain - the doubts and confusions we all know so well - these are dissolved by pranayama. At that time, the next sutra says, the mind becomes cultivated and is fit for concentration (*Dhyanasau ca योग्यता मनसाह II.53*). This is achieved through pranayama and pratyahara, freeing the mind from the senses of action and perception (II.54). Now you can see the gap in understanding today. At the end of the second chapter Patanjali shows how the mind becomes ready for meditation when pranayama and pratyahara are practised. Having learnt the control of the organs of action and the senses of perception through yama and niyama, and cognisable and non-cognisable pains having been silenced by pranayama now the mind should be controlled by pratyahara so that it becomes completely detached from the bridge, the *jnanendriyas*. The mind is the eleventh sense, an inner sense, the *antara indriya*. Up to pranayama is the reverse journey, the evolutionary method which goes from the self towards the periphery. With pratyahara begins the involutionary method, the inner journey, from the periphery towards the self, the soul.

So the first sutra speaks of *guna vrtti nirodha* which is character building or the effort to restrain the individual's wavering conduct which depends on yama and niyama. *Snaya vrtti nirodha* is the effort through pranayama to control the cellular system which is non-cognizable to our eyes. Now do you see the meaning of *drsta and adrsta* - the cognizable and non-cognizable pains. The non-cognizable pains are within the cellular system. Thus, cancer cannot be diagnosed immediately. AIDS cannot be diagnosed quickly because the disease is inside and has a long incubation period. It remains *adrsta*, unseen. So at the time the sufferer feels fine, appears happy because the sickness is hidden. It has not yet come to the surface. So they say it is non-cognizable and non-painful. But the moment it surfaces, it becomes painful. That is why *snaya vrtti nirodha* is required so that non-cognizable diseases may be controlled at the cellular level through the culture of the cells.

THE TWIN BROTHERS: PRANA AND CITTA

As the cells are controlled by pranayama, that is *prana vrtti nirodhah*. Prana is close to the self; according to the Upanishads, prana and citta together form the consciousness. Mind is the outer layer of consciousness. Consciousness is near the soul, but mind is far away from the soul. Consider the tree, the soul is the seed. First you plant the seed. From the seed, a single bud shoots out. You see the bud and you say, "Here is a plant". That is the sprout of *asmita*, the individual self. But before, the seed did not show any form. This bud forms a stem: the sense of individuality. Then this stem branches into two. Similarly the consciousness divides into intelligence and mind. Then come the various subsidiary branches. These are the organs of action and perception. Then the leaves open, begin to breathe and send back this to the base where the seed has grown the roots. This process is the involuntary method, by which energy is gained from the periphery and sent back to the core; whereas the first process, where energy is drawn from the seed and the root and is then supplied out to the periphery, is the evolutionary method.

Similarly in our system we distribute energy in two ways. From pranayama we develop *prana vrtti nirodhah*. The energy finds the channels through which it must pass. And when people say "I don't have enough energy", it is because the energy cannot find channels to flow along. The course of the river changes when the banks change. When we ask, "Why is this part of me wearing out?", it is because the course of the channels has changed, one part is alive but another has died. So through pranayama you bring the vital energy to touch these areas and supply the needed energy.

In the Prasna Upanishad they say breath and consciousness are twin brothers. But one was born a little earlier than the other. So Consciousness is the elder brother who was followed just after by Breath, and these twins are always together. It is often said that twins cannot live without each other and that if

one twin dies the other will die soon after. Similarly if the consciousness goes wrong the breath goes wrong and if the breath goes wrong the consciousness goes wrong. So the theme of the whole of the Prasna Upanishad is that these twins must be brought together.

ENERGY AND THE FIVE ELEMENTS

Now what is the energy which the breath brings? What is the energy of pranayama? It is very simple. We all talk about *kundalini*. Patanjali also talks of this but people miss it because he refers to it as *prakrti shakti* where others talk of *kundalini shakti*. Now, a river has life: running water has life. But can it produce electricity? It cannot. Similarly, our normal breathing has life but it cannot produce the energy which the human system requires. In the hydro-electric power station, water is made to flow down tubes from top to bottom, so that as it flows it is heated to high temperatures. It is this super-heated water that rolls the turbines and generates electrical power.

We are made of five elements - earth, water, fire, air and ether. As in human groups three members tend to form a close relationship the same is true of the elements. The three cooperating elements are earth, ether and air, whereas water and fire are the antagonistic elements, the anti-elements. If a house is on fire what do you do? You call the fire brigade and they pour water on the fire which extinguishes it. Now because water and fire are anti-elements they also have the capacity for a kind of fusion which produces a very powerful energy. So the process of pranayama increases the potency of the energy within the human system through the interaction of these two elements in the practise of deep inhalation and exhalation. Then the energy is stored in the body and distributed by the element ether which works through the nervous system. When this kind of energy is strong the mind does not wander and this why the approach of Hatha Yoga begins with *prana vrtti nirodha* - the control of fluctuations of the prana. Patanjali begins with *citta vrtti nirodha*, but as we have seen, citta and prana, consciousness

and breath, are twin brothers. The two are inextricably linked so where one is controlled the other follows.

CHAPTER III: VIBHUTI PADA

In the third chapter Patanjali goes on to describe the vibhuti. This does not mean supernatural powers as it is so often translated, but it refers to the fruits of action. Sadhana is the action, so vibhuti refers to the fruits of sadhana. Chapters I and II both describe practice but chapter I describes *antaranga sadhana* (internal practice) whilst chapter II focuses on *bahiranga sadhana* (external practice). Samadhi Pada describes practice at its most refined level, while Sadhana Pada gives a more basic and practical approach for lesser minds and for those who have fallen away in their practice.

POINTS OF CONCENTRATION

In Vibhuti Pada it is interesting to note that Patanjali describes the fruits of concentrating on several different points within the body. Many people now stress the use of external objects such as candle light or flowers, but Patanjali also says, "Look at your own throat, look at your heart, look between your eyebrows. Can't you see the light of the intelligence which is burning inside although you are unaware of it?"

Patanjali connects the external and the internal. For those who find it easy to do external concentration he gives external objects and for those who can concentrate internally he gives internal points for concentration. He gives both ways. So when someone suggests that you look at a beautiful rose, whilst I suggest you look at the beautiful way the muscles come into balanced action, are these not both acts of concentration? Is one physical and one mental? What is the difference? If you gaze at a candle you are working with one organ or perception; if you work with the skin in the controlling of an asana that is another organ of perception. Do you see how false this distinction of physical and mental is? So do not use such confused

terms, but find out for yourselves.

If, for example, in Setu Bandha Sarvangasana you concentrate on the heart, where exactly should you concentrate? When you do Viparita Dandasana, where should you concentrate? The legs, arms and chest all meet at the centre and there you must concentrate, but you only concentrate for a short while, then you give up and say, "Oh, Mr. Iyengar, this is nothing but physical yoga!" You must stay longer so that the concentration comes.

When you do Sirsasana, if you do not keep the shoulders parallel you lose your balance, so are you not concentrating continuously to maintain that? Think about that and you will realize you are doing something more than physical. You are doing something where the mind and body are united as a single unit. Then they ignite the light of the soul. When we do not understand that, then we say, "Oh, I'm doing this for my health". By saying that you close the door on the possibility of other fruits coming to you from your practice. But if you say, "Yes, I am doing this for my health but let me also see what other things may come with that health," then you may see more of the light. If you put a block up in your mind, your mind will never go beyond that block; that is not meditation.

DHYANA: MEDITATION

AN UNINTERRUPTED FLOW OF ENERGY AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Patanjali does refer, however, to a different kind of block. These blocks are like the bhandas we use in Sarvangasana when the chest is brought to touch the chin. These bandhas or locks are used to consciously prevent the mind from going beyond certain points. Within those restraints we must try to release and extend the period of focused concentration a little longer. Then comes a oneness between the centripetal and the centrifugal tendencies. What terminology does Patanjali use to describe this? He says,

(III.2) *Tatra pratyayaikatanata dhyanam*

Dhyana(meditation) is when concentration on an object, or on your own self, or on an asana does not fluctuate. If you can maintain a single flow of energy with a single flow of consciousness, then that is *Dhyana*. That is Patanjali's definition; but what is today's definition? "Close your eyes", "Go to sleep", "Have an empty mind". That is not *dhyana*. In *pranayama* sometimes, as you are observing the breath, it begins to come well, and then your attention fades and suddenly the breathing becomes rough. That is broken meditation. It is not *dhyana*. You must control those tendencies and see that there is no break in the in-flow or the out-flow. Similarly in *asanas*: you must overcome all the blocks and breaks in the joints and muscles of the body which interrupt the flow of movement and concentration. If you work in such a way that the flow is uninterrupted in the *asanas*, then that is meditation. Then, when you achieve this state, continue to work to prolong it.

THE PROCESS OF SAMADHI

In chapter I Patanjali explains this struggle of *citta-vrtti nirodha*, the restraint of the fluctuating mind. The self says to the mind, "I want to restrain this, I want to stop this fluctuation, Stop!" This is the shock treatment. But in chapter III, for the benefit of the *sadhaka* who has persevered and begun to experience the fruits, he goes on to say that the inner consciousness itself does not want to fluctuate. There is a spontaneous tendency to restrain the mind. Between the moment of uncontrolled fluctuation and the moment of restraint of that fluctuation there is a pause, a space (III.9). You have to discover this space, you have to learn this space, you have to learn to prolong this moment. Only then will you begin to draw near to *Samadhi*. In that pause you have a glimpse of tranquillity. So, instead of concentrating on the restraining, you must concentrate on this space. Try to develop this, because your practice of *pranayama* should have cultivated your brain to give it the sensitivity and stability to respond to this chance. Learning to

become familiar with this pause is *nirodha parinama*, (the restraining transformation). When you begin to consciously lengthen this pause, then you have achieved *samadhi parinama*, (the transformation to *Samadhi*). In Chapter I Patanjali defined *Samadhi*; here he shows the process, how *Samadhi* can be touched, in that space beyond words.

See how beautifully he delineates the three transformations; *nirodha parinama* is the phase in which the mind switches between a state of fluctuation and a state of restraint; *samadhi parinama* is where the *sadhaka* begins to lengthen the pause between those two states; then Patanjali shows that there is still a higher state to be reached - *ekagrata parinama*. *Ekagrata* is usually translated as concentration; but if we break this word down further into *eka* and *grata* we can find a subtler meaning; literally, "one base" or "one foundation". In *samadhi parinama* there is a feeling of tranquillity in that prolonged "quiet space", but there is no feeling of the Self. In *ekagrata parinama*, however, you penetrate deeper and the mind rests in the abode of the *Atman*, the Self. There is no division; you are one.

THE FRUITS OF PRACTICE

In the following part of Vibhuti Pada Patanjali has given a list of thirty-five experiences which may come to you when, as a result of your practice, that state (*samadhi*) is reached. From mind reading to the ability to distinguish between externally indistinguishable objects, these are all the fruits of practice. As human beings are all different, so the fruits of their practice are also different. But whoever you are, if you persevere in your practice, one or other of these powers will surely come. The important thing, says Patanjali, is that such a power should be taken merely as a sign that your practice is succeeding; you must just carry on with your *Sadhana*. Some have attained such powers and have been caught up in them. "Oh! See what I have attained!" they say, and instantly they are caught up again in the *klesas*, the pains of *Avidya*, *Asmita*, *Raga*, *Dvesa* and *Abhinivesa* which they fought so

hard to conquer before. So beware! Throughout the four chapters of the Yoga Sutra the message is clear! Persevere in your practice!

THE SEER AND THE SEEN

The final sutra of Chapter III describes the state of Kaivalya which will finally come if you persist in your practice.

III.56 *Sattva purusayoh suddhi samye kaivalyam*

When the exalted intelligence is as pure as the seer this is Kaivalya, perfect independence of the seer.

When is the seer freed from the seen? He is freed when the intelligence of Prakrti (nature, the seen) is equal to the intelligence of the Purusa (the Lord, the seer). When there is no difference between the intelligence of the seer and the intelligence of the seen, then that is Kaivalya. That is the highest state in which there is perfect freedom and yet which is also the divine marriage of the Soul and nature.

CHAPTER IV: KAIVALYA PADA

This definition of Kaivalya leads into Kaivalya Pada, the last chapter. How should the sadhaka who has achieved Kaivalya continue to live in the world? All desires for external things have gone: they are transformed into the desire towards the soul, to continue the inward journey. First Patanjali defines the five types of people who achieve divine powers; the difference between them lies in the way in which they reach it.

(IV.1) *Janma ausadhi mantra tapah samadhijah siddhayab*

The divine powers come by birth, herbs, incantation, and scrupulousness in practice or meditation.

Some are born gifted, and some gain power through mantra. Patanjali also talks of drugs and the word he uses, ausadha - medicine, herb - in this context refers to the use of psychedelic drugs that we are so familiar with in this century. Some attain powers

through earnest practice and some through meditation but, as I have said, only those who are capable of absolute surrender to God without the slightest holding back can succeed in this last case. Of these five types, Patanjali only admits these last two to be real Yogis; the rest he discards.

THE ENERGY OF NATURE

So what of Kundalini? Later texts speak of *Kundalini* or *Shakti*; in Hatha Yoga, purusa is called *Shiva* and *prakrti* is called *Shakti*, but Patanjali always refers to *purusa* and *prakrti*. He uses the word *prakrti* to describe how, for these people, the energy of nature flows abundantly in the human system. It does not happen for you or me. It will only happen when we reach that stage. You have all been misinformed on that point and I am trying to correct that misunderstanding. In IV.2 he says,

Jatyantara parinamah prakrtyapurat

In evolved souls the potential energies of nature flow in abundance to dynamically transform their consciousnesses.

So what should we do when this tremendous energy begins to flow? You have heard how many saints have become sinners. Even though they attained Kaivalya they fell victim to the energy they released. Patanjali gives a wonderful simile to illustrate how the Yogi should deal with this energy to avoid this.

(IV.3) *Nimittam aprayojakam prakrtinam varana bhedas tu tatah ksetrikavat.*

As a farmer builds embankments to regulate the flow of water to his fields, so the Yogi channels this abundance of nature's energies for the development of spiritual illumination.

So, like the farmer, you must build banks so that the energy you gain is conserved, controlled and directed.

FREEDOM IN ACTION

When you have gained such control then you are capable of understanding the true nature of Karma. You will have heard that in the Bhagavad Gita it is said, "Yoga is skill in action" (*Yogah karmasu kausalam*). This is the common translation which is widely quoted out of context. By itself it makes no sense. Let us see what Patanjali says about karma.

(IV.7) Karmasuklakrsnam yoginas tri-vidham itaresam

For others, actions are of three types: white, black or a mixture of these; the yogi's actions are neither white, black nor mixed: they are pure. This means that for us, we have good actions, bad actions and mixed actions. A mixed action, for example, is when we offer to help someone or give something to somebody and then keep changing our minds about whether we will or we will not. We are full of such things, but the yogi is not: he is free from these kinds of action. When he gains that freedom, then his actions become skillful, and not before! He is free from all motivations and so his action is free. He can study his actions and their effects dispassionately. That is how he gains the foreknowledge of both the short-term and the long-term effects of his actions (III.23).

FREEDOM FROM TIME

Patanjali goes on to show the connection between action and Time. Unlike many of today's philosophers, he does not discard the reality of past, present and future and, as far as I have read, he is the only person to have demonstrated the relationship between Time and Timelessness. He says that action is dependent on time, but he also shows how the yogi must use this relationship between the two. That is why I say he was a great practitioner.

A moment is timeless and the movement of moments is time. If the movement of moment goes back, it is past; and if the movement of moments goes forward, it is future. Do not allow the moment to move, but

observe the moment as a moment without allowing the thought of movement. It is like the spokes of a moving wheel; if you can see the spokes you see the movement; if you do not, then you cannot tell where the movement begins or where the movement ends. Do you see how beautifully these sutras connect? When your action is free, then you are also free from Time. A moment is eternally present; it is neither past nor future. Therefore, a moment is virtuous while movement is non-virtuous because it creates oscillation in the brain. So if you can learn to observe the moment and live in it, if you can avoid being caught in the movement of moments and instead be caught in the sequence of moments, then you have conquered time. Then you are beyond motives, you have conquered your actions and all your actions is skillful!

Then, when the seer is freed from time and action, when he understands the difference between moment and movement, the consciousness itself loses its power. It says to itself, "Until now, because I was connected to my actions and connected to Time, I thought I was supreme; but now I realize that I was just reflecting the light of the soul". When you are stable in Moment, the citta is stilled; and because of that, the citta finds its true depth. This is the spiritual equivalent of the force of gravity. When the citta is still and quiet it is inexorably drawn towards the soul.

That is what everybody is seeking and everyone will experience that state, if not today, then tomorrow and if not tomorrow, then next week, next month, next year. Even if it takes several lives, everyone will find this. That is what Patanjali, the great master, the great practitioner says. That process is what we are all involved in. And as I have said, casual practice brings casual results, temperamental practice brings temperamental results but total practice brings total results. So my friends, this is the way to develop the life of Consciousness. Begin with the body because the body is the covering of the Self. Just as you do with a house that has been shut up: you open all the doors and windows so that the stale air is blown out and the fresh air may come in.

In the very same way, maintain your practise so that your body, your mind, your consciousness and your true self do not become polluted, obscured and dark. Throw out the pollution, and cast off the five coverings of the self one by one, the skeletal body, the physiological body, the mental body, the intellectual body until the Self shines through. "*Tada drastuh svarupe avasthanam!*" You are all inside your Self! An indivisible state of existence!

PREPARING FOR THE LIGHT

I hope you have grasped the points I was trying to make, because the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali are an extremely difficult subject. But they are also extremely important! If you do not have the preparation they provide you, what will happen when the light of the Self comes? You will fall sick! Remember the story in the Gita when Arjuna asks Lord Krishna, "I want to see if you really are the Lord of the Universe. Show me your true form, not the pictures of the imagination you have used till now, but your pure original nature." But as soon as Krishna showed his true form to Arjuna, Arjuna's eyes were not strong enough to look on the divinity. He saw the vision of his own cousins in Krishna's mouth and he called out, "Stop, go back to your usual form, I cannot stand it, I am dying! Only if you give me the eyes of God can I see this and survive!"

PERSEVERANCE IN PRACTICE: THE ULTIMATE SAMADHI

However, breaks may still occur in this new state of consciousness as a result of impressions from previous experience (IV.27). When these fissures appear and the citta again begins to fluctuate and move away from the soul, then the sadhaka must intensify his sadhana. As you see, Patanjali is consistent throughout all four chapters: even at these heights continued practice is essential. Only when the fissures stop appearing, when all the subliminal impressions have been exhausted, then does the search come to an end. There is no need for any further searching because the atman is

everywhere. The seeker discovers that he is the seer. The seer acts as seer, object and instrument of seeing. At the end of his quest for the soul, the seeker discovers that he himself, as the seer, is the goal.

In the Yoga Sutras two terms are used to describe this ultimate state: in chapter I Patanjali calls it *nirbija samadhi*, and in chapter IV he calls it *dharma megha samadhi* (IV.29) literally "dharma-pouring samadhi". These two titles are like the two sides of a coin: they are two ways of viewing the same phenomenon. How can we explain this "Dharma-pouring Samadhi?" In England sometimes it is cloudy for ten days at a time. You see neither sun nor rain and you begin to get gloomy. Is this not true? You ask, "Why does it not rain? Why can we not see the sun?" It is the divine duty, the *dharma* of clouds to pour down rain, but still they do not pour. Such English weather is like our brains. They form clouds and sometimes we allow those clouds to stay for day after day, obscuring the sun within us. So do not let those clouds settle! Keep the inner clarity, the light of the intelligence striking the entire frontier of your body! Your citta fluctuates, it has its rhythms, like the moon which waxes fifteen days and wanes fifteen days in every month. But the Atma, the Self, is a sun that never fades. So when this fluctuating part of you, the citta, rests in the sun of the Self then the clouds pour down their rain, the clouds disappear and the light of the intelligence of the Self shines everywhere in a sky of perfect clarity. Then you have conquered the gunas - the qualities of nature - you have conquered *purusa* and that is the end of Yoga.

Remember also what Patanjali says, "*Heyam dukkham anagatam*," you do not know what pain lies in wait for you. If you are not strong enough, the joy of the divine light can also be unbearable. Then people say, "It happened to me in my meditation! It happened to me! I am so frightened. I don't know what to do!" They cannot cope and so they become mentally ill. How many meditators have become schizophrenic? Have you not heard of these cases?

So even in spiritual practice be careful. Develop the strength to bear this and work to keep that strength. That is why asanas and pranayama must be practised regularly so that the nervous system and the willpower keep strong enough to bear this divine light. And so carry on. God bless you.

Reprinted from Dipika, Journal of the Iyengar Yoga Institute, London, England. No. 24 January 1993.

BLOWING THE WHISTLE **by Derek French**

On Sunday, the 25th April 1993, I attended a yoga centre executive meeting. Shirley and I drove through the Metchosin countryside, looking its best in the cool green spring weather, to the Rischmiller residence nestling in its country acreage.

A fine spread of food for brunch, some social chit-chat, and then down to business. Various reports, read and accepted, programmes discussed, ideas tossed around: the assembled directors undertaking to organise and put into effect the various projects. All in all a pleasant, productive and satisfying meeting of a part of the yoga community.

So why did I notice a growing feeling of discomfort, a hard to pin down but clear feeling that something about this idyllic scene was not quite right? I sat for a while using Gendeln's focusing technique, staying with the unease until some kind of understanding surfaces. Suddenly, it was very clear! These people were too good to be true. There was a conspiracy, an unspoken collective agreement to keep all the work that needed to be done within the grasp of this small group.

An unthinking, innocent error, you might say. Well, maybe! But remember these are people with many years training in yoga; several with exposure to the ideas of Mr. Iyengar and Swami Radha, teachers who proclaim that selfless service will

make you divine. Had I inadvertently detected hidden motives: a lust for divinity, a greed to retriect the selfless service to members of the executive, an inverted pride in not asking others for help. Was I seeing an illustration of the old saying that the closer to the light, the darker the shadow? Was I seeing shadows that did not exist? Was this a load of codswallop?

My way was clear now. This cosy arrangement had to be opened up to the light of the community at large. One hesitates to rat on one's friends, but sometimes there is a higher law. Besides that's my job in the executive - I'm the vice-president!

Without more ado I moved that the work available be published in the newsletter, breaking the Executive monopoly.

My Executive colleagues may not talk to me for a while, but my actions will give them an opportunity to practise tolerance and forbearance. Heigh ho, the lessons are never-ending.

Om namah Sivaya.

WANTED

Victoria
Yoga Students
to provide

BED & BREAKFAST
For Participants Of The

YOGA INTENSIVE
JULY 3 - 9th

REWARD: \$20/night

PHONE: Linda Benn, 598-8277

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

MAILING LIST CO-ORDINATOR

- add to or delete from the mailing list
 - print labels for newsletter
- Time: Couple of hours per month
Schedule: End of month

THANKS TO JEAN HUBAY

LONG WORKSHOP CO-ORDINATOR

- preparation and publishing brochure to advertise workshop
 - preparation of refreshments and supplies
 - arranging photographer and/or reporter
 - preparation of articles/photos to promote workshop
 - preparation of articles/photos for newsletter after workshop
- Time: Several hours
Schedule: To workshop date

FRIDAY NIGHT CO-ORDINATOR

- preparation and publishing brochure to advertise friday night yoga gatherings
 - arranging refreshment supplies
 - arranging photographer and/or reporter
- Time: Couple of hours per month
Schedule: To yoga gathering date

BROCHURE DESIGN AND PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATOR

- working with teachers to plan brochure for long term program
 - arranging for design of brochure
 - arranging for publication of brochure
 - co-ordinating distribution
- Time: Several hours twice per year
Schedule: To program events

REPORTERS

- taping, editing and/or typing reports on yoga events, sunday workshops, longer workshops, writing reports on personal experiences, etc.
- Time: Several hours per month
Schedule: To newsletter deadlines

PHOTOGRAPHERS

- photograph yoga workshops, events for the newsletter
- Time: Several hours per month
Schedule: To newsletter deadlines

SUNDAY WORKSHOP CO-ORDINATOR

- preparation and publishing brochure to advertise workshop
 - preparation of refreshments and supplies
 - arranging photographer and/or reporter
 - preparation of articles/photos to promote workshop
 - preparation of articles/photos for newsletter after workshop
- Time: Couple of hours per month
Schedule: To workshop date





NEWSLETTER CO-ORDINATOR

- follow up on search for articles
- make sure ads are ready for events

Time: A few hours per month

Schedule: To newsletter deadline

TYPISTS

- typing articles for newsletter
- can be done on computer using WordPerfect, Microsoft Windows, Microsoft Word, 3 and half inch disc. Also on a Macintosh using Macwrite.
- using Times Roman 10 as font

Time: Your choice

Schedule: To newsletter deadline

ALL THESE JOBS CAN BE SHARED AND/OR ROTATED.

If you're interested in trying your hand at one of these jobs call any member of the Yoga Centre Executive:

Jim and Jennifer Rischmiller, 474-5630
 Derek French and Shirley Daventry French, 478-3775
 Marlene Miller 652-8570
 Jerrilyn Wass 478-3867
 Jean Hubay and Eric Grunsky 598-5866
 Linda Benn 598-8277
 Margaret Feehan 598-9709
 Wendy Boyer 598-9321

YOGA PROPS

- rope master
- mat washer
- blanket washer

Time: Couple of hours per month

Schedule: Your own



ART GALLERY OF GREATER VICTORIA

SAND MANDALA



AND THE SACRED ART OF TIBET

June 4th - June 27th

Monks Building Mandala

Between June 4th and June 27th, three Tibetan monks from Ithaca, New York will build a sand mandala at the AGGV. His Holiness, the Dalai Lama of Tibet will bless the mandala before it is ceremoniously dismantled and thrown into the ocean at Dallas Road.

**1040 Moss Street, Victoria
384-4101**

**Gallery Hours: Mon. - Sat., 10 - 5
Thurs. 10 - 9, Sun. 1 - 5**

THE BHAGAVAD GITA

On the Psychology of the Individual

by Derek Cameron

What constitutes an individual?

The Gita's answer to this is quite clear. We are all produced from the union of what it calls the "field" with the "knower of the field."

By field, the Gita means the body. However, the Gita's notion of the body differs from our own in that it includes not only the external organs of sensation and action, but also the mind, considered as a kind of internal sense organ.

But furthermore, the Gita also includes in this definition of "field" the respective fields of action of the senses. This means sights, sounds, smells and so on. And, since the mind is counted as a sense, mental phenomena such as desire, aversion, pleasure and pain also count as part of the "field."

What then, is the "knower of the field?" The term "knower" is defined in a confusing plethora of ways. It is Krishna himself. It is the spirit which is situated in our material nature. It is the witness and consentor to events. It is the imperishable supreme self.

Clearly, for the Gita, these must all be equivalent notions. However, the Gita does not explain the identity of all its various definitions. It is not even clear whether one should think in terms of one "knower" present in all individuals, or many "knowers", one for each particular individual. At times, the Gita suggests that it is the one, supreme Lord who is situated in all beings. At other times, the knower is associated with a particular body. There does not seem to be an easy way out of this ambiguity.

Having defined the individual as the union of the field and the knower of the field, it is natural that we should ask how the two components are related.

The Gita's answer is that the field and the knower of the field are bound together by three sorts of "attributes" which originate in our material nature. These three "attributes" are present in different proportions in different individuals, and this explains why different people have different personalities.

The Gita divides people, on the basis of their predominant attitude, into three types. The first are those illuminated by knowledge. The second are those who have a desire for action. The third are those who are confused and slothful.

In the Gita, each type of person is associated with a type of food. The equivalent types of food are pleasant and smooth, pungent and hot, and stale and putrid. However, the Gita's notion is that diet is chosen according to personality. It is not explicitly stated that diet in turn will influence personality.

The different attributes of an individual also determine his or her next birth. This implies that our actions --- and, in particular, the consequences of our actions --- can also be characterized by the three attributes.

The Gita also suggests that an individual's state of mind is determined by the proportions of the three attributes which are present. The three attributes can therefore be thought of as being in ever-changing motion, determining not only our overall personality, but also our moment-to-moment moods.

For the Gita, then, the individual is driven from within by these changing "attributes". The attributes may be determined by our previous actions, and equally, our current actions will determine the nature of our future.

However, Gita's psychology is not only descriptive. It is also prescriptive in that it lays down desirable attitudes which we are encouraged to cultivate.

One should be detached with respect to the sense objects, and one should exhibit a spirit of selflessness in daily life. In particular, one should practice virtues such as non-violence and truthfulness. And one should refrain from hypocrisy, arrogance, anger and so on. The motivation for cultivating the beneficial or "divine" attitudes is that they lead to liberation, while the bad or "demonic" attitudes lead one into further bondage.

The Gita, as can be seen, lists many particular good qualities. However, the general principle that underlies them is that one should be detached with respect to the material world. One should treat pain and pleasure in exactly the same way. One should be similarly indifferent to honour and dishonour. Ultimately, having renounced material undertakings altogether, one will transcend the system of three attributes and go beyond it.

It is interesting to compare the Gita's ideal of detachment with the ideals of Western psychology. In general, Western psychologists regard full psychological health as a state where the individual reacts deeply and uninhibitedly to life's situations. Any form of restraint is regarded as an emotional blockage. (For a "classic" statement of the goals of Western therapeutic psychology, read Carl Rogers' On Becoming a Person.)

The Gita, having recognized that individuals differ, is also prepared to advocate slightly different courses of action according to one's disposition. Those who are oriented towards the acquisition of knowledge are urged to develop their wisdom to the point where they arrive at the final truth. Those who are oriented towards action are urged to perform sacred rituals (16:24). And those who have a devotional nature are urged to approach life as a whole with an attitude of service to the Divine.

If one has to summarize the message of the Gita, perhaps it is that one should approach life without being overly concerned with achieving this or that particular result along the way. By reacting to the world in this way, the individual is spared a great deal of unnecessary anxiety, and is able to enjoy each moment for what it is.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Shirley,

I just came home from Ann's yoga class and finished reading the April newsletter. I've been filling out this membership form for many months now but tonight I decided it was time to make that real effort, not just to think of it. I therefore enclose my subscription form and my cheque for \$20.00.

I started yoga classes a year ago on the advice of my doctor and my chiropractor after being hit by a car as a pedestrian. Although I was sent by the doctor, it was the dedication of all the teachers that has kept me attending these classes twice a week. They have been simply wonderful and, although at my age and with this accident I may never accomplish many of the asanas, I am certainly there 'trying'.

I enjoy reading the newsletter and know how much work goes into producing one, having done this for many years myself.

Now when I pick up my next issue, I won't feel guilty, having a paid up subscription. I also look forward to meeting you some day.

Sincerely,
Vi Chubak
Victoria.



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



SUMMER YOGA INTENSIVE

July 3 to 9, 1993

with

Shirley Daventry French, Jessica Sluymmer and Dr. Derek French

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

Fee: \$350.00

Shirley is a student of the Yoga Master, B.K.S. Iyengar, and one of Canada's leading teachers of his method of yoga. Jessica is a student of Swami Radha, and the director of Radha House, a spiritual centre in Victoria. Derek is a physician who has practised yoga for many years and seeks to integrate the ancient wisdom of yoga with the practice of modern medicine.

For out of town students: Victoria is a popular tourist centre with a wide selection of hotels and motels. The Residence at the Y has a limited amount of inexpensive accommodation for women. Billets will also be available with members of the local yoga community.

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 YOGA CLASSES AT THE Y

Program of classes in the Iyengar Approach to Yoga

Iyengar Yoga creates a dynamic balance between flexibility, strength and endurance with an emphasis on precision of movement and correct body alignment. It promotes health, vitality, conscious relaxation and general well being. Yoga is especially suitable for people who wish to explore and expand their awareness of the way they use their body and mind in daily life. The Victoria Y offers one of the most comprehensive programs of Iyengar Yoga in North America under the direction of Shirley Daventry French, a senior student of Mr. Iyengar and one of Canada's most qualified yoga teachers of his method of yoga. She is assisted by Linda Benn. All classes in the Y program are taught by experienced and well-trained yoga teachers, in a well-equipped studio.

Bare feet essential in all classes.

Yoga for Backs

Learning skilful use of the back is fundamental in all yoga classes in the Y program. People who have experienced back problems will benefit from the teaching in any Introductory class.

Pre-Natal Yoga

Registration is welcome in Introductory level classes. However, you are asked to inform the Instructor that you are pregnant.

PLEASE NOTE DATES FOR SUMMER YOGA

Term A: Monday, June 28-Friday, July 30

Term B: Tuesday, August 3-Friday, August 27

Yoga Intensive: Saturday, July 3-Friday, July 9

During the week of the Intensive some of the daytime yoga classes will not be offered. These classes will be pro-rated.

All classes are co-ed.

All classes are in the Lounge.

Introductory Yoga

Members: Free

Non-members: \$23

All students with no previous experience of the Iyengar method should register in this level. Co-ordination, strength, flexibility and stamina will be developed through progressive work with yoga asanas (poses).

Class	Term	Instructor	Day	Time
401	A	Lauren Cox	Mon	10:00-11:30 am
402	A/B	Jim Rischmiller	Mon	7:30-9:00 pm
403	A	Ann Kilbertus	Tues	5:30-7:00 pm
404	A/B	Linda Benn	Thurs	5:30-7:00 pm

60 & Better

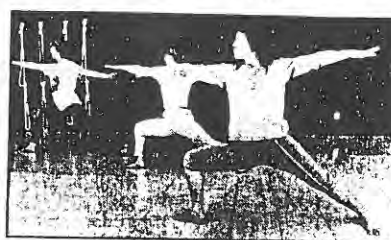
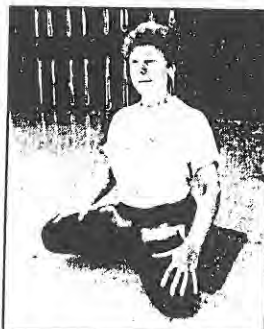
Regular practice of yoga promotes good posture, muscle tone, bone strength and a feeling of general well-being.

Members: Free

Non-members: \$23

Seniors: \$18

Class	Term	Instructor	Day	Time
406	A	Linda Benn	Wed	10:30-12:00 pm



All Levels

A summer maintenance class for all yoga students who have completed at least one session of Introductory yoga.

Members: \$16

Non-members: \$26

Class	Term	Instructor	Day	Time
407	A/B	Margaret Fechan	Wed	5:30-7:00 pm
408	A/B	T.B.A.	Thur	10:00-11:30 am

Workshop Series

- Members: \$20
- Non-members: \$34
- An intermediate course for students with a good understanding of the Iyengar method.

Class	Term	Instructor	Day	Time
409	A/B	Marlene Miller/T.B.A.	Mon	5:30-7:30 pm

Noon Hour Yoga Class

- Members: Free
- Non Members: \$15
- Take time out at mid-day to stretch, recharge and relax.

Class	Term	Instructor	Day	Time
410	A	Lauren Cox	Tues	12:00-1:00 pm

Youth & Yoga

Children's Yoga (7-14 years)

- Members: \$10
- Non-members: \$16
- We are pleased to offer this opportunity for young people to develop body awareness in a relaxed, non-competitive atmosphere.

Class	Term	Instructor	Day	Time
108	A	Lauren Cox	Tues	11:00-12:00 pm



**IYENGAR YOGA CONFERENCE
TORONTO CANADA 1993**

*August 16 to August 20, 1993
Glendon Campus, York University
Toronto*

5 day conference • 4 day visit from Mr. Iyengar • Daily asana and pranayama classes
Question and answer periods with Mr. Iyengar • Forums on various topics of
interest to students and teachers • Evening events and festivities

*Early registration - \$400.00; after Mar. 31/93 - \$440.00 + GST
(Accommodations extra)*

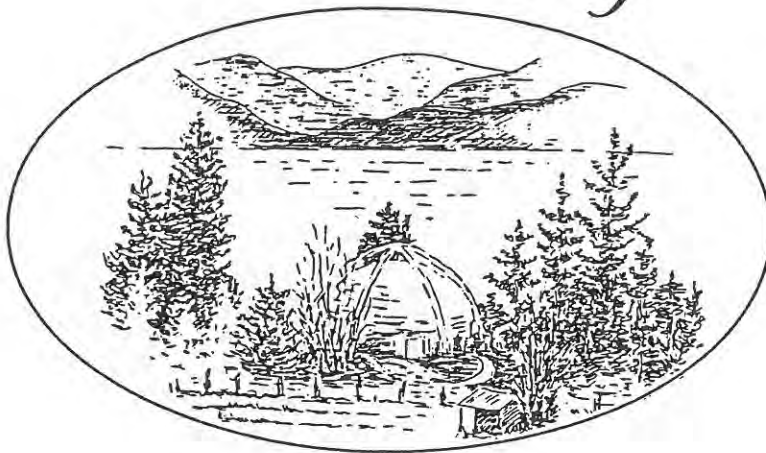
For general information contact:

Donna Fornelli, 235 des Bourgeons Ave., Aylmer, P.Q. J9J 1R8; Phone (819)685-0491

For registration information contact:

Linda Singleton, Yoga Centre Toronto, 2428 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario M4P 2H4
Telephone (416)482-1334

Announcing



*Yasodhara Ashram's
30th
Birthday
Celebration*

July 16-18, 1993

Fee: \$184

R.S.V.P.

The Program Secretary

(604) 227-9224

YOGA CALENDAR

JUNE:

4-6: Iyengar Yoga Retreat on Saltspring Island with Shirley Daventry French.

13: A Day with the Bhagavad Gita at Radha House.

19-20: Rose Ceremony at Radha House.

26: Teachers meeting.

28: Summer yoga classes begin at the Y.

First session June 28-July 30.

JULY:

3-9: Iyengar Yoga Summer Intensive led by Shirley Daventry French.

AUGUST:

16-20: Mr. Iyengar's visit to Toronto, Iyengar Yoga Convention.

3: Summer yoga classes begin at the Y.

Second session August 3-27.

SEPTEMBER:

24: Yoga Centre Gathering

26: Sunday workshop at the Y.

OCTOBER:

17: Sunday workshop at the Y.

22: Yoga Centre Gathering

NOVEMBER:

12-14: Ramanand Patel at the Y.

21: Sunday workshop at the Y.

DECEMBER:

4: Yoga Centre Annual General Meeting.

12: Celebration workshop at the Y.

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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COLLATING: *Jennifer Rischmiller and
Margaret Feehan*

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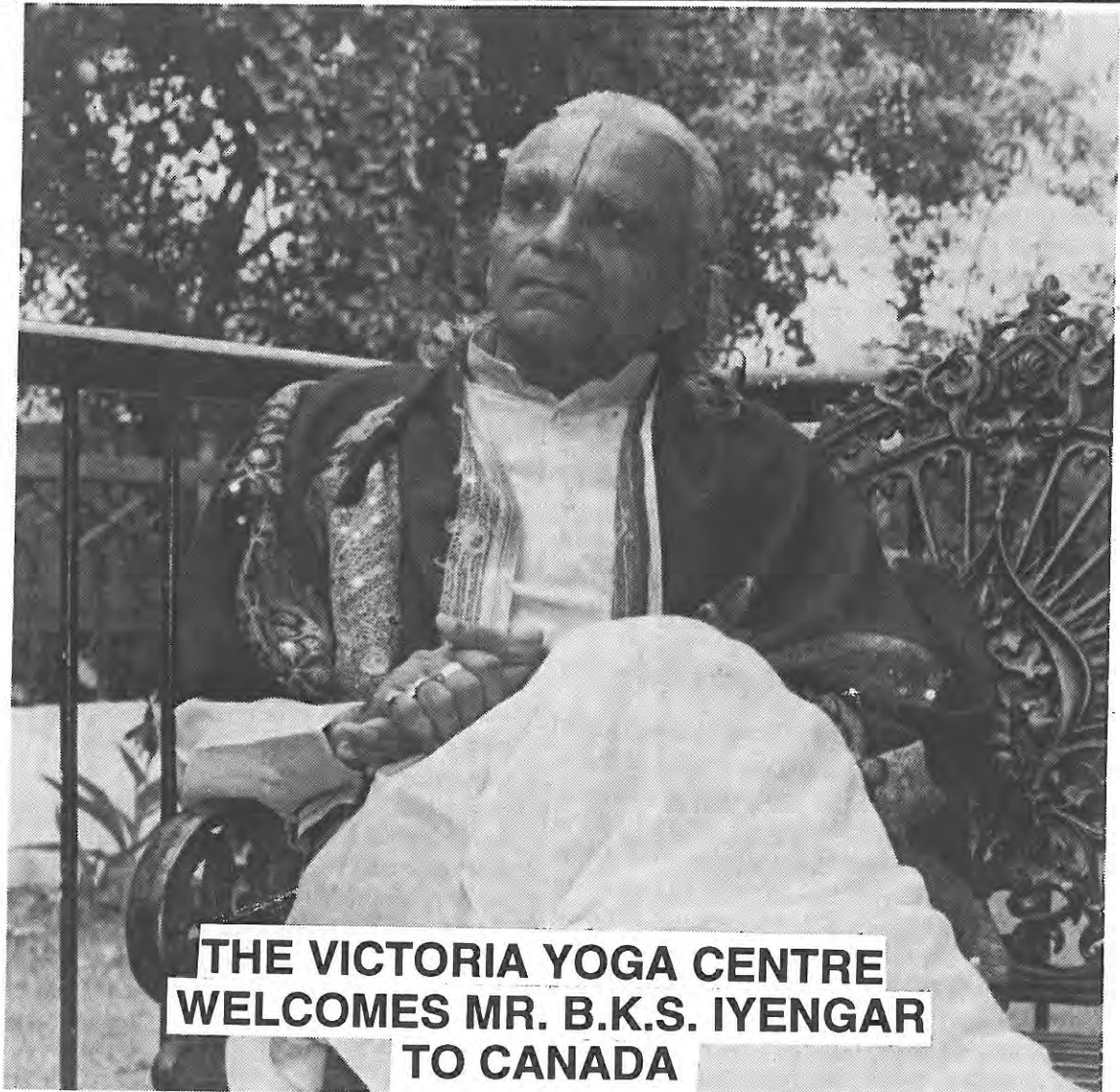
DEADLINE FOR JULY ISSUE: JUNE 15th, 1993.

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



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

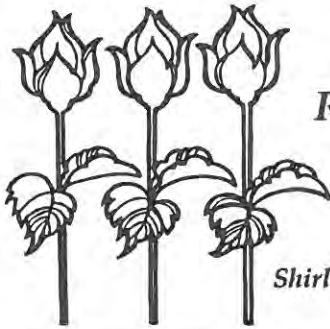
Newsletter



**THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
WELCOMES MR. B.K.S. IYENGAR
TO CANADA**

Please Subscribe

July-August, 1993



Reflections

by

Shirley Daventry French

Yesterday started well, but ended badly. In the early morning, a focussed practice and some quiet reflection helped me make some decisions which needed to be made about the forthcoming conference in Toronto. I wrote notes, made several long distance phone calls, and proceeded with the other matters of the day in good spirits.

In the evening, after a pleasant dinner, Derek and I sat down to watch the second part of a very disturbing but fascinating documentary about justice (or injustice, depending upon your point of view) in one of the southern states of the United States. After watching the first part, we had both experienced a disturbed night's sleep, and should have taken this as a warning and recorded the second part so it could be watched at an earlier time of day and not immediately before going to bed. But it was too interesting, we were hooked, and did not heed the warning.

Because this was a production of public television, there were no advertisements to interrupt the programme which was successful in generating an intensity of mixed emotions, unusual for a documentary. Normally we curse the intrusion of advertising, but this night it would have been almost welcome. Then the phone rang. My first inclination was to ignore it and let the answering machine pick up the call, but one of my daughters is orchestrating a move to graduate school and I thought it might be her. I got up and answered the phone.

It was not my daughter, it was one of our yoga centre members, seeking the phone number of another member who has recently moved. I was irritated and refused to give it to him. He was there at a recent meeting when she gave her new telephone number and address to all those present. I am tired of being used as a convenient telephone directory service, because it is known that I keep good records.

This call was followed a few minutes later by another. This time I did let the answering machine pick it up but heard a woman's voice leaving a message and, again thinking it might be my daughter, went to the phone and listened to the message. It was our newsletter editor, enquiring about my newsletter stuff for the upcoming issue. The rest of the material was already in the hands of the designer, but mine was missing.

I should have known better, and waited until next morning to return her call, but I didn't. I called her back to discover there had been a miscommunication. She thought she had told me that the newsletter would be going into production last Monday. I had no recollection whatsoever of this. Her fault or mine, or both, who knows? Had she failed to clearly enunciate her needs to me, or had I selectively chosen not to hear her demands?

I returned to the documentary angry at these two interruptions, angry at the demands being made of me, and distressed at the events unfolding before me on the television screen. The programme in question, *Innocence Lost: The Verdict*, examined accusations of massive sexual abuse in a day care centre and the ensuing court cases. It raised disturbing questions about the nature of mind, memory and imagination, about mass hysteria, auto-suggestion, hypnotism, about truth, decency, humanity and justice. Quite a lot to cram into a two hour programme; too much to cram into a mind seeking a night's rest.

I went to bed, tossed and turned for a while, then got up and started making some notes. Why was I so restless? Why, after feeling relaxed all day, did I now feel under pressure?

The summer intensive ended, successfully, two weeks' ago. In three weeks' time I leave for the conference in Toronto and travel on to London, to attend the European Iyengar Yoga Convention. I have a lot to do in those three weeks, to get ready for the conference, prepare for the trip to Europe, and set up my fall classes and workshops. At the same time, we have a new computer, more complex than the old one, and I need time to become familiar with its idiosyncrasies.

I want to spend time with my daughter who is about to leave for three years' at graduate school in the U.S. My husband has injured his wrist, rendering his right arm out of action, which has thrown extra work on my shoulders. His mother, who lives with us, has been unwell, requiring some extra support. And on top of all this, the weather, so far this summer, has been abysmal. The Gods are conspiring to teach me some lessons about the nature of treading the yogic path - and about my nature.

It is fortunate that all of this has happened at a time when I am not teaching my regular classes, and my workshop commitments are fulfilled for the time being. There is a hiatus of a few weeks between the work of last season and the season to come. I would have time, or so I thought, to rest, read, sit in the garden, idle away some time with friends and family. The Divine Committee had other plans, forcing me to establish priorities, assess my commitment to yoga, my duty to my family and my teacher, and, above all, examine my attitude in all areas of life.

I do not shirk responsibility and usually do what has to be done, no matter how difficult or how much it inconveniences me - but I do not always do this with good grace. This is an aspect of my character where there is work to be done, and life presents me with a stream of opportunities to get on with this work!

Looking back at the curious juxtaposition of events last night, it is amusing to observe how many lessons could be crammed into such a short time. First of all, I should have heeded the inner voice which was telling me that this TV documentary was not an appropriate bedtime story. Secondly, having ignored that warning, I should have ignored the phone call and left the answering machine to do its job allowing me to listen to the messages at a more suitable time when I was prepared to give them my full attention.

Once having answered these calls, I had to deal with them, and felt angry about this. I resented the unwanted intrusions into my time and space, and realised that a large part of my irritation arose because I want to forget about the yoga centre for a while. I have been trying to hide out in my Metchosin home - difficult to do if I keep answering the phone; and to make matters worse, a few months ago when I was feeling more benign, I offered to host the next executive meeting which will be held at my home on Sunday.

When Derek gives talks on stress management, which he did one afternoon at the recent summer intensive, he has a chart which shows various levels at which we can interrupt the chain of response which leads to a state of distress. Events keep happening all the time, this is the nature of the world, and, if we would believe the teachings of yoga, these events are there for the purpose of providing us with the lessons we need to learn. We can deal with these events with equanimity (ah so) or emotion (oh no). We can have the same response all of the time (knee-jerk reaction) or develop a variety of ways of responding (discrimination).

Given my preoccupation with what I was already doing last evening, it would have been better to have put a stop to this chain of response at the start by not answering the phone. But having missed that opportunity, what next?

Instead of being angry (justly angry, as I felt at the time) at having my precious leisure time interrupted by a late night request for someone else's phone number, I could have simply said: this is not a good time. If I want to avoid such requests in the future, I need to make it quite clear that I do not wish to be disturbed late in the evening for information which is easily obtained from other sources.

The nature of the second call was a little different, in that it is quite reasonable for the editor of the newsletter to approach a contributing editor for information about her contributions. From my point of view, it wasn't a good time to approach me; but how was she to know this. Perhaps it was a very good time from her point of view; a difference of opinion requiring clarification. Again, I must make it clear if I don't want to become involved in these matters late in the day.

Often I feel as if all these interactions with others, which force me to clarify my motives and question my responses, take time away from my yoga practice. But this is *all* part of my yoga practice. In addition to the time I put aside each day for asana and pranayama, there is the yoga of daily living which never ceases.

Think how fortunate we are: we don't have to go looking for opportunities to learn. Our lessons are right here, constant companions for every moment of every day.

Om namah Sivaya!

THANK YOU FOR THE INTENSIVE

Thanks so very much for the Intensive. It helped me be strong, relaxed, flexible and alert, all at once Yes.

Leslie Fiddler, Vancouver.

You are a wonderful giver.. I am very grateful to you for teaching me about my very neglected Body Symphony....Now I am aware of the motive of the right foot bunion, the rhythm of my shoulder breathing, the tempo and dynamics of my walk and stand....and of the melodies of my body.

Ilona Bartalas, a music teacher from Budapest/Victoria.

Oh, how I wish my yoga friends here could share the experience I am privileged to have in Victoria! I am so grateful for your efforts.

Marjorie Fisher, Wisconsin.



1993 CANADIAN IYENGAR YOGA CONFERENCE

In August, eight Vancouver Island teachers and many students will be flying across the country to Toronto to attend the second Canadian Iyengar Conference, and honour the renowned teacher, B.K.S. Iyengar whose work is at the heart of this gathering.

A cross-country network has organised this conference, a network which was first put in place at last year's Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' meeting. Donna Fornelli of Ottawa and Marlene Mawhinney of Toronto were appointed co-chairpersons and form the Management Committee. The brochures were prepared in St. John's, Newfoundland who also took care of the advertising. The conference logo is the work of an artist in Winnipeg, and two Winnipeg teachers are responsible for Finances and Shop. The conference magazine is being published in Edmonton. Documentation is under the auspices of Calgary. The host city, Toronto is taking care of many responsibilities such as Hospitality, Props, Billeting, Scheduling, and Registration. Because of the enormous size of our country, two Regional Co-ordinators were also appointed: Edith Layne of Toronto for the East, and Hilda Pezarro of Vancouver for the West.

What about Victoria? We have also done our share. Celia Ward and Ann Kilbertus have organised the Forums, Demonstrations and Question and Answer sessions. Shirley Daventry French heads the Entourage Committee and enlisted the help of Derek French and Paul Parsons to provide the necessary documentation for the entourage to obtain their Canadian visas.

The Victoria teachers travelling to Toronto will be busy during the conference performing many tasks, including the vital one of teaching classes. Sadly, many Iyengar Yoga teachers are unwilling to teach in front of the teacher whose tradition they purport to follow. It is not easy to do this, because he is very demanding in the true tradition of a Master of Yoga. Nevertheless, it is a rite of passage which five Victoria teachers have indicated their willingness to undertake: Lauren Cox, Shirley Daventry French, Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus and Jim Rischmiller. For all of them, if Mr. Iyengar does enter the classroom where they are teaching, they will have a tremendous opportunity to learn and grow. On their return to Victoria, sometime during the fall and winter they will all present workshops and pass on what they have learned, and as a result our yoga community will be all the richer.

We wish Guruji himself, his entourage, and all the teacher and students at the conference, blessings and light!







EUROPEAN IYENGAR YOGA CONVENTION

CRYSTAL PALACE SPORTS CENTRE

LONDON, ENGLAND

AUGUST 24 - 30, 1993

**THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE EXTENDS ITS
CONGRATULATIONS TO SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH
ON BEING INVITED TO BE THEIR GUEST.**

WHY MARRY

Swami Sivananda Radha

As we develop on our evolutionary paths, we may be seriously questioning the place of sex and marriage in our lives. Becoming truly human has a whole range of meanings, the most important of which is to take responsibility for one's life and evolution. And although the chemistry that works between two people on the physical, mental and emotional levels cannot be eliminated, it must be understood that everything has its price. One does not become a virtuoso without a great deal of time, effort and practice, and the same is true of becoming a truly human being.

When we are young we are not given sufficient education, nor are we wise enough, to realize what it means to enter into an intimate relationship. There is a responsibility for working on that relationship and recognizing the possible results. We have a responsibility for offspring, and must consider the very important questions of birth control and personal health. We must investigate very soberly what we want from a relationship, what our motivation is, and what we need on the physical level; whether or not sex is the driving force for entering into the relationship. We can prevent disappointment by being as clear as possible about these issues.

Disappointment is also caused by wanting what a partner is unable to give. We often must undergo much heartbreak to realize that wanting someone else to be responsible for our individual happiness is an impossible demand. We are each responsible for our own inner peace and happiness, and cannot expect it from anyone else; to expect that is like chasing an illusion. We tumble into relationships, driven by social pressures, by instincts, by common habits, by biological urges, without any idea how many factors contribute to what we think is a truly personal decision. Looking for the satisfaction of

our needs and the fulfillment of our illusions, having expectations and assumptions, and wanting the approval of another person are often the basis for feeling that our life is worth living and that we are indeed worthwhile.

There are no rules that apply to every one. Each person will have to ponder these questions: Is sex just a biological function? Is sex only for procreation? What does the Kundalini Force have to do with sex? Should one practice celibacy? Is sex a creative force that can be channelled elsewhere? Is sex connected with psychic energy? All questions of morals should come only from our own inner being, from our own convictions. Societal morals vary with the culture and the times, and what is expected in one part of the world is unacceptable in another.

Acceptable behaviours between the sexes are determined by the stage of human development within a society at a particular time. The institution of marriage came into human life to bring commitment into sexual relationships, and to control the interaction between men and women. It was based on many needs: the self-protection of the male who does not want to bring up the offspring of another male, the protection of children, the security of women, the clarification of property and inheritance lines. However, as religious and spiritual ideas come in, changes take place. As we move along the course of evolution, we begin to understand that the guiding principles come from a very different level: the union of the male and female within, of the rational and the intuitive, of the physical and the mental. And the purpose of spiritual life is eventually to lead us to that union between our Higher Self and our human self, which is the union all of us are really seeking. We were not created to gratify appetites. We were created for another world also, and must bring together those two worlds - the human and the spiritual.

Sex uses energy that can be colored any way the mind decides. The sexual act can be an unforgettable experience when both partners are able to overcome selfishness and are dedicated to co-operating with their own evolution. It is possible for two people to be married, or engaged in a sexual relationship, and also provide support for each other on the spiritual path. Those who can put the Divine first in their lives and their beloved second can have a happy relationship, yet, at the same time live a spiritual life. However, to have the necessary control, both partners must first have achieved the spiritual marriage of the male and female within. This first spiritual marriage is the result of bringing into balance the rational and the irrational so that we can fully use the mind-logic and reason in combination with the heart-feelings and intuition. It is this union that brings us fully into the fourth stage as a whole human being.

It is very important to understand that the attraction is different for each of the sexes. a man perceives primarily through his eyes, and often chooses his wife or partner by the way she looks. A woman is generally attracted to a man by what he tells her. To marry on the basis of either kind of attraction is not enough. It is unfair to make demands afterwards, so by first becoming friends and establishing good communication, the couple can discuss their basic ideas and ideals before they marry. The moral standard of a sexual relationship is commitment. The morals are not dependent on having sexual relations, being married or not. Without commitment to the other person, there will be abuse, and that means the balance of the male and female cannot take place or has not yet taken place.

There are beliefs and ideals deep within our consciousness that we have inherited from the culture to which we belong. But questions of loyalty, relationships, sex outside marriage, and monogamy must be answered by each one of us. The criticism and judgement we have for others must also govern our own actions. We cannot live by a double

standard as feelings of guilt will be with us if we act against our ideals, and they will surface in moments of stillness. We must live what we believe in, and therefore must clarify our own ideals and convictions, and we must put them into practice. The Christian cannot take on the moral convictions of the Muslim, or those of any other culture, without first doing this kind of clarification.

Many of us who think that we marry for the sake of love, do not know how we define the word love. Often we are only in love with the idea of love, and of course that can also apply to being in love with the idea of marriage, fatherhood, or motherhood. We may just be experiencing a certain attraction that we need to define, or perhaps only attachment that is actually possessiveness. These distinctions are not easy to make, and love is difficult to define. The highest form of love has no "because" attached to it. When we use "because" to demonstrate our love for somebody, we need to investigate the reasons. They may have little to do with love; they may belong to the needs and gratification of some very human personality aspects. Until we reach the point where we can love with no "because", we cannot really know love.

The ideal marriage is one in which the two partners consider themselves each one-half, together making a whole unit. In such a case, the man is then able to accept what is usually termed the irrational in the woman, and the woman will not be overawed by the rationality of the man. There will be an exchange, and each will bring out the best in the other. Where the idea of "I and Thou" exists, there is mutual respect, and there is no question wanting only pleasure without the consequences or responsibility.

If it is possible for a person to preserve all sexual energy through the practice of celibacy, then there will be more to use for creativity. But if in practicing celibacy we use more energy fighting the sex drive than if it were indulged in, no energy is saved. Again, it is the ego wanting to be a celibate,

or brahmachari, when we are not ready for it. Each of us must inquire within and pursue the path that is right. There is no prescription in life for everybody. Our own consciousness will make the best decision. As long as consciousness is embodied in the physical vehicle of the body, this vehicle is subject to the law of nature. However high our aspirations are, we must never condemn ourselves nor feel guilty when we fall below them. Everyone has the right to be a spiritual baby and a baby is not punished when it cannot yet walk. Do not let the ego interfere and want to be a saint when you can hardly crawl.

The above is excerpted from the book "From the Mating Dance to the Cosmic Dance" by Swami Sivananda Radha, c 1992.

Reprinted with permission from Timeless Books in Canada, PO Box 9, YCV, Kootenay, B.C. and in the U.S. from Timeless Books, PO Box 3543 YCV, Spokane, Washington. From an article printed in InnerSelf magazine, 1993.



JIM'S DOG IN TADASANA



Every room has boxes in it. I sit at my desk and know that all but one drawer is empty. 17 years worth of family life is being packed away, or given away.

For the past several years I have had spring fever. Birds build nests, I look at houses. My husband never encouraged me in these moods. He was happy in our home. But this spring he joined me in the search and now the move is imminent.

Why am I doing this? Yes, there are things about our house I don't like. But it's a nice house, full of character and plenty of room. There are sure to be things in the new house I won't like. I already know there aren't enough closets.

I get up in the mornings and go into my yoga room. The mural of water lilies I painted greets me. Everything else that had been in that room has been moved out. It is an inviting space to do my yoga in. I like it better than ever. I'll have to leave the mural and the room behind.

I'm sitting in the guest room typing at my desk. It's also a peaceful room and when we have guests they don't have to sleep in my yoga room. In the new house they will.





Why are we moving? The new neighborhood is near the ocean and parks. It will be a somewhat smaller living space. A simpler house with more windows, more light.

Why now? So many chapters in my life are closing and two in the same week. My job is also in flux. My oldest son started attending Sundance School, a Victoria District alternative, 17 years ago. He started there after we moved into this house. Then I started teaching there six years ago. The program is ending. I must go to another school.

Sundance has been a community of friends, colleagues and more. It was a chance to put an idealistic dream into action. The dream is ending and part of my idealism has gone as the dream dies.

I'm standing with so many things I've known still around me, but only for a few days more. And then? And then a new home, new neighborhood, a different job, new responsibilities, some old ones finished.

I guess this is the empty nest syndrome, partly. Only I didn't wait for the nest to become entirely empty. I think when one begins the journey of putting a child in school, the end seems impossibly far off. I was beginning that journey when we moved here and now it's nearly over. Our youngest son will graduate from high school in January.

There will be no more parents' nights, parent councils, bake sales, or driving on field trips. The friends we made along the way are still part of our lives, in new ways. The children may no longer spend time together but that hasn't stopped us!

As a young couple we moved all the time. Before we moved here, two years was the longest we'd lived anywhere. The first year we were married we moved into a temporary apartment while we waited for the one we wanted to be vacant. So we moved in September and then October. In the spring we moved to the country to an upstairs apartment in a lovely home and then we moved back to our home town for the summer before we left for an overseas teaching assignment. We moved four times in twelve months and thought nothing of it. Of course, we only had a bed and a few boxes.

Letting go, non-attachment, is part of yoga philosophy. At a time like this, I don't feel very yogic. I feel attached to my home yet it's only wood and timber, glass and stone, inanimate objects. My mother said she could identify with those feelings. When people ask her if she misses her old and

wonderful house, she says she misses some of the people and events, and maybe the trees. I guess what I'll miss is the part of my life when everything revolved around my role as mother and the life and activity of a busy family, outings with my car full of small boys, mine and their friends.

But the other letting go I have to do is more complex. I have to say goodbye to the children I have taught, and their siblings, who I always thought I would teach next year or the one after. Like the boy who has been visiting my room since he was three and has been counting on my being his teacher when he turned five, which will be this September. His mother tried to explain that I would no longer be at Sundance. Recently he said to his mother, "I know, Mom. Wherever Leslie goes to teach that will be my school."



WHAT'S WILD ABOUT YOGA?

by Beatrice B. Briggs

Reprinted with permission from Heartland Journal, Spring, 1993.

At this stage of the Earth's evolutionary story, when the human presence is severely compromising the basic life systems of the planet, what we most need to cherish and connect with is the wild. As a student of yoga for over twenty years and a teacher for more than a decade, I have come to treasure this ancient discipline for its capacity to give us what poet Gary Snyder calls "the practice of the wild." We need daily disciplines which cut through the life-destroying insanity of contemporary Western life and put us back in contact with the life-giving wildness of the natural world, of which we are an integral part.

The wild is evolutionary fire, primal creativity, cosmic surprise, the sacred. In their powerful new book, *The Universe Story*, Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry describe the wild as "a great beauty that seethes with intelligence, that is ever surprising and refreshing for the human mind to behold...an untamed and untamable energy at the organic centre of life." Although the wild is always everywhere, our relationship with it has been atrophied by the way we live. We no longer know how to relate reverently to the wild around us or within us. The animals, plants, rocks and winds are strangers, or enemies. Our own bodies are neglected temples of wildness, while our minds are filled with the pap and poison of consumerism.

Yoga has the potential to put us back in contact with the wild. By yoga, I mean the classical postures, breathing practices, chanting and seated meditation, all grounded in an on-going commitment to a truthful, compassionate, non-greedy, examined life. Wildness, however, is the last thing most of us expect from yoga. We turn to

yoga for stress reduction, not creative interaction with the givenness of life. We want mere relaxation, not fundamental transformation. We want to stretch, or get a workout, improve fitness or relieve back pain, not have an encounter with our true nature. We are content to be domesticated, to accept uncritically the cultural roles, even though they are killing the precious wildness of the planet.

Do not misunderstand. Physical health, quietness of mind, temporary escape from the craziness of daily life are all reasonable expectations. If one is blessed with competent teachers and perseverance, they are almost inevitable by-products of the yogic process. But as descriptions of the true power and purpose of yoga, they are much too tame. As developed by spiritual seekers over the millennia, yoga is an initiatory process designed to free practitioners from their cultural conditioning. Its techniques are tools for radical transformation, not mere accommodation to the existing social order.

To accomplish this bold agenda, yoga practice must engage us deeply at the physical level. The body and its home, the earth, are the matrix of any authentic human spirituality. To ignore, malign or attempt to flee our earthiness in an effort to be more "spiritual" is to completely misunderstand our task. The body is revelatory. The earth is sacred. Wherever we are standing, no matter how urbanized, polluted or otherwise degraded, is holy ground. Our physical form, no matter how depleted or diseased, is an evolutionary gift from our ancestors, dating back to the first single-celled organisms. The struggle to do yoga postures, many of which are named after plants and animals, recapitulates the story of life on earth and adds

another chapter to the narrative. A physically grounded yoga practice puts us in direct contact with the fundamental beauty, vitality and creativity of matter. In other words, it reveals our essential wildness.

Even a glimpse of the astonishing wildness at the heart of organic matter can be overwhelming. To contemplate the extinction of that wildness is even more unbearable. Yogic disciplines can give us the strength and sensitivity needed to cope with both these challenges. The ancient teachings can show us how to stand reverently before the great mystery and to act effectively to prevent the further destruction of the web of life in which that mystery is enfolded. We must be able to sit silently and work hard. We need to learn how to feel intelligently, think passionately and behave ethically. We need practices which affirm the physical and teach us to perform physical acts in a prayerful manner. We need to be transformed from a species bent on wanton destruction into one which celebrates life.

Yoga, like all human enterprises, has evolved through time. To practice yoga in the waning years of the twentieth century means being joyfully engaged in the twin struggles for ecological sustainability and social justice. It is tempting, of course, to ask less of yoga, to treat it as mere recreation, narcissistic therapy, or as a heady, theoretical system with no practical or political relevance. To do so, however, not only condemns us to a New Age hell, but also denies yoga the power to be wild.

Beatrice Briggs is a writer and bioregional activist who teaches yoga at Wild Onion Yoga in Chicago and Cress Spring Farm, near Madison, WI.

A DAY OF YOGA

Asana and Pranayama
in the Iyengar Tradition
with
Shirley Daventry French

SATURDAY,
Saturday, October 2nd



10 am to 4 pm in
The Yoga Room
3918 Olympic View Drive
R.R. 4, Victoria, B.C.

FEE \$48.00

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

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

I've just returned from my third annual Saltspring Island Yoga Retreat with feelings of gratitude which I want to express in the appropriate directions.

I thank Shirley for her teaching which was so informative and inspirational. In addition to gaining so much from her asana instruction, I appreciate the time she takes to convey some of her (and Mr. Iyengar's) philosophy about, and attitude toward, the practice of yoga.....And Derek is such a perfect foil to Shirley - they bounce off one another in such a way that both are enhanced and the student is the beneficiary.

Celia once again assumed the burden of organizing this splendid weekend, and her efforts are certainly appreciated. Each year I attend I become more aware of what goes on behind the scenes to ensure the smooth flow of the retreat - it is no small task!

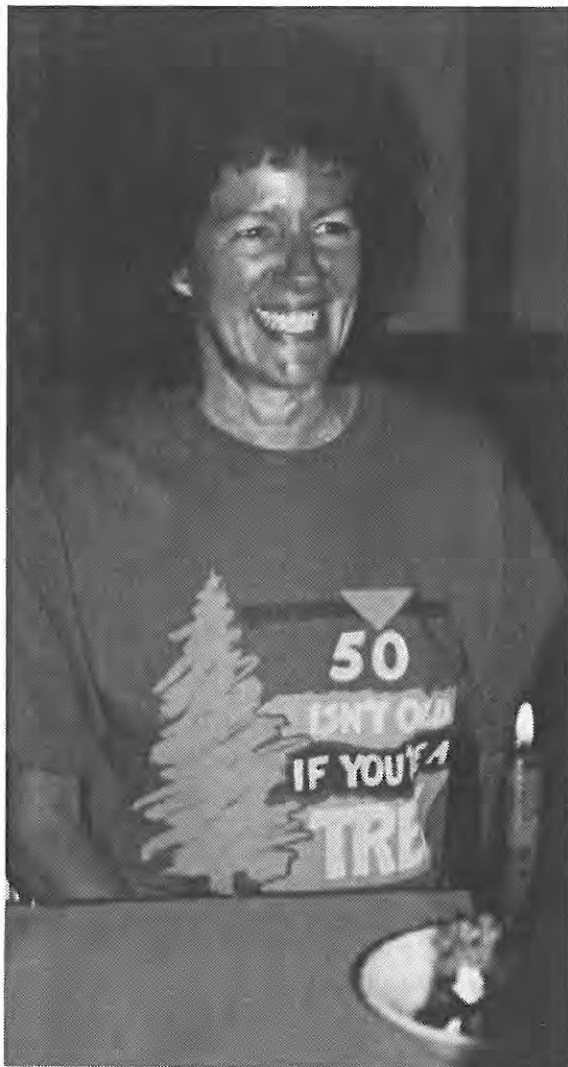
And what would it all be without the members of the Saltspring Centre, the wonderful food they prepare for us, the atmosphere they set, and their sharing of Sat Sang on Saturday evening? Their hospitality is so warm.

I want to thank Leslie and Giles for bailing me out of a sneezy situation; Shirley for closing pranayama on Sunday morning with that "special" chant in English - Happy Birthday; Nancy for her surprise gift of the conference T-shirt; Marlene for her gift of a candle which brings some of the light from the ashram into my home; and finally Marlene and the Saltspring Centre staff for the rather astonishing impromptu "birthday" cake - a sizeable piece of banana cake slathered in blackberry sauce, decorated with an array of garden flowers, and topped with a purple, beeswax candle!

It was a happy birthday, a time of considerable learning, and a weekend of the camaraderie and community which I have come to associate so closely with the Victoria Yoga Centre.

Om Om

Jo Ann Hope
Victoria

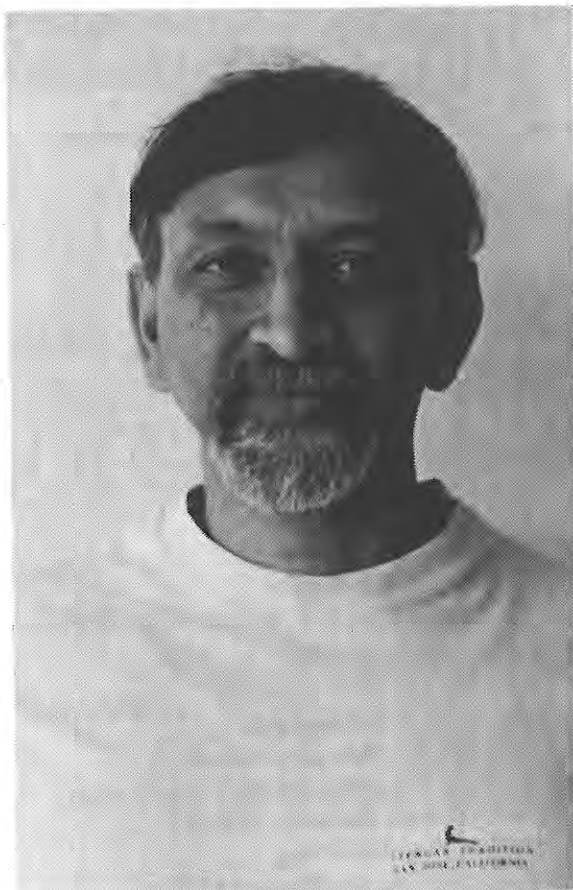


RAMANAND IS COMING !!!

Ramanand Patel will be here for a weekend workshop November 12th, 13th and 14th.

Ramanand has been coming to Victoria once a year for many years. Those who have worked with him before eagerly look forward to the precision and refinement of his teaching, his innovative presentations and his unique sense of humour. Ramanand is one of the finest Iyengar Yoga teachers in the world. Yoga is in his blood. He was born into an Indian family in Africa, and he grew up with the yogic teachings as part of his family tradition. Ramanand now makes his home in San Jose, California when he is not travelling all over the world to teach. He is in much demand as a teacher, and we are fortunate that once again a visit to Victoria is included in his busy schedule.

A brochure with full details will appear in September's newsletter, but circle these dates on your calendar and register early to save disappointment. Registration will take place at the "Y" where the workshop is being held. For further information contact Shirley Daventry French at 478-3775 or Linda Benn at 598-8277. (Please note that Shirley will be away until September 13th)



INTERIM YOGA CLASSES

Wednesday, Sept. 8th, 5:30-7:00pm - Jim Rischmiller

Thursday, Sept. 9th, 10:00-11:30am - Linda Benn

Fund Raisers - Everyone \$5.00

Y-Lounge - All Levels

'Y' Fall Classes Start Week of September 13th



YOGA CALENDAR -CLIP & SAVE-

AUGUST:

- 16-20: Mr. Iyengar's visit to Toronto, Iyengar Yoga Convention.
3: Summer yoga classes begin at the Y.
Second session August 3-27.

SEPTEMBER:

- 13: Start of Fall classes at the Y.
21: Yoga in Metchosin; start of Fall classes with Shirley Daventry French.
24: Yoga Centre Gathering
Meet the Yoga Teachers
25: Teachers meeting at the Y.
26: Sunday workshop at the Y.
Led by Jim Rischmiller

OCTOBER:

- 2: Day of Yoga in Metchosin
with Shirley Daventry French
16: Pranayama in Metchosin
with Shirley Daventry French
22: Yoga Centre Gathering
Discussion on the Bhagavad Gita
30: Teachers meeting at the Y.
30: Yoga, Women and the Change - an
afternoon workshop at the Y with
Shirley Daventry French
31: Sunday workshop at the Y.
Led by Linda Shevloff

NOVEMBER:

- 12-14: Ramanand Patel at the Y.
20: Pranayama in Metchosin
with Shirley Daventry French.
27: Teachers meeting at the Y.
27: Yoga and Stress Management -
an afternoon workshop at the Y
with Dr. Derek French.

- 28: Sunday workshop at the Y.
Led by Ann Kilbertus

DECEMBER:

- 4: Yoga Centre Annual General Meeting.
12: Celebration workshop at the Y.
Led by Shirley Daventry French.
18: Pranayama in Metchosin with
Shirley Daventry French.

JANUARY:

- 16: Sunday workshop at the Y.
Led by Marlene Miller
28: Yoga Centre Gathering
Discussion on Dreams

FEBRUARY:

- 13 Sunday workshop at the Y.
25: Yoga Centre Gathering
Discussion on Stress

MARCH:

- 6 Sunday Workshop at the Y
11-13: Felicity Green Workshop at the Y.
25: Yoga Centre Gathering

APRIL:

- 17: Sunday Workshop at the Y
22: Yoga Centre Gathering





Meet Your Teachers For An

OPEN HOUSE

Hatha Practise led by Jim Rischmiller

followed by Potluck dinner

followed by introduction of your yoga teachers

Date: Friday, September 24, 1993

Place: YM/YWCA Yoga Lounge

Time: 6-7 pm Practice in the Dance Studio

7-8 pm Potluck dinner

8-9 pm. Meet the teachers

RADHA HOUSE

Victoria

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



Starting each Monday from August 9, 1993

at Radha House, 5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

Hidden Language Hatha Classes

Drop in Fee \$11.00 per class



The Victoria Yoga Centre

presents

Working with the Gita

A Sunday yoga workshop led by

Jim Rischmiller

Sunday September 26th

10am to 1pm

In the Yoga Studio - Victoria YM-YWCA

Followed by refreshments.

Yoga Centre members \$25.00.

Non-Members \$30.00

What is the Bhagvadgita ? Why so many translations ?

Why is it about war ? What value does it have for me ?

*Come and have some fun. See what part you can play on
the battlefield of life. Jim will be using our Yoga postures to
explore how the Gita can help us in our daily lives.*

Registration

Phone Jim Rischmiller at 474-5630 or 474-0392.

Please leave your name and Phone number.

Refreshments - Register Early.

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DOES YOUR YOGA CENTRE MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION NEED RENEWING?

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

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22: Yoga Centre Gathering

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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PHOTOGRAPHS OF MR. IYENGAR : SONI STUDIO,
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DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER ISSUE: AUGUST 20th, 1993.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

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

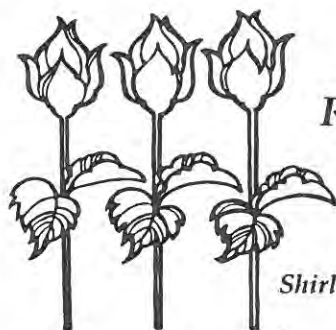


VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

Newsletter



PRASHANT, B.K.S. IYENGAR and GEETA



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

REFLECTIONS

Shirley is out of town attending the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Conference in Toronto and the European Iyengar Yoga Convention in London. This month, instead of her regular "Reflections" column, we are pleased to offer the following article, which was originally written for the Canadian conference magazine.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF PATANJALI

by Shirley Daventry French

When I was growing up in England, there was a character on a B.B.C. radio program who, whenever there was an opening, launched into an anecdote about his adventures as a British Army officer in India. These were always prefaced by the phrase: "When I was in Pune....." It was a popular program, and these words became a catch phrase for many an individual to tease others as they launched into a tall tale or two. Little did I know then, that later in my life, I would have many adventures of my own which could truthfully be prefaced: "When I was in Pune ..."

Since my first visit in 1979, I have returned regularly every two or three years to touch base with my teacher and immerse myself in his teaching. Without a doubt, each one of these journeys has been a pivotal time in my life.

My most recent visit was in the fall of 1991. The journey to Pune was relatively uneventful; I have learned, from experience, how to minimise the stress of crossing half the globe and thirteen time zones. First I took a non-stop overnight polar flight to London, where I spent a couple of nights with my family before travelling on to Bombay to be greeted by my Victoria friend and colleague, Jim Rischmiller. He had arrived a day earlier, via Singapore. Geographically, Pune is half way around the world from Victoria, so it doesn't make much difference whether you travel via Europe or Asia. We had planned to meet at my hotel, but as my plane landed I had a feeling that Jim was there. Amid the heat, noise, dust and teeming chaos of an Indian airport, his familiar face was a very welcome sight.

The journey from the international airport into central Bombay is long and tiring, but Jim repeated it again the next day to greet another compatriot, friend and fellow pilgrim, Liz McLeod. In her usual fashion, Liz flew straight through from her home in Edmonton without stopovers, preferring to just get it over in one full sweep! After a brief pleasant sojourn in Bombay, the three of us took the Deccan Queen express train to Pune, and settled into our separate hotels.

The following morning, excited and eager, we made a ritual trip to the Institute to pay our respects to Guruji. Later in the day we returned for a meeting with Geeta Iyengar and the other students who would be participating in the three week intensive course. It was predominantly a European group from the Netherlands and Germany, but there were others from France, Austria, and the U.S. The Canadian contingent grew to four when we were joined by Ray Long of Montréal. Geeta welcomed us and gave a pleasant introductory talk. Classes would begin at 9 o'clock next morning.

Monday, first day of the intensive, and forty two students of yoga milled around in the downstairs vestibule of the Institute waiting for the early morning public class to end. Some people chattered nervously, while others were silent. For most of them it was their first time in India, and the shock still registered on many of their faces. As old India hands, the four Canadians were a little more relaxed. We knew what to expect - or did we?

The public class ended, we mounted the stairs to the main yoga studio and waited for Geeta to arrive. In an instant, the energy in the yoga hall became charged. Mr. Iyengar himself had entered and, moreover, was wearing his shorts and ready for action.

Guruji called us together, and told us that he had some good news and some bad news. The good news was that his daughter Savita had given birth to a son a few days earlier. The bad news was that Geeta would be so involved in the care of her sister and the baby that she could not teach this intensive. So the bad news for him and good news for us, was that he would be our teacher.

My heart pumped faster and I felt a tremendous surge of excitement, along with elation and gratitude at my good fortune to be there at this time. What an opportunity! Yet at the same time there was a sober realisation that the course would be hard, very hard. I knew he would demand that we work to the maximum, that he would not let up, and that I would be tested.

Guruji's introductory talk left us with no doubt that he was in a no mood to tolerate ineptitude, and then the class began. It was, as I had expected, a very difficult class, not because of the postures which were fairly basic, but because of the level of execution, concentration and attention to detail which he demanded.

Although I never forget the hard work and demands for excellence which are Guruji's trademark, it is always a shock when once again I find myself in

his class and experience afresh just how much he expects of his pupils. In true yogic tradition, he simply demands our very best effort - *all of the time*. And why not? If it is our aspiration to follow a yogic path in this lifetime, why would we settle for anything less than the maximum? How else can we expect to become free of self-imposed limitations? Reading us well, Guruji will know just how much we are capable of, much better than we know ourselves, and because of this, in his classes we transcend ourselves.

After class, as we went in search of lunch, Liz and I talked animatedly, marvelling at the unfolding of events that had led us to India at this particular time, and the unexpected gift of three weeks with Guruji. Jim was quieter. Geeta had been the main teacher on his previous visits to India, he had learned a lot from her, and was looking forward to continuing this work. Jim is not a quiet man by nature, but the first impact of Guruji full force for three hours made its inevitable overwhelming impression.

In the first section of his yoga-sutras, (*Samadhi Pada*, verses 21 & 22), Patanjali states that success in yoga comes quickly to those who are intensely energetic and speaks of different levels of aspirants: mild, moderate and intense. Once, when Guruji was discussing this, he said: "I am intensely intense." No-one who has worked with him ever has any doubt about this.

Guruji's intensity burns away our ignorance along with the other obstacles to enlightenment or *klesas*, which arise from ignorance: egoism, attachment, aversion and clinging to life. (*Sadhana Pada*, verses 3 & 4). Patanjali earlier mentions nine other distractions (*citta-viksepa*) which impede progress on the yogic path: disease, mental stagnation, doubt, carelessness, idleness, sense gratification, false perceptions, lack of perseverance, and unsteadiness in concentration. All of these obstacles will be confronted and challenged in a class with B.K.S. Iyengar - again, and again, and again!

According to Patanjali, to attain yoga one must discipline the mind, and the way to do this is by sustained practice and non-attachment (*Samadhi Pada*, verse 12). Practice, persistent practice, steadfast practice, practice which is pursued over a long period; this theme runs throughout the sutras, along with reminders that we must at the same time become unattached to the fruits of this practice - no matter how much we appear to achieve.

In Guruji's classes, students surpass themselves and discover that they are capable of more effort, concentration and refinement than they had dreamed possible. Stretched to their limit on many levels, a whole new area of possibility opens up. Are these students always grateful? No, of course not, because a paradigm shift such as this is not achieved without cost. In the process, our ignorance will be revealed, and our self-importance and false pride will be confronted again and again. Who likes this? But yoga isn't about likes and dislikes, and Patanjali also tells us that we must move beyond these pairs of opposites to view each event in our lives as an equal opportunity on the spiritual path.

As the intensive with Guruji unfolded, his demands were unceasing, and many questions arose in the minds of the students about the perceived "harshness" of his teaching. One man left after a few days saying he couldn't see any relationship between what was happening here and spiritual growth. Others were asking similar questions, but chose to stay and get on with the work. Does it have to be this way? What right has he to talk to me (or you) like that?

What way should it be? Who is going to decide? The students in this course were either established teachers of Iyengar Yoga, or were about to begin teaching having completed a three-year teacher training course in Amsterdam. If you consider Mr. Iyengar to be your teacher, and especially if you claim to be teaching in the tradition of his work, then he certainly has the right to intervene and point us in the right direction. This is his responsibility as a Yoga Master, just as it is our responsibility as his student to surrender, listen and learn.



LEGWORK IN URDHYA DHANURASANA

There is a story, which I read in Swami Radha's book *Kundalini Yoga for the West*, about a time after the earth had been flooded, when the waters receded leaving a pleasant smelling film covering the earth. The young gods of heaven were curious and came down to earth to taste this substance, which was sweet like grape-wine. Some of them put their fingers into this film and sucked them again and again until their bodies grew heavy and lost their luminosity. When the time came to return to heaven, they discovered they had become dense, could no longer fly, and were stuck here on earth.

What sort of teacher would *not* intervene seeing clearly how we are stuck - or worse, sinking? What sort of teacher would not intervene seeing how we are harming ourselves? What sort of teacher would not intervene, seeing us lost, floundering or taking the wrong path? Are not a few harsh words and the loss of a little pride a small price to pay for avoiding this fate? The harsh words arise from compassion for our predicament, and if we are able to suspend judgment, and just get on with the work, this often becomes clear to us later on.

An incident occurred recently in my home when my daughter, Rachel, was visiting with her two small children. We were sitting around the dining table having a meal, when her little girl, not quite two years old, stood up on the booster chair which sat on the seat of one of our dining chairs, and leant against its back. The chair started to tip over, and Rachel reacted at once; in the same instant she shouted "No, Adriana!" and grabbed her firmly. An accident was averted, but the child, sensing the urgency in her mother's voice and reacting to her sudden rough grasp, burst into tears. From her perception her mother was angry and harsh, while all the adults could clearly see the love and compassion in this action.

A DAY OF YOGA

Asana and Pranayama
in the Iyengar Tradition
with
Shirley Daventry French

SATURDAY,
Saturday, October 2nd



10 am to 4 pm in
The Yoga Room
3918 Olympic View Drive
R.R. 4, Victoria, B.C.

FEE \$48.00

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

In the second chapter of the yoga-sutras, verse 16, Patanjali says that "the pain yet to come can be avoided." In this case, a mother's action saved her daughter from the painful consequences of her own act. Eventually the child will mature to adulthood and be fully responsible for her own actions, but until then her mother will intervene from time to time to guide her and give her the opportunity to mature in a healthy and natural way. A master of yoga takes care of his pupils in a similar way, so that they can tread the yogic path and develop a clear understanding of the teachings of yoga without doing irreparable harm to themselves.

At the end of our intensive, many of the students who had questioned Guruji's manner and method at the beginning of the course, were now able to see the love and compassion which drive him, and felt loving and grateful in return. When the last class was over, the students stood there not wanting to move, not wanting the intensive to end - and then one by one the majority of students came to the front of the room and touched Guruji's feet in gratitude for the gift of his teaching.

I have an additional reason for cherishing this time in India, and that is that I shared it with my friend, Liz McLeod. A few days before the end of the course, when observing one of Guruji's Indian students prostrating himself, Liz had said to me: "I would never do that." However, on that final day, I

was amused and delighted to observe that one of the people who came forward to touch Guruji's feet was Liz. Although we did not know it at the time, this was her final leave taking of the teacher she loved and respected so deeply.

New This Fall
**YOGA
FOR SPECIAL NEEDS**

a course
for people with health problems
or recovering from injuries
who would have difficulty
participating in a regular class

with
Shirley Daventry French
Ann Kilbertus, Occupational Therapist
Derek French, Physician

Wednesdays
4:00 to 5:30 pm
at the "Y"

Brochure with full details at the "Y"
or phone Ann at 360-0916

PLEASE NOTE CORRECTIONS FOR YOGA CALENDAR:
OCTOBER 17 - SUNDAY WORKSHOP WITH LINDA SHEVLOFF
NOVEMBER 21 - SUNDAY WORKSHOP WITH ANN KILBERTUS



Program of Classes in the Iyengar Approach to Yoga

Yoga is a classical Indian philosophy and discipline which promotes self-development and self-understanding. Yoga at the Y is based on the teaching of B.K.S. Iyengar, one of the foremost exponents of yoga in the world today and author of the classic text Light on Yoga. This approach creates a dynamic balance between flexibility, strength and endurance with an emphasis on precision of movement and correct body alignment. The practice of yoga promotes health, vitality, concentration and relaxation through the integration of body, mind and spirit.

Program Staff Liaison — Shirley Main

The Victoria Y offers one of the most comprehensive programs of Iyengar Yoga in North America under the direction of Shirley Daventry French and Linda Benn. Classes are held in a bright, airy, well-equipped studio, and taught by experienced and well-trained teachers, the majority of whom have studied with Mr. Iyengar in India. We offer general classes at four progressive levels, noon yoga, classes for those who are sixty or better, plus gentle and special needs yoga for students of any age who require a slower approach.

Yoga for Backs

Learning skilful use of the back is fundamental in all yoga classes in the Y program. People who have experienced back problems will benefit from the teaching in any Introductory class. However, the Gentle Yoga and Yoga for Special Needs classes will provide more individual attention and a slower approach for those with back problems.

Pre-Natal Yoga

Registration is welcome in Introductory level classes. However, you are asked to inform the Instructor that you are pregnant.

Bare feet essential in all classes

All classes are co-ed

All classes are in the Lounge

If you are placed on a Wait List, come to the first class and talk to the teacher.

Introductory

Members: N/C

All students with no previous experience of the Iyengar method should register in this level. Co-ordination, strength, flexibility and stamina will be developed through progressive work with yoga asanas (poses).

Class	Day	Time	Instructor	Non-mem
01	Mon	9:30-11:00 am	Lauren Cox	\$42
02	Mon	7:30-9:00 pm	Ann Kilbertus	\$42
03	Tues	5:00-6:30 pm	Linda Shevloff	\$42
04	Wed	9:00-10:30 am	Shirley Daventry French	\$42
05	Wed	7:00-8:30 pm	Jim Rischmiller	\$42
06	Thurs	1:15-2:45 pm	Leslie Hogg	\$42
07	Thurs	4:30-6:00 pm	Linda Benn	\$42
08	Thurs	6:00-7:30 pm	Jim Rischmiller	\$42

Gentle Yoga

Members: N/C

A slow approach to yoga for students of any age who are seeking a change from the fast pace of modern life. Basic yoga postures will be taught along with an emphasis on breathing and relaxation.

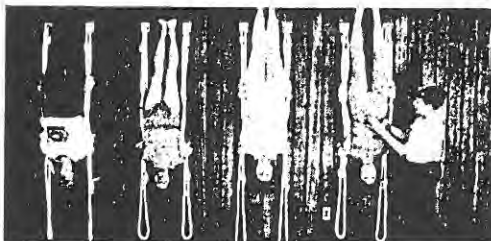
Class	Day	Time	Instructor	Non-mem	Sen
409	Tues	10:30 am-12:00 pm	Linda Benn	\$42	\$37

Sixty And Better

Members: N/C

Regular practice of Iyengar Yoga promotes good posture, muscle tone, bone strength and a feeling of energetic well being. The care and attention to detail is especially suited for people in this age group.

Class	Day	Time	Instructor	Non-mem	Sen
410	Wed	10:30 am-12:00 pm	Shirley Daventry French	\$42	\$37
411	Fri	10:30 am-12:00 pm	Linda Benn	\$42	\$37



Yoga for Special Needs

A program designed to address health problems and injuries which require more special care and attention than may be afforded in a regular class. Yoga postures will be adapted to suit individual needs, with an emphasis on breathing and relaxation. Classes will be co-taught by Shirley Daventry French, one of North America's most experienced yoga teachers, and Ann Kilbertus, an Occupational Therapist and yoga teacher. Dr. Derek French, physician and longtime yoga practitioner, will act as a consultant for this program and be in attendance for some classes. Registration will be limited to 12 students. Doctor's permission is required.

Class	Day	Time	Mem	Non-mem	Sen
412	Wed	4:00-5:30 pm	\$55	\$75	\$65



Meet Your Teachers For An

OPEN HOUSE

Hatha Practise led by Jim Rischmiller

followed by Potluck dinner

followed by introduction of your yoga teachers

Date: Friday, September 24, 1993

Place: YM/YWCA Yoga Lounge

Time: 6-7 pm Practice in the Dance Studio

7-8 pm Potluck dinner

8-9 pm. Meet the teachers

THE LUXURY OF A CAREER

By Beatrice Briggs

Reprinted with permission from Conscious Choice Magazine.

Careers are luxuries we can no longer afford. Like servants and steamer trunks, the term "career" belongs to the privileged classes of the nineteenth century. It implies education, opportunity, entitlement, and the expectation of success in "the professions"; law, medicine, engineering, science, finance, the military, government. For some ambitious women of that era, careers, of a sort, were available in education, nursing, the arts. The working classes merely got a job, if they were lucky. To have a career meant prosperity, progress, social standing. It also meant the plundering of the earth's richness and the poisoning of our air, soil, and water. The careers of well-meaning people have bankrupted the planet. Their success has left growing numbers of every species, including our own, without a means of supporting themselves.

To say "the idea of career has run its course" is not only a socio-economic critique, but also a rather telling play on words. "Career" comes from the Latin *carraria*, carriage road, which in turn derives from *carrus*, wagon, from which we also get the word "car." "Career" originally meant a racecourse. When applied to horses, it meant a short gallop at full speed. In medieval times it referred to a charge in tournament or battle. Later "career" was used to describe the course of the sun or a star through the heavens. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, career as "a course of professional life or employment, which affords opportunity for advancement in the world" is a modern usage, occurring first in the early nineteenth century. Thus, to trace the etymology of the word "career" is to follow an astonishingly straight path from the road-building of the Roman Empire through the chain-mail of feudalism, the emergence of the nation-state, and the development of the observational sciences, to

the current technological trance of our times. The race has been short, intense and utterly depleting. Everyone lost.

The Case of the Vanishing Career

Among those who feel the loss most acutely are the men and women who entered a career in good faith, believing it to be, as Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary states, "a profession for which one trains *and which is undertaken as a permanent calling*" (emphasis added), only to find the mills and mines closing, the factories moving overseas, the corporate headquarters "downsizing." Trained, experienced fifty year olds forced into early retirement. Women and minority "new hires" being the first to be laid off. Recent college graduates settling for work as night managers of fast-food outlets. High school dropouts unable to find even a job bagging groceries. All are as much the by-products of exploitive, unsustainable economics as clear-cut forests, strip-mined hillsides and lakes full of mercury instead of fish.

Under these circumstances, to have a job - any job at all - seems fortunate and to be able to seriously consider "career choices" puts one in a privileged position. Most of the available choices, however, are so destructive to the integrity of both the individual worker and the ecosystem, that even those with "successful" careers feel deeply unsatisfied. The perceptive recognize that an economic system which ignores ecological reality is doomed to fail, and that the money they worked so hard to accumulate is worthless in a world without breathable air, drinkable water, or arable soil. It all seems like a cruel joke.

From the point of view of the Earth, the unemployed human may be a more benign presence than one with a job that chews up natural resources to produce the unrecyclable goods and ephemeral services of our consumer culture. This is scant comfort, however, to those condemned to a life of grinding poverty, whether in urban slums of the "first world" or the rural villages of the third. After the economics

lectures, complete with pocket pointer and flip charts, after the learned debates about externalities and productivity and limits to growth, after the billions and trillions of the federal budget have been sliced and diced, unanswered questions persist. How can people be starving on a planet so blessed with abundance? How can anyone be unemployed when there is so much work to be done?

Replacing the "Jobs" Mantra

Our urgent social problems will not be solved by those pursuing the old illusions of career, personal wealth, or job security. Selfishness, greed, and fear have very little survival value in the current context. The hope for the future lies in those who understand, deep in their bones, that human work is meaningful, and human economic systems viable, only to the extent that they support the ecological integrity of the Earth. The mantra of "jobs, jobs, jobs," chanted so devoutly by our elected officials, must be replaced with an equally fervent prayer that we, as a species, learn how to "fit in, fit in, fit in" to the larger Earth community. Until our notion of work becomes more biocentric, more reverently aware that "the wealth of nations" does not exist outside of the life systems of the planet, we will continue to treat human labor as a commodity and devalue the importance of the work of other species, such as earthworms, frogs, native grasses, in maintaining the viability of the Earth's economy.

David Haenke, director of the Ecological Society Project of the Tides Foundation, describes ecological economics as "regional scale economies, designed on the basis of ecological principles. This in turn mandates decentralization, deconcentration, and regionalization of our economic systems, including local production, consumption, and full-scale recycling, this activity derived as much as possible from local resources. It further mandates that no economic activity be destructive or compromising to the ecological integrity of the region within which it takes place.... Eco-economics means bringing the economy home, and embedding it cooperatively in the web of life of our bioregions."

Community Help Wanted

This vision includes putting the community to work restoring damaged ecosystems, growing food and putting it by, retrofitting buildings with energy-efficient technologies, bringing back wildlife, making clothes and furniture with locally available materials, repairing bicycles, publishing the community newspaper, planning street fairs and seasonal celebrations. The list goes on and on. In a vibrant, locally-based economy, there is work for everyone. Each person's gifts are precious and needed and each one's needs are met. We do not need careers, we need community. We do not need jobs, we need work that matters. We do not even need much money, if we kick the habit of consumerism and live with elegant, demonetized simplicity.

To implement this vision requires creativity, courage and commitment, to crafting a better way. Luckily, for whatever our other faults, we humans are a remarkably adaptable species. Much of our behaviour is culturally coded. Therefore it can be transformed by cultural means. First, make a choice to put down roots somewhere. Start making decisions by consensus, rather than majority rule. Eat more locally and seasonally. Be prepared to get dirty, work hard, make mistakes. Tell stories and sing songs that belong to the place you live. Insist on having more time to dream, play, sleep, learn, share. Before you know it, you will be much too busy, too challenged, too fulfilled, to be bothered with anything as narrow, self-serving and soul-destroying as a career. And when asked by a stranger, "What do you do?" you will answer, "Why. I am a member of this community. I help out wherever I can."

Beatrice Briggs lives in the Wild Onion Bioregion, where she offers her services to the community as a writer, yoga teacher, consensus facilitator, leader of eco-rituals and Contributing Editor of *Conscious Choice*.

The Victoria Yoga Centre

**presents
a workshop
on**



**with
Linda Shevloff**

The ultimate goal of yogic practice is to be in the centre. Asanas teach us to confront ourselves to develop balanced attention between body and mind. This all levels workshop will focus on balance.

Date: Sunday, October 17, 1993

Place: Victoria YM-YWCA Yoga Studio

Time: 10AM to 1PM

Fees: Yoga Centre Members \$20

Non Members \$25



Registration: Phone Linda Shevloff at 479-5847

RADHA HOUSE

Victoria

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



1993 Fall Calendar

September

- 12: Open House
- 12: Guru Puja
- 17-18: Kundalini Overview
- 20: Classes begin

October

- 16: Saturday Morning in Shavasana

November

- 5-7: Dreams: Gifts of the Night
- 20: Saturday Morning with Spinal Twist
- 29-December 4: Last week of classes

December

- 4: Rose Ceremony, Part 1
- 5: Rose Ceremony, Part 2

Radha House Vancouver Workshop

Ideals: October 22-24

Fee: \$150, \$25 deposit

For information call Janet Gaston: 433-3495

Dreams: Gifts of the Night

Friday, November 5, 7:30-10:00 P.M., Saturday & Sunday, November 6-7, 10:00 P.M.-6:00 P.M.

In this workshop you will have the opportunity to explore your dreams in depth, and to use a variety of creative techniques for unlocking the secrets of your subconscious mind and Higher Self. Emphasis is placed on applying dream messages in daily life.

Guest Instructor: To be announced

Fee: \$125, deposit \$15

About Radha House

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



Jessica Sluymmer, director of Radha House, has taught yoga for over 20 years. She holds a Yoga Teachers Certificate, and a Hidden Language Hatha Yoga® certificate. She is the resident teacher of the House.

Radha House Victoria opened in February 1984 with Swami Padmananda as its first director till October 1990. She laid a solid foundation for the work that is now continuing in its tenth year.

Swami Padmananda is president of Yasodhara Ashram. Her commitment to spiritual life and selfless service continues to be a shining example for us all.



Registration

For further information and registration, please call 595-0177.



The Victoria Yoga Centre

presents

Working with the Gita

A Sunday yoga workshop led by

Jim Rischmiller

Sunday September 26th

10am to 1pm

In the Yoga Studio - Victoria YM-YWCA

Followed by refreshments.

Yoga Centre members \$25.00.

Non-Members \$30.00

What is the Bhagvadgita ? Why so many translations ?

Why is it about war ? What value does it have for me ?

*Come and have some fun. See what part you can play on
the battlefield of life. Jim will be using our Yoga postures to
explore how the Gita can help us in our daily lives.*

Registration

Phone Jim Rischmiller at 474-5630 or 474-0392.

Please leave your name and Phone number.

Refreshments - Register Early.

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 21st
\$80.00 for eight-week session

Pranayama

for experienced students
Saturday mornings
October 16th, November 20th
December 18th
\$22 per class (\$56 for 3 classes)

A Day of Yoga

Asana, Pranayama, Philosophy of Yoga
October 2nd \$48.00

Shirley is a student of B.K.S. Iyengar
and an experienced teacher of his method of Yoga
Information: 478-3775



ARMWORK IN VIRABHADRASANA II.

WHAT I DID ON MY SUMMER VACATION

By JoAnn Hope

Being on my own again, I find that holiday times present a new challenge. No longer is it the automatic What-shall-we-do-this-year-Dear? routine. Rather, it is, "Hm. Well now, where will I direct my energy, time, and money?" This year, prior to Spring Break, I answered the question by consulting the Yoga Journal. I was looking for a yoga holiday, anywhere, within reason, just so long as the timing matched with mine. There it was: a small, square ad, beaming out from Page 119 in the bottom, right-hand corner: **Yoga in Mexico**. Within moments, I was on the telephone to Gabriel Halpern in Chicago. "Is there space?" "Yes, there's just been a cancellation." I was on my way.

Gabriel and his fellow Iyengar Yoga teacher, William Prottegeier from Minneapolis, make an annual spring (for us) or mid-winter (for them) sojourn to some place warm. For the past four years, it has been to a lovely little spa called Rio Caliente, just an hour's drive from Guadalajara. This spa is not a luxury hotel as I feared it might be; rather, it is more like an old-fashioned motel built on two levels on a hillside adjacent to the river of hot water. It is set in a forest preserve and is very quiet except on weekends when many of the locals descend on the park to enjoy its beauty and serenity - their presence does not damage the ambience, rather it contributes another dimension.

Rio Caliente accomodates about seventy guests, and our contingent made up close to one half of that number. They value their "regulars" and, on one occasion, William was asked whether our group would balk at a tuna salad for lunch. He indicated that, indeed, many of us were total vegetarians and that tuna could be a problem. The response was in the form of another question: "Would we mind, then, a substitute of stuffed avocados?" Would we mind??? Oh no, we thought we could probably

struggle along with stuffed avocados! The only dish which I did resist was Huevos Revueltos con Cacto Cortado (Scrambled Eggs with Chopped Cactus!). Oceans of freshly prepared juices were available at every meal - even chilled hibiscus flower juice, not even slightly reminiscent of the packaged tea we buy in local grocery and health food stores.

Our days began with an hour and a half asana class followed by breakfast. We were at our leisure from then until we met in the late afternoon for pranayama. The intervening hours were spent lounging in, or around, one of the several hot mineral-rich pools; horse-back riding; hiking or walking; being massaged, mud bathed, or diagnosed by either the resident naturopath or the iris-reading nun down the road. Many of us returned with mysterious packets of herbs, most probably, like mine, still unopened in some dark cupboard in the kitchen.

The evenings were pleasurable and varied. I subjected myself to a belly dancing class taught by a svelte Tanya, the spa's activities director; marvelled at a film of Mr. Iyengar in his own practice, which either William or Gabriel brought along; participated in a moving ritual celebrating the Spring Solstice; and enjoyed a last-night party at which emotions ran high and everyone expressed the gratitude they felt for the company, for the richness of the teaching, and for the practice of yoga itself.

Gabriel and William are both excellent teachers possessed of the expertise which, I think, can only fully be gained from studying in Pune itself, with the Iyengars, as both have done. I met many wonderful people during that week - does yoga attract them or create them? - and came home well satisfied with and enriched by every aspect of the experience. Next year I hear it will be either Rio Caliente again or some place in Jamaica.

As a school teacher, I feel an incredible need for refreshment of mind-body-spirit at that time of the year; I think I'd like to be first on the list - regardless of the venue.



THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
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present



YOGA, WOMEN AND THE CHANGE

with
Shirley Daventry French

In yogic terms, menopause is the herald of an opportune period in a woman's life - a time to focus on personal and spiritual growth. A discussion of how yoga views this period of transition will be followed by the practice of postures and breathing exercises to energize the body, soothe the nerves, balance the endocrine system, and create freshness of mind.

Where:	The Yoga Studio of the Victoria YM-YWCA 880 Courtney Street	
When:	Saturday, October 30, 1993	
Time:	1:30 to 4:30 pm	
Fees:	Y and Yoga Centre Members	\$25.00
	Non-Members	\$30.00

Shirley Daventry French is a student of the renowned Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar and an experienced teacher of this method of yoga. She has also studied intensively with Swami Radha of Yasodhara Ashram. She has been teaching at the Victoria Y for over twenty years and gives workshops nationally and internationally.

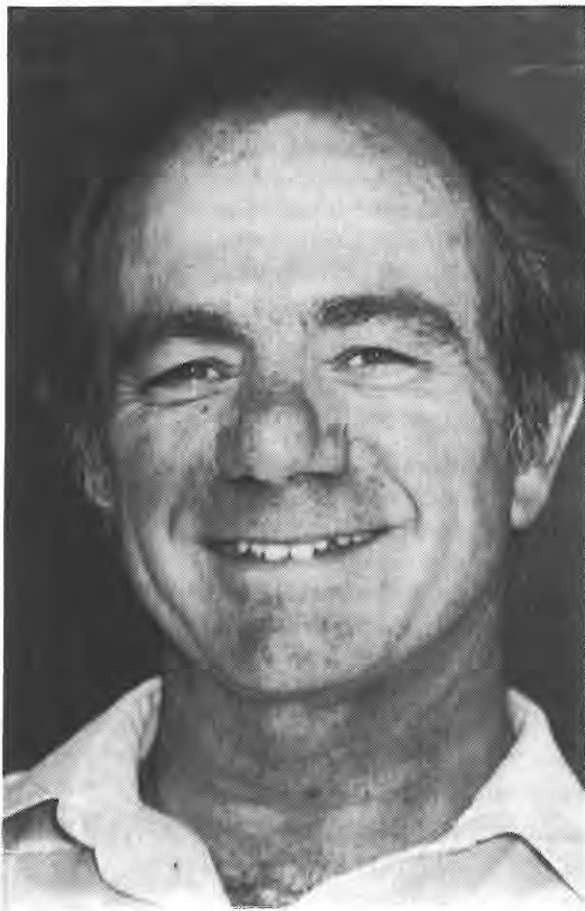
Please pre-register at the Y Main Desk - Registration is limited
Wear warm loose clothing

Information: Shirley Daventry French 478-3775 or the Victoria Y at 386-7511

CLARITY AND CHOICES

A Talk with Jim Rischmiller

By Margaret Feehan



It is a balmy day in Metchoshin and I sit with Jim on the back porch of his house and sip tea. We are talking about yoga, and I am asking him questions about his work with Mr. Iyengar and Swami Radha and what aspects of himself he continues to explore through his practice of yoga. In answering, Jim uses as a reference The Bhagavad Gita, an ancient text originally written in the language of Sanskrit. I have read the Gita only once and consider my understanding of it to be cursory. Jim, who has been

studying the Gita for the past four years, and perhaps has a more personal understanding of the book, talks to me about his current thoughts and how he applies this text to his life.

As we begin to converse, I am aware that to work with the Gita is to engage in a life-long learning process with innumerable layers and revelations. Jim and I laugh about the fact that it would take a lifetime to fully understand the Gita; but we agree that we can talk about the parts of it we understand and how it illuminates the events and circumstances of our lives.

As Jim explains, "You go to the Bhagavad Gita and what Arjuna is essentially doing is trying to get some clarity in his life and he uses Krishna as a resource to do that. The way I see it is that Krishna is the God aspect within each of us and Arjuna is the Human aspect."

When I ask Jim what it means to be a man involved in Yoga he replies by reminding me that each of us have both male and female aspects. After acknowledging the different parts of ourselves, the most important thing is to have clarity about how we choose to act on them.

"You can call (your two selves) male and female, you can call them past and future, you can call them ignorance and wisdom; it doesn't matter, what you're talking about is choice. It really doesn't matter what you're making choices about, but the only way you can make a wise choice is by being clear about what the choices are. All the time, it's choice. So the world comes down to something very simple in the end; you can clutter it up but it really comes down to 'Do you acknowledge your God, your Spiritual aspect, your Krishna?'"

This leads me to question Jim on how he bridges his work with Swami Radha's Kundalini method with his work in the Iyengar tradition. Both of them, he explains, offer their knowledge to help us clarify our own beliefs.

"In Kundalini, Swami Radha says, 'This is the way the world is,' and I sometimes disagree with her point of view only to find out that the reason she wrote it was so that I would have something to disagree with. That's part of the process of being clear. Iyengar says, 'Here's your back leg, can you straighten it?' and you think it's straight, but it isn't. Here's something to disagree with."

For Jim, Mr. Iyengar and Swami Radha are both vital Teachers. As I listen to him, one of my own beliefs is validated: the work of these two Gurus is wonderfully compatible.

"A lot of the work I do in Kundalini is thinking/mind work. It's about how my emotions are, how my feelings are, it's about how I think and how I discriminate, what judgements I make, etc. That stuff is absolutely vital to living as a human being.

"I see Mr. Iyengar's work as being a different language. He says all the words, but when I get the words out of the way, I realize he is asking me, 'Can you stay in a pose long enough to find that place of ease? That place of complete balance?'"

"That's what Mr. Iyengar is saying, 'here's something concrete: can you straighten your back leg?' Once you're clear about that, you can be clear about something else. Swami Radha says, 'Can you be clear about when you're being self-destructive? Or failing to value yourself? Or not acknowledging your spiritual aspect?'"

"I integrate what I learn from both of them and I come to a new understanding which doesn't necessarily make intellectual sense, it is just a knowing, an internal truth."

What this truth leads us to is, ultimately, an understanding of our Higher Selves and The Divine. Jim strikes me as being clear about the role of Teachers and Gurus in finding his own truth and I find myself listening with interest as he describes his understanding.

"People like Swami Radha and Mr. Iyengar and other teachers have clarity about what they are doing. A guru, a teacher, is helping me work through my human aspects until I can finally say, 'Who is my real teacher?' In the end, there is only one teacher; and the one teacher is Krishna or whatever name you want to use."

Again, I am reminded by Jim how important it is to stay focused on The Divine Aspect during our search in Yoga. With this vision alive, riches follow.

Jim concludes by telling me what Yoga brings to his life.

"What yoga is for me is a place of incredible learning about myself and as I learn, I find there is a richness in my life."

Indeed! With lunch in my stomach and enriched thoughts settling into my mind, I drive back to Victoria, aware that my own understanding of Yoga has once again deepened.

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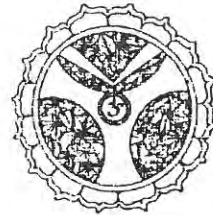
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880 Courtney Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 1C4

Friday, November 12	6:00 to 8:00 pm
Saturday, November 13	10:00 am to 1:00 pm & 3:00 to 5:00 pm
Sunday, November 14	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.

YOGA CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER:

- 12: Open House at Radha House. See ad this issue.
- 13: Start of Fall classes at the Y.
- 17-18: Kundalini Overview at Radha House.
- 21: Yoga in Metchosin; start of Fall classes with Shirley Daventry French.
- 24: Yoga Centre Gathering
Meet the Yoga Teachers
- 25: Teachers meeting at the Y.
- 26: Sunday workshop at the Y.
Led by Jim Rischmiller

OCTOBER:

- 2: Day of Yoga in Metchosin
with Shirley Daventry French
- 16: Pranayama in Metchosin
with Shirley Daventry French
- 20: Saturday Morning in Savasana at Radha House. See ad this issue.
- 22: Yoga Centre Gathering
Discussion on the Bhagavad Gita
- 30: Teachers meeting at the Y.
- 30: Yoga, Women and the Change - an
afternoon workshop at the Y with
Shirley Daventry French
- 17: Sunday workshop at the Y.
Led by Linda Shevloff

DOES YOUR YOGA CENTRE MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION NEED RENEWING?

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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RATES per ISSUE

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

NOVEMBER:

- 5-7: Dream Workshop at Radha House.
See ad this issue.
- 12-14: Ramanand Patel at the Y.
- 20: Pranayama in Metchoshin
with Shirley Daventry French.
- 20: Saturday morning with Spinal Twist
at Radha House.
- 27: Teachers meeting at the Y.
- 27: Yoga and Stress Management -
an afternoon workshop at the Y
with Dr. Derek French.
- 21: Sunday workshop at the Y.
Led by Ann Kilbertus

DECEMBER:

- 4: Yoga Centre Annual General Meeting.
- 4: Rose Ceremony at Radha House
- 5: Rose Ceremony at Radha House.
- 12: Celebration workshop at the Y.
Led by Shirley Daventry French.
- 18: Pranayama in Metchoshin with
Shirley Daventry French.

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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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and *Derek French*

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ADVERTISING: *Carole Miller*

PRINTING: *Monk Quick Copy Centre*

DISTRIBUTION: *Dave Rocklyn*

DRAWINGS: *Lauren Cox*

COLLATING: *Jennifer Rischmiller and*
Margaret Feehan

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DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER ISSUE: SEPTEMBER 20th, 1993.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

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



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE *Newsletter*



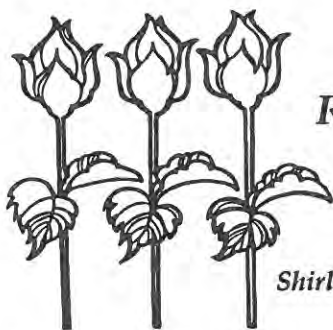
VICTORIA PARTICIPANTS AT THE IYENGAR YOGA CONFERENCE TORONTO, 1993

Back Row: L to R JoAnn Hope, Lauren Cox, Chris Lea, James Currie-Johnson
Sheila Deb, Karen De Lisle

Front Row: L to R Jim Rischmiller, Leslie Hogya, Shirley Daventry French,
Janine Beckner, Ann Kilbertus, Margaret Feehan

Please subscribe

October, 1993



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

What an incredible summer! When I made my plans to attend the Canadian and European Iyengar Yoga conventions, I knew it would be an extraordinary experience. I knew that Mr. Iyengar with his insight, intuitive awareness, vast experience, and, above all, his ability to penetrate directly to the source of a problem, would have an impact on my progress on this path of yoga. As a student, I anticipated a boost to my practice. As a teacher, I anticipated a honing of skills, and a fresh look at what and how I teach.

The yoga purists who read this last paragraph will quite rightly observe that yoga teaches us to let go of expectations - and that if we don't learn to do this, life will intervene and emphasise the point. However, yoga also encourages us to learn from our experience

From past experience of working with Mr. Iyengar, I knew there would be priorities to re-examine, along with a vast amount of material to absorb. I knew that any self-satisfaction would quickly be wiped out, to be replaced with a sober assessment of strengths and weaknesses. I also hoped that when I returned to teaching in the Fall some of the Master's fire and enthusiasm would have rubbed off on me, bringing a freshness to my work.

I knew that learning would take place in unexpected places and moments, and that the more I could let my guard down, the more I would learn. I knew that in Mr. Iyengar's presence, there is no place for

my ego. At one time, when a European teacher from Germany or Austria was teaching, Mr. Iyengar entered the room and gave him some pointers. It was a huge class of about 450 students and the teacher was teaching on a platform with a microphone - not an easy task. Mr. Iyengar enquired of the teacher what changed when *he* entered the classroom, and without a moment's hesitation the teacher responded: "When you come into the room, my ego goes in!"

During and after any event where Mr. Iyengar observes the work of his teachers, stories begin to circulate about how hard he was on this or that teacher. If we were all truly mature this gossip wouldn't happen at all, and when tempted to lapse into one of these anecdotes it is always important to remember that *they had the courage to teach in front of a consummate Yoga Master* - many others prefer to avoid this experience. By denying yourself this opportunity, you also deny yourself the opportunity to receive the teachings directly, personally, without the interference or interpretation of an intermediary.

It is never going to be simple or easy! Mr. Iyengar is going to offer criticism. If you teach using his name, that is his right and his duty. If you are able to listen and get your pride out of the way (i.e. what right has he to speak to me like this, in front of my colleagues and students, it isn't fair, etc. etc.) you usually discover that what you are

receiving is constructive criticism on which you can build. There may be a destructive assault on bad habits which are taking you off course, but isn't this something to be thankful for? It may be hard to take at the time - because that little ego is so good at convincing you that you have been unjustly singled out or misunderstood; but if you can put your emotions aside and coolly appraise what happened, you will learn from this uncomfortable experience, which could even signal a breakthrough or turning point.

Many of my expectations were fulfilled, but what I could not have anticipated, was that Mr. Iyengar himself taught several classes to the entire group. He had agreed to teach one class in Toronto: he taught four - two Pranayama and two Asana classes, to give us a base from which to work. In London, he taught two classes on Recuperative Asanas and Pranayama, one on Sirsasana and Sarvangasana, and brought the convention to a resounding finale on the last day with a general Asana class. Each of these classes had at least a thousand students, and the final mega-class probably had more, because some additional students were attending for the weekend only.

To a Canadian, the idea of one thousand yoga students in the same room, overwhelms the mind - and I must admit that several times during the first of these mega-classes it came close to overwhelming me.

In addition to finding a space for our bodies, we had to find room for one sticky mat, five foam blocks, one wooden block, one blanket and one belt. The sticky mats, measuring 5'9" x 2', were placed directly touching each other in the large arena of the Crystal Palace Sports Centre in south-east London. This mat was your home for the class. Mr. Iyengar was teaching on a raised platform at the front of the room, and from time to time he called us to come close and see him demonstrate a posture or show some points on a student. There was a scramble to get close enough to see what he was doing which, for a small person like me, was especially difficult

unless you managed to move quickly and be near the front. When the demonstration was over and we were told to return to our places, there was another problem. Where was my place, among one thousand identical blue mats containing sets of identical equipment? I knew roughly where in the room I had been working, but exactly where was difficult to define. Eventually, since there was one mat per person, I found a space somewhere.

As if it wasn't crowded enough, during that first restorative class Guruji had us fetch chairs for supported backbends. It was almost the last straw when, having had to go to another part of the sports centre to find a chair, I returned to find no space available in the vicinity where I had been working previously. "That's my space," I said crossly to a young French woman. She looked at me scornfully and said nothing. "*I think that's my place*". This time I selected an English student. *Oh no it isn't! It's mine!*", she responded in no uncertain terms.

I found myself becoming very cross and longing for the open spaces of home, thinking to myself that I really have become a Canadian, and there are too many people in Europe. Then the thought arose that I was behaving like the proverbial North American tourist. Even more disturbing was how quickly I started to revert to the pushiness of my London youth, and discovered that the talent to grab, push and shove through a crowd had not atrophied over the years but was only latent waiting to be reawakened should the need arise. I chuckled, and squeezing myself and my chair into a small empty space directly underneath the platform, began to enjoy my predicament. To add to the general confusion, each class was simultaneously translated into French, German, Italian and Spanish with occasional bursts of Hebrew, Dutch, Russian, Polish, Czech and who knows what other languages. A veritable Tower of Babel!

There were four of these mega-classes, and with each one we began to co-operate a little better. Those requiring translation learned to form a group



close by the individual translating into their language, and the translators distanced themselves from each other. Chains of people were established to pass chairs, students learned that there was enough equipment for everyone if you trusted and waited, and we began to respect each other and each other's space. Urged on by Mr. Iyengar's incomparable teaching, the spirit of yoga began to reign throughout the class.

On the final day, when Guruji led us through three hours of intense work, my little blue mat was not merely adequate, but seemed like all the space in the world. A thousand students followed Guruji's maxim to "Love, labour and laugh", as sweatily, side by side, we worked "to the maximum" and delighted in our good fortune to be in this place at this time.

In Toronto and in London, the assembled students stood at the end of the closing class taught by Guruji and cheered and applauded loud and long, eyes filled with tears of love for this man who gave so much of himself, reluctant to see him leave, but full of gratitude for the light he brought to our communities.

This article is written in deepest gratitude to my teacher, B.K.S. Iyengar, and in appreciation of the work of all his students in the United States, Canada and Europe, who, in the spirit of karma yoga, spent several years planning and organising the Ann Arbor, Toronto and London conventions.

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Time: 10AM to 1PM

Fees: Yoga Centre Members	\$25
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Registration: Phone Linda Shevloff at 479-5847



THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and THE VICTORIA YM-YWCA
present



YOGA, WOMEN AND THE CHANGE

with
Shirley Daventry French

In yogic terms, menopause is the herald of an opportune period in a woman's life - a time to focus on personal and spiritual growth. A discussion of how yoga views this period of transition will be followed by the practice of postures and breathing exercises to energize the body, soothe the nerves, balance the endocrine system, and create freshness of mind.

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Please pre-register at the Y Main Desk - Registration is limited
Wear warm loose clothing

Information: Shirley Daventry French 478-3775 or the Victoria Y at 386-7511



The unpacking is finally complete. All but a bit of renovations are finished and the turmoil I felt early in the summer has vanished. A lazy, relaxed summer dispelled all worries. I walked every day on the ocean cliffs near our new house, read books and visited friends. Boating was also a feature. My husband and I explored new coves and bays and walked on rocky shores, learning a few more bird names and occasionally spotting a dolphin.

All I miss from the old house is the back yard full of trees and grape arbors.

The other new challenge has been met. I started teaching at Craigflower School, in an early primary class. Young children of four and five have the same needs, I think, no matter where the school. Watching the children cut up apples for a large pot of applesauce was just as nerve wracking as always! I get such a kick out of singing songs like 'Where is Thumbkin?' and 'I'm a Little Tea Pot'. Yesterday we galloped around the gym like little ponies. The new staff and parent community has been very welcoming. At the last minute, I had an opportunity to go to a different school, but I am feeling settled where I am.

So, I weathered all these changes and have finally stopped feeling like I have a form of sleeping sickness. Early on in the summer if I wasn't asleep, I was yawning.



The big event of the summer was travelling to Toronto for the Iyengar Convention. Knowing I was going through so many changes, I had hesitated to committ myself to the Convention. I also had not really recovered financially from going to India last fall. But when the Conference organizers, distraught at how few teachers were registered, nudged us, I signed up. They reminded us that Mr. Iyengar was coming to our country at our request. He had made a major committment to us, where was mine?

I prepared myself to teach in front of him, and to give a forum on the book he wrote, The Tree of Yoga. Then I was asked to welcome Mr. Iyengar on behalf of Western Canada. The day after I arrived, I had the pleasure of going to the house where Mr. Iyengar was staying and helping Karhoum cook for him and the entourage. I learned how to make samosas. Well, I sort of learned. I never really got the knack of folding them so the stuffing didn't all fall out.



KARHOUM



ENTOURAGE AT NIAGARA FALLS

It was great to talk to Birju, Jawahar, Faiq, etc. around the kitchen as they waited for their incredibly strong coffee to be ready. Faiq was nick named the King of Coffee and Karhoum the Queen of Chapatis. I left before they ate so I said they could blame anything that didn't taste right on me.

The next day I gave my speech and will write it up for next month's newsletter. A group of us went out for Indian food and that night I foolishly ate some of the leftovers. It was hot in Toronto and I just kept the food in my dorm room. Joanne ate some with me and within a few hours we met in the washroom and lost what we had eaten - food poisoning! No matter what topic came up during the rest of the Convention, eventually someone would make a joke about eating rotten food. I'll probably never live that one down.

The unfortunate side effect was that I was too ill to participate in the classes taught by Mr. Iyengar. I know in Pune with all the extra helpers, I would have been given a therapeutic series to do. But I at least was able to observe and take notes, which was itself a privilege.

The Conference was very well organized and flowed smoothly to accomodate changes that occurred in the schedule because Mr. Iyengar wanted to teach us. The best part, of course, was watching and listening to him. As he left, after ice cream cake in honor of his 75th birthday, he was very humble and thanked us for being there. Yet, the whole time he was in Toronto, he was giving, teaching, talking, answering

questions. Pranayama at 7.00 a.m., teaching asana, demonstrating, answering questions, giving a speech; the pace for him was intense.

He took his leave of us and went on to London to the European Convention where he taught classes of 1000 students. I was grateful I could be at a smaller conference and have such close contact with him. I was deeply moved by his unselfish giving.

Thank You Mr. Iyengar for blessing us with your presence!

I appreciate the efforts of all the Conference organizers. Thank You all for the hours of work - you did a great job!



LESLIE AND HER KINDERGARTEN CLASS

SCIENCE AND YOGA: BEGINNING THE DIALOGUE

A talk given by Ramanand Patel during YOGA
90's Philosophy Forum

Aadil Palkhivala: I remember a quote from Milton where he is talking about the mind and the way it fluctuates and the monkey and scorpion business. In Paradise Lost Lucifer says, "The mind is its own place and in it self can make a hell of heaven or a heaven of hell." I now request our dear Ramanand Patel to come up and address us on science and yoga philosophy.

Ramanand Patel: Friends, with the blessings and kind permission of our Guruji, in spite of the fact that I have this peculiar mind that is intoxicated and stung by a scorpion, I don't know why you have the same mind and I have the same mind that you really want to listen to another one who has that bad a disease.

I was very fortunate to go to the University of London where I got a degree in engineering. When I got my certificate I thought I was an expert in science. Very quickly, as I began to practice the art, I realized I was barely a beginner. So I thought this is not a good idea, I better change this. I came to yoga. University of London happened to be one of the most prominent universities on the subject. I decided I was not going to opt for one of the most prominent yoga schools. I went for the best! Only to find that even after being given the best certificate out of that school, I was even less of an expert in the subject. So, if I don't know much about science and less about yoga, what on earth am I doing with this stung mind in the presence of my Guruji talking to you about this subject? You see, it's not the subject of the mind I want to talk to you about although mind is very much involved as a tool. But no matter how badly diseased our minds, we have whether we are yogis, students of yoga, or scientists, a very big common factor between us. And it is that we seek

truth. That burning desire to seek the truth may express itself through the mind but it does not originate in the mind. It originates in the heart. And my heart has been far away from any monkey. I'm sure yours has too.

There is a big assumption we make when we search for this truth. The assumption is that the truth exists. We both, the scientists and the yogis, justify this belief by offering a peculiar argument: that the very desire to engage in the search for truth is generated by the truth, and therefore the truth must exist. Whether this circular proposition has any merit in it or not is an endless debate that has gone on for centuries and will perhaps go on for many more centuries. Nevertheless it is a debate that has shed some light on the path that appears to lead in some direction. It seems that a dialogue between the two (science and yoga) is desirable not because the dialogue itself will yield any answer or solution, but because the very process of engaging in the dialogue is a tool that generates further insight.

Much of this dialogue simply generates ideas. These ideas may have very far reaching and useful practical applications, but they still remain ideas and are nothing more than a bonus. The one in search of the truth would be wise not to be strayed away from the mainstream of inquiry and practice by these ideas.

Staying with the main current yields an insight distinct from the ideas. This insight, which comes in a flash, opens a whole new manner of looking, and imparts a freshness to the actions, or karma. The ideas thrill us and excite us. The insight is awe inspiring, sobering, humbling, and nourishing to the soul.

To those who are serious seekers, the dialogue is not an intellectual entertainment to be indulged in on some occasions. It is, rather, an all consuming passion, a passion that generates and fuels the fire that consumes the ideas, consumes the thought, and ultimately the maya of time, or kal as it is called in Sanskrit. The result of this total consumption is the

total insight. Oddly enough when the insight happens the process appears to be unnecessary and even antagonistic. It appears that way to the mind that had expected the dialogue to yield answers. However, to the one who has understood the rightful place of the dialogue it is not such an undesirable hindrance. Thus, even if the dialogue is nothing more than a necessary evil, it behooves us to examine the possibility of a meaningful dialogue.

For the dialogue to be meaningful on each side, the scientist and the student of yoga need to have some appreciation of the tools that the other employs, the usefulness of these tools and their drawbacks. Both sides use the inquiring faculty as a tool to observe the universe. Up to that point of intent there is not much difference, past the point of overall intent there are numerous differences. We do not have the time to examine them all so I propose to look at a few.

The yogi is more concerned with the inner universe knowing which, he claims, the knowledge and even the control of the outer is automatic and obvious. The biggest danger is that when the yogi has not quite mastered the art he tends to neglect, sometimes fashionably, the practical implications of his behaviour, his work, his ideas. It is often these ideas, devoid of real insight, that lead to his demise.

On the other hand, the scientist is much more concerned with the outer universe. In his arrogant faith in mathematical accuracies and analytical methods, he falls into the serious danger created by the very nature of those methods. The method, the scientific method, is one of ever increasing specialization resulting in dangerous levels of powerful localized knowledge that is so badly fragmented in its relation with other forms of knowledge that the indiscriminate use of such knowledge harms the wholeness of the universe.

The world today has grown very much smaller. Fortunately the universe has not. For a meaningful dialogue to take place in this complex and yet compact environment each side has begun, and barely just begun, to appreciate that neither the outer nor the inner universe can be neglected.

Unfortunately, in this early stage, the yogis seem more interested in impressing the scientist than in sharing the knowledge. In seeking the approval of science, the yogi is in serious danger of destroying or compromising the very tools he uses to understand the universe. His tools are love not attachment, compassion not sympathy, humility not false modesty, just pride not arrogance, faith not fame, practice not preaching, his needs not his wants, and when necessary indifference not missionary style patronizing.

Guruji's method and life are filled with examples of such useful tools. By contrast, we sometimes see lesser yogis who have abandoned their tools engaged in a debate with the scientists. He tries to justify yoga and, as though that by itself is not sad enough, he borrows from science its terminologies and uses its parameters often without understanding the exact meaning of these terms and parameters. Some of these terms have one meaning in science, another in yoga, and a third in everyday usage. The poor scientist is sometimes baffled, occasionally impressed just because he does not understand. But more often than not he's forced into a position of either ridiculing yoga or becoming indifferent out of politeness. When a yogi hears a scientist talking about raising kundalini or experiencing nirvana through the use of electronic toys attached to his brain, what can the yogi do except feel sorry for the scientist. My friends, the same applies in the reverse, too. The scientist feels equally uncomfortable and sorry for the yogi who uses scientific terminology. Even simple expressions like force, energy and power have very specific and

distinctly different meanings in science. Terms such as brain, mind and intellect have to be used very carefully because their meanings in yoga are different from their meanings in science.

Expressions such as molecular and bioenergy in individual cells of the body should be limited to the class situations for creating certain feelings and atmosphere in the class. But their use in a dialogue with a scientist could be rather unproductive.

In the dialogue, if it is to be meaningful, one must not try to impress nor justify nor randomly borrow the parameters of the other. Rather, the dialogue ought to center around the fields of common interests with mutual respect for each others' experiences. One such field is the therapeutic aspects of yoga. Our revered Guruji has given immense contribution to this field and part of that immenseness is very familiar and well known to many of us. Primarily, however, it remains a one man show. There are many reasons for this. This is, however, neither the place nor the time to get into that dialogue.

It suffices to say that there is in it a vast, largely unexplored practical emerging field of dialogue. I have often heard Guruji sadly reflect that most of this art is doomed to die with him. Just as science is constantly refining its tools, relentlessly and continuously we the students of yoga also need to passionately engage in refining our tools.

For a meaningful dialogue to take place we have to have good scientists and good yogis. There is in Sanskrit a shiota that categorizes man into four classes. It says that there are those among us who engage in serving others, fellow human beings, with complete disregard for their personal gain. These are called saints. Then it says there is a second category of those who will safeguard and secure their own well being first before helping others. There is a third category of those who would selfishly hurt others for personal gains. These are known as rakshashas or demons. Finally there are those who

engage in needlessly hurting others even without any benefit to themselves. For these there is no single term to define them. My friends, lack of such a word in so rich a language as Sanskrit is not indicative of the deficiency of language. It is rather a tribute to the majesty of its culture. Most of us belong to all four classes, in that there is a little bit of each quality in us. To be good yogis we need an abundance of the first quality and need to minimize the semblance of the last. Without that the scientific part in each one of us will overshadow the yogic part in us. Let us passionately see that that does not happen.

There is another common interest. It is the significance of time. This has not suffered from too much scientific analysis because it is largely not understood by the average scientist, nor for that matter by an average yogi. The parameters and terminologies are new to science. The kind of scientist who understands something about it is willing to use the language, the terminology, and the parameters of yoga. It is here that the outer and the inner universes meet and merge. It would be very sad to let this opportunity pass by. Once again we have to brace ourselves to passionately engage in the practice of yoga for the right reasons.

We are on the threshold of one of the most exciting periods of human history. If we waste our time in petty politics and one-upmanship we would not just miss this opportunity, we might well find ourselves witnessing utter destruction of civilization as we know it. We would be guilty of not lending a hand to the few scientists who are engaged in decoding the foremost frontiers of understanding our universe.

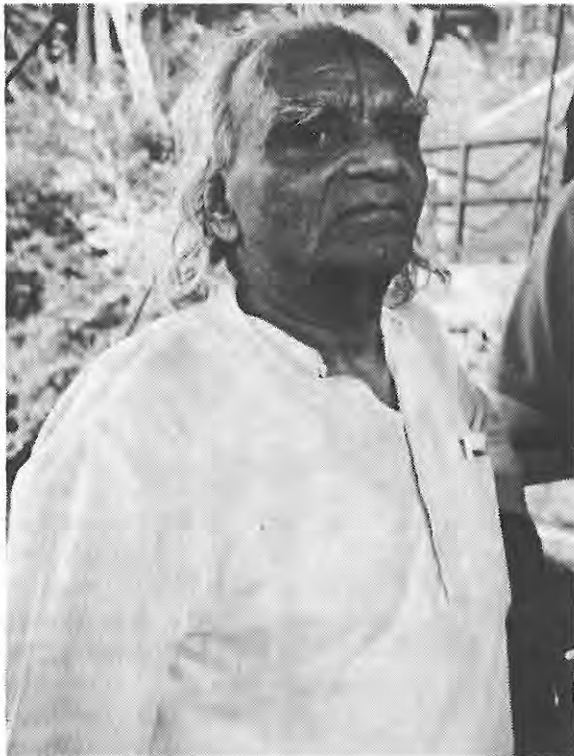
Reprinted from the Winter, 1991, newsletter of the B.K.S. Iyengar Association of Southern California.



DONNA FORNELLI AND MR. IYENGAR
AT THE IYENGAR YOGA CONFERENCE, TORONTO 1993

UNDER THE LIGHT OF MY FATHER

An Interview with Geeta Iyengar



The following is part of a two-hour interview given by Geeta at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, India, during the Canadian Intensive in October, 1992. It was conducted by Margo Kitchen and videotaped by Heather Malek, Calgary. This portion was transcribed and edited by Judith Mirus, Edmonton, in consultation with Marlene Miller, Victoria.

Q: We've enjoyed chanting to Patanjali before the classes. I was wondering, when did you begin doing this?

A: We decided to chant these two *slokas* from the very beginning. That means that when Gururji asked us to practice yoga we started already with the recitation, but in the classes we were not doing it.

There was a big problem when we began in the Institute because, when people came as beginners, they had this idea it is a religious prayer, of concern only to the Hindus and others should not recite it. It took a little time for people to understand. Whenever we had some public programs, some celebration - for Divali or Gururji's birthday, etc. - we used to recite these *slokas*, these prayers; and then people started taking interest, asking us what it means. When it was understood, everybody accepted it. For the last four years we are doing these prayers before the classes.

Q: Could you give us the meaning?

A: You know these two *slokas* have come from the Bhojavritti. To Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* Raja Bhoja has written the commentary; just like there is the Vyasa commentary, similarly Bhoja has written one commentary and the *slokas* make a beginning to that. And it's so appropriate. That's why I thought if we could use it, it helps people.

It says, first of all, that Lord Patanjali is considered to be the incarnation of Adishesha, the cobra, which is the seat for the Lord Vishnu, the very creator of this world. It is said that took birth three different times, giving three different sciences for people to improve themselves.

First is yoga - *yogena cittasya*. That means to purify this mind, purify the consciousness, he gave the science of yoga to us. *Padena vacam-pada* means word, *vacam* means the art of speech; so second he has written the commentary on grammar. That means using the words so that our way of speech is clarified, distinct and pure. To bring that purity of the *vaca*, that is, the speech, he gave grammar to us. *Malam sarirasya ca vaidyakena*: as the speech sometimes has impurities, as consciousness has impurities, similarly the body also has impurities. So thirdly, to remove these impurities of the body - *malam* means impurities, *sarira* is body - he gave us *vaidya*. He gave us *vaidya*; *vaidyakena* refers to the science of medicine. So all these three: yoga for the consciousness; the grammar for the speech and the very medicinal science for the purpose of purifying the body.

The one who has given these things to us - *yopa karottam pravanam muninam* - let me go near to him. Speaking the name of Patanjali, in the first person, it says let me bow down my head with my folded hands to that Lord who has given all these three gifts to improve humankind - *Patanjalim pranjalir anato'smi*. That is the first stanza.

Then, after knowing the work of this Lord, the second stanza says what Lord Patanjali looks like, in what form he stands before us. To do any meditation first the format has to be in front of our eyes. The first question you ask is how he looks. *Abahu purusa karam* - from hand right up to the head having the shape of a human being. *Purusa* is human; *karam* is shape.

Sankha cakrasi dharinam. In his hand what is he holding? *Sankha* is the conch, *cakra* is the disc which he holds in his hand. *Sahasra 'sirasam svaetam* - on top of his head he has got a thousand hoods of the cobra because he is, as I said, the incarnation of the greatest cobra, who is the seat of the Lord Visnu. *Sahasra* is thousand, '*sirasam* is head, *svetam* means white. *Pranamami Patanjalin* - I bow down to that Patanjali.

The first stanza is regarding the work that he has done, what he has given to us; and the second one is about the form of the Lord, how he looks, as I explained. And it's so appropriate, the question of religion does not arise at all because whatever is said is for everyone, for all human beings everywhere on this earth.

Q: By chanting this at the beginning of class does it help students focus on the deeper meaning of the asanas?

A: Of course, gradually it "takes" - the imprints have to go gradually; one cannot change the old imprints all of a sudden; the new imprints have to come to wash off the old ones. So naturally it takes time. Yet it brings the change.

The very beginning is made when that feeling of sanctification comes from inside, with the feeling of surrendering oneself, because nothing can be learned in this world unless you are humble, unless you have the humility to learn. So the moment you think of the Lord, at the beginning of doing a practice, you know that you are very small in front of that greatest soul. And once that is understood then the other problems which always arise while practicing, mainly concerned with the ego, will be affected. You know that you are "coming down" to learn something. And you can't learn anything unless you come down; if you think you are on the top and you know everything, then you are not a learner at all. In that sense, the chanting helps.

Q: Your book, Yoga, a Gem for Women, is dedicated to your mother. She was a very saintly woman and she practised the sadhana of a householder. Is this yoga as valid as the yoga practised by you and your father?

A: The book is definitely dedicated to my mother, but I haven't written in the book that she was a *yogini*. Neither has she herself claimed that she was, but she had certain characteristics of a *yogini* in her. She was always dedicated to the work she was doing. I think we learned a great lot from her. Even this morning I was thinking that to a great extent we learned from her *pratipaksha bhavana*, of which *yama* and *niyama* is spoken, about how we have to think of the opposite of what we might feel like doing.

When we were young, suppose if somebody really troubled or bothered us, we used to feel; why not fight for our right. But she used to tell us to be the other way; she said, "Keep quiet, then they themselves will understand their mistake; why should we go and fight with them?" I think that was a *pratipaksha bhavana* for her. So we used to be quiet when the other party was shouting for no reason; if we also started talking back, it would be just a quarrel. In that she has taught lots of things to us.

She was a dedicated person, always dutiful as far as the household was concerned. Whoever came, whether they were guests or we children - as we were very small at that time - she did her duty with complete inner dedication and sacrifice.

Now the problem always is that we think there are different, distinct types of yoga. And that's why we think that this kind of thing, when it is done, is not yoga. But yoga has all pieces in it, whether it is the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali or what Guruji teaches; it needs this kind of sacrifice; it needs the dedication; it needs the sense of duty. So there is a *karma*, there is a *jnana*, there is a *bhakti* - a devotion - in it; nothing can be done without that knowledge. You should know for what purpose you are doing something, whether it is leading you exactly to that end you want to reach. So a person who does even a household duty with that balanced mind, then he becomes a *yogi*. She had that balanced mind.

We all may be performing our duty, but how dedicated are we, that's one thing. How far do we remain in a balanced state; how much do we have the emotional balance within; how many times do we have that feeling of acceptance, whether it's a gain or loss. As a householder she has seen the poverty of earlier time and she has seen even that richness later when everything was available. But in both stages she kept herself in the same equal attitude of mind. She couldn't be called *yogini* unless she had reached that state, and she had.

I tell you, even at the time of death she had that very balanced mind. Even now after so many years - 19 or 20 years - I remember everything, the way she left her body with so much calmness, such quietness. There was not a bit of feeling of attachment, that now I'm going to leave you people and what's going

to happen? No, she just calmly said, "Look after everything," and "I am going." And she left; she closed her eyes in a very calm and quiet manner. This kind of death cannot come to those who are, what you call, disturbed.

I think sometimes that I must put it in writing. You know what I told her just five or six hours before her death? I said, "I haven't seen a death directly as such; I mean, you see that person after they are dead, but I've never seen a person dying." The night before in the same hospital I saw a man dying and how he was gasping for breath and how much disturbance this person had - everything I saw I related to my mother. I never knew that just hours after seeing this death I was going to see the death of my own mother, which would give me just the opposite picture of it. And she really died very peacefully, very quietly, in a very neat manner; she folded her legs, she folded her arms, and she died.

The validity is not for us to decide, remember. The person who is dedicated can be called a *yogi*. This stands for Guruji also. If you think his *yogasana*, *pranayama*, etc., is valid, it is because he is completely devoted, completely dedicated; he is one, unified, with that which he is doing; and that's why that becomes a yoga practice.

Q: Many women live in the shadows of the men in their lives. Despite a very powerful father you seem very fulfilled within yourself. Can you offer any help to those who are searching for an identity, and I'm not speaking of the Women's Liberation Movement - this is above that.

A: You see, there is no question of dependence and independence; they are relative words. You might be with your father, you might be with your husband. The feeling of remaining in their shadows comes when there is a weakness in our own selves. This is very much a relative word, that we are depending on somebody or we are independent of them. When it is about a society, when it is about a family structure, we are dependent. We cannot say that we are absolutely independent. And we should not be either because it's a family, it's a society. You live for others, too, as you live for yourself.

But when you demarcate dependence and independence, I agree that dependence comes when your nature externalizes you, in the sense that you remain dependent on somebody when the need is external to you. When you internalize yourself, when you look internally, you are not dependent on anybody. The more you look outside to seek a sort of support, you are farther from being one, from being yourself within. And that's why you want to depend on somebody. On the other side, when you look within, go deeper inside, you know that that support which you want is already existing within you. You have it. In fact, it is not a support, it is you yourself who are there. And if that is understood, this question need not arise.

How the mind raises this questions, I'll tell you. You think you are dependent when you have external needs - it could be something like the need for monetary help, emotional support, or psychological support, etc. Whenever fear comes, you think you need somebody to take away your fear, somebody to sooth your feeling of isolation, etc. But if you look deep inside you recognize that you are definitely an isolated person, you are one unit. So that again stands in relationship to that which we feel: the more you remain attached exteriorly, remain with the external world, the more you want support, you want to be dependent on somebody. Otherwise you can be independent.

Even if it comes to the question of what you call Women's Lib, that is a fancy idea, you understand? We are liberated: how far do we want to be liberated? We have to understand that. What do you mean by liberation? You are already liberated if you know what you are doing, how you are doing it for yourself. If that is known, you are not then dependent on somebody else.

And as I replied to you previously, even if you do your duty for somebody, when you offer it to them, you are doing it to cleanse yourself. When you do something for your family, if you think there is dependence, it is just a duty.

In fact, you should do that to cleanse yourself, what Patanjali calls as *citta prasadana*. The very cleansing of the mind comes in that process of helping others, of doing duty for others. So if you do it only as a duty, you are showing that your mind is externalized. But the same duty, though you have done for the others physically, from outside, when you look inside, you know that you did it for your own sake. If that feeling comes, then I don't think this question of dependence has to arise.

So even if you think I am dependent on my father, as though I am under his shadow, it is not bringing me any darkness. (Laughter from the audience) If that shadow is bringing some darkness then I have to worry about it; on the contrary it is giving more and more freedom, it's giving more and more light. So I must consider myself fortunate. Instead of saying that I am under the shadow of my father, I would say that I come under the light of my father. (Applause from the audience).

First published in the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Conference magazine, Toronto, August, 1993.



PLANTING A TREE AT THE LONDON CONFERENCE , 1993

THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and THE VICTORIA YM-YWCA
are pleased to announce



YOGA
with
RAMANAND PATEL



A Weekend Workshop
November 12 to 14, 1993
to be held at the Victoria "Y"
880 Courtney Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 1C4

Friday, November 12	6:00 to 8:00 pm
Saturday, November 13	10:00 am to 1:00 pm & 3:00 to 5:00 pm
Sunday, November 14	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.

To all members of The Victoria Yoga Centre,

I am writing to extend my heartfelt thanks for the financial and personal support given to me by the Yoga Centre that enabled me to attend the Iyengar Yoga Intensive in Toronto.

Over a year ago, when I first heard of the Intensive, I knew that I wanted to attend. For some time, it didn't seem that it was going to be financially feasible; but still, my enthusiasm wouldn't die. I decided finally that "if it was meant to be, it would happen." Emphatically, it was meant to be!

Describing that week in Toronto is a challenging task, for so much understanding and knowledge presented itself to me that has not yet been assimilated. Many "ah-ha's" came, wonderful conversations and friendships were inspired and a profound appreciation for Mr. Iyengar and his work were the result.

I mentioned to someone that I have never felt more fully alive than when I was in a class with Mr. Iyengar. People speak of wanting to "be in the moment" but perhaps don't fully understand what this means. I have used this expression in my life, but only in that large group class with Mr. Iyengar leading us in a challenging sequence of poses that demanded my maximum attention and effort did I experience what it really means to "be in the moment".

I left Toronto feeling very rich: inspired, humbled, contemplative, expressive and secure that working in the Iyengar tradition was right for me.

Thank you for giving me the means that enabled me to have this experience. I appreciate the thought and action that resulted in the two scholarships.

Sincerely,
Margaret Fechan.

YOGA and STRESS REDUCTION

with

Dr. Derek French

Saturday, November 27th

**1:30 to 4:30 pm at the Y
880 Courtney Street**

Y & Yoga Centre Members:

\$25.00

Non-Members \$30.00

Yoga offers a practical and philosophical framework for managing stress, and learning how to get the most out of life. In this workshop, there will be a discussion of how to cope with the stresses and strains of everyday living, and a practical exploration of breathing and relaxation techniques.

Ensure yourself a place in this special workshop by registering early at the Y Main Desk.

Further information: 478-3775.



**THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
WELCOMES YOU TO A
FRIDAY NIGHT
GATHERING**

Hatha Practice led by Jim Rischmiller

followed by Potluck dinner

followed by a discussion on the Bhagavad Gita

Date: Friday, October 22, 1993

Place: YM/YWCA Yoga Lounge

Time: 6-7 pm Practice in the Dance Studio

7-8 pm Potluck dinner

8-9 pm. Discussion

RADHA HOUSE

Victoria



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

October

16: Saturday Morning in Shavasana

November

5-7: Dreams: Gifts of the Night

20: Saturday Morning with Spinal Twist

29-December 4: Last week of classes

December

4: Rose Ceremony, Part 1

5: Rose Ceremony, Part 2

DOES YOUR YOGA CENTRE MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION NEED RENEWING?

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.

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1/4 Page	\$12.00
Business Card	\$9.00

YOGA CALENDAR

OCTOBER:

- 2: Day of Yoga in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French
- 16: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French
- 17: Sunday workshop at the Y. Led by Linda Shevloff.
- 20: Saturday Morning in Savasana at Radha House. See ad this issue.
- 22: Yoga Centre Gathering
Discussion on the Bhagavad Gita
- 30: Teachers meeting at the Y.
- 30: Yoga, Women and the Change - an afternoon workshop at the Y with Shirley Daventry French

NOVEMBER:

- 5-7: Dream Workshop at Radha House.
See ad this issue.

12-14: Ramanand Patel at the Y.

- 20: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.
- 20: Saturday morning with Spinal Twist at Radha House.
- 21: Sunday Workshop at the Y.
Led by Ann Kilbertus.
- 27: Teachers meeting at the Y.
- 27: Yoga and Stress Management - an afternoon workshop at the Y with Dr. Derek French.

DECEMBER:

- 4: Yoga Centre Annual General Meeting.
- 4: Rose Ceremony at Radha House
- 5: Rose Ceremony at Radha House.
- 12: Celebration workshop at the Y.
Led by Shirley Daventry French.
- 18: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French.

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.

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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 NOVEMBER ISSUE: OCTOBER 15, 1993

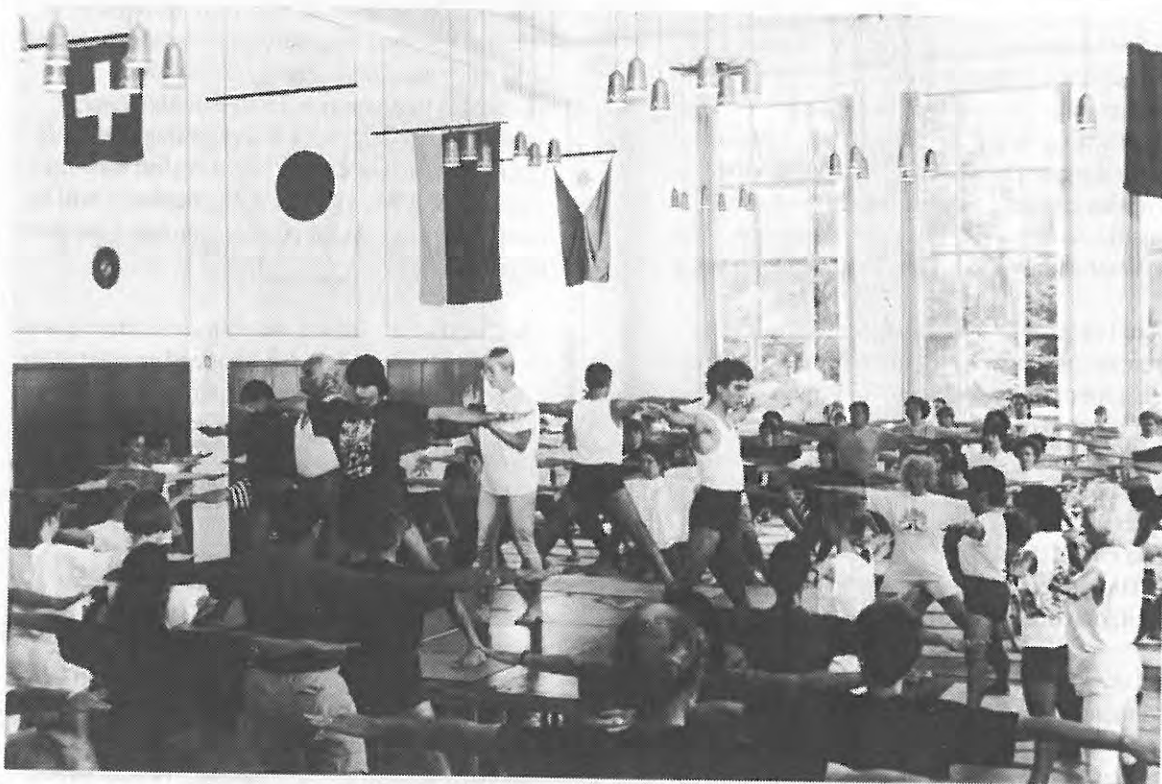
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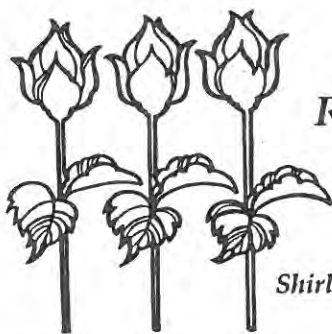
Newsletter



**PARTICIPANTS AT THE IYENGAR YOGA CONFERENCE
TORONTO, 1993**

Please subscribe

November, 1993



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

This morning I wore my Canterbury Cathedral sweatshirt for my yoga practice. I bought it in the Cathedral gift shop on the last leg of a summer pilgrimage, which had began a month earlier with a visit to Niagara Falls. At Niagara I was in the company of Mr. Iyengar, the four men who comprised his entourage, and two Canadian colleagues. I went to Canterbury with my sister-in-law and niece. Two family outings!

There is a joke that Europe has a lot of history whereas Canada has a lot of geography. I have seen a lot of that geography. I have travelled from coast to coast, visited all provinces and most major cities, but until this summer had never been to Niagara Falls. Mr. Iyengar expressed a wish to visit them on his "rest day" at the end of the Ann Arbor convention and before the Toronto conference began. These falls are, he stated, one of the wonders of the world.

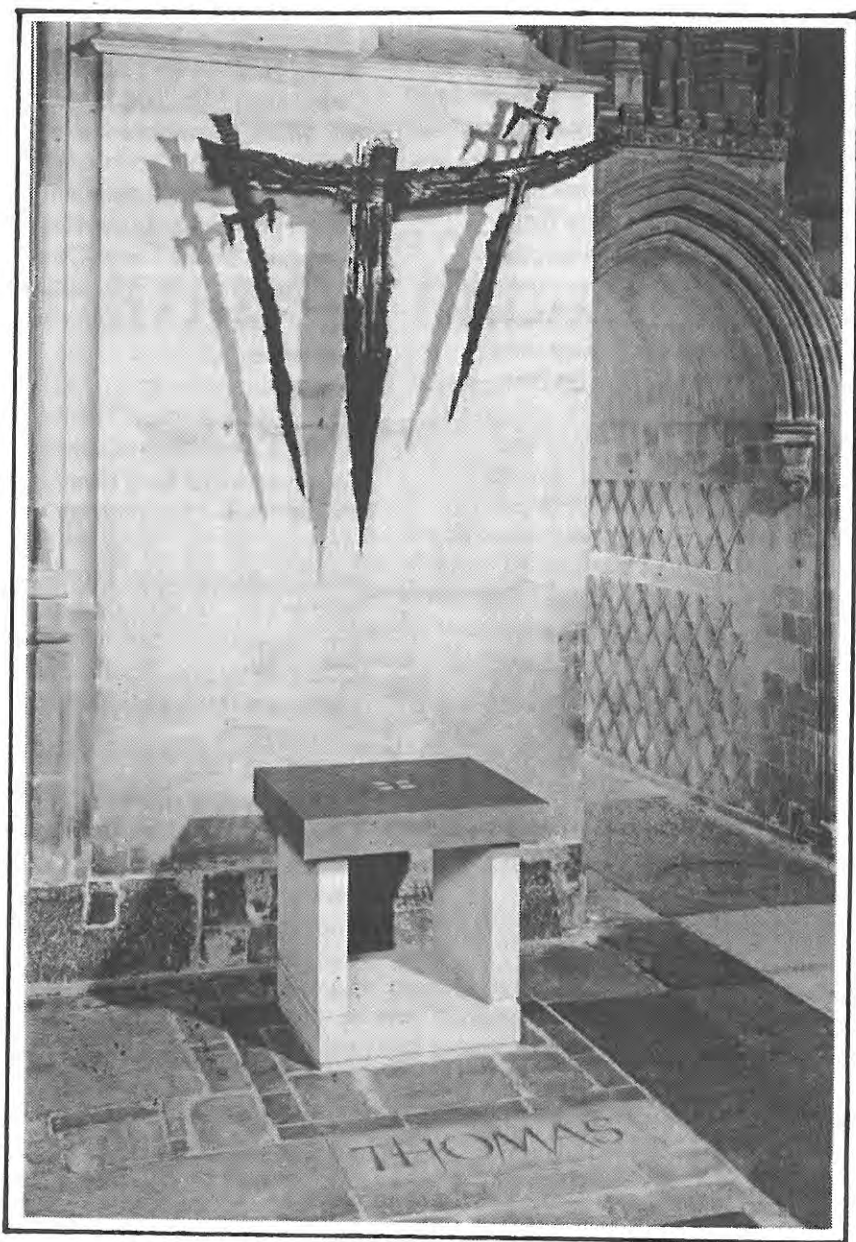
And they are! Not even the creeping commercialism which surrounds them, nor the hordes of summer visitors, can diminish their grandeur, awesome power and sheer energy. While there, one of the things which struck me was that everyone looked happy. I saw no miserable faces, not even in the long lines of people waiting to go into the scenic tunnels behind the falls or on to the "Maid of the Mist" a boat which sails right up to and close beneath them. Was it because of all the negative ions or pranic energy in the air? Our group was certainly happy, and we did and saw everything with

enthusiasm. There is nothing like visiting a great natural wonder with a great Guru!

When we were planning this trip, I was concerned that it would be tiring, and not a good way to start a week long conference in the presence of Mr. Iyengar, which I knew, from previous experience, was likely to involve early mornings, late nights, considerable work for those like myself involved in the organisation, and many demands on many levels. In the presence of a spiritual master, you inevitably come face to face with aspects of yourself which are difficult to acknowledge and integrate, and this takes a certain amount of adaptation energy. What often happens is that you ride a wave of high energy during the event, getting and requiring very little sleep, until it is over, when you realise how tired you are. If it has gone well, the tiredness will be mixed with elation, as you contemplate your next steps!

The "next step" for me when this conference was over, was to fly to London to attend another even larger and longer convention, and I wanted to pace myself. To add to my concern, just before leaving home I had had a bout of summer 'flu and was still feeling below par when I arrived in Toronto.

My choice for a rest day would probably have been to relax around the swimming pool in the garden of the elegant home where Mr. Iyengar was staying. He had a different agenda. To him a "rest day" means a rest from his intense involvement with his pupils, and the enormous demands with which he is constantly bombarded at home and abroad in his role as spiritual teacher. When he is teaching he does not waste a minute of his time in passing on as much as humanly possible to his students; and in true yogic fashion, on a rest day he is intensely and totally involved with that experience. If I had gone to Niagara on my own, I doubt I would have waited in line for so long in such good spirits, if I had even bothered to wait at all! One of the many



*The Chapel of the Saints & Martyrs of our own time
Thomas Becket
Canterbury Cathedral*

things I learn from Mr. Iyengar is to get as much out of each day of my life as is humanly possible.

In this spirit I participated in the Toronto conference and the London convention, and when they were both over I was eager to make the most of the two extra weeks in London which I had allowed myself for a visit with family and friends. Usually this means a crowded schedule of dinner parties, lunches, theatre, concerts, browsing in art galleries and book shops, and generally availing myself of the many amenities of one of the world's great cities. I did go to the theatre once, to see an excellent Royal Shakespeare Society production of *Antony and Cleopatra*, but most of the things which draw me to London again and again had little appeal for me this time. For the first time in history, I did not go to the West End on a single shopping expedition.

What I chose to do instead was interesting. With my sister-in-law, an art historian and ideal companion for such a journey, I visited two of the major spiritual centres of the Christian church in Britain: York and Canterbury, holy places now and for many centuries past. We stayed in York for four days, breathing in its history, a history which bears testimony to the endurance of the human spirit and mankind's search for meaning and purpose in life - sometimes against seemingly insurmountable odds.

Christianity emerged in York during the Roman occupation of Britain, and in Roman times there was a Christian Bishop of York. It reverted to paganism under the Anglo-Saxons who succeeded them, until King Edwin married a Christian princess, converted and re-established Christianity. He built the first Minster, a little wooden church, and York became an important religious centre and centre of learning. It survived rape and pillage by the Vikings, the Norman invasion, the Wars of the Roses, the Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII, and the English Civil War. As the introduction to my

guide book said: the history of York is the history of England.

After our visit to York, we returned to London and my sister-in-law said: we should go to Canterbury. Like York, Canterbury is an ancient city, whose centrepiece is a magnificent cathedral. Here the guide book reminds us to remember that "A cathedral is not a museum" and "with all its beauty, grandeur and powerfully evocative sense of the past, the Cathedral Church of Christ at Canterbury remains at its still centre what it has always been: a holy place in which God is worshipped ..."

In the twelfth century, Thomas Becket, the powerful Archbishop of Canterbury who defied his former friend King Henry II, was murdered in the cathedral. I was profoundly moved to stand quietly at the spot where his death took place which is appropriately known as "The Martyrdom". In this small chapel, above the altar is a very dramatic cruciform sculpture consisting of several swords. Tools of violence turned into symbols of faith and hope!

At Niagara Falls, my spirit was uplifted by the awesome power of nature. In York and Canterbury, I was inspired by the power and resilience of human nature. In between at the core of my pilgrimage, I practised yoga in the presence of my teacher, searching for my own true nature. As always, Guruji's courage, intensity, dedication and brilliance encouraged me to intensify my efforts on the path of yoga. When I see the effort he puts into his practice and teaching, when I experience his demand for maximum effort from his pupils, it is like a light which shows me quite clearly how much more I am capable of doing, learning and being.

Now I am home, and it is up to me to keep that light alight throughout the winter in my practice, teaching and all other aspects of my life.

Om namah Sivaya!

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and THE VICTORIA YM-YWCA
present

YOGA and STRESS REDUCTION

with
Dr. Derek French

Yoga offers a practical and philosophical framework for managing stress, and learning how to get the most out of life. In this workshop, there will be a discussion of how to cope with the stresses and strains of everyday living, and a practical exploration of breathing and relaxation techniques.

Where: The Yoga Studio of the YM-YWCA,
880 Courtney Street
When: Saturday, November 27th, 1993
Time: 1:30 to 4:30 pm
Fees: Y & Yoga Centre Members: \$25.00
Non-Members: \$30.00

Derek French is a physician in general practice in Victoria with a special interest in musculo-skeletal problems, chronic pain syndromes, hypnotherapy and stress management. He has been practising yoga for over twenty years, and is a student of the Yoga Master, B.K.S. Iyengar of Pune, India, and Swami Radha of Yasodhara Ashram, B.C. Derek teaches therapeutic yoga, and seeks to integrate the ancient wisdom of yoga with the practice of modern medicine.

*Please pre-register at the Y Main Desk.
Registration is limited.
Wear warm loose clothing.*

Information: Shirley Daventry French 478-3775 or the Victoria Y at 386-7511

Yoga for Overall Health

by B.K.S. Iyengar



"Dharmartha Kama Moksanam Arogyam Mulamuttamam", says Ayurveda.

Whether one wants to follow the science of duty (dharma or religion) or to earn a livelihood (artha) or to enjoy life (kama) or seek liberation (moksa), health is a must, as health is the wealth of everyone.

Upanisads proclaim that a weakling cannot enjoy the pleasures of the world nor become a master of the self. "Nayamauna Balahinenalabhyaha".

As healthy plants and trees alone yield fragrant flowers and tasteful fruits, smiles and happiness blossom out like flowers and fruits from a healthy man.

Man is a triune of body, mind and soul. The body is the outer cover of the inner man (soul). This body is called ksetra or the field and the inner man - the dweller of the body - as ksetrajna. The unifier of the body and the soul is the mind.

For the sake of convenience, our sages of lore divided this body into three tiers with five sheaths (kosas) to convey the depth of the abode of man. Out of the three tiers, the first is known as the core of the body or the self (karana sarira), the second as the mental body (suksma sarira) and the last as the gross body or the physical body (sthula sarira or karya sarira). Within these three tiers, five more sheaths are rested. They are called as follows:

the first is the anatomical body with bones and muscles (annamava kosa).

the second is the respiratory system, the circulatory system, the nervous system, the digestive system, the glandular system and geneto-excretory system which are known as the physiological body (pranayama kosa).

the third is the system of volition, motivation and gathering information. This is called the mental body (manomaya kosa).

the system which reasons and judges the pros and cons is known as the intellectual sheath (vijñanamaya kosa)

the fifth and last is the cause body, the seat of pure existence, pure consciousness and pure bliss (anandamaya kosa).

These three bodies with five sheaths interpenetrate from the skin to the self and outerpenetrate from the self to the skin as one single unit.

Yet it is not easy to pinpoint where the body ends and the mind would begin or where the mind ends and the Self would begin. They are all woven together through a string of intelligence.

By nature, the body is inert, dull and sluggish (tamasic), the mind vibrant, active and dynamic (rajasic) and Self, luminous or illuminative (satvic). Practice of yoga destroys the sluggishness of the body and become equal to that of the active mind. Then both the body and the mind are made to transcend the level of the illuminative Self, with perfect health in body, stability in mind and clarity in intellect. That is, hand (karma), head (jnana) and heart (bhakti) become one.

We all know that the mirror is clean. The mirror reflects the objects clearly. Similarly, the practice of yoga removes the impurities of the body and reflects like the mirror in man and helps the light of knowledge and wisdom to dawn in his body, mind and Self as they all work in unison.

The body is one of the finest precise instruments on earth. It has about 300 joints, about 700 muscles. We do not know how many minor muscles and link muscles are in this machine. If the nervous system is stretched as a single thread, its length is that of a distance from Bombay to London. That distance is about 9600 kilometres. If arteries, veins and capillaries are joined together, they run to about 96000 kilometres. The heart beats rhythmically about 70 times per minute, pumping about 5 litres of blood per minute. This is enough to know how much one has to be vigilant to shape the body in order to possess good health.

Fortunately, nature provides this precise instrument - the body - to adjust to its rhythm with the turmoils of the day to day pressures and environments. It is also astonishing that, in spite of imbalances created by the possessor of the body, through over-indulgence for satisfying his or her greedy wants, it maintains its balance. When these wants are overstepped, the physical, the physiological and the psychological diseases set in, and doubts and fears occupy the seat of the mind creating emotional disorders which are termed as psychosomatic diseases.

Generally health is understood as freedom from illness. It is more than freedom from illness. Health is a perfect state of equilibrium, balance and concord with joints, tissues, muscles, cells, nerves, glands, respiration, circulation, digestion, distribution and elimination. Health also means a perfectly happy disposition of mind towards sorrow and joy, pain and pleasure, evil and good, inspiration, aspiration and resplendence.

Life is a combination of conscience, consciousness, intelligence, mind, senses of perception and organs of action. Health involves a tremendous communication with each and every part of man so that each cell communes with the other. This cannot be purchased in the bazaar or market place, but has yet to be earned by inspiration, sweat and toil. Does yoga do that? Yes, it will.

Yoga is the fountain, or the root (mula) of all exercises. It has eight aspects known as Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi; forming into ethical, physical, mental and spiritual disciplines. It not only exercises the whole of the body but also develops the intellect and illumines the soul. Hence, it is called complete exercise or holistic exercise (sarvanga sadhana). Yoga unites the body, the mind and the soul of man. It deals with the structure of the body, and proper functioning of the muscles with perfect flow of blood. It provides even distribution of bioenergy or life force and canalises the mind to a state of calmness to face life without becoming a victim but as a master of circumstances and environments. Yoga starts from the health of the body and makes one to climb the everest of spiritual happiness, poise and peace.

We have been bestowed with the only capital - the body - for a useful living. This body is the temple or the kingdom of man. It is essential to ask the dweller of the house to keep it clean and the surroundings tidy for him to live in peace. Similarly, it is the duty of a man or woman to keep his or her temple - the body - healthy. Thus here alone, ethics begin to keep the body healthy.

There are innumerable asanas. They cater to the needs of each individual according to their constitutions and conditions. They have vertical, horizontal and circumferential movements which feed back the systems through concentrated blood supply to the needed areas of the body. Asanas like sirsasana, dwipada viparitamandasana, sarvangasana, with their various cycles irrigate the brain cells with fresh supplies of blood, refreshes man and increases his power of concentration with least strain.

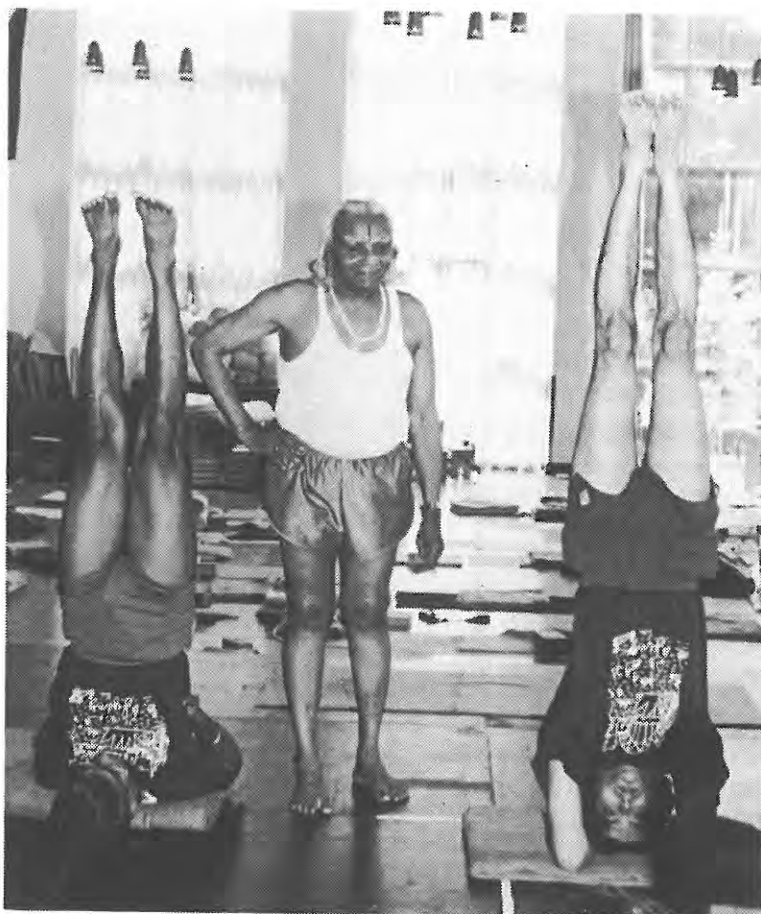
Uttanasana, adhomukha svanasana, padmasana, paschimottanasana, halasana, rest the head and the heart creating poise within. Jataraparivarthanasana, pasasana, matsyendrasana, kapotasana, vrschikasana, upavistakonasana and baddhakonasana work on liver, kidneys, spleen, pancreas, intestines, urinary organs and excretory system. In yoga, each cell is observed, attended and provided with the supply of pure blood, so that it does its job profoundly before it dies.

Pranayama, the science of respiration, has three functions, namely, inhalation, retention and exhalation. Inhalation is the intake of energy, retention is the distribution of energy and exhalation is the output of energy.

Our life span is measured by the number of breaths, which are about fifteen per minute. Proper rhythmic patterns of slow, deep breathing soothes the nerves and checks emotional excitement. Pranayama helps the two tributaries - energy and consciousness - to flow into the river of tranquility, so that man or woman is able to withstand the present day trend of stress, strain and speed. It is more effective if it is learned under the guidance of a competent teacher.

Yoga also helps in avoiding the hidden unknown disease which may surface in later life. Hence not only it works as a therapeutic science but also as a preventive art.





Yoga can be practised irrespective of whether one is young or old, male or female, healthy or unhealthy, valid or invalid, poor or rich, undernourished, overnourished. That is its beauty. Only it has one condition, that is, they have to be done half an hour before or four hours after food.

An aggressor annexes a nation when it is weak and a thief burgles when the owner is careless, so also, the body becomes a breeding ground for diseases if one is careless. Like the farmer who ploughs the

uncultivated fallow land, removes the weeds, provides water and manure, sows the best of seeds, tends the crops and enjoys the best of harvest, yama and niyama ploughs the body, asanas remove toxins and symptoms of diseases, pranayama irrigates with energy and tends the mind like a crop to enjoy the harvest of health, peace and happiness. Then it becomes a heaven on earth both for the body and its dweller - the ksetra and ksetrajna.

Reprinted from the June 1988 issue of the newsletter of The B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association of Australasia.



I'm including here the text of the speech I gave welcoming Mr. Iyengar to the Toronto Conference in August, 1993, on behalf of the Western Provinces,

"I am so pleased to be welcoming you here today, Mr. Iyengar, as a representative of the Western Provinces.

Canada is a very big country as you know. Those of us who travelled from the West Coast travelled the equivalent distance as if we had gone from Bombay to Calcutta three times.

British Columbia and Alberta are filled with mountains, lakes, plains and rivers. Even Vancouver and Victoria are separated by a sea inlet as you yourself experienced in 1984. You taught us how to do shoulderstand on a bobbing boat!

The lands that separate us cause us to see each other more often in Pune than in our own country! (laughter). However, there are strong centres in Calgary, Edmonton, Victoria, The Islands and Vancouver. There are classes, workshops and newsletters that help spread what we have learned in Pune to our students.

Margot Kitchen in Calgary has helped bring your work to public television with her videos.



I noticed that half the teachers in the directory are from the Western Provinces. I believe this is because the early pioneers were from the West. There was Derek and Shirley French, Bruce and Maureen Carruthers, Norma Hodge, Hilda Pezzaro. Many of us here in this room have worked with them. Those in the West have benefited from their teaching and leadership. Derek and Bruce, both being doctors, have put some of your methods to work in their medical practices. Shirley, Maureen, Norma and Hilda have trained teachers and been leaders in their communities.

One name is missing from this list. A special person who was an early pioneer and influenced yoga teaching in the Canadian community and in Edmonton in particular. The person who invited us to Edmonton in 1990: Liz McLeod. We remember her spirit, and dedication to yoga.



For Western Canada I wish to thank you for being here and travelling half way around the world to teach and inspire us through your on-going, unselfish dedication to the art of yoga. I'd like to close with a quote from your own book, The Tree of Yoga."

"The rivers which flow in your country and the rivers which flow in my country help to irrigate our lands and make them fertile; then they all flow into the sea and become one single ocean. Likewise, we are all human beings created by God with no differences between us at all. We are all one...."

Leslie Hogya



LIGHT ON THE YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI

The following is an excerpt of a talk given by Shirley Daventry French at the August 1993 Canadian Iyengar Yoga Conference in Toronto.

Revered Guruji, Honoured Guests, Fellow Students, Ladies and Gentlemen.

My mandate tonight has two parts. The first is to echo Marlene (Mawhinney)'s welcome to Guruji. In 1984, after the International Iyengar Yoga Convention in San Francisco, I was fortunate to be on the same flight as Guruji from San Francisco to Vancouver, and when the plane landed in Canada, he stood up and announced to us all: "I am a Canadian" - and then explained that his native tongue is called Kannada (the language of the state of Karnataka where Guruji was born). So perhaps what I should really say is: "Welcome Home, Guruji!"

I must apologise to Guruji that despite this, Canadian Immigration still insisted on a visa.

The second part of my mandate is to congratulate Guruji on the publication of his book *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. I have been eagerly awaiting its publication. On various visits to India, I have seen this book grow from an idea and a few notes, into monthly discourses on the Sutras which in turn formed the basis for a limited edition of a small book. At the same time, Guruji's notes were growing and growing, into complete chapters, and then in 1991 I arrived at the Institute to find the full manuscript for this new book going through its editing process.

Now the book is here, completing a trilogy with *Light on Yoga* and *Light on Pranayama*. Like its predecessors, it is likely to become a standard textbook for serious students of yoga.

I should like to read a few sutras from *Samadhi Pada*, the first part of the *Yoga Sutras* on total absorption. In the second *sutra*, Patanjali says that: Yoga is the cessation of movements in consciousness. *Sutra* 12 states that: Practice and detachment are the means to still the movements of consciousness. The 20th *sutra* adds that: Practice must be pursued with trust, confidence, vigour, keen memory and power of absorption " *Sutra* 21 says that: The goal is near for those who are supremely vigorous and intense in practice. Then in *Sutra* 22, Patanjali speaks of different levels of practitioner: mild, average, intense and supremely intense.

No-one who has had experience of Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar needs to ask which category he falls into! (Laughter)

In his commentary on this *sutra*, on page 73 of the book, Mr. Iyengar says:

"Paravairagya (supreme detachment) is for those who are clear of head and pure of heart, heroic and supremely energetic. For those the goal is at hand; for others, it is time bound."

Such a man is B.K.S. Iyengar. A true Master of Yoga

It is an honour to receive the teachings of yoga directly from a Master. If you are fortunate to be in his presence, as we are tonight, when he speaks to us - listen with your intuition, absorb what you can. For the majority of us, who are less intense and consequently "time bound" - it is the role and duty of a Master to help us throw off the bonds that bind us, so that we can find fulfilment.

In a class with Mr. Iyengar, no student is time-bound. In a class with Mr. Iyengar, everyone is right here - body, mind and breath. In a class with Mr. Iyengar, there is only the present moment.



B K S IYENGAR

Light on
the
Yoga
Sūtras
of
Patañjali

FOREWORD BY
YEHUDI MENUHIN

Alas, it is only occasionally, when Guruji travels to our country, or when we are able to make the pilgrimage to Pune to study at his Institute that we can receive the teachings directly from this consummate Master of Yoga. However, in this technological age, we are fortunate to have other aids to encourage us: videotapes, audiotapes and, of course, books.

One of Guruji's Maxims is that "A Good Book is better than a Bad Teacher"

Now, of course, a good teacher is better than a thousand books! But when that teacher is not directly before us, it is wonderful to be able to turn to a book which captures the spirit of his teaching, bringing it to life. Even more than that: a book such as this creates a link between our individual practice, here and now, wherever we may be in the world, and the teachings of Yoga as laid down thousands of years ago by the sage Patanjali.

No-one who has studied with Mr. Iyengar has any doubt that his work is firmly grounded in the tradition of the *Yoga Sutras*. For these people, *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* is a consolidation. For others, it will offer the chance to learn how Yoga can be practised in its fullest sense in all aspects of life.

In his Preface, Mr. Iyengar calls this book "a practical guide" which is intended "to help my fellow practitioners in their search for their own inner identity." Even if you are not interested in a systematic study of the sutras, Guruji encourages you to "dip" into them.

The first sentence of the Preface to this book says:

"Yoga is an art, a science and a philosophy. It touches the life of man at every level, physical, mental and spiritual. It is a practical method for making one's life purposeful, useful and noble."

and Guruji gives us some extra encouragement, by adding:

"May this manual act as fuel to the fire of practice"

Amen to that.

Thank you Guruji

- for your devotion to the Art of Yoga
- for the intensity of your practice
- for your dedication in propagating the teachings of Yoga throughout the world
- for all the long hours, you worked on *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*.

You have honed a new and valuable tool for all students of yoga.

Copies of Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali by B.K.S. Iyengar may be purchased from the Victoria Yoga Centre at a cost of \$19.00 Canadian. To order phone Linda Benn at 598-8277.



Ann Kilbertus

THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
presents

YOGA and HEALTHY HIPS

with
Ann Kilbertus

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21ST, 1993

10:00 am to 1:00 pm

at the Victoria YM-YWCA

Yoga Centre Members \$25.00
Non-Members \$30.00

An all levels workshop which will explore asanas to soften and strengthen the hip and pelvic areas.

Ann Kilbertus is an occupational therapist and an experienced yoga teacher in the tradition of B.K.S. Iyengar. In this workshop, she will draw on her own yoga experience, and her knowledge of anatomy and physiology to help students increase awareness of the structure and movement in the hip and pelvic region.

Refreshments will follow
To register: Phone Ann at 360-0916

"ANOTHER THANK YOU"

Our attention shifted due to the sounds of a very sudden and very heavy rain storm accented by claps of thunder - probably coinciding with the time Guruji was checking into the departure gates at the Toronto airport.

Shades of deja-vu! Three years ago in Edmonton Mr. Iyengar arrived and departed in the rain. Once again rain greeted us on our first day of the conference and bade farewell to Mr. Iyengar on his departure. Rain is a very auspicious sign in India according to Guruji.

What a week this had been! I'm sure that all those present at the second Canadian Iyengar Yoga Conference felt very privileged to have been taken under Mr. Iyengar's wings and personally led by him for two and a half very full and rewarding days.

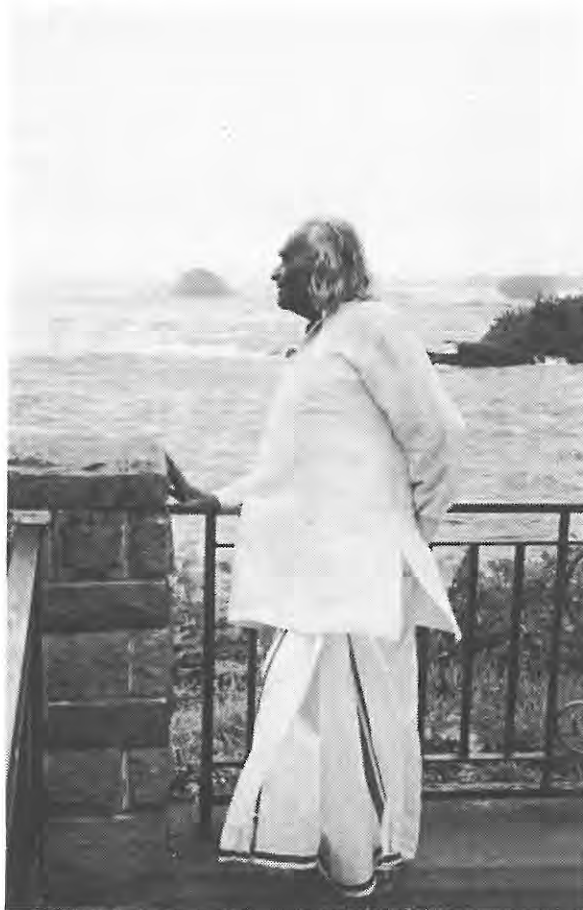
On my first day in Toronto I was able to volunteer my help with preparing and serving Mr. Iyengar and his entourage. I arrived at the address I was given to find Karhoum, the appointed cook for the group, waiting for the party to return from a day's outing to Niagara Falls. The group arrived in good spirits around 7.30 p.m. still enjoying the after glow from the shower of negative ions from the falls. What a treat to meet Mr. Iyengar and his entourage in such an informal setting.

Even though there were similarities between the first and the second conference, there were many differences. There were things I did this time I wouldn't have done then. I submitted a question for the "Question and Answer Period" knowing that I would have to go up on stage. (Yes, I was nervous). I agreed to teach an asana class at the conference knowing that Mr. Iyengar might drop in (no, he didn't). I even agreed to lead part of the practice at the teachers' meeting even though my first reaction was an adamant 'No'.

I felt very fortunate to have been able to participate in the conference. Our number was small in comparison to the conferences held in Ann Arbor and London. But perhaps it was because of this "intimate" size that I was able to have a sense of growth, a sense of overcoming some hurdles, a sense of connecting with so many fine people. It was a real honour to have been blessed by Mr. Iyengar's presence in Toronto.

Thank you, Guruji, for all that you give with such selfless dedication. And thank you to all the people who made the conference happen.

Lauren Cox
Victoria.



WHAT IS YOGA?

In the West, Yoga is known primarily as a means of improving flexibility and becoming more relaxed. This is true, but it is much more than that. It is an ancient spiritual science and living art which promotes physical, mental and spiritual health. Yoga is not a religion, but a way of life which encourages each individual to fulfil their own potential.

WHAT IS IYENGAR YOGA?

The name "Iyengar" is that of B.K.S. Iyengar, an internationally renowned Yoga Master who lives in Pune, India. Iyengar Yoga is a system of yoga developed by Mr. Iyengar from over fifty years of dedicated personal practice and teaching experience.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Yoga helps improve concentration, endurance and balance. It promotes health, vitality and general well being. Postures (asanas and breathing techniques are taught and practised in such a way that they benefit the entire body: joints, muscles, nerves and internal organs. Students become more aware of body, mind and breath in daily life, and learn to be more relaxed and at ease.

SO YOU THINK YOU'RE FIT, EH?

Exercise, as it is usually done, only reinforces misalignment. We tend to stretch from our more flexible areas and rely on our better developed muscles for strength. Iyengar Yoga encourages weak parts to strengthen and stiff areas to stretch, thus awakening and realigning the whole body. As the body moves into better alignment, less muscular work is required and relaxation increases naturally.

I HAVE HEALTH PROBLEMS. CAN I DO IYENGAR YOGA?

Yes. Iyengar Yoga can be adapted to suit any individual no matter what their age or state of health. However, if you have a severe back or other musculo-skeletal problem, or if you are recuperating from an illness or accident, you would benefit from first attending a Gentle Yoga class which proceeds at a slower pace than regular classes. Private lessons are another option for those who find it difficult to work in a regular class.

New Session: November 3

YOGA FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

a course
for people with health problems
or recovering from injuries
who would have difficulty
participating in a regular class

with
Shirley Daventry French
Ann Kilbertus, Occupational Therapist
Derek French, Physician

Wednesdays
4:00 to 5:30 pm
at the "Y"

Brochure with full details at the "Y"
or phone Ann at 360-0916

Self-less.

'Devoted to others welfare or interests and not one's own.'

Over the years I have asked myself why I was a Yoga Centre director. In the end I decided that it was two things, one selfless and one selfish. My current position as a director is president of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society and I really don't have any desire to hang on to the job. It doesn't come with a stipend or even a pension! It can be fun, is challenging and interesting and has given me the opportunity to learn how I can work best with like-minded people.

My selfless reason was less obvious to me but as I worked in yoga I grew to understand my 'self' a little more. With that understanding comes gratitude and a desire to offer something of my self back to the

divine plan. My teachers, B. K. S. Iyengar and Swami Radha support our efforts to find a way to give something of what we have back, as they do in their own lives.

It is our annual general meeting on Saturday, December 4th and, following our philosophy of meetings, it will be a short meeting followed by a great pot luck party. All yoga centre members are welcome, please bring a friend.. If you are not a member then for \$20.00 you can be for the whole year and reap the numerous benefits. One of these is the opportunity to be president or at least serve as a director. If in doubt ask your 'self' for guidance.

Jim Rischmiller
President
Victoria Yoga Centre



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

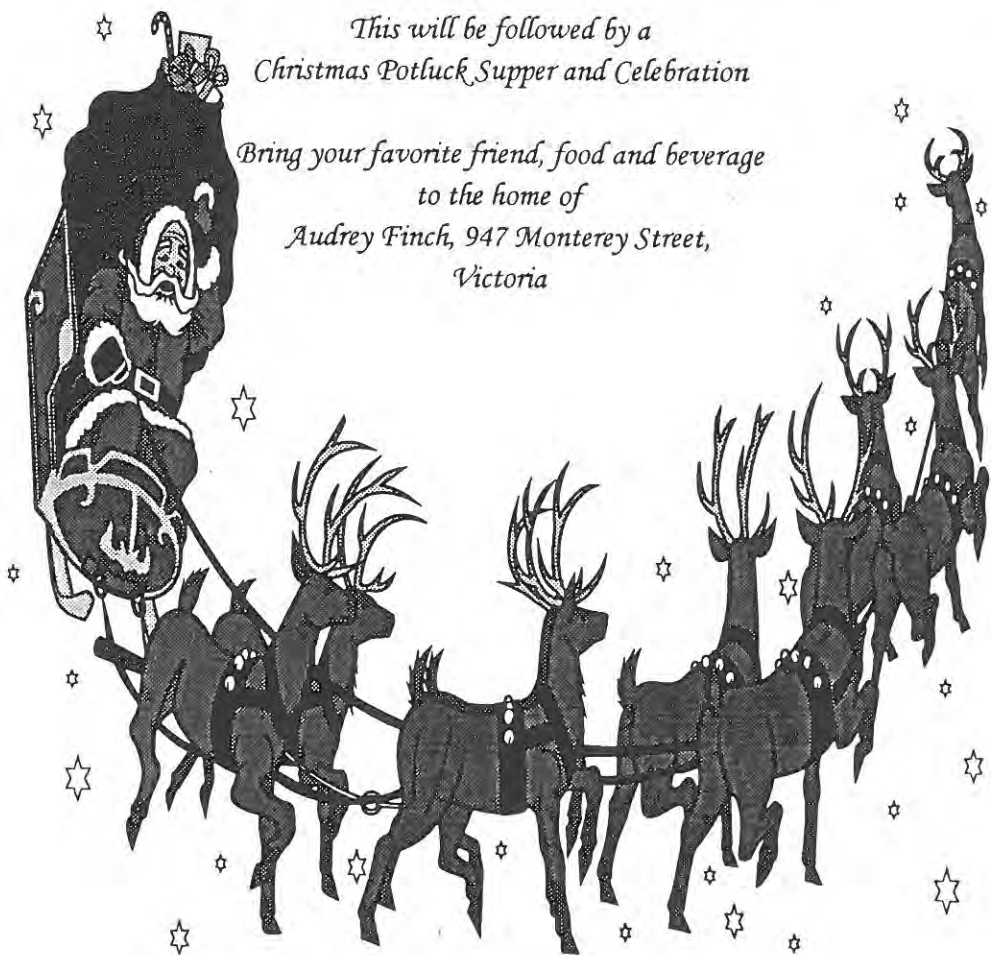
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, December 4, 1993 at 6.00 p.m.

Please join us for a brief business meeting.

This will be followed by a
Christmas Potluck Supper and Celebration

Bring your favorite friend, food and beverage
to the home of
Audrey Finch, 947 Monterey Street,
Victoria



RADHA HOUSE

Victoria

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



November

5-7: Dreams: Gifts of the Night
20: Saturday Morning with Spinal Twist
29-December 4: Last week of classes

December

4: Rose Ceremony, Part 1
5: Rose Ceremony, Part 2

A BENEFIT AND A CELEBRATION

From time to time during the year we (The Victoria Yoga Centre Society) schedule a fund-raising event, to generate the wherewithal to continue our ongoing work. What is our work? Well we define it as "to encourage the physical, mental and spiritual growth of our members and other interested members of society at large by the study and discipline of Iyengar Yoga". We are a non-profit society registered in the province of British Columbia, and one of the jokes heard often at our meetings is that we fulfil this "non-profit" status quite ably. In support of our work we provide a library of audio and video tapes, we keep an inventory of yoga props and books, we rent space for workshops and gatherings (which do not always make money) and we try to offer scholarships to students and teachers for classes, workshops or even intensives in India. Also this summer we were one of the Canadian centres who underwrote Mr Iyengar's visit to Canada. And then there is the newsletter! We are grateful to all of you who have taken out a yoga centre membership in support of the newsletter, but unfortunately it still does not pay for itself.

Our next fundraising event is a workshop 'In the light of Yoga' on Dec 12th to be led by Shirley Daventry French. Shirley is our senior teacher and is donating her time to this workshop in order to help raise funds. I know the workshop will be interesting and fun and I urge you to register with Shirley 478-3775 or myself 474-5630 to make sure of a place. If you cannot come then I ask you to consider donating the fee to the Victoria Yoga Centre, As always we can supply a tax receipt if required.

Jim Rischmiller
President
Victoria Yoga Centre

THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
presents

IN THE LIGHT OF YOGA

A special benefit workshop
in celebration of the 75th birthday of
Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12TH, 1993

10:00 am to 1:00 pm
at the Victoria YM-YWCA
with

Shirley Daventry French

Yoga Centre Members \$25.00
Non-Members \$30.00

Shirley Daventry French is a longtime student of Mr. Iyengar, and one of North America's most experienced teachers of his method of yoga.

The Victoria Yoga Centre is a non-profit society registered in British Columbia which propagates the teachings of yoga and the work of Mr. Iyengar through many activities :-

- * workshops & classes
- * monthly newsletter
- * books & video tapes
- * scholarships
- * monthly gatherings
- * retreats
- * teacher training *

**WE INVITE YOU TO ATTEND THIS WORKSHOP
AND SUPPORT OUR WORK.**

For All Levels of Students - Beginners are welcome
Refreshments will be served

Registration: Phone Shirley at 478-3775 or Jim Rischmiller at 474-5630

YOGA CALENDAR

NOVEMBER:

- 5-7: Dream Workshop at Radha House.
See ad this issue.
- 12-14: Ramanand Patel at the Y.
- 20: Pranayama in Metchosin
with Shirley Daventry French.
- 20: Saturday morning with Spinal Twist
at Radha House.
- 21: Sunday Workshop at the Y.
Led by Ann Kilbertus.
- 27: Teachers meeting at the Y.
- 27: Yoga and Stress Management -
an afternoon workshop at the Y
with Dr. Derek French.

DECEMBER:

- 4: Yoga Centre Annual General Meeting.
- 4: Rose Ceremony at Radha House
- 5: Rose Ceremony at Radha House.
- 12: Celebration workshop at the Y.
Led by Shirley Daventry French.
- 18: Pranayama in Metchosin with
Shirley Daventry French.

DOES YOUR YOGA CENTRE MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION NEED RENEWING?

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

JANUARY:

- 16: Sunday workshop at the Y.
Led by Marlene Miller
- 28: Yoga Centre Gathering
Discussion on Dreams
- 29: Restorative asanas, breathing and
relaxation workshop at the Y with
Shirley Daventry French. 1.30-4.30pm

FEBRUARY:

- 13 Sunday workshop at the Y.
- 25: Yoga Centre Gathering
Discussion on Stress
- 26: Workshop at the Y 1.30 to 4.30p.m.
TBA

MARCH:

- 6 Sunday Workshop at the Y
- 11-13: Felicity Green Workshop at the Y.
- 25: Yoga Centre Gathering
- 26: Workshop at the Y 1.30 to 4.30 p.m.
TBA

APRIL:

- 17: Sunday Workshop at the Y
- 22: Yoga Centre Gathering

JUNE:

- 3,4,5: Saltspring Retreat led
by Shirley Daventry French

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 DECEMBER ISSUE: NOVEMBER 15, 1993

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

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