



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE NEWSLETTER

December, 1995 – January 1996

Please Subscribe



Swami Sivananda Radha
1911 - 1995



**THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
AND THE VICTORIA Y.M.Y.W.C.A.**

WELCOME YOU TO A FRIDAY NIGHT GATHERING

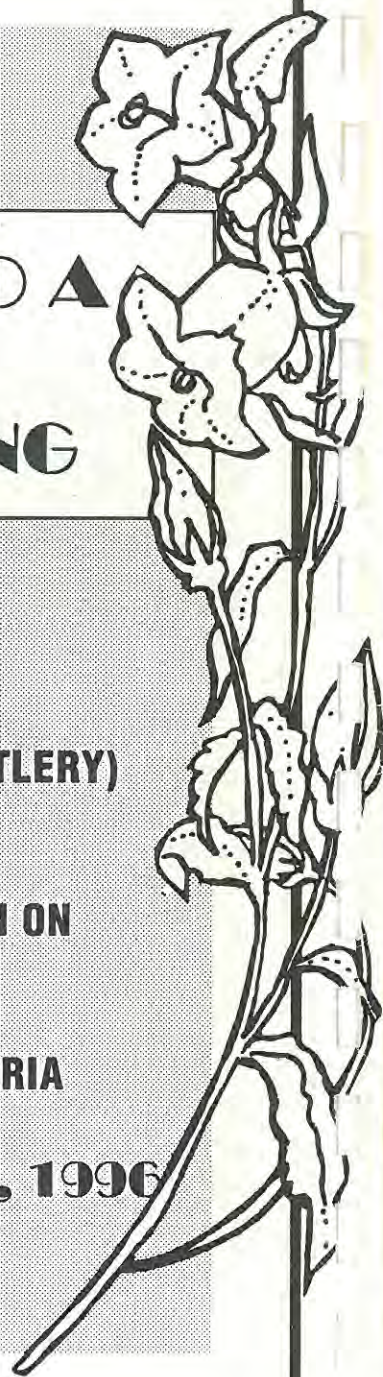
**ASANA PRACTICE AT 6 P.M.
POTLUCK DINNER AT 7 P.M.
IN THE YOGA LOUNGE
(PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN PLATE/CUTLERY)**

**8 P.M.
PLEASE JOIN US FOR A DISCUSSION ON
MANTRA
BY JESSICA SLYMER,
DIRECTOR OF RADHA HOUSE VICTORIA**

DATE: FRIDAY, January 26, 1996



EVERYONE IS WELCOME



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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 persons of the 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 the Victoria 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 contract the Editor, Jennifer Rischmiller: 4489 Lindholm Road, RR #1, Victoria BC, Canada, V9B 5T7. Telephone: (604) 474 - 5630
Deadline for submissions: 10th of every month.

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REFLECTIONS

BY SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH

I have recently returned from India where I was privileged to study with Mr. Iyengar and his daughter, Geeta. As always, after a visit to Pune, I returned feeling stuffed full of valuable information and guidance for my spiritual journey. It is too soon to write about my experience which first needs to be digested. However, going through my notes the other day, I highlighted a few statements by Guruji. Some of them were made during class and others during conversations in the library. I thought to myself, if I made these available for the newsletter they would get 1996 off to a good start and allow you to reflect on them with me. Happy New Year!

INSPIRATION FROM INDIA APHORISMS OF B.K.S. IYENGAR

Asana develops character where consciousness is made to understand it exists everywhere in the body, not just in the head. We have to practise so that the peripheral body reaches the soul.

Some people ask: "Why do I have pain when I practise so hard?"

This is vibrancy, not illumination.

After a practice in which Guruji held head and shoulder balance cycles for approximately two hours he asked: "Could I do this if it were just physical? You would be crying!"

River of consciousness:

– When water is flowing in a river it will touch both banks evenly unless there is a damming, a diversion or obstruction. We have to trim our flow of consciousness into certain areas so that it can flow into others.

Balance the scales of justice through evenness of movement on both sides.

– Stability of the body vanquishes the oscillating character of the mind and makes both body and mind steady

– Sharpen intelligence into every part of the body until mind is in every cell.

– When intelligence permeates the whole body, the self is known.

The difference between alertness and awareness:

– Alertness is objective, external, can be stimulated by a prop such as a brick.

– Awareness is subjective, internal. When there is no awareness we have to create alertness. Nowadays there is a lot of talk about abuse or molestation. We are abusing our bodies, molesting our cells.

– Truth cannot be partial; there are no dualities.

– Concentration needs a focus or form. Meditation has no focal point because the self has lost its identity.

Dharana (concentration) is stillness; dhyana (meditation) is silence.

Using my outstretched arm to illustrate his point:

– When the waves of consciousness are distorted this prevents expression of the soul.

Knowing that yoga practices liberate energy:

– What is this energy to be used for? Yoga Sutra I-3 states: "Then the seer dwells in his own true splendour."

In his commentary on this sutra, Guruji says that when the waves of consciousness are stilled and silenced, they can no longer distort the expression of the soul. During class one day, Geeta explained that what we do in our practice is oscillate, subduing certain vrittis but in the process creating more. What is required is constant vigilance.

For Teachers:

– Find the confusion in the art of teaching.

– Face your confusion and learn.

– There is no Iyengar British system, or Iyengar Yoga Canadian system or Australian or American system. There is just the Iyengar system.

– Inject into the body and not into the mind.

– Memory has to be in the body not in the mind.

– If the point you have given has not been taken, you have to approach differently.

– Guidelines are always a movement, not a stagnation.

– With ethics, there is no middle way.

– Let knowledge be important, not power. ♦



Interview with Sarada

Sarada, a resident of Yasodhara Ashram and a student of Swami Radha, was the first editor of the Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter and one of the founders of Radha House Victoria. Formerly Norman McKenzie, Sarada, agreed to be interviewed by Leslie Hogya when she visited the Ashram last August.

L: Would you talk about how you first came to the Ashram?

S: I first came in 1969 during a difficult time in my life and I was looking for a way of understanding my life. I was in my late teens, early twenties and I came out to work for about three months. Gurdev Sivananda had told Swami Radha she would have young men who would come to help her and there was a dedicated group of young men working here then. I enjoyed this time, although I found S. Radha very challenging. She's direct and straight. I had a meeting with her that left a strong impression, I still remember its intensity. It took me quite while to understand what she was saying to me. After a while, I ran away from the Ashram, but I came back off and on. In the early 70's I visited with my father, but I was holding the Ashram at a distance.

Ten years later, in 1979, I was going through a divorce and a change in my career. I thought I had done

Message from the Editor:

Swami Sivananda Radha died on Thursday, November 30, 1995.

In this issue we have published some items as a memorial in her honour.

You will read the words her Guru spoke on the event of her return to North America from India and we have reprinted some of Swami Radha's own words on her 80th birthday.

Swami Radha was the inspiration for the Victoria Yoga Centre. She spent time in Victoria: many people here knew her and worked with her – she will continue to be an inspiration.

by Leslie Hogya

what I wanted in government. I didn't want to become a beurocrat, but I didn't know what to do. I was in poor health physically, mentally and emotionally. I needed to rebuilt myself. I talked to S. R. and she gave me a thorough going over. At that point I was able to appreciate more of what she was saying. I had recently moved to Victoria and I needed to begin again. I asked Swami Radha who in Victoria could help and this is when I met Shirley and Derek (French) who had done the teacher's course at the Ashram. I am grateful for the kind of support they gave when I was at a low point. I also began Iyengar yoga which helped rebuild my body. I taught in the Y program for several years. I saw the Victoria Yoga Centre as a productive place for people and it gave me a focus for service outside of myself. The community there was very important to me, the only other community I had was the work-a-holic government world. So 1979 was a pivotal year for me and got me into a whole new relationship with other people mainly through the Yoga Centre and Shirley and Derek.

About that time I began to I listen to and practice the guided Meditation on the Light twice a day (a recording by Swami Radha), it was my anchor. It gave me a focus when I didn't know how to focus on my own.

THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
PRESENTS

The Stories in the Asanas

WITH
JIM RISCHMILLER

The yoga asanas are more than just physical exercises. They come from a immense body of knowledge that evolved to help us understand who we are and how we fit into this world.

In this workshop we will be using some stories from this knowledge and practice, to help us discover the story in our asana.

This workshop is open to all who have some yoga experience.

NEW YEAR'S DAY
SUNDAY, JANUARY 1ST, 1995
Y.M. - Y.W.C.A.

12:30 A.M. - 15:30 P.M.
REFRESHMENTS INCLUDED.

FEE: \$25.00 YOGA CENTRE MEMBERS
\$30.00 NON-MEMBERS.
REGISTRATION: JIM RISCHMILLER
474-0392 OR 474-5630.

The sessions at the Y with Shirley were a way of keeping my body healthy. Both practices kept me open when I needed to be open and helped me hear a lot more than I had been able to hear on my own in my interactions with others. This period lasted for three years. We had a lot of Iyengar teachers coming to the Y from around the world. We were given a broad spectrum of how to approach ourselves, it was challenging, demanding and exhausting; exhilarating and it brought me a sense of community that I had never had.

L: Did you go to India to study with Iyengar?

S: Yes, I went to Pune in 1982. But after that I went back to the woman who had challenged me the most. There was no question who that was. I wanted a spiritual system. I tried Zen Buddhism, EST, Iyengar Yoga, Transcendental Meditation and the Ashram. The three that stayed with me were my connection to the Victoria Yoga Centre, the Ashram and a personal connection with the Tibetan Lama in Victoria. I needed to find a way to support my spiritual life. In 1981, I did the ten day program at the ashram. Afterward I knew I needed to do a lot more work on myself. I had just scratched the surface. It opened a window of potential. I was at a crossroad again in my personal life and my career. I kept hearing about the Teacher's course at the Ashram, which I tried to push away. I felt my government job was precarious because of the politics and the ruthlessness of my Deputy Minister. Finally, I decided that the Teacher's course was what I needed to do. I moved into Shirley and Derek's home and again they were very, very kind. They provided support that I didn't expect from anyone, even my family. They helped me talk over the decision and told me about their own experience at the Teacher's Course (now known as the YDC Yoga Development Course).

I wrote to the Deputy Minister to ask for permission. At first my request was rejected, he wanted more information. I talked to my immediate boss and she said, "We're not going to let that stop us!" She gave me support on how to write a second letter. The second time my request for leave of absence was approved and I was quite surprised. I wasn't in a good financial position, I had to pull things together. I reduced my possessions to boxes that Shirley and Derek let me store

in their home and off I went to the Yoga Teacher's course. I knew fairly early that I had made the right decision. I knew I had to develop a much deeper understanding of myself as well as what I was trying to accomplish in my life. I touched upon a sense of appreciation for what I had been given in my life that I never felt before. I spent time tracking down some people from earlier in my life and wrote to some of the people who meant a lot to me, including a fourth grade teacher. I've tried to keep a sense of gratitude in my life and I keep learning that lesson.

Also at that time, I had to make some decisions and asked for direction from Divine Mother on a relationship I was in with a fine young woman, my career and my spiritual direction. The relationship ended. In my career, I was offered a different, challenging position and I did that for the next nine years. I began to think about a Radha House in Victoria. I felt torn also because of my commitment to the Yoga Centre and I tried to keep the connection to the centre going. Padmananda, Swami Radha and I had a whirl wind weekend looking for an appropriate house to buy to establish Radha House.

L: I remember that weekend. Swami Radha was here and we did a Straight Walk at Shirley and Derek's house.

S: We found the house and moved in, in 1984. That was the start of a very different type of life. I had always been independent. I was brought up in a rigid Presbyterian family. Men were to live in the world. Yet suddenly I was living in a house and Padmananda was in charge of the house. She introduced me to a woman's perspective. She took me yards further with her experience. She'd been through a lot with her own marriage and family. I learned so much from her and from the classes. I was awestruck with how different life is for women and men; I was very naive in my emotions. Padmananda was just wonderful, she had a dedicated commitment to the work with the Ashram and S. Radha. She had an attitude and perspective that allowed me to learn. We had some rough times, too: we're both very stubborn, and not easy to live with. She challenges herself and she challenged me to overcome my pride. I think she prepared me for the Ashram because of her commitment is to the work. I also needed help in how

Sarada: continued, p. 15

THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
PRESENTS

A Yoga Workshop for Beginners

WITH
LAUREN COX

**Join Lauren for a sequence of
stretches and poses geared for
the beginning student.**

FEBRUARY 18TH, 1996
10:00 A.M. TO 12:30 P.M.
IN THE YOGA STUDIO
AT THE VICTORIA YM - YWCA

REFRESHMENTS AND TIME FOR
A DISCUSSION WILL FOLLOW.

FEE: \$ 20.00 YOGA CENTRE MEMBERS
\$ 25.00 NON - MEMBERS.

TO REGISTER, CALL LAUREN
AT 382 3287

Press Release from Yasodhara Ashram
December 4, 1995

INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN SPIRITUAL TEACHER DIES AT 84

Swami Sivananda Radha, one of the world's most respected spiritual teachers died peacefully at her home on November 30, at the age of 84. Well known for spreading the knowledge of Yoga across the Western world, she had taught and lectured widely for over 40 years, publishing books and establishing teaching centers in Canada, the United States, Mexico and Europe.

Swami Radha was among the first Western women to become a swami – a pioneer in the work of bringing yoga into the mainstream of North American life. She was initiated into the sacred order of Sanyas in Rishikesh, India, in 1956. In that same year she returned to the West and dedicated herself to fulfilling her Guru's request to interpret and update the ancient teachings of Yoga for the Western mind. Over the next 40 years she became widely known through her writing,

lectures, teaching and workshops. In 1963 she established the teaching centre for her work, Yasodhara Ashram at Kootenay Bay, British Columbia. The Ashram is one of the longest established yoga teaching communities in North America and the yoga courses taught there are considered to be among the finest available anywhere.

Swami Radha's work has flourished in the West. In addition to the Ashram, Swami Radha established the Association for the Development of Human Potential (ADHP) in the United States and over the past decade she built a network of centres called Radha Houses which represents her work in various cities throughout North America, Mexico and England. Her publishing company, Timeless Books (Spokane, WA), is dedicated to the publication of her work. Her books on yoga and spiritual life, including her classic text *Kundalini Yoga for the West* have been translated into several languages and are distributed throughout the world.

In response to the continuing demand for her teachings, her Ashram is currently completing a beautiful new teaching complex called Mandala House. The building is part of the planning for the future that has characterized so much of Swami Radha's work. The Ashram's Temple of Divine Light, overlooking beautiful Kootenay Lake, was officially opened in 1992. Swami Radha's vision for the temple first came to her in a childhood dream. She has always seen it as a special place where people of all faiths could come and celebrate the Light common to all religions. Since the Temple's completion, hundreds of people have made the journey to the Ashram to visit the temple at the centre of Swami Radha's work. With her passing it is very likely that many more will want to do the same. ♦



YOGA INTERIM CLASSES

ALL LEVELS YOGA CLASSES

Monday, December 18, 5:30 - 7:00p.m. Celia Ward
Saturday, December 30, 9:30 - 11:00a.m. Celia Ward
Wednesday, January 3, 5:30 - 7:00p.m. Linda Benn
Thursday, January 4, 10:00 - 11:30a.m. Linda Benn

FEES: \$8.00 per class

Pay per-time at Y Main Desk

*"Grace, beauty, strength, energy and firmness adorn
the body through Yoga." Yoga Sutra III.47*

Swami Sivananda Radha: A Biography

Swami Radha (formerly Sylvia Hellman,) was born in Germany in 1911 and lived there until after World War II. Always of a very questioning nature, she soon realized that worldly success brought little of enduring value. The disruptive events in Germany throughout the War years only increased her desire to find a lasting and meaningful purpose in life.

In 1951, she emigrated to Canada and became a Canadian citizen. A visionary experience led her to her Guru (spiritual teacher) – Swami Sivananda Saraswati in Rishikesh, India. At the time of her first visit she spent six months at his Ashram and received very intense training in the philosophy and practices of Yoga and the spiritual life. It was there that she chose to dedicate her life to the service of others and in 1956 was initiated into the sacred order of Sannyas as Swami Sivananda Radha. Sannyasins renounce all worldly ambitions and emotional attachments, directing their life and energy to the ideals of selfless service and the search for spiritual understanding and enlightenment.

At her Guru's request she returned to Canada to bring the Yogic teachings to the West. In 1956 she founded an Ashram in Burnaby, British Columbia, which moved to its present location in Kootenay Bay, B.C., in 1963. Since then, Swami Radha's major emphasis has been to interpret the ancient teachings so they can be understood and applied in the daily life of the Westerner. Swami Radha's extraordinary dedication to the Divine through service, love and wisdom has made it possible for her to complete her mission. Her approach to yoga is widely regarded as being of the highest ethical standards – profound yet accessible.

Many of her recordings have been classified as educational material by the Canadian government. She is the author of *Kundalini: Yoga for the West*, *Mantras: Words of Power*, *The Divine Light Invocation*, *Radha: Diary of a Woman's Search*, *In the Company of the Wise*, *Hatha Yoga: The Hidden Language*, *From the Mating Dance to the Cosmic Dance* and *Realities of the Dreaming Mind*. ♦

SWANWICK STUDY CENTRE

538 Swanwick Road, RR1, Victoria

For information contact Khairon – 737 4762

Shirley Daventry French - Yoga Retreat

Longtime student of Iyengar. Recently returned from India.

April 19, arrive after lunch. April 21, depart after lunch.

Father Joe Pereira

Studied Yoga 20 years with Iyengar. Closely connected with Mother Teresa's work.

June 11, arrive after lunch. June 17, depart after breakfast.

Ingelise Nellan - Yoga Retreat

Rich, joyful, rejuvenating teachings.

May 3, arrive after lunch. May 5, depart after lunch.

Gloa Irwin - Yoga Retreat

Warm, gentle, personal style with deep yogic principles. Awakens the innermost being.

August 2, arrive after lunch. August 5, depart after lunch.

FAREWELL TO SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA RADHA

Swamiji's speech on 21.2.56, Excerpted from Swami Sivananda Radha: A Biographical Sketch, Timeless Books, 1981

This is a glorious day, an auspicious day, a joyful day.

We have amongst us a Canadian Yogi. We are offering our highest tributes and homage to her for her Divine virtues and practice of Yoga and her strongest desire to live in the Eternal and to disseminate the knowledge of Yoga-Vedanta in the West.

Her coming here from far off Canada to meet me is not an accidental chance. It is in the Grand Plan, the working of Prarabdha. We lived together and worked together in the field of spirituality in a past life, so we have met here in this birth. Sivananda Radha (Sivananda – Master's name: Radha – Eternal companion of Krishna) has come with intense desire, faith and devotion, to meet me and learn something of Yoga – not to learn, she already knows Yoga, only the Samskaras (impressions), which are already engraved on her mind have to be brought back to the surface of consciousness. Her virtues are in abundance. Her adaptability is unique and unparalleled. She is amicable, moved by all people, showing her kindness and affection. She is a very earnest student, full of energy and tenacity of purpose. She went to Dehra Dun and learned a new science, our Bharata Natya, in a short space of time without knowing the language. Mr. Devasatyam taught only in Tamil and she learned Tal, rhythm, the movements and the expressions, with the heart most wonderful. It is very difficult for others to learn as much within a month.

Her devotion to the Guru is most unique and unparalleled. She worked day and night and gave a good deal of work for her music teacher, Swami Nada Brahmanandaji also – four hours daily. Nada Brahmanandaji is also a Swami of calm serenity. He never gets irritated when people bore him for four or

five hours. He is ever ready to help the students in music and he has elevated and instructed hundreds of people here, and in Dehra Dun, Roorkee and various other places. He is a most kind musical teacher and professor who is adept in the science of Thaana in music.

Yogic students feel that a Yogi can fly in the air, walk on the water and do other miracles. They think then only you know Yoga. It is a sad mistake. To be peaceful, to be calm, to radiate joy, to have an intense aspiration and devotion, to have a spirit of service – this is Yoga. This is not so easy. Flying in the air is not Yoga. Why become a bird after so many years of Sadhana (spiritual practice) and Pranayama (life, force, breath)? Even Nirvakalpa Samadhi (heightened state of Divine ecstasy) is not necessary for us. You must have a willing heart to serve everybody, the spirit of service and a desire to possess all divine virtues. This is Yoga. Let us not try to become a bird and fly to Delhi, five or six rupees is enough to go to Delhi.

To be good, to do good – this should be our ideal. Be ever willing to share what you have with others. You should have knowledge of scriptures, devotion to teacher, to saints and to founders of religions. Why do you want to get yourself merged in the Absolute? Possess Divine qualities and move as a Divine Being. Freedom from hatred, malice, readiness to share with others – such things you should possess. Merging in the Absolute is not necessary. Let us have a small veil of individuality and serve here as Nityasiddhas (eternal perfect ones). You elevate thousands of people by your example. You remain as a Divine Being on this earth. So let us not aspire for powers only. Powers come by themselves and we do not want them. Remain as a Divine Being. Possess all the Divine virtues that are enumerated in the Gita (spiritual scripture of India). Share what you have with others. This is Yoga.

So, Sivananda Radha will do a great deal of work in America and Canada through her practice of Yoga, guiding groups of people, elevating them, giving them the message of the Rishis, sages and seers: "Saryam

Vada" (speak the truth). "Darmam Cara" (lead a righteous life). "Worship mother as God, worship father as God, worship teacher as God, worship guest as God." Give, but give with modesty. Give with good will. Give with humility. That is the teaching that she will spread there. There is one eternal Atman (the Self, one

Universal Consciousness dwells in the heart of all. Realize this through concentration, purification, aspiration, renunciation. So many 'tions are there. Therefore we must practice all these. Give, love, share. Control anger. Do not get irritated through misunderstanding. Understand everybody, their feelings. Bear insult. Bear injury. Then you yourself can fly in the air like a bird. After undergoing so much spiritual practice, do not aspire to be a bird.

If you develop one virtue, Satyam or truthfulness, all virtues will follow. You will become a magnet. Be ever intent on the welfare of all (Sarvabhootahiteratah). Even if a man is trying to take away your life with a dagger, be kind to him like Jesus. Love that man who tries to persecute you. These are the things you should practice, not only studying the Brahma Sutras and the Upanishads (spiritual scriptures of India): the Upanishads should come from your heart through purification, through service. Service is the highest thing on this earth. Service will make you Divine. Service is Divine Life. Service is eternal life in God. Service will give you Cosmic Consciousness. It is not easy. You will have to kill your egoism. You will have to pulverize your egoism, make it a powder like our Kahudavardhak (holy ashes). You will have to make oil from your bones and burn it for six months. If you have humility all virtues will come by themselves. Sivananda Radha has already all those divine virtues. Do not become nervous. Be strong. Have a small beginning in the room on the third floor in your house. Become a magnet. All will come, like bees to drink the honey.

**“If you develop one
virtue, Satyam
or
truthfulness,
all virtues will
follow ”**

Gradually your work will spread throughout Canada and America. Those who want inner life are very few. All are thirsting to drink the honey but they do not know where to drink that honey. They try to drink that honey from bank balance and helicopter. Maya (illusion) is very clever. Maya never allows anyone to taste the honey,

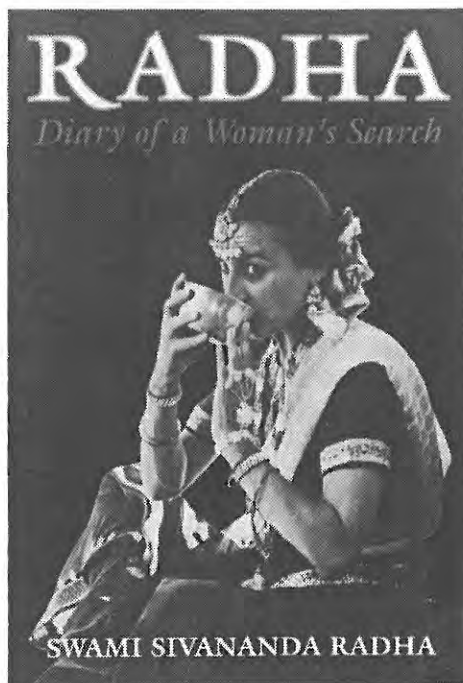
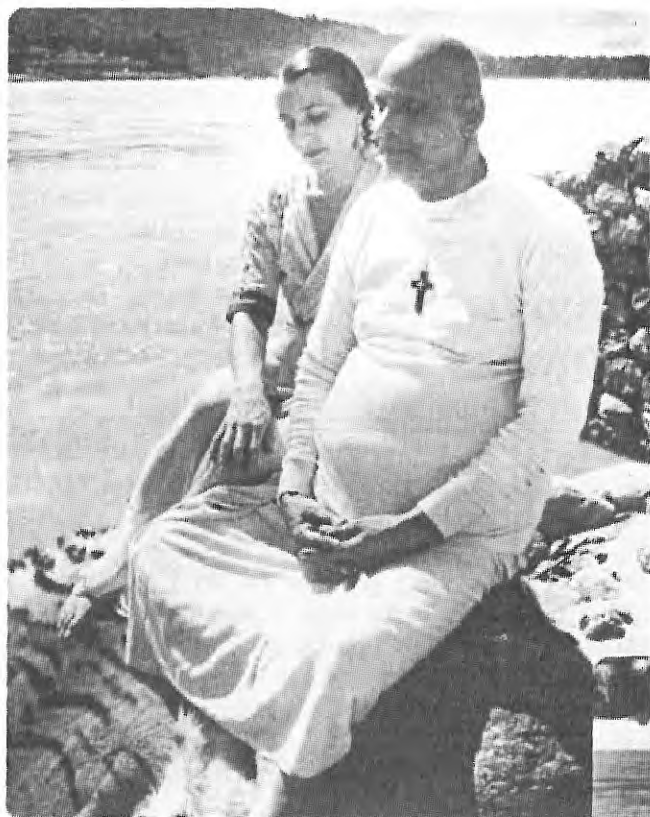
to lead an inner life. Deluded by Maya, people say, "there is no transcendental realm."

There is nothing beyond the senses. Eat, drink and be merry. Have good tea and good coffee. You may remain here for two years, but only for those who have the grace of the Lord, the road is open. Many people leave the practice after five or six years, because there is no real aspiration. They have only some curiosity. They want to get psychic powers to become a Yogi and start an Ashram. Only for those people who sit in the Dattatraya Temple or on the bank of the Ganges and practice Japa (Yoga of repetition of the Divine Name) and concentration, the road is open. You need not go to Dattatraya Temple. What beautiful scenery: Vyasa and other Rishis remained here. Their vibrations are in the Akasic (etheric) record. This is the best place in the world for meditation. Mussoorie (city in the Himalayas) may be tempting, but this is the best place for meditation. Let us become Yogis.

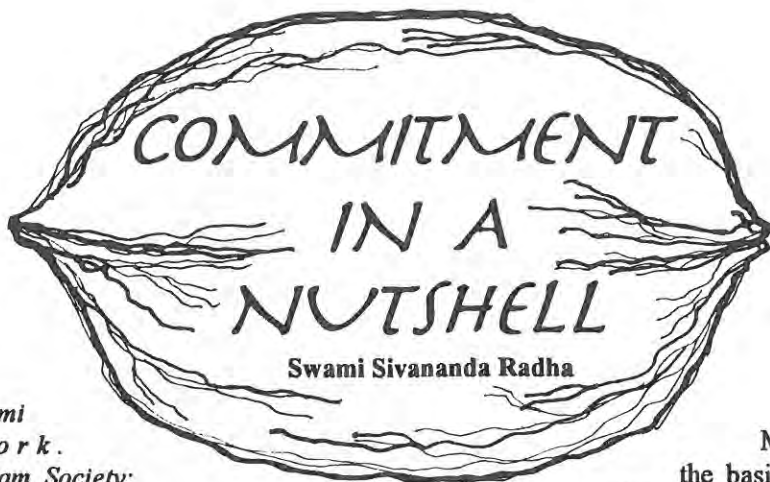
Swami Radha will do a lot of work there in Canada and America and change the people there. Let her not be diffident, but confident. Even three months practice on the Ganges bank is sufficient for an earnest student.

Be good, do good. This is the essence of the teachings of all the scriptures and of all the prophets of the world. So we all pray for her long life, peace, prosperity, Tushti (contentment), Pushti, (nourishment) and all Divine Aiswaryas (Divine powers). ♦

*Published in Radha: Diary of a Woman's Search,
Timeless Books, 1981*







*Excerpted
from: Ascent,
Journal of Swami
Radha's Work.
Yasodhara Ashram Society:
April - June 1995, pp. 31- 33.*

What is commitment? As an ideal, the word can inspire many hours of discussion. For practical purposes, however, I would like to put my meaning of commitment into a nutshell. A compact, succinct understanding of commitment will stay sharply in your mind and can mean something to you on a day-to-day basis.

If you are preparing to enter into a spiritual commitment you must first be aware of what you are committing to. Are you committing to a fantasy that life will be a beautiful in heaven? Or to fantasies of self-glorification? The fantasies are endless. Spiritual life is not a fantasy. If you make a commitment to spiritual life you must understand the purpose and responsibilities that go along with choosing that life. Sometimes women have come to the Ashram looking for a husband, thinking that the men who live here will be more reliable, more loyal, more this or more that. And the same applies to some men who have come here looking for a wife. But when it became clear that life in the Ashram is a serious business, the ones who had come for the wrong reasons simply had to leave to find what they were looking for somewhere else. We can be highly stimulated and inspired by spiritual life, but that ought not to be confused by fantasy. Spiritual life is no fantasy whatsoever. It takes courage and strength to look at the facts honestly, but knowing the facts straight out is the only way to be clear enough in yourself to

fulfill your
commitment to the
Most High. Acting on
the basis of true commitment
will bring the intelligence behind your

ideals to the surface. The first step to fulfilling a commitment is to ask yourself: What kind of person do I want to be? You must decide what you want to be physically, mentally-emotionally and spiritually. Then ask yourself, Why am I here? What is the purpose of my life? Is my life worthwhile? Your answers to these questions must be straightforward, well-investigated, and factual. Once you decide who and what you want to be, you then commit yourself to becoming that person. Your commitment becomes very practical and real - a commitment to honesty and to putting quality into your work and your relationships. This requires daily application and a lot of awareness.

Many times I have been asked if students, followers, or disciples have a right to demand that their spiritual leader set the example. That depends on what you need from your teacher to achieve your goal. If you ask a carpenter how to build a cabinet, it should not concern you if he quarrels with his wife. You are not seeking his knowledge about marriage; you want to learn how to build a cabinet. There's a certain common sense and discrimination involved. If you want to learn how to fly a airplane, you will not trust anyone who has never been in the air. The important thing is to be aware of what you want and perhaps adjust your goals a bit so that your demands become realistic.

When you are committed to the Most High, the work you do deserves the highest quality you are

capable of, whether you are peeling potatoes, making jam, performing an Indian dance, or singing bhanjans. You will know deep within if you are doing your best. And your commitment is always to the Most High, not necessarily to the teacher. If you teacher's life does not reflect the quality you are seeking, you have a right to turn away and leave. But your sincerity is also your protection. With sufficient sincerity, your own Divine Committee will lead you to a true teacher.

To lead a moral life requires knowing the law of divine life. When you study divine law you will see that the origin of our morals is the forgotten knowledge of divine law. All scriptures have certain laws that are the same regardless of whatever other doctrines they present. But the one overall law is ahimsa (non-injury) and this is very important. Every day you must apply what you learn if your life is to reflect commitment.

And you should have an interior life, a communication with the Divine from your heart, not so much from your mind. When you renew your commitment, have enough humility to ask for help, to admit that you can't do it on your own. Living and working against divine law can only last for so long before the Divine comes along to puncture your ego balloon. All the hot air from the balloon will disappear. The big dramas and trials that come to you in your life also serve to wake you up to cooperating with your path of evolution. If you work with the Divine, you are bound to meet your goal and your commitment will be fulfilled.

Liberation comes in many degrees and truth is approached in many ways. Honour your commitments. Seek quality in life and you will be truly free to take flight to the Most High. ♦

DEDICATED TO SWAMI RADHA

Peace

*The sun peeks round the trees of green,
Firing the golden broom.
Whispers of cloud drift from shadowed pond,
Grey wraiths within the gloom.*

*Those placid waters team with life
and death on a moments notice.
The frogs call out its time for love,
meaning mating is the paultice.*

*And so I stand facing my lord
whose works are all around me.
Honouring life and also death,
And offering him my plea.*

*Help me struggle on this earth
to give up my controlling power.
And instead to make my mark
by finding my enternal flower.*

*In the end all questions are,
Who are you and why are you here?
Look in and enjoy, not out and employ.
Take the time, do the work, have no fear.*

*Then ego stands up with tears in his eyes
or demands a place in the sun.
Bending my leg when it needs to be straight,
or giving my fears a full run.*

*But with age comes wisdom of ancient lore,
Hands held out with smiles to guide me.
By looking within we see without.
Life is death, death is life evermore.*

Jim Rischmiller

Krishna stepped down from the chariot and asked Arjuna to do the same. No sooner had Arjuna left the chariot when Krishna set it on fire. The chariot burned to ashes in a minute. Arjuna was shocked. He realized that he was very attached to his chariot and he could not understand why Krishna had done this. The chariot had served him well. He had used it to fight all his dreaded enemies, and now it was just a bundle of ashes. Arjuna turned to Krishna and demanded an answer. The answer Krishna gave him is very significant for every human life.

Krishna said, "Arjuna, this chariot has served its purpose. It has been the target of many enemies and it has withstood the fury of all those who were against us. But because I was in the chariot with you, our enemies could do nothing. My presence prevented them from wielding their power, and now it is all over. You do not need this chariot anymore and so I descend from it for the last time."

The moment the chariot's purpose has been served, the chariot comes to an end. Everything that has been created has a definite purpose, and the moment the purpose is served, its destruction follows. That is true of human beings, too. Each of us is born to achieve a particular goal. When that goal is reached, there is absolutely no need for us to remain nor does the world need us any longer. That is as true for me as it is for you. We were born into this world for a certain purpose and we will have to remain here as

long as there is something left for us to do. But when that purpose has been achieved we will leave the world. The time will come when we have to go.

I have felt for some time that my work is done.

There are many who are well trained who will carry on the work. There are others who may follow their own desires.

But the purpose that I agreed to carry out has been fulfilled and, indeed, there is no point in remaining any longer in the world. All the tools are given.

Everything is here. It's now a matter of using the tools, practicing and making your own way to the divine source.

Keep good spirits. And remember, without Radha and Krishna there is no song, there is no dance. Balance your life well so that you don't get drained too early and feel you have to give up. Remember it is the Divine, in whatever way you perceive it, that is also in the chariot of your life.

So this is my last message. Together, we have been walking the path for a little while just as we have done many times before. For now, all is done that can be done. Keep on going.

Stand alone. Be courageous. Meet yourself in all that has to be met – the highest and the lowest, the good and the not so good, knowing that all passes, just as ignorance passes as you keep on learning. It was a job and a blessing that, for a while I could be in your midst. Now the veil drops and our physical eyes do not see each other. Do not grieve. Rather, turn to the greater reality that will bring you to a new relationship, a greater closeness, and will allow you to step into a new

THE LAST MESSAGE

SWAMI
SIVANANDA
RADHA

NOVEMBER
30,
1995

dimension. Remember, each step sets you free.

From experience I want you to know that death has no sting. I have no fear because I know there is a place prepared. It is also a blessing to know when your time comes so that you can put your house in order. Forgive and forget. Drop the chains of resentment lest you carry unnecessary weight when your time comes. Set your ideals clearly before your eyes and live up to them. If you are practicing awareness, you will put your ideals into a way of life that will take you to freedom, regardless of what your faith is.

If you will grant me one last wish, it is this: stay together, love each other, support this work and the Ashram in the spirit in which it was started – granting to each other the freedom to have your personal experience of God. Strengthen your faith, and you will have no need for seeking acceptance by others. Open the doors of your heart so that God will know you mean it. Don't be sporadic, be persistent. Suspend judgement and instead try to understand.

Finally, don't take yourself and the world too seriously. Rather, think that one day you will join in the Krishna lila, in the great circle dance. And keep the Light going. The Light will give you understanding and insights. But it will also help you to discover your own divinity and the source of the Light within yourself. From here on it is your duty to keep that Light going – your first and most important duty.

Hari Om, Hari Om
Swami Sivanand Radha ♦



Sarada: continued, from p. 5

to deal with my family. She was going through things with her own young adult children, she gave me some tools and a more mature perspective and some light heartedness.

After some years, I had to deal with my career again. I had a specialized job in the government that I knew was vulnerable to cutbacks: I negotiated programs for people with mental or physical disabilities. In both the federal and provincial governments, finding common ground required communication skills, concentration and understanding different perspectives. In 1991, I came to the end of my career.

L: Did your career come to an end because of changes in government or because you came to the Ashram?

S: The two things converged. If I was going to continue in government I would have to move into a new area or I could have gone to Ottawa to work for the federal government. My job came to an end, it was being consolidated. I was there 17 years and a lot of that work was meaningful to me but now I knew I didn't have the same commitment as when I started; it was time to reassess. I went to the Ashram for a while and thought over my options: I could go to Ottawa and work at the Radha House there or go to work at Timeless Books in California. Another option was to stay at the Ashram.

There were so many changes all at once. I wasn't in Victoria, I was no longer in government, I wasn't in Radha House, I wasn't working in a career. I was pretty sure I didn't want to go back into a career. I went through some upheaval and toward the end of the summer I did a five day Hidden Language Program and worked on what was next for me. On the last day of the course it became clear that the Ashram was my home. I talked to Swami Radha about it, there were three or four choices for me within the Ashram community. I chose to go to California to work at Timeless Books. After six months, I finally made a decision. I went to visit Swami Radha in 'Many Mansions.' She said, "Well, you know, you could go and work in Ottawa." I was stunned and then I was mad, really mad. I didn't know what to do, I just steamed for a few days. And

Sarada: continued, p. 18

THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE IS PROUD TO PRESENT

Felicity Green

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FELICITY GREEN IS A DEDICATED STUDENT OF B.K.S. IYENGAR, A RESPECTED AND SOUGHT AFTER TEACHER WHO TRAVELS THE WORLD TEACHING. SHE IS A LEADER IN THE U.S. TEACHER TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND STUDENT OF SWAMI RADHA.

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO HAVE FELICITY GREEN TEACHING HERE IN VICTORIA, FEBRUARY, 2, 3, AND 4, 1996.

SHE HAS OBVIOUSLY DEVELOPED HER TALENTS IN POETRY ALSO. HERE ARE TWO POEMS BY FELICITY GREEN WHICH PREVIOUSLY APPEARED IN HER NEWSLETTER, *NAMASTE NEWS FROM FELICITY GREEN*. (REPRINTED WITH THE PERMISSION OF FELICITY GREEN.)

Dreams, dreams,
Life, life.
Is life a dream?
Is dreaming part of life?
I dream of a journey
I am on that journey
I am transported to another world,
another reality, the mysterious East.
Where is the division between
the real and the unreal,
the known and the unknown,
the manifest and the unmanifest?
Is it in the mind?
If we are part of Brahma's dream,
then we are the dreamer's being
dreamed,
manifesting dreams, and that is life.

My Mother the Lake
Soft and Fluid
Receiving and Supportive

My Father the Mountain
Stable and Tall
Nurturing and Fragrant

My Brother the Sun
Energy and Warmth
Challenge and Excitement

My Sister the Moon
Gentle and Reflective
Mysterious and Secretive

My Family the World
of my Heart, Body and Soul
I Thank Thee Lord
I Thank Thee Mother
I Thank Thee Divine Spirit
that Encompasses All

Sarada: continued, from p. 15

finally Swami Radha called me over and said, "What do you want to do? Be clear." We talked and turned everything upside down. That was my introduction to what the Ashram is all about. Turning things upside down is what happens here a lot. You get set on doing something and the phone rings.

L: When did you take your name and what is its significance?

S: Originally I chose a different name. Another person who was initiated at the same time had picked my original choice. I called Swami Radha and asked for advice. She suggested a few names and their meanings. I didn't decide on Sarada until the morning of my initiation and I still wasn't sure if it was the right choice. Two weeks later I was in California and went to the College of Music owned by Ali Akbar Khan, a North Indian Classical musician, who has over the door way of his college the image of Sarada.

L: So you knew it was the right name, what is Sarada?

S: Yes, that did it! Sarada is an aspect that seems to bring together several qualities or characteristics in the Eastern tradition and one is Saraswati which is sound, music and poetry, and another is Durga or Kali – the feminine, fierce aspect. Ali Akbar Khan worships Sarada in both forms. He's a musician, so Saraswati is important, but also the fierce aspect is something he and his family have worshiped for many years. That was a very interesting experience. I still discover lots about Sarada and who she is. Music and poetry are a big part of my life and for many years I had cut them off. The work at the Yoga Centre and the Ashram helped me come to them again. The fierce aspect is what I need to help me overcome my obstacles, such as pride.

L: You were initiated in September 1991, a time of turmoil?

S: Yes. In California, I did mundane work for Timeless Books. But I did work on publicity for Swami Radha's books. I contacted publications that might do reviews of her books and tapes so that more people would come to know her work. The other thing I did was

a of 26,000 piece mailing of the Timeless catalogue. I sat at an old folding table in Faith's living room in Menlo Park day after day after day for quite a few weeks. I stuffed envelopes and listened to Swami Radha's tape "The Divine in Our Image." I listened to it four, five, six times a day, and I think that partly my connection with Divine Sarada is through sound. There's nothing for me that has the same range of experience, feeling and compassion as Swami Radha's voice. I can listen to it for hours and feel inspired, nourished and complete in a way that I've never felt with anything else in my life. I lived off music in my teen years and early twenties. It was the closest thing I could get at the time.

L: It satisfied something, but you didn't know what.

S: That's it. It was the devotional quality that I didn't want to think about as a teenager. That would have been pretty weird. In the teacher's course in 1982 I learned a lot about sound by chanting mantra.

L: People might think that living in the Ashram is a contemplative life, but all of us who have been there know there's a lot of work to do! How do you find time for practices when you're working all day?

S: I think one of the adaptations you make living in an Ashram, is to learn how to keep a kind of reflection going through the day. My focus for the moment is on pride but I also work with sound and listening. I can't listen if my pride is in the way, so it's a good combination. I begin by thinking what my focus will be for the day in listening and humility and then I try and to keep a key phrase in my mind for the day. At the end of the day I reflect on what I learned and how I can do something a little different the next day so I can be more caring toward the people I'm working with. Often life in the Ashram just comes down to that. It's to learn how to use the opportunities we're given everyday. Then we get together in the morning at the Temple for chanting. If we have a meeting or work on a project together, we'll do some kind of spiritual practice together. At lunch time, I'll reflect on the morning and maybe make a few notes. There's time between dinner and Satsang in the evening to work on a dream or in my diary or whatever. Satsang is a good time for me. Something that I did will

stand out in relief or sometimes it's a particular word someone said that I find inspiring. After Satsang I'll write in my diary. Then I'll dream at night and wake up with some insight or work to do. I had a series of dreams about dancing. They all had a message about how to be a little lighter in my approach with people, more responsive and pay attention to what comes up in the day.

L: About the initiation, you're not a swami?

S: Swami Radha takes initiation very seriously, she's initiated relatively few people. Some of the Eastern teachers have initiated literally thousands of people. Swami Raddha begins with the mantra initiation. The mantra has its first use as a song. Then it's used to bring the mind to a point so it can stay focused and concentrated and the third, is to bring to awareness the potential that one has – perhaps for listening more deeply or for seeing through situations to have deeper understanding. The mantra is the primary connection between the guru and the disciple in the traditional in which she herself was initiated. So for her, it's the most important initiation. It's the first step and most important step.

L: Your're living at the Ashram again?

S: Yes. Recently I returned to the Ashram and am learning about all the aspects of running the Ashram. There are many jobs and responsibilities to keeping the place running. We work together on projects instead of staying isolated in just one area. When Swami Radhananda became President brought about some changes. By helping in all areas we appreciate the work everyone has to do. We all take turns washing dishes, for example. One of the things I enjoy, are the work bees. When the apples are ripe, everyone comes out from the bookstore, the kitchen, the office, from behind their computers and works together to pick apples, make juice, or whatever. ♦

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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 40 years ago and practiced them intensely in her own life before bringing them to the West and adapting them for 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 done, if we choose to.

Radha House Victoria opened in February 1984, with Swami Padmananda as the first director until October 1990. She laid a solid foundation for the work that is now continuing into its second decade. Swami Padmananda is now Director of Casa Radha, Merida, Mexico.

Jessica Sluymmer, Director of Radha House Victoria, today, has taught yoga for over 20 years. She holds a Yoga Teacher Certificate and a Hidden Language Hatha Yoga® certificate. She is the resident teacher at Radha House.

Workshops and Events:

Open House: Sunday, January 14, 3 – 5 p.m. We invite you to join us in this informal gathering as we start a new year. This is a wonderful opportunity to greet old friends and to meet new ones.

Saturday Morning with Plough Pose: Saturday, January, 27, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Fee: \$25.00. This is the Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga® approach to Halasana. As the earth has to be ploughed every year to keep it loose and aired, so the ground of the mind has to be ploughed, over and over to keep it open and receptive. This workshop is followed by a potluck lunch.



Celebrating our 12th anniversary with a mantra workshop, potluck supper and special Satsang: Mantras: Words of Power: Sunday, February 18, 10:00 a.m. – 6 p.m. Potluck supper 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Fee: \$50.00, deposit \$15.00. This workshop is an introduction to the practice and philosophy of mantra. We will be practicing several mantras. The power of sound is well known, here is a chance to begin to experience that power with a spiritual focus and to discover for yourself its beneficial effects.

Guru Puja: Sunday, February 4, 8 – 9 p.m. A special Satsang of gratitude to honour our teachers who have dedicated their lives selflessly to help others find their inner strength and life's purpose.

Saturday Morning with Tortoise Pose: Saturday, March 16, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. This is the Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga® approach to Kurmasana. Tight muscles, stiffness of the limbs point of tensions that may reflect many fears. Do you have the patience to develop the flexibility to practice this pose and explore its meaning? This workshop is followed by a potluck lunch.

Divine Light Invocation: Saturday, April 27, 10:00 a.m. – 6 p.m. The Divine Light Invocation is a powerful yogic practice for healing oneself and others and for realising the Light within.

Rose Ceremony: Part 1: Saturday, June 22, 8 – 9 p.m. Part 2: Sunday, June 23, 8 – 9 p.m. The Rose Ceremony is a personal dedication to the Divine, a time to re-establish one's commitment to the very finest within and to reaffirm one's ideals.

Continuing Classes: Kundalini: 11 classes, \$121. The Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga®: 11 classes: \$121; drop in: \$11 per class. Dreams: 11 classes, \$121. Bhagavad Gita Reading Group: No fee, registration is open. Sundays: Satsang and Bhajans.

Registration: For further information, please call 595 – 0177. Further daytime classes can be formed if interest warrants. Fees due at first class. Participants will be asked to sign a release form. **Private Sessions:** Students are encouraged to work on their issues during classes and workshops. However, private sessions are available at \$40/hour.

YOGA CALENDAR

JANUARY 1996

- 1: Yoga Workout with Jim Rischmiller.
- 20: Teachers' meeting.
- 26: Friday night Yoga Centre Gathering.

MAY

- 10: Teachers' demonstration at Friday night Yoga Centre Gathering.
- 25: Teachers' meeting.

FEBRUARY

- 2-4: A Weekend workshop with Felicity Green.
- 18: Beginners workshop.
- 24: Teachers' meeting.

JUNE

- 31, 1, 2: Saltspring Retreat.
- 22: Teachers' meeting.

MARCH

- 1: Friday night Yoga Centre Gathering.
- 2: A Day of Yoga with Shirley Daventry-French
- 10: Sunday Workshop
- 30: Teachers' meeting.

JULY

- 12-14: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers AGM on Saltspring.
- 22-27: Yoga Intensive in Victoria

SEPTEMBER

- 27-29: Father Joe Pereira.

APRIL

- 12: Friday night Yoga Centre Gathering.
- 14: Leslie Hogya and Carole Miller will lead a workshop.
- 27: Teachers' meeting.

OCTOBER

- 25-27: Saltspring Retreats.

** All events where not otherwise stated, take place at the Victoria Yoga Centre at 880 Courtney Str.*

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM:

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VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE NEWSLETTER

February 1996

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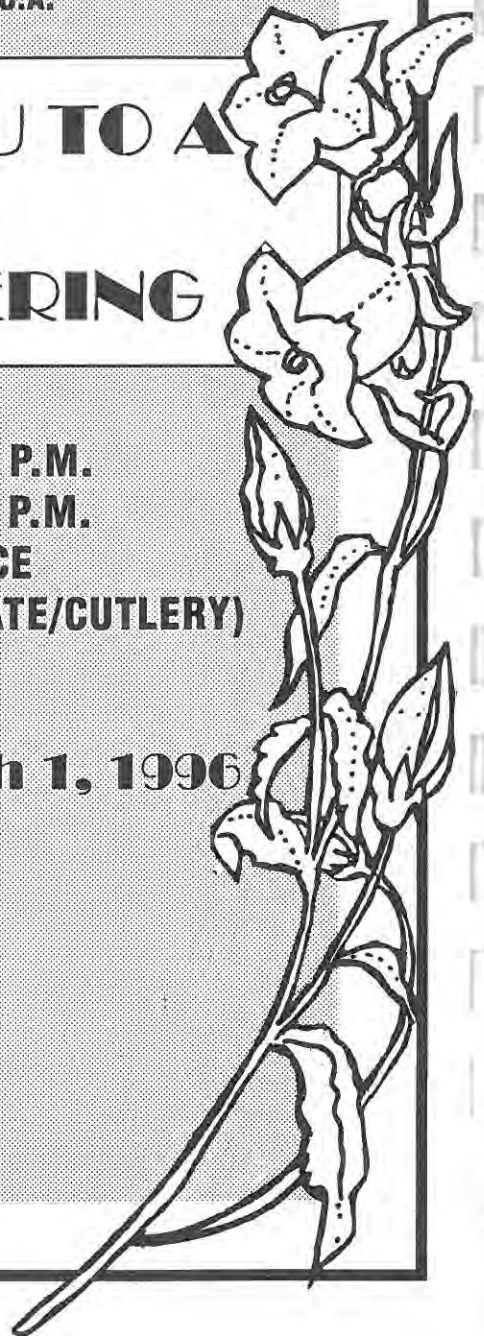
**THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
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WELCOME YOU TO A FRIDAY NIGHT GATHERING

**ASANA PRACTICE AT 6 P.M.
POTLUCK DINNER AT 7 P.M.
IN THE YOGA LOUNGE
(PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN PLATE/CUTLERY)**

DATE: FRIDAY, March 1, 1996

EVERYONE IS WELCOME



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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 persons of the 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 the Victoria 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, RR #1, Victoria BC, Canada, V9B 5T7. Telephone: (604) 474 - 5630
Deadline for submissions: 10th of every month.

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REFLECTIONS

BY SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH

"Are you glad to be back?" So many times this week, I was asked this question as people greeted me after a six-month sabbatical from teaching, most of which was spent travelling to distant parts.

Am I glad to be back. Well, yes....

Victoria is not a bad place to come back to and my home is situated in as beautiful a spot as any I have visited. But it was raining when we arrived home, just as it had been raining on the day we left and much cooler than the 95° weather we had enjoyed on the Caribbean coast. Our daughter, Stephanie, who lives in Southern California, had spent Christmas in Victoria with her grandmother while Derek and I travelled to South America. She left us a note which said: "Welcome Back! I feel sorry for you having to come home to this place. Before the weather bums you out let me tell you, this San Diego gal loved the subtle beauty of the colours, ran in the rain and enjoyed the smells and the rich greens and rich soil."

After reading her note, I looked out the window and marvelled at the many different shades of grey, strong and subtle, of sky and ocean and mountains. Looking more carefully at a landscape that during the rainy season I often describe as dreary and colourless, I saw a variety of greens from evergreen trees, fields and hedgerows, lawns and bushes. Then there was the rich brown soil which Stephanie mentioned, where even now some hardy flowers are emerging. What a view! What a beautiful place to return to. It was a marvellous trip, but I am glad to be home and thankful to have arrived safely. In a recent article on air safety, I saw a list of the world's five worst airlines – and I had flown on two of them.

It has been a wonderful sabbatical – an odyssey. At its centre was my expedition to India and the opportunity to study Iyengar Yoga at its source with Mr. Iyengar and Geeta. Before this, there was a family wedding and reunion in England and afterwards, journeys to California, Florida and Colombia. These latter were, like the visit to England, family affairs; but really the

entire time involved family, because going to Pune is like going home and Guruji is the head of a huge yoga family spread throughout the world.

While in Pune, in addition to the very great blessing of studying with my teachers, I was reunited with many colleagues from other parts of the world who have become friends over the years as we journey to and from Pune, or to national and international conventions. Some of them were staying for a year or more or until their money ran out. One American friend was living there temporarily with her husband and their two young daughters, while he did some teaching at the university. Others, like myself, were there for shorter stays – two or three months – whatever their particular situation in life permitted. I have made friends with some of Guruji's Indian students who live in Pune and whom I see each time I visit. Another Indian friend who married and moved away also happened to be there as she had been on my last visit. And before I left, I had made many new friends.

The day after my arrival, having attended Geeta's ladies' class in the morning, I spent the afternoon in the library at the Institute. Guruji was there, at his desk, reading. From time to time, the small group of people present (about five or six including myself) were the fortunate recipients of an impromptu, informal and impassioned discourse on the connections between Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and the practice of Iyengar Yoga. This is a topic which is very dear to Guruji's heart, and one which he wants us, his students, to explore so that we can unravel the mysteries and tease out a meaning from these teachings which will create a firm link between the ancient philosophical body of work on which yoga is based, our personal practice and our daily lives.

Guruji asks many questions. On this afternoon, he sometimes directed them to an individual and sometimes to the group in general. Often, while we were still thinking about it, Guruji would provide the answer himself. He speaks rapidly and the topics on which he

was conversing are very familiar to him, but more obscure to the rest of us. Guruji was in good spirits and his abundant sense of humour, which is always close to the surface, was very much in evidence. He has an infectious laugh, and we laughed a lot on this particular afternoon. While laughing, we would exchange glances which expressed our delight to be there.

After Guruji left, I stayed on to read a little more and a young woman from Sweden approached me. She said she was getting together with some of the other women students for dinner that evening and would I like to join them? Seven o'clock at her apartment and everyone was bringing something to share.

I was still a little tired from my journey and thinking about having room service in my hotel that night, but the warmth with which this invitation was proffered encouraged me to exert myself and join them. I went in search of some food to contribute and spent a pleasant and interesting evening with an international group of female yoga students of all ages. We entertained each other with stories of the twists and turns of our particular yogic path: how we were introduced to Iyengar Yoga, how we first came to Pune, and the challenges we have faced since then. As in the afternoon, we laughed a lot in a spirit of camaraderie, understanding and compassion generated by our own experience. Here, we were on familiar ground and knew what the others were talking about: from Sweden, England, France, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, India and Canada; from diverse cultures, climates and religious backgrounds; from different generations, we had found meaning and a common purpose in our lives through the practice of yoga.

It was a wonderful sabbatical, a gift, but there are many delights in coming home. One of them is that here I have a special well-equipped space dedicated to yoga where I can practice. Before and after my visit to the Institute in Pune, I did my practice in a variety of places: in and out of doors—in a genuine Tudor hotel in Oxford (with resident ghost), in an Edwardian London home, on the balcony of a hacienda in the Andes, on the terrace of a Caribbean beach house where the early morning mosquitoes were the biggest obstacle, and in a variety of hotel rooms. When I travel I take with me a sticky mat and a belt and for additional props make use of whatever

Pranayama in Metchosin

with
SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH

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FEBRUARY 17, MARCH 9
APRIL 13, MAY 4

8:00 – 9:15am	Pranayama
9:15 – 10:15am	Refreshment
10:15 – 12:00am	Asana Practice
12 noon	Brunch

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furniture, fixtures, fittings and space is available. Some of the places were cluttered so that I had to squeeze myself into small corners. In others, there was ample space but little privacy, i.e. grandchildren who arose early and clamoured for attention. Most of these places were warm (even my time in England) and I love practicing in a hot climate. Wherever I found myself and whatever the situation, it was a rare occasion that I could not practice—even on an airplane. On one flight my four year old granddaughter and I amused passengers with our Trikonasana and Parsvakonasana in the aisle.

It was a luxury to practice without any thoughts of teaching. Now I am home and it is time to give back some of what I have been given and hopefully encourage my students to make their own journey of exploration through their own practice.

Om Namah Sivaya. ♦

A LETTER FROM B.K.S. IYENGAR:

I recently received the following letter from Mr. Iyengar. While it was in response to a personal letter of mine, the sentiments he expresses as well as his guidance and encouragement will be of interest to all students of yoga. Therefore, I asked for and received his permission to reprint it in our newsletter.

The award, *Punyabhushan*, which Guruji mentions in his last paragraph, is a great honour given to outstanding citizens of Pune. In the Bible (Matthew 13:57) it states that: "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house." This was certainly true for Guruji in the past and those who have read his autobiography *Iyengar – His Life and Work* know about his early struggles to establish himself in Pune. He has long been recognised in the West as one of world's outstanding contemporary Yoga Masters. Now, that recognition is spreading throughout his own country. Congratulations, Guruji on this most recent honour.

Shirley Daventry French

Yoga A Way of Life

with

SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH
AND DEREK FRENCH, M.D.

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*Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute
Pune, India. December 26, 1995*

My dear Shirley,

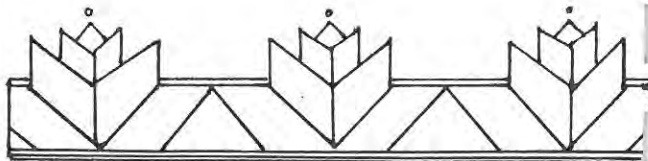
Your letter of December 7th to hand today and noted the contents. I heard about the Maha Samadhi of Swami Radha last week only. A fine lady with a balanced head and heart is no more. As a student of yoga she has done her job and now it is for her followers to keep her divine thoughts flaming with brightness for the younger generation of your country to learn the hidden secret of life which is mystic to one and all. She was a good friend of mine and the only satisfaction is, that I met her, visited the centre and had a lot of discussions for progress in each other. May her soul rest in peace.

It is good that you all benefited in the October Intensive and may the understanding of body, mind and soul penetrate you all. Having lost the earlier contact on the growth of Yoga, it is better that one goes to the base like Hatha Yoga Pradipika so that the foundation is made firm (as Patanjali says) for one to make that basic intelligence to grow in space so that the elements of earth and space are connected through the other intermediary elements. God bless you all.

Also I am happy to inform you that the official public function is taking place this evening in honouring me with the award of "Punyabhushan". I wish you all a happy New Year.

Yours affectionately

B.K.S. Iyengar ♦



LET'S GET PHILOSOPHICAL

Reprinted from Loya News. UK Issue 17. Winter 1994-1995. By John Evans

Everyone who goes to Yoga classes knows that there is more to Yoga than physical exercises. However, for a lot of practitioners it is enough that Yoga makes them healthier or that it gives them relief from stress. Some are interested in the spiritual side, but don't quite know what that side is or how to go about developing it.

In his talk at the Euro Yoga Convention, Karl Baier helped his audience recognize that the answer lies within the practice we are already doing. He showed how Yoga practice brings about transformations in our state of mind and body which go beyond the physical level.

Often our sense of Time changes as we practice – we live in Time instead of running against it. Our sense of space also changes – we become open to the world around us instead of closing up, more aware of our surroundings and less self conscious. We begin to feel grounded and “at home” in the world.

Learning about the philosophy of Yoga can help us to be more open to these “side effects” of our practice. Even for those who are only concerned with improving health, an awareness of the psychological and philosophical levels of practice can help the practitioner let go of old habits and patterns of tension with immediate physical improvements. Gradually we begin to understand that our yoga practice is the catalyst for a total transformation: mental, emotional and spiritual.

Many Iyengar method practitioners will have seen Mr. Iyengar's new book *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, 1993. This is the final part of the trilogy which began with *Light on Yoga*, 1966, and continued with *Light on Pranayama*, 1981. In it Mr. Iyengar provides a new and uniquely practical translation of the classical text of yoga. It is a mighty book, 350 pages long, full of Sanskrit words, complicated tables and appendices. Thumbing through it can be more than a little daunting but remember, this is not a book to read

straight through. In his preface, Mr. Iyengar describes it as a manual and he goes on to say...

“I have ... undertaken this task ... to help my fellow practitioners, so that they may be aided by this practical guide in their search for their own inner identity.”
(Preface pp. xix-xx.)

Do you remember first seeing *Light on Yoga*? My first contact with Iyengar Yoga was when a friend at university showed me a copy and I was spellbound by the photographs of Mr. Iyengar doing advanced asanas. My initial reaction was to say, “What possible use are all these extraordinary contortions to me with my big, stiff Western body?” Nevertheless, to satisfy my curiosity, I went to a class. When I discovered how much sense the Iyengar system made and how I was able to gain benefits from the basic poses, I was hooked.

Now, trying to read straight through Mr. Iyengar's new book would be like attempting all the poses in *Light on Yoga* in your first Yoga practice. Traumatic enough to put you off for life. You have to approach the sutras like the asanas, slowly and steadily. Despite first impressions, the book is very user-friendly. The Preface explains how Mr. Iyengar came to write the book and what he hopes it will do for us; the Prologue explains a little about Patanjali (the author of the original text) and also gives an overview of the structure of the four chapters of the Yoga Sutras. The Introduction explains the main concepts in each of the four chapters. So take your time to absorb these first easy stages before plunging into the main translation and commentary.

Before we go on to look at the sutras themselves, I would like to talk about another reservation many Western Yoga practitioners have about Yoga philosophy. It's often said that Yoga philosophy is not only horribly complex, but also it is alien to our culture and religion. For some there is even a fear that getting too involved in such subjects might threaten their own

religious faith. I spent several years worrying whether Yoga philosophy and Christianity were reconcilable when I was in my teens.

I should explain a little about the reasons for this youthful obsession. I had become a very ardent Christian at the age of 12 after my mother became seriously ill, following my father's death. As I struggled to find solace in verbal prayer and Christian meditation I became increasingly convinced that there had to be some more effective way of breaking through to the spiritual world. When I mentioned my growing interest in Eastern religions, the chaplain at my school told me of an Anglican priest who was introducing Patanjali's Yoga Sutras into Christian contemplative prayer.

Father Slade, a priest in an Anglican monastic order, thought that Patanjali's great treatise (which codified the teachings of the yogis of India in about 400 B.C.,) could help Christians make their spiritual training more systematic. He was also convinced that Patanjali's model of the universe did not contradict Christian theology. He explained that the Sanskrit language has a much fuller and richer vocabulary for describing the world of spiritual experience. He also felt strongly that Patanjali showed how the body – which Christians have often seen as an obstacle to spiritual development – could be the instrument for spiritual liberation.

After leaving university I spent five years in the community lead by Father Slade. He had studied with a Pandit in India for over thirty years and we studied the sutras with him as he had studied them with his teacher. We learned to chant the sutras and began to memorize them. The idea was that by absorbing the words and ideas of the sutras just as we had absorbed the gospel stories and teachings of the saints, we could begin putting these ideas into practice. In 1979, on a study trip with members of my monastery we visited Mr. Iyengar's Institute in Pune. Father Slade talked of his interest in Patanjali and asked Mr. Iyengar about how this fitted in with the system of yoga he was teaching. Characteristically, instead of plunging into a philosophical discussion, Mr. Iyengar asked us to come back the next day and observe the pranayama class.

That hour made a deep impression on me. The entire class was spent in savasana observing the body and the breath without even attempting controlled

pranayama. I realized that Mr. Iyengar was demonstrating how the philosophy of the sutras could be recreated in the body of the practitioner. The energy of Mr. Iyengar's voice inspired his students on a profound journey from the skin to the soul and back again. What I didn't fully appreciate at the time was how the same journey is possible in the asanas.

The word Yoga means union, but before we can attempt the integration of our divided and embattled selves most of us need to learn about what it is we are hoping to integrate. This preparation is described in Chapter II of the Yoga Sutras. Mr. Iyengar has often said that we should begin with the sutras of Chapter II because Chapter I which describes the profound world of mental phenomena and meditation can only be practiced effectively by saints or geniuses. Chapter II describes how the ordinary person can begin the path of yoga. The Sutras of Chapter II are like the standing poses. You begin with them and if you go astray you must come back to them. Here Patanjali sets out the eight disciplines of Yoga – the Ashtanga. The first five of these are then described in detail: Yama and Niyama the ethical disciplines and observances, Asana and Pranayama and finally Pratayahara, the withdrawal of the senses.

The reason we cannot succeed in mastering the techniques of Chapter I, is that we are unable to discriminate between the things which really matter from the things which don't. Occasionally, we have glimpses of what is really important, in moments of vision and insight, but for much of the time we are trapped in destructive and self defeating patterns of behavior. We have become the slaves of the desires and aversions generated by our past experience. Yoga says that the root cause of this blindness, this inability to maintain true discrimination, is the mixing up of our soul (purusa) with our nature (prakrti - which includes our senses, mind, ego and consciousness as well as the physical body). This state of being "mixed up", of being in a "mess", has nothing to do with the union which is the goal of yoga. We have to learn how to separate before we can integrate. For example, you have to learn to feel where the thigh bone ends and the hip bone begins before you can learn how they work together; you must be able to feel what is muscle, what is skin and what is

bone before you can learn how to harmonize them in the wall of the chest during pranayama. This discrimination extends to all aspects of our lives and it comes from practicing the Ashtanga, the eight disciplines of Yoga. In the asanas we begin to explore our body, mind and spirit from the skin to the soul and from the soul to the skin. The accusation is sometimes made that Mr. Iyengar, by teaching us to spend so much time and energy in detailed adjustments in the poses is encouraging an over attachment to the physical body at the expense of our inner life. If we practice according to the teachings of the sutras, asana brings us closer to the soul.

Asana work at its best is a process of repeated action and observation. (Conation and cognition as Mr. Iyengar describes them.) We adjust the inner heel of the front foot in Trikonasana then we observe how this changes the action of the front leg, we adjust the head of the femur and see how this affects the stretching of the spine, then we see how much the top chest can be opened and so on. The more we practice, the more refined these adjustments become and each refinement of prakrti (our body and all its faculties) is accompanied by an act of detachment. In that moment of detachment we observe the result of our action, "Did the thigh really turn out more?, Did the lumbar spine really stretch?, Did the chest really open?" and just as important, "Did my breathing stay undisturbed?, Did my tongue, eyes and brain stay relaxed?" In each of those moments of detachment we are practicing viveka (discrimination); we are beginning to see ourselves more clearly. In those same moments of great concentration as the mind moves a little away from the physical body so that it can observe, it is also moving spontaneously inward. The serenity we experience when we are working well in asana comes because our center of observation has moved closer to our core, the purusa, the soul. We begin to observe our body with detachment, not with the cold hatred of the spiritual fanatic but with compassion and acceptance. During that memorable savasana, I observed in Pune, Mr. Iyengar tell his students to observe their bodies as if they were a parent watching their child sleep.

While in Japan I started a study group with some of the teachers in the Iyengar association there and we

began to translate Mr. Iyengar's first book on the Yoga Sutras (published by the Institute in Pune, in 1987). After returning to England two years ago I talked to Silva and Mira Mehta about Mr. Iyengar's new book and about the possibility of starting a similar group here. Silva agreed to lead a weekly meeting. The pranayama class beforehand quietened our intellect and awoke our intuition so that the message of the sutras fell on more fertile ground and in the asana class afterwards there was a new clarity and concentration to the way in which we practiced the asanas. We met for over a year until Silva's poor health made the strain of climbing the stairs to the temporary quarters of the London Institute too much for her physically. Every week when we saw the tremendous effort those last few stairs cost her, it affected us all. We saw how vitally important Silva considered that time spent studying the sutras. Even more striking was the incredible change that came over her the moment she opened the pages of Mr. Iyengar's book. Her exhaustion disappeared, her voice gained a musical quality, her eyes shone and she answered even the silliest of questions with wit and compassion. We will miss her very much. Most of all, we will not waste the wonderful start she gave us in exploring *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. ♦



Patanjali's Path

An interview with Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali by Christain Pisano and Claus Grzesch. Recorded at RIMYI, Pune, January 1994. Reprinted from Loya News. UK Issue 19. Winter 1995-96.

Christian: It must have been a very difficult task to translate the "Yoga Sutras of Patanjali." What was your approach to the book?

Guruji: There is nothing much for me to say. After all, the original book was written by the top class intellectual man in India, sage Patanjali.

It is very difficult for a common man to understand this terse subject where he compresses all the ideas in a few words. Unless and until one is intellectually and spiritually evolved, it is very difficult to go into his work to understand the depth of his feelings.

I read a lot of books on the Yoga Sutras and it is all academic, like keeping a dictionary, taking the word by word meaning of it, forming a sentence and then working a thesis on those ideas.

In fact, people who have undergone training on the subject have not dealt thoroughly with this book. So, I thought that if it is possible I could touch on this book from the practical point of view, as well as in understanding the hidden philosophy, living in this world, not renouncing the world. Did Patanjali speak to renounce the world or to live in the world and to renounce what? So this way the idea was in my head. It took me several years to write this idea of considering Patanjali's views from the practical point of view and it helped me a great deal. In the early days, being from an average intellectual level I could not understand anything at all about philosophy but having practised uninterruptedly, it built this absorption of this

knowledge and guided me to go with courage to write this terse book. I think I fulfilled the idea: can a common man, a commoner or an average individual, can he take to Yoga and follow the philosophy of Patanjali? I think I have done that. To reach every common man to realize that it is possible to understand Patanjali and to follow Patanjali living in the world with all the turmoils and upheavals of life. It is possible and that is how I have presented it without creating any confusion, because all books do confuse. I have done my best to minimize this confusion to a great extent or I might have eradicated it for some people. But if you take the book as a whole I think it is more direct, more clear, more straightforward and point to point, without doubt, clearing the feelings of the students who have a confused mind or confused understanding. I think to a great extent, I have cleared all these things and I feel that I have done service to Patanjali by my presentation. As I said, my presentation is from my experience. My experience and his words, where do they meet? From that angle I took it and I think I have done the job well as compared to others who have done work from the head only, not from the head to the heart. Here I use my head and also my heart and that is why I say I have done good work. I think the way the books sell in a very short period of time, I feel that people have appreciated being able to go into that book. That shows that courage must have come saying this subject is not as difficult as thought before.

Claus: Can you recommend your book for those who are not practitioners of Yoga?

Guruji: Yes, even if one is not a practitioner of Yoga one can get the comment of philosophy of yoga. So from that angle one who reads my book would be tempted to go in for a trial on the subject. That is certain, that's what I have done. My book is not only for

commoners but also for the higher intellectuals. They have to think before they criticise my work. Just criticising is a different matter but honestly, sincerely, they have to think.

Claus: It's such a great help for the yoga practitioner.

Gurujii: Not only, as I say, for Yoga practitioners. I have tried to create the interest to grow even in the art of yoga. I make those who may not be practising, interested by reading this book. They need not be lovers of Yoga, but they can also live in Yoga.

Christian: This book is like an inner journey for the reader. Could you please explain this inner journey?

Gurujii: My friend, all philosophies are a journey toward the core of the being, of the source of life. This text is a two way path. You can go from the periphery toward the source and you can also come from the source toward the periphery by interpenetrating your intelligence and challenging each and every sheath of the soul or the vehicle of the soul, like the physical body, physiological body, mental body, the intellectual body and the space between the body. When these five sheaths of the body, which are nothing but the elements of nature, when these five, externally as well as internally, are communicating with each other a new light dawns from that.

Where the consciousness automatically learns that it is not dependent on the elements of nature, naturally one embraces the cause of that consciousness which is the core. So hence it is a challenge and a counter challenge. A challenge for the external body to reach toward the inner body and for the inner body to reach for the outer body, so that these two incoming and outgoing currents interchange and interact. This action brings a new dimension to the practitioner, one sees a new light in the old practice.

Claus: Astanga Yoga of Patanjali is divided into *bahiranga* and *antaranga sadhana*. How does the practice of *asana* and *pranayama* prepare the student for *antaranga sadhana*?

Gurujii: *Asana* and *pranayama* is a penetration from the external toward the internal. That's the beauty, once you reach the internal you start using the external

body as a means to come back to the source. I hope you understand what I mean. When we speak on philosophy we cannot talk on abstract lines. It is easy to speak when people cannot understand. But you and I are practitioners; we have to begin from the earth, from the foundation, for us the foundation is what we can see, what we can feel, so through this feeling, this moving, we interpenetrate from the skin toward the flesh, from the flesh toward the circulation, from the circulation toward the sense of vibration or sense of contact or touch, where you get into the interstructure of the elements. You can call it infrastructure, the *matras* or the qualitative characteristic hidden in these five elements known as vibration, touch, shape, liquidity and solidity. So if you can penetrate the five aspects of these five elements which can only be felt by *asana* and *pranayama* you have already understood nature. As you understand nature then you can channel that energy for the betterment of your life, to see or to go into the sight of the soul. So *asana* and *pranayama* is a bridge to cross over from the physical body to a spiritual body.

Bahiranga sadhana covers *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*. They are the external vehicles to go toward the internal structure of the soul and *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* is the subtlest part. These three aspects of Yoga are the subtlest. Hence Patanjali, for conveniences' sake divides *astanga yoga* into two parts: *bahiranga* and *antaranga*; *bahiranga* being - *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*. *Antaranga* being - *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. The latter three of course are beyond the mind. The first five are within the mind. He makes the mind a bridge within the physical and spiritual body. So the moment you cross over naturally, the mind takes you to the understanding of the other side, the other bank of the river that is *antaranga*. For convenience only Patanjali divides *bahiranga* and *antaranga* but actually when he uses the word *bahiranga*, it means that you have to use external means to understand the inner sheaths of the body. Without them it is impossible to learn.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras are not meant only for the elite of the world but are meant for the average intellectual as well as an undeveloped intellectual. So we have to see the wholeness of Patanjali's ideas from that point of view, in order to uplift a common man or an undeveloped

person or an average person, he has to show them to understand what is visible body, what is invisible body when he speaks of dharana, dhyana and samadhi. He directly touches toward the core so, this division is only for the sake of understanding but you have to take it as a whole. You have to go from the external toward the internal or you can come from the internal to the external so there is a tremendous harmony, balance and rhythm between the physical body, physiological body, mental body and spiritual body. So the rhythm and balance is taught in the field of Yoga.

Some people can reach like Ramana Maharshi; we are not all like Ramana Maharshi. We are not Jesus Christ. We are only ordinary human beings. So it is how we evolve from our present position to reach the highest subtlest intellectual growth and from that point I think that Patanjali is the only person who has shown the way and means without confusion that this is the visible function as we can see the body. Yama, niyama:

yama to control the organs of action (karmendriyas); niyama is the control of the senses of perception. So when the organs of action and the organs of perceptions are controlled, disciplined, naturally you have access to the inner body, what you call the circulatory system and nervous system and that is why asana is taught so that the nervous system and circulatory system are kept healthy, besides the control of the organs of action and sense of perception. When that comes, you have achieved that understanding between the senses of perception, which are the organs, the outside body. Then you go a little inward to understand the circulation, to understand the flow, the current of the nerves through which you learn to usage of energy, the flow of energy. So through pranayama you develop the energy called shakti. So it is a shakti, it is a power. Vital power is shakti. It means you are conquering shakti. The moment shakti is under

control so is purusha also under control. Shakti and purusha are the same. Wherever there is power there is tremendous attention: where there is attention there is tremendous energy. They are like twin brothers or sisters so, Yoga develops from the external. So that once you have understood how to know the flow of energy in your system and how to control the flow of energy through the system by pranayama then naturally the senses will become quiet, so when they become quiet the mind is in a desert, there it is free from this world. It is a peaceful desert. Is that the end? Patanjali says we are in a desert where it is empty.



Claus: Is that dharana, dhyana and samadhi?

Guruj: No, I don't go to that. He said desert: that means emptiness. An emptiness comes. Like Sufis and others have said, he speaks of emptiness of the mind. You reach the emptiness of the mind because the mind – which is always active with the senses of perception and the organs of action – is automatically

released from this contact. Then it is an empty desert, in a peaceful desert. Is that the end? Patanjali says, "No." From now on you have to jump positively toward dharana, dhyana and samadhi so that from the emptiness you go toward the fullness of consciousness; that's why he has given from the scratch to the zenith and those who are in the zenith, how can they maintain that state without undergoing all of these practices? That is samskara, by birth: what you call genius people, who are they? They have done something, that is why when they come to life they are considered to be genius. We call it samskara: latent, hidden karmas which one brought to fruitfulness in this life. So they can be counted on one hand in this world, maybe one a century, but what about common people? So Patanjali has not written the book only for them but for the whole of humanity. We have to think from that angle: is it meant only for a few people

who come only in two or three centuries, or is it meant for all? It is meant for them too because they may fall and he says how to build up those people who have not even touched Yoga, how to make them also experience that state? So he has taken both the ways and hence I say for the common man he has gone from bahiranga to antaranga, for an evolved soul from antaranga to bahiranga. I hope you understand.

Christian: Could you explain the sutra vitarkabhadhane pratipaksabhavanam (II.33) and the use of the opposite?

Guruj: Badhana means kleshas, Vrtti. Sobadhana means pain, suffering, greed, obstruction, obstacles. So what does it convey? You have to analyse the pain. Pratipaksa means challenges and counter challenges. So badhana, the other side. Suppose you are doing trikonasana. If there is a pain on the right side and you change from right to left and you don't get the pain. There is the feeling of pain on one side; there is a feeling of non-pain on the other side, is it not? Then you have to study yourself. Why have I a feeling of pressure in this side; why have I a feeling of pain here: what is going wrong? What wrong is going on between right and left side? So the academic meaning they have said which I have also quoted, that if you are violent, think non-violence. Then when you are violent can you think of non-violence? You are violent. You may steal but afterwards saying I should not have stolen is a different matter, but while stealing can you think of the opposite? So it is easy to say can you think of the opposite, but what I feel here is that being a student of Yoga, bhadana means pain, bhavanam means feeling; so when I am feeling good on one side and not feeling the pain, one has to understand why it is not paining, how am I doing here? So can I compare this non painful positioning of the body in the pose, to the positioning of the other side where it is paining? What are the mistakes I am committing? What is the sensation I am getting on the other side? So if you can correlate, then due to a feeling of goodness on one side you can re-adjust on the side that is giving grief or creating obstacles then you can break that obstacle. I take that as a guide for the student to study on either side to find out the feelings and the obstacles. If there is grief then you should know pratipaksa that there is something that I am doing

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A Yoga Workshop for Beginners

WITH
LAUREN COX

**Join Lauren for a sequence of
stretches and poses geared for
the beginning student.**

FEBRUARY 18TH, 1996
10:00 A.M. TO 12:30 P.M.
IN THE YOGA STUDIO
AT THE VICTORIA YM – YWCA

**REFRESHMENTS AND TIME FOR
A DISCUSSION WILL FOLLOW.**

**FEE: \$20.00 YOGA CENTRE MEMBERS
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wrong in this side. So when Hatha Yoga speaks of right and left this is the meaning: paksa means right, pratipaksa means left.

Think it over, then when you come to the conclusion that you can rectify the obstacles which come in the way, the feelings are even on both sides, that is the effect of the asanas and it is the effect of pranayama. If you can inhale from the right side well you have to question why I cannot inhale from the left well. If I am exhaling well from the left and not from the right then you have to question how my inner membranes are blocking on the side which you cannot inhale. Find out on either side, how the membranes are behaving, what is the quality of the membranes, what is the quality of the fingers, the positioning of the fingers, the placement of the fingers, the spacing of the fingers, the spacing between the membranes and the fingers. Then you can adjust that way. Is it the same passage? Because the passages on the right and the left may not be the same. So you may keep the fingers mechanically on the same side, then you have to search where the breath is touching when it is flowing on one side smoothly, when it is interrupted on the other side. Change the fingers because you might not have the exact spot from where the sensitivity of the breath goes. So that is what I understand from the sutra how you have to learn the re-adjustment – that is pratipaksa.

Christian: So unless there is balance between right and left it is not Yoga.

Guruji: That is what I say. If you know Hatha Yoga books they say ida is moving on the left, pingala is moving on the right. What does it mean? They are intermingling. They are feeding on each other. It is a clear picture, they criss cross and that means they supply energy to each other for equal distribution. That is the meaning of it. So here this sutra conveys identically the same meaning but in a mental standard. There it's spoken on a physiological level because chakras and nadis are not on a physical level. This is on a physiological level. Chakras are on a spiritual level but today everybody compares the chakras to the glands, the plexus and all, but it is beyond. So here it is a mental action. So why have you mental obstructions on this side and not on the other when you are doing it? So when there is no mental obstruction on the other side, how do you work? Do you

see there is no mental obstruction on the other side, so the flow of energy of the mind is smooth on the other side too? Actually that is the meaning of the sutra.

Christian: What about sthira sukham asanam?

Guruji: It is a very tricky translation. Patanjali is also a very tricky man! When he speaks of sthira sukham asanam and in the next sutra speaks of prayatna saithilya ananta samapattibhyam that means he speaks of three sutras with four dimensions and that is where we are not understanding the calibre of his intelligence, the calibre of his spiritual advancement.

Sthira sukham means comfortable and stable. Suppose if you are sitting in padmasana for one hour. After one hour what happens to your leg? Stability goes. So you feel a little pain and discomfort sets in. The moment discomfort sets in, what happens to that sthira sukham? Do you get the correct meaning of the sutra now? So whether you stay in one minute, five hours or ten hours you should be thorough in both comfort and in stability and this is the dvandvah, the word which is in use in the third sutra - tatah dvandvah anabhighatah. What is that duality? Don't go to the external translation like the academic people. Sthira means stability: the stability may become unstable. You may be doing first class sirasana for one minute; after one minute what happens? You have to re-adjust, yes or no? Then where is the stability? That means according to the sutra, stability may become unstable, comfort may become discomfort. Your effort may fade. The moment effort fades you lose the quality, you lose the stability so you have to exert again. These three are the three dimensions: sthira, sukham, prayatna, according to Patanjali. He has used these words; I am not going out of the text. So three dimensions are stability, which may become unstable, comfort which may become discomfort; your efforts may fade. So that means it has opposites: sthira has asthira as opposite; sukha has dukha as opposite; prayatna has saithilya as opposite. So tatah dvandvah, one who practises the asana, the fourth dimension should not feel all these three: he is beyond all these three and that is the mastery of the asanas. It will be interesting to know that even in pranayama there are only three sutras. Tasmin sati svasa prasvasayoh gativicchedah pranayama (I.49) is one sutra. Bahya

abhyatanra stambha vrttih desa kela samkhyabhih par idrstah dirgha suksmak (II.50) is the second sutra. Bahya abhyantara visaya aksepi caturtah (II.51) is the third sugra. Why did he use the word "fourth" here and there are only three sutras? Is that not puzzling? There he calls it differently. He says tatah dyandvah anabhighatah (II.48). People say honour-dishonour, hot-cold, etc., but for me it is all subjective: subjective body, subjective mind, subjective self. So your stable consciousness may become unstable, your stable physical posture may become an unstable physical posture, your effort may expand, reduce, extend, distend, so that's why he says the fourth one, dvandvah, when duality of the three is removed then that is mastery of asana. But here, how do you count? Here the third sutra is also the fourth one, so which is the third one? Two sutras are there so here is the same example. The first one he speaks of the rhythmic channelising of the in breath and the out breath which is known as pranayama. He



defines pranayama. But the second sutra is the most important one and many people misunderstand it: bahya abhyantara stambha vrttih (II.50) - inhalation, retention, exhalation: in the previous sutra he speaks of the regulation of inhalation and exhalation as pranayama. He speaks only of in breath and out breath. In the second, which is for me a compound sutra, as far as I can gather he speaks of in breath, out breath and retention. I am not going to deal with desha, kala, samkhyā: desa is the body, kata is time and samkhyā is precision. The third dimension is dirga and suksmah (II.50).

You can take a deep inhalation (showed by example of forceful inhalation). You can inhale like that is it not? The depth is there but what is suksmah, it is also subtle is it not? So this is known as the third dimension, so you

can be carried away when you inhale too long making a sound, so he says it should not only be long, it should be suksmah – subtle. What we do is "sthula" – gross, heavy. Everybody does it. Sthula and suksmah, he uses in other things - gross, subtle, but Patanjali without using the word sthula jumped directly to suksmah because we should understand that your length of inhalation, length of exhalation or length of retention

may be gross. Converting this into subtlety is the third dimension in order for you to experience the fourth dimension. He calls it fourth. What is that fourth? Mind does not work, nor energy works; both become silent and that's the highest type of pranayama. So the puzzle is also, there if you ask me.

See the book ends with only the quality of the Self. At the end he says it's all in the power of the soul, beyond that I can't tell you - citisaktih iti (IV.34) - he completes it. What is next, afterwards? So the puzzling comes because he used the word ishvarapranidhana in the

beginning: surrender to God. But he ends the book with the quality of the seer. After explaining the quality of the seer, what's the next stage? So the puzzling is there. So we have to convert it. That means as we know, from self-realisation to God-realisation, but he doesn't touch God-realisation, he only says quality of the Self and the book ends. How difficult it is to understand. Everybody may say the book is complete, but for me I feel it has ended abruptly, saying it's the quality of the seer. Then getting this quality of the seer, what's the next step? Because ahamkara ("I" - Maker) is gone, that is the time the seer is fit as in the beginning he says after pranayama now the mind is fit for meditation, so here you have to understand yourself that when the quality of the seer is known this is time to surrender to God, that's what I can't teach you. Do you understand now?

Patanjali is also very difficult to gather. People say he speaks of monism, or they say he is following Shankaracharya or Ramanuja. But remember they all came after him. So the translations and the commentaries have been done according to texts the translators read from these people. But originally, what did he say, because he ends it with "citasaktih iti" - quality of the Seer. Then why did he speak of surrendering to God in the beginning? So he left it there unfortunately, knowing very well that when you know the quality of the Seer, what is the next step? "Now you know, I need not teach, you have to surrender, because there's no ahamkara at that moment." It's a puzzle. You can get confused by reading lots of things, even the Yoga Sutras, but you have to understand. For example, citta vrtti nirodhah is Yoga. What is citta vrtti? Tell me. Everybody says waves of thoughts, right? Stop the waves of thoughts. Now is consciousness only with waves of thoughts or is it not with afflictions? So afflictions and movement of thoughts are all part of citta vrtti. How many people explain it this way? So when you are free from afflictions, when you are free from waves, wandering with the mind, then where is vrtti? There is not movement at all. What did I say in pranayama just now - the fourth dimension? There is not movement of the flow of energy, there is no flow of mind. When there are no afflictions there is no wandering of the mind. Where is shakti and where is consciousness? Both dissolved. So the Seer, that is the quality of the Seer, is untouched by thoughts, untouched by klesha (afflictions), because he is untouched. What have we to do? It is the time to surrender, he has the character of God who is free from all types of afflictions. We are freed from afflictions so we are ripe to surrender to God. Like after pranayama the mind is fit for meditation, when you have understood the quality of the Seer, that Seer is ripe to surrender to God. That's how you have to conclude, although he does not conclude.

Claus: Why does he not conclude?

Guruj: That I do not know. He is 2,500 years old. When he explained the quality of the Seer he did not go further because that means he has to explain from that state of consciousness, but he has taken you beyond consciousness. Then you have to experience, so that's

why he did not express it. That is the beauty. If he expresses it, it is again from the state of the verbal level. He did not want to bring it to the verbal level. Living is not verbal, living is factual. So he takes you to that living level.

The atman is part and parcel to God. The atman is a parcel of the universal spirit. The universal spirit is there, is here, is between you and me. I don't know how many individual spirits there are without bodies. So these are all bodies of God. As we have the body to the soul, all ourselves put together is body of the God. When you have almost reached the identical free state you cannot become God, you surrender to God. Though you are equal, you cannot destroy, you cannot create, that power is his, so you surrender.

Many people may refute me; it does not matter because when somebody has to refute, I also say that his knowledge has to be thoroughly ripe before he comes to the conclusion. I am living in it, that's why I understand. I am not speaking. Yoga is not an objective science or art for me. Every cell is ringing with the bell of Yoga to me. I am subjective so when you put me to a question, I have to be objective but unfortunately I am subjective. Yoga is my subject and I am Yoga. Yoga is me, so it is in me. It does not speak. I live in Yoga, each moment of me is Yoga. So how difficult it is for me to explain? That is why I struggle. Somebody may say, "Why do you write?" But I wrote it in order to make you also tread that path without fear.

Christian: You say that you want to give your students the taste of present life in a lesson. As you shout at them to straighten their legs they cannot be wondering what is for dinner or whether they will be promoted or demoted at work.

Guruj: Yes it is correct. What I have said is a fact. When I have classes for two hours or three hours or five hours, can anybody know what time it is at that moment? So are you not living moment to moment? Is it not a spiritual time at that moment?

Because you are free from the dependence of past and future. So are you not divine at that entire moment? At other times one may not be divine. But even one who works with me, do I not treat them as divine for such a long time with this hard work? So that's the quality of

THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
AND THE VICTORIA YM-YWCA
ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE AN

IYENGAR YOGA INTENSIVE

July 15 to 20, 1996

with

Shirley Daventry French

Dr. Derek French

Leslie Hoga

Ann Kilbertus

Jim Rischmiller

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

Fee: \$375.00

Victoria is an active centre for Iyengar Yoga, whose teachers maintain close contact with Mr. Iyengar through regular trips to India and participation in conferences where he is in attendance. Our 1996 Summer Intensive will combine the skills of one of Canada's leading yoga teachers, Shirley Daventry French, with physician Derek French, occupational therapist Ann Kilbertus and experienced yoga teachers Leslie Hoga and Jim Rischmiller.

The residence at the Y has a limited amount of inexpensive accommodation for women. billets are available with members of the local yoga community and as a popular tourist centre, Victoria has a wide selection of hotels and motels.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
3918 OLYMPIC VIEW DRIVE R.R.4 VICTORIA, B.C. V9B 5T8
TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES: SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH (604) 478 3775
OR LESLIE HOGA (604) 383 6301

Yoga. It is possible for you to live in that moment which is divine, which is pure, where the mind may not play the future or the past. Because the past and the future depend on memories. When I am teaching, does memory work or intellect work? You are my students.

Christian: Intellect has to work.

Guruji: Yes, the moment you work with memory, do I not lose my temper? Why do you do it that way? Why do you want to go to your old thoughts? So that means I keep your intelligence ever fresh. That's what it brings. As I have experienced, I want everybody to experience the same. So it's a conquest of time. While I am teaching known time is not there at all. So you have conquered time. Your mind is not on the future, your mind is not on the past, your mind is neither in the present, you don't know what present is in that moment. So I bring divinity. I have to express that divinity through the vehicle of the soul, the body. If a person does not speak at all, do you call him divine? He may be a fake just keeping quiet. But honesty, integrity, the oneness between the pupil and the master while in action, that will only prove whether one can live actively in the state of divinity doing his day to day job. That's what I have experienced and that's what I give to others. It's a fact and can't be denied. Those who deny it have no interpenetration. Those who have interpenetration they experience this. Those who do just for the sake of doing, just wanting to keep fit is just exercise. So if they treat asana as an exercise it ends as an exercise. If you treat asana as a posture where you recompose the posture every now and then which means when you feel a certain sensation and you don't feel certain sensations on other places, how to get that sensation? That means you are recomposing the position. So you go on recomposing and recomposing to get the precision till there is no recomposing at all, where you reach the state well, this is the end. It is not the body which did the asana, it's the very core which appears in the extremities of your body. That's the Self and that is divinity.

Claus: What is your final message?

Guruji: I was trained only to show for others what asana means. When I began, I had undergone practice

no doubt from the external level, that is certain. I was not given a philosophical background but only to present postures. It took me several years to purge myself, purge my body, purge my intelligence. I read lots of books which confused me a great deal, but fortunately I did not stop my practice. That's God grace. I made up my mind to write the book when I achieved maturity on these two subjects of Yoga. From my experience I went on reading the Yoga Sutras, where my experience and his words met. It helped me a great deal that my practice is almost closer to his sutras. That means my practice must have become very ripe to reach that level. In the beginning it was not so. Sometimes I used to read and close the book saying it is impossible to understand. So I brought the most difficult sutras for all to read. Of course if you read seriously ideas may strike very fast. I have tried my best to make the reader understand the philosophy even sitting in the drawing room, so that he is ignited to make an effort to feel what he reads. So from that angle I think I have done a great service to the students of Yoga by making them learn from the base rather than coming from the zenith toward the base. I have gone from the base step by step and I can say that students who are interested in philosophy cannot get confused in my book. I have done my best to remove the doubts and create enthusiasm for them to make a trial. It's probably the only practical book written on the Yoga Sutras, for the first time. I may not know the reactions on a practical level, but those who are interested, and keep *Light on Yoga*, *Light on Pranayama*, *Tree of Yoga*, also the *70 Glorious Years*, where I've have a lot of things and also *Light on Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, they will reach the goal faster than me. That is certain. I consider that I have done a great service in presenting the most terse philosophy in a simple language for even an average person to understand the background to life.

I have spoken about asanas and how the five elements and the five qualities of the elements are controlled by creating rhythm and balance in the body by various postures. That means when one conquers the elements of nature, then what is left? Patanjali ends the book by saying that it is all one can explain about the Seer. I say that is all I can explain to you about asana and pranayama and you have to search afterwards to where it leads you. ♦

TEACHERS IN THE COUNTRY

by Yvonne Kipp

The Iyengar Yoga teachers from Victoria, Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands meet regularly on the last Saturday of each month for a practice/study session. These meetings are so well attended and so valuable a part of their professional development, they decided to devote a whole weekend to this purpose last November. The author of the following article, Yvonne Kipp, formerly of Winnipeg, now lives and teaches Iyengar Yoga on Cortes Island, B.C.

What a grand time we all had at Camp Thunderbird. Philosophy flowered around the fieldstone fireplace. Debates burst out around the Nature of Truth originating in our study of the Sutras. What is truth to Modern and Post Modern thought as compared to the Renaissance thinking on truth and beauty? Can there be one truth for all? How does truth work in an individual's life? Does a truth have a life of its own, changing with the times. Truth in the moment?

We know that the earth rotates around the Sun. The rest is opinion. In Sutra II 33, apathy was defined for us as apathos – without passion. The consideration was that it is a wise person who shows apathy toward evil; to have no passion for evil.

Ann, Celia, Marlene and Lesley led the work for us in the Sutras, Inversions and Pregnancy. I renewed my hearing of abdomen strengthening for more dynamism in Sirsasana and Sarvangasana.

Shirley Daventry French brought us the news from the Source. How wonderful it was and is to have direct

word from Guruji here and now. Certification in Canada is in the works. This is such an exciting prospect as we come to focus on excellence and standardisation in teaching and the cross-Canada connection of Mr. Iyengar's work. The mystery of how few men there are currently in Yoga classes aroused much debate at the lunch table, as did discussions on who? what? how, do we decide who attends Intensives in Pune, especially the upcoming one in 1997? Tune in to the teachers' meeting on the 20th of January, in Victoria.

Derek French's anatomy is so wonderful. Every time I attend a seminar by him my vision and understanding of the wonders of our bodies is rekindled. Something I felt re-inspired about, was the learning and remembering of the anatomical names – trochanter, anterior superior iliac spine. The Latin names, together with the use of the Sanskrit names of the asanas, add a breadth of insight and background for teachers and students. From an international conference on Backs that Dr. French recently attended, he reported that there is still the G.O.K. theory of back pain – God only knows. I know that Yoga works for back pain and that's a Truth.

The experience at Camp Thunderbird has continued to stay with me weeks later, in my practice, my thinking, my renewal of connections: the network is humming. Ann Kilbertus kindly gave me copies of her pregnancy workshop which I delivered to teachers up Island, who were delighted to receive the 'news'.

The 'famous' early morning alarm story – 4.20 am – ask anyone who was there, was a wild start to the wonderfully rich, enlightening, happy two days. Put this weekend on your calendar for 1996. ♦

Yoga in Metchosin A Day of Yoga

with

SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH
SATURDAY, MARCH 2ND, 1996

Fee: \$55.00

Asana, Pranayama, Philosophy of Yoga
Information: 478 3775

Flowering Bodies: Yoga in Pregnancy



In my belly grows a baby, living hint of where my center is, the seed of my regeneration. There, too, on the outside lies the dimple of my navel, connection to life before mine.

The yoga I wake to each day, in practice and spirit, honors this center continually. It, too, is belly based. In these nine months of support I will give my womb held baby, I find no more conscious way to bring energy to her than with yoga. It feeds us both so fully.

Yoga is union. It's the joining of our inner selves with the world outside, our longings with universal spirits which soothe them, our stretched fingers and feet with the air and earth they touch. So, too, it is my baby's shy and early whispers to her waiting, outer life.

Yoga is breath, it's a means of ceaseless exchange with our world. The wind and temperature and scent we invite with inhalation bring with them messages from the earth for our noses and throats, bellies and babies. With each exhaled breath we speak back to a world always ready to hear us. It's a reminder that we belong here – so nice to tell our babies.

Yoga is centered stretch, the desire our bodies have with a solid stance to reach outward. It's the desire to reach, like a rooted and flowering tree, in two directions at once, the flourish of one empowering that of its opposite. The energy to do this is in a yoga asana (posture) – to root with the forearms and head and rise with the toes, or to plant the soles of the feet so the extended limbs and spine may blossom – comes again from our belly center, a hub from which we lengthen in many directions. With such belly focus, attention faithfully returns to my baby.

Yoga is movement. It is the encouragement of graceful motion in our bodies' systems and organs, the syncopation of our blood circulation, breathing, heart beat and hormonal cycles with ever-moving nature. (In this way, too, yoga is invaluable for baby-enabling, for fertility).

Yoga is cleansing. Each twist and squeeze of our body flushes organs with new blood, refreshing them. So, too, it comforts us, allowing us to massage ourselves internally and calm our nerves. My baby within can now begin to feel the soft touch I'll give her later with my hands.

Yoga is strength, vigor, limber muscles and it's the confidence in our bodies' power that we can take with us through birthing time.

And yoga is stillness – the reflective, yet alert place, of rest within where our intuition finds its voice. Into every yoga practice are woven asanas of restoration and quiet, times of feeling the baby's soft kicks, times of feeling cradled myself by the universe as my pelvis now nests this baby.

Yoga is metaphor, a physical reminder of philosophies we can use in living. Attention, patience, forgiveness, interaction and self-sufficiency, honesty and non-competitiveness, are some of these. Most profoundly, yoga is a tangible invitation to spirit, to be with us always.

The divine given life in our bodies...this is the essence of yoga; it perfectly describes our growing babies, the two are beautiful mates.

*Written mid-pregnancy by Betsy Duncombe, 1995.
Teacher of Iyengar Yoga for Motherhood ♦*

Spirit

over

Mind over Matter

What is yoga? What really is this yogic asana practice?

I kept asking myself such questions over and over after my last work-out.

Yoga, in general, is a multi-faceted approach to daily living; conversely, one is striving toward the principle of, or the experience of, Unity.

Yoga means unity, but what I was grasping at with this internal dialogue was an understanding – if only an intellectual one – of why it is, or how it is, that yoga asanas actually work?

As a dancer, I never felt as elated after hours of ballet as I do even after half an hour of yoga. I did long distance running and bicycling as well. The feeling of jubilation was sort lived and often interspersed with pain. And as far as horse-riding was concerned, an hour in the ring usually meant sore shoulders and stiff inner, upper thighs.

On the other hand, doing a string of asanas leaves me feeling great, sometimes for days at a time. Technically, asanas are designed primarily as an integral workout for, and therefore oxygenation of, the spine. However, I have now discovered that – mistakenly – I credited the body with feeling good and thus credited the body for my general state of well-being.

All spiritual teachers say that the body is only a temporary structure, they warn us against identifying with it. Taking this point of view *specifically* forced me to ask, so what is this yoga thing? Why does it work? If the body is only a temporary 'robe' as Aboriginal Canadians also claim, then yoga as an exercise must likewise have only temporary benefits.

Eventually one clear answer came: yoga has less to do with the body and much more to do with the mind. The body is only an instrument, a tool, a means to an end: fitness, or health or perfection of the body is not an

end in itself.

Yoga has less to do with the body and more to do with the mind because a disciplined mind is the avenue for ultimate Realization.

At first, the mind is reluctant to allow us down this path because it must let go of deep rooted belief systems and fight a barrage of demons: frustrations, desires, impulses and otherwise in-effective behaviour patterns.

The ultimate demon of course is our own shadow – the Ego. The Ego confuses the normal processes of daily life and instills in us delusions of grandeur and illusions of superiority. Whether this is moral superiority or physical prowess, or intellectual one-up-man-ship, we all know our games *on some level of truth* and it is *at this level of truth* that the mind becomes our friend.

The mind provides the discipline required for a regular yoga practice and yoga makes the body feel good; the body then encourages the mind to keep up the discipline: it is a self-fulfilling prophesy.

But exercise is only exercise and the mind is most agile at altering it's perceptions. So eventually the repetition of asanas must reach a new, deeper level; the level at which yoga becomes a form of prayer, a form of worship – meditation in motion. Now, even the most elemental asanas facilitate a change in attitude.

The change is subtle, imperceptible at first, but soon the mind questions – what is it about yoga that makes it unique? No other form of exercise offers this kind of up-lift-ment (perhaps with the exception of Tai Chi).

After more pondering another answer came: this up-lift-ment is an experience in Unity. During practice I am being en-Lightened by my long neglected Soul who is now rejoicing over my effort and commitment; that alone is the lasting impact, the highest benefit, of yoga.

Jana Kalina ♦

SWANWICK STUDY CENTRE

538 Swanwick Road, RR 1, Victoria
For information contact Khairon
737 4762

Shirley Daventry French – Yoga Retreat
Longtime student of Iyengar. Recently returned from India.

April 19, arrive after lunch –
April 21, depart after lunch.

Father Joe Pereira

Studied Yoga 20 years with Iyengar.
Closely connected with Mother Teresa's work.

June 11, arrive after lunch –
June 17, depart after breakfast.

Ingelise Neilan – Yoga Retreat

Rich, joyful, rejuvenating teachings.

May 3, arrive after lunch –
May 5, depart after lunch.

Gioa Irwin – Yoga Retreat

Warm, gentle, personal style with deep yogic principles. Awakens the innermost being.

August 2, arrive after lunch –
August 5, depart after lunch.

RADHA HOUSE



Guru Puja: Sunday, February 4, 8 – 9 p.m. A special Satsang of gratitude to honour our teachers who have dedicated their lives selflessly to help others find their inner strength and life's purpose.

Celebrating our 12th anniversary with a mantra workshop, potluck supper and special Satsang:
Mantras: Words of Power: Sunday, February 18, 10:00 a.m. – 6 p.m. Potluck supper 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Fee: \$50.00, deposit \$15.00. This workshop is an introduction to the practice and philosophy of mantra. We will be practicing several mantras. The power of sound is well known, here is a chance to begin to experience that power with a spiritual focus and to discover for yourself its beneficial effects.

Saturday Morning with Tortoise Pose: Saturday, March 16, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. This is the Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga® approach to Kurmasana. Tight muscles, stiffness of the limbs point of tensions that may reflect many fears. Do you have the patience to develop the flexibility to practice this pose and explore its meaning? This workshop is followed by a potluck lunch.

Continuing Classes: Kundalini: 11 classes, \$121.
The Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga®: 11 classes: \$121; drop in: \$11 per class.
Dreams: 11 classes, \$121.
Bhagavad Gita Reading Group: No fee, registration is open.
Sundays: Satsang and Bhajans.

Registration: For information: 595 0177.

YOGA CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- 2-4: A Weekend workshop with
Felicity Green.
18: A beginners' workshop with
Lauren Cox.
24: Teachers' meeting.

MARCH

- 1: Friday night Yoga Centre Gathering.
2: In Metchosin: A Day of Yoga with
Shirley Daventry-French.
10: Sunday Workshop.
30: Teachers' meeting.

** All events where otherwise not stated, take place at the Victoria Yoga Centre at
The YM-YWCA, 880 Courtney Str.*

It's membership renewal time.

Your membership expired

December 31, 1995

This is your last notification.

Don't forget, if you purchase your
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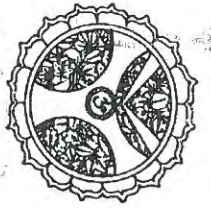
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sions, I'll pick one up at my Y class: ☐



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY
3918 Olympic View Drive, RR #4
Victoria, BC V9B 5T8



Registration: For information

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Victoria, BC
V8T 3Z2



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE NEWSLETTER

March/April 1996

Please Subscribe





**THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
AND THE VICTORIA Y.M.Y.W.C.A.**

WELCOME YOU TO A FRIDAY NIGHT GATHERING

IN THE YOGA LOUNGE:

DATE: FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 1996

ASANA PRACTICE AT 6 P.M.

POTLUCK DINNER AT 7 P.M.*

DATE: FRIDAY, MAY 10, 1996

BIG BIG PRACTICE

AND TEACHER'S DEMONSTRATION AT 6 P.M.

POTLUCK DINNER AT 7 P.M.*

DISCUSSION TO FOLLOW

**This is a fundraising event,
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Art, Production & Collation: Lauren Cox,
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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 persons of the 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 the Victoria 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 contract the Editor, Jennifer Rischmiller: 4489 Lindholm Road,
 RR #1, Victoria BC, Canada,
 V9B 5T7. Telephone: (604) 474 - 5630
Deadline for submissions: 10th of every month.

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REFLECTIONS

BY SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH

"Are you afraid of Mr. Iyengar?" I was asked this question by a yoga teacher from one of the Gulf Islands. Ten of us were sitting around the table in my dining room finishing lunch and talking about India. We had come together on Saturday morning to practise pranayama and yoga-asana, something which happens at my home once a month. When our practice is over, we assuage our hunger and engage in lively conversation about yoga and its ramifications in our lives.

This was the first such gathering since my return from India, so the conversation turned around that topic. In Iyengar Yoga circles, when you say "India" you invariably mean "Pune" and more specifically the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute. Several people present had also studied in Pune, and others had recently learned that they would be going next year. Naturally, they had a lot of questions.

"Are you afraid of Mr. Iyengar?" The questioner, who had no personal knowledge of Mr. Iyengar, added that she had heard so many stories about his violence and abuse-slapping, hitting, hurting students etc.

"Oh, how I hate all that," said another woman, who had worked with Mr. Iyengar in Toronto, who was very positive about the experience, and who is hoping to be included in the contingent going to India next year, - how people always focus on that, like an article I saw somewhere recently titled, *Iyengar the Cruel*.

"We published that article in our newsletter," I replied, "because I thought it was an outstanding article, one of the best descriptions I had ever read about what it is like to work with Mr. Iyengar - and extremely positive." "Too bad it didn't have another title," was her response, "It put me off and I didn't read it." An omission she plans to remedy now.

Iyengar the Cruel, written by Mark Harelik, was first published in the newsletter of the B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association of Southern California which is where I saw it and it is so good it has been reprinted in many other newsletters. In one, I noticed the title had

been changed to *Iyengar, the Fire of Compassion*. Obviously my student was not the only one put off by the original title. I must admit that when I first saw it, it jolted me and I began to read the article defensively, ready to refute more unjust allegations about Mr. Iyengar, only to be pleasantly surprised and delighted at the respectful tone and the many insights contained therein about the nature of the yogic path and in particular what it is like when that path leads you to a truly great teacher.

If the title of the article deterred you too or you simply did not get around to reading it, do so now (it appeared in our June 1995 newsletter, some copies are still available or we'll lend you one).

Coming back to the question about fear of Mr. Iyengar: "No, I am not afraid of him," I answered, "and I have never been afraid of being physically hurt by him."

In my first class in Pune, I was placed in the front row because I am small, I stood there with very mixed feelings as Guruji taught us Tadasana. Tremendous excitement to be there at last in class with him, mingled with fear about whether I would be worthy and able to do the work. A few minutes into the class, I felt as if I were standing there naked, that he could see not only what was on the surface but what lay under the skin. I felt that he knew me, through and through, and this was at the same time a tremendous relief and very frightening. The relief came from the realisation that any artifice or subterfuge was a waste of time and the energy generally used for this purpose would be freed up for other, more fruitful purposes. The fear was about what his teaching might reveal to me (and others) about myself, and, as I watched the intensity of his interactions with other students, I also became nervous about being confronted by him in public.

The confrontation came the second day of class when I did not understand and therefore did not respond to one of his instructions. He stood in front of me loudly repeating this instruction and almost pulled off my shorts in exasperation to make sure I understood exactly in which direction to move my pelvic rim. I learned something important about Virabhadrasana Two, and at the same time struggled with my pride and ego as tears, which I was trying very hard not to shed, pricked

my eyes. One of my friends, who was standing directly behind me, reached out to give me a consoling touch, but I pushed her away. I needed to be left alone to struggle, because a very clear question had arisen: did I want to cling to my pride, or did I want to learn?

What exactly had happened to me? Mr. Iyengar had criticised my presentation of the asana and forcefully suggested some improvement, in a loud voice, in public – not by a discreet word into my ear, or taking me. He doesn't have time for this. He had never seen me before, might not see me again for years, if ever. A moment arose in which he could teach me to replace a harmful action with a beneficial one. Isn't this something to be grateful for? When I did not respond initially, the force of his energy and intelligence confronted the force of my ignorance and resistance – something had to give and in Mr. Iyengar's classes it is not going to be him. You have a choice to practise surrender and acceptance (basic yogic principles) or to leave and some people do just that.

Why did I have to struggle? Why was I not instantly grateful? Because I had been taken in by the very limiting idea so prevalent in North America, that no criticism should be offered unless it is positive. In his article, Mark Harelik says that we have developed a culture that revolves around our self-esteem. This leads us to depend upon our teachers to build our self-respect, which will necessarily be very fragile because it comes from without and not from within, dependent on others' support and approbation and when that external support is withdrawn, self-esteem crumbles. A Master of Yoga will encourage you to develop your inner strength and build your self-esteem from inside out by looking within and discovering your true self, the Atman. Yoga asanas are one means of creating pathways to this Higher Self. Provided you practise and don't allow these pathways to become overgrown, they are always available wherever you are and whatever external pressures you face.

Difficulty in accepting criticism makes it awfully difficult to learn. This is not to suggest there should be a licence to go around saying anything which comes to mind, as happened in the sixties' encounter groups. Nor do I support the system in which I was educated in England, where constant criticism was offered with heavy doses of sarcasm by teachers wielding a great

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deal of power over their hapless pupils. But direct criticism offered in a manner uncoloured by emotions is a most precious gift which is a great boost to learning. If we are able to receive this criticism uncoloured by our own emotions, we do not have to learn everything the hard way – and learn we must, in this life or the next.

Once I was discussing this topic with a student of mine who is Japanese, who came to North America to take a graduate degree. At first, she was distressed because all she received from her tutors was positive feedback. This led her to believe that her work was below standard and unworthy of more time and effort on the part of her teachers. If she was really doing good work they would have offered strong criticism and challenged her constantly, which was what she had been accustomed to in Japan.

I doubt if Japanese students have as much difficulty in Pune as North Americans. Certainly, on my first visit to Pune, I felt that having been educated in England stood me in good stead. I had learned to accept criticism, just and unjust, and to discriminate between the two.

The inability to be criticised in any way makes it

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

The Centre is pleased to offer the following scholarships:

YOGA RETREAT AT THE SALTSRING
CENTRE,

MAY 31, JUNE 1 AND 2, 1996
TWO \$100.00 SCHOLARSHIPS

IYENGAR YOGA INTENSIVE,
JULY 15 TO 20, 1996
ONE \$300.00 SCHOLARSHIP
TWO \$150.00 SCHOLARSHIPS

The applicant or nominee shall be a member of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society and an active student in the Victoria/Vancouver Island Iyengar Yoga community.

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

Our hope is that scholarships provide encouragement to a student of yoga to help in her/his personal growth.

To nominate someone or apply, please contact: Linda Benn, 478-0757; Maggie Feehan, 383-9987 or Marlene Miller, 655-4306. ♦

difficult to change.

For instance, in class a student has their knee bent in Uttihita Trikonasana. The teacher says: "Straighten your knee" or indicates this with a touch. The student feels unfairly picked upon, doesn't like Iyengar Yoga, leaves and moves to a more "gentle, caring, traditional form of yoga." Iyengar Yoga is traditional and in the yogic tradition it is the responsibility of a teacher to correct sincere pupils and point them in the right direction – more than a responsibility, it is a duty which the teacher accepts when accepting individuals as students. In this case, the student also has a responsibility to listen to and follow the guidance of the teacher.

You would think that a student who has his knee bent in a posture where it is supposed to be straight, who might injure himself by keeping it bent, who is wasting his time doing the posture this way, might be grateful to have this pointed out – especially when, as is always the way in an Iyengar Yoga class, he will be shown how to remedy this lack of understanding and move in a more healthy direction. Alas, this is not always so.

Before I went to Pune this past winter, I had been having a problem in my upper back over one of my costo-vertebral joints. I could work through it in my practice and it would improve for a while and then return. I kept asking myself, "what am I doing to myself that creates this pain?" I looked at my posture and breathing, got some clues, but could not get rid of the problem. In Pune, two or three days into the course, Mr. Iyengar took me out of the crowd in Tadasana and stood me up on the platform with my back to the class. We had been working very strongly into the legs and one or two others had been up there before having their leg action closely scrutinised. I stood there working my legs to the very maximum, only to have Guruji put his fingers directly over the trigger point in my upper back and say "She has a problem, longstanding. She has pain here, and then, looking directly at me: "Isn't it?" "Yes Guruji, for several months." He pointed out the difference between the skin on that side and the other, said that I didn't remedy this I would develop arthritis and then he showed me several ways of working to create a more healthy environment in that part of my body.

Thereafter, in class after class, as he passed by me I received a slap or kick (depending on whether I was

standing on my feet or my head) in that area. I was not allowed to forget or ignore the challenge facing me and for that I am truly grateful.

Now I am home, has the pain gone? No, it still comes and goes. There has been no miracle. Sustained change rarely comes that easily. Guruji has shown me the work I have to do. It's up to me. Sometimes when Guruji has worked with someone in pain, they will say afterwards: "It still hurts" and he will respond: "Ah, but did I make your big pain a smaller pain?" Greed has to be put aside. In my case, the quality of my pain has changed, it is the pain of instability rather than the pain of complete blockage and in some ways more painful on many levels. An area, hitherto dead, has come to life and while positive, this is also very disturbing. I must develop strength to support the opening so that I can keep it open and there is no need to close up again.

If you are lucky, a visit to India will cause a great deal of disturbance. The memory of those slaps and kicks enlivens my daily practice, encourages me to learn more about myself, my life and its purpose. The strength I develop from facing my limitations and striving to overcome them in turn gives me courage to open the door a little wider and let in a little more light.

It is not a question of being abused by Guruji. He spoke to us one day on this topic, knowing full well the accusations which are directed at him. He talked about how we are abusing our bodies, molesting our cells – something which he had amply demonstrated day after day in class – and how his interventions are a means of attempting to put an end to that abuse.

No, I am not afraid of Mr. Iyengar – rather of my own ignorance! ♦

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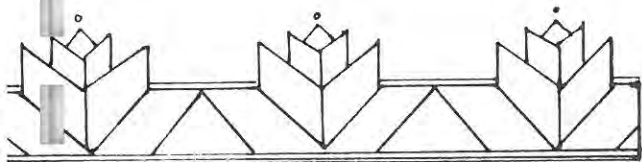
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Victoria Yoga Center YM-YWCA**



***Reports from the Annual General Meeting
of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society, held on
December 2, 1995.***

President:

I received resignations from the position of Director from Peter Jackal and Wendy Boyer. Karyn Locken and Margaret Feehan will not be standing for nomination as Directors for 1996. Our thanks to them for their past services. During 1995, the Directors met four times. Some of the items discussed were as follows:

- more organization regarding the membership/ mailing list,
- recruiting of new members,
- programs and workshop fees and registration policy,
- teachers' concerns and future plans regarding certification,
- disbursement of scholarships and scholarship policy,
- newsletter advertising policy,
- general policy and procedures,
- ongoing discussions regarding the disbursement of funds.

I would like to give a special mention to the teachers for their dedication and commitment. The latest information I have is that there are 46 Iyengar yoga classes every week in the Greater Victoria District.

I would also like to mention the special efforts from the Directors:

- Leslie and Paul have taken notes of our meetings,
- Jerrilyn has served as our treasurer,
- Renate has worked on the policy committee and as newsletter collator,
- Margaret has been our teachers' representative,
- Linda has looked after the book inventory.

Each of the Directors has given me a great deal of encouragement and support. It has been a great honour to serve as President and work with the 1995 Board of Directors.

Thank You

Jennifer Rischmiller, Treasurer

Statement for Year Ending October 31, 1995

REVENUE

Workshops	\$14,963.21
Membership Dues	4,341.20
Books/Mats/T-shirts	4,247.62
Donations	968.62
Newsletters, Gatherings & Miscellaneous	1,761.53
Interest	112.94
Total Revenue	\$26,395.12

EXPENSES

Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Meeting	\$3,307.67
Certification	614.94
Workshops	10,200.68
Books/Mats/T-shirts	3,432.11
Newsletters	5,076.49
Insurance	567.00
Library	436.31
Office Expenses, Bank Charges	
Gatherings & Miscellaneous	1953.17
Scholarships	925.00
Total Expenses	\$26,513.37

ELECTION OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 1996

The following people were nominated and voted in by acclamation and will serve in the positions noted:

- Linda Benn, Director/Scholarship Committee
- Shirley Daventry French, Director/Assistant Editor Newsletter
- Derek French, Director/Acting Vice President
- Renate Grinfelds, Director/Newsletter Collator
- Leslie Hogya, Director/Secretary
- Melanie Jollimore, Director/Future Editor Newsletter
- Paul Lescarmure, Director/Acting Treasurer
- Corrine Lowen, Director/Policy Committee
- Jennifer Rischmiller, President/Retiring Editor Newsletter
- Jim Rischmiller, Director
- Gerrilyn Wass, Director/Treasurer
- and rumour has it (though as yet unconfirmed) that Brian London has volunteered to be a Director. See you at the next meeting, Brian! ♦

The following is an excerpt from the yoga centre's first newsletter, which appeared in January 1978 and consisted of three typewritten pages.

For over a year now we have been meeting once a month on Fridays at the home of Shirley and Derek French, and also holding weekly Satsang in the Y Chapel at 9 pm on Monday evenings. At the monthly meetings we have discussions on various aspects of yoga, listen to tapes, read from yoga and spiritual books, chant and meditate together. Various yoga and personal growth workshops have also been organised and held at the French's from time to time.

Now another event is being sponsored by the centre which is a monthly weekend workshop, in which Norma Hodge, an experienced Yoga teacher from Vancouver, will be teaching the Iyengar approach. As you probably know, Mr. Iyengar is one of the world's foremost teachers of Hatha Yoga known and respected all over the world, and the author of *Light on Yoga*

The second newsletter, which appeared in March 1978, had grown to six pages.

After a while, Bill took over from Norman as editor and Trish continued as designer as well as becoming President of the yoga centre before moving away from Victoria. Linda Shevloff became editor after Bill, and she handed over to the current editor Jennifer Rischmiller.

We kept this up, with the odd lapse here and there, until the number of people working on the newsletter decreased and those remaining decided that they really needed a rest in the summer, so we combined July and August issues into one Summer issue. It was also very

difficult to produce both a December and a January issue, because we wanted to enjoy Christmas with our families, so we combined those into one Christmas/New Year issue and produced ten instead of twelve newsletters a year.

We have worked hard to fulfil this commitment and managed to do so until this year when looking at the tight production schedule and the small number of people doing the work, we reluctantly came to the conclusion that for the survival of the newsletter and the people working on it, we would be better off producing one issue every two months.

Somehow or other, over the years, everyone has become more and more busy. First we stopped having our monthly production meetings and discussed matters over the telephone, but latterly there hasn't been time even for that. Messages are left on answering machines, or notes put in our boxes at the Y. Everyone has been doing their work in isolation, communication has been poor, many things have fallen between cracks, and we have not been doing as professional a job as we would have liked.

We are hoping that a little more space between issues will give us an opportunity to remedy this. In fact, we have already begun. At the end of February, we had a planning meeting. There has been an infusion of new

blood - some of the younger members of our community with skills in writing and editing have expressed an interest in working on the newsletter. Jana Kalina has already come forward to volunteer her desktop publishing skills allowing Lauren Cox more time to use her artistic talents creatively and not spend so much time cutting and pasting.

Our newsletter has subscribers from all around the world. When we started the only other similar publication was the Review of the Iyengar Yoga Institute in San Francisco, whom we congratulate for their efforts in continuing to produce a high quality publication. Now there has been an international explosion of newsletters produced by many organisations and yoga centres, and we exchange issues with a good number of them. Who knows? Perhaps we have had some influence on the growth of this field? We are especially honoured that our newsletters are available in the library of the Ramamani Iyengar Yoga Memorial Institute in Pune.

The editors would like to thank all those who have supported this endeavour over the years and invite your continued support. In the spirit of yoga, we will do our best to merit your support by continuing to produce an interesting, informative and varied publication, honouring our teachers, respecting the teachings of yoga, and relevant to all of us in our personal practice.

SWANWICK STUDY CENTRE

538 Swanwick Road, RR 1, Victoria

For information contact Khairon at 737 4762

Shirley Daventry French – Yoga Retreat
Longtime student of Iyengar. Recently returned from India.
April 19, arrive after lunch –
April 21, depart after lunch.

Father Joe Pereira
Studied Yoga 20 years with Iyengar. Closely connected with Mother Teresa's work.
June 11, arrive after lunch –
June 17, depart after breakfast.

Ingelise Neilan – Yoga Retreat
Rich, joyful, rejuvenating teachings.
May 3, arrive after lunch –
May 5, depart after lunch.

Gioa Irwin – Yoga Retreat
Warm, gentle, personal style with deep yogic principles. Awakens the innermost being.
August 2, arrive after lunch –
August 5, depart after lunch.

HOW YOGA TRANSFORMED ME

B.K.S. IYENGAR

The course of one's life can be altered by a flash of destiny which is the accumulated actions and reactions of past lives that play a role in the present life. One has to accept the challenges when destiny strikes like lightening. The effects may be visible immediately in some, while it may take decades of persistent and patient effort in others. I belong to the latter category.

Destiny alone cannot open the gates of luck and make one successful in life. A persistent and determined effort is also necessary to mould an individual.

I consider myself to be one in a million who succumbed to the call of that flash of destiny. I stuck to that call with faith, although failures after failures brought me despair, dejection and distress. I pursued my fate with restless determination accepting that these failures may act as a step toward success. I am happy that my efforts fructified after 35 years. One may call it fate or destiny or the grace of God.

Faith and untiring effort made me understand and realize that the purpose of my life was to utilize it for the good of society and the world at large.

It is embarrassing to speak or write about oneself but I will keep aside my false modesty and let you know how my interest in Yoga gathered momentum and transformed me. How, I, with a new light attracted people toward yoga and made it popular. I think that this narration of my early life may help my pupils, whose destiny has brought them to me, to build up courage and strength in their practices.

My Birth

I was born in a village called Belur in the state of Karnataka, India, on Sunday, December 14, 1918, at 3 a.m., during the influenza epidemic of 1918. My mother was in the grip of influenza and there was little hope of my survival but God spared us both. I looked sickly with thin arms and legs, a protruding stomach

and a heavy head. My appearance was not prepossessing.

My Early Childhood

My health began deteriorating because of bouts of malaria, typhoid and the doctors also suspected that I had tuberculosis of the lungs. At that time there was no cure for these diseases and I often faced the jaws of death. I became a burden to myself and to my parents.

My father breathed his last when I was only nine years old and his absence created a vacuum in our family. No one in the house could guide me on how to attain good health. My schooling was affected as I was forced to stay in bed. I became a "back bench" in class and I would just manage to obtain borderline marks. The authorities would promote me to a higher class hoping that I would perform better the next year. Studies became monotonous and laborious.

The 'Flash of Destiny'

My life turned for the better in March 1934. My Guru, Sri T. Krishnamacharya was also my brother-in-law as he was married to my eldest sister. Before his marriage, he stayed in Varanasi and studied various darshanas. He then went to Nepal and learned Yoga under a great master named Sri Ramamohana Brahmachari. He conducted seminars on yoga at various places after he returned to his native place in Karnataka. The Maharaja of Mysore, the late Krishna Raja Wadiar Bahadur IV, heard of my Gururji. He opened and patronized a yogashala (shala - school) in the Jagamohan Palace of Mysore. The Maharaja would send my Gururji to various places to propagate yoga. In 1934, the Maharaja sent him with his pupils to visit Kaivalyadham at Lonavala and Bombay. He halted at Bangalore (where I was residing) on his way to Bombay and asked me whether I would stay with my sister in Mysore until he returned from Bombay. I had heard about the palaces and lush gardens of the city of Mysore but I had not had

an opportunity to see them. So I willingly agreed to his suggestion and he bought my ticket to Mysore. This is the 'flash of destiny' which changed the course of my life.

I asked my brother-in-law's permission to return to Bangalore when he returned from Bombay. He suggested that I join the High School in Mysore and also learn a few asanas to improve my health instead of allowing me to go home. I was tempted to consent to his suggestion to stay in Mysore and join the local school as I had never experienced good health. He also started teaching me a few asanas to improve my health. I began addressing him as "Guruji" as he implanted the seed of yoga in me.

My First Exposure to Yoga

My body was very stiff as I had been bedridden for many years. My arms barely reached my knees when I bent down. I doubted whether yoga would do me any good as my body was not responding though I was struggling hard. I stayed with my guru for two years. In the beginning he did not show much interest in teaching me possibly due to my weak physique. He turned his attention toward me when one of his senior-most students left him forever after a year of my stay. He would make me practice yoga twice a day and as he demanded. He was very stern and that inculcated a fear complex in me. I had severe aches, pains and fatigue because of these intense practices. Circumstances forced me to do as commanded by my guru. I did not turn to yoga as a vocation for I was not born in the house of yogis, saints or philosophers. Now I consider that it was rather a stroke of good luck that yoga pursued me though I was indifferent toward it.

My First Exposure To Teaching

In 1936, the Maharaja of Mysore sent my Guru along with a few of his pupils including myself on a

lecture cum demonstration tour of Northern Karnataka. A number of people including ladies requested us to teach them during this tour. In those days women were very shy to practice yoga in front of elderly men. My Guruji asked me to conduct classes for these ladies as I was the youngest of the group. They gladly accepted me as a teacher.

Thus, Guruji planted the seed of teaching in me

which has now grown into a mighty tree spreading its branches over all the five continents.

I started getting a lot of offers to teach yoga. Teaching demanded experiences but I was a novice in yoga. My limited practices and experiences kept my courage at bay. I was nervous to take up the responsibility but my mind was saying, "Why should I not take a chance?" I meekly accepted to teach with fear in my heart. This meekness forced me to practice more and more to gain

experiences. The interest in yoga came not for the sake of love for yoga but for the sake of earning my livelihood.

How Pune Became My Home

In 1937, the Deccan Gymkhana Club of Pune wrote to my Guru asking him to send them a yoga teacher for six months. Guruji was very keen that someone should go and teach. None of my Guru's students were willing to accept that offer. All his students except myself were from Mysore Sanskrit Pathshala. Only I went to a school that taught English. He ordered me to go and teach in Pune as I knew a little of English. I agreed because I was looking for freedom from bondage.

I met the Club members who asked me to teach in various schools, colleges and physical education centers. It was sheer delight to enter the college premises to teach yoga when I had not even completed school education.

My Limitations

The responsibility of teaching was too much for me; those who came to the class were older in age, bigger in size and very sophisticated in their behaviour.

"...this art would not have reached the average man nor would it have become so popular if yoga had not stuck to me..."

The first humiliation I faced was when the college students laughed at me and sarcastically looked at my physique. (I weighed about 32 kilos and my chest measured 22 inches only. After inhalation, it would increase by only half an inch). Their behaviour made me face them with boldness and accept the challenge. Another of my weak points was my language. I was neither good in English or in my own mother tongue, leave alone the language of the land - Marathi. Furthermore, I had no theoretical knowledge or practical experiences. Guruji did not explain the principles or the subtleties of yoga though I was practicing yoga. I was forced to call myself a yoga teacher although I did not have any qualification.

There were only two ways by which I could overcome these limitations: acquire second hand knowledge from books or practice vigorously with determination to gain first hand information through subjective experiences. I opted for the latter and began practicing for 10 hours a day to master what little I had learned from my Guru.

Soon, the college authorities appreciated my work and my services were extended for three years. I then continued teaching independently. The intense effort I had put in gave me good health and my teaching helped me earn enough to carry on with my bare necessities. It took me years of practice to gain control over my body. Slowly I achieved mental stability and my approach to the problems of life became more spiritual. I confess that my mind could not grasp the vast art and science of yoga in the beginning but with devoted effort my knowledge increased. It took years of patience and hard work to attract people from all walks of life toward yoga. I cannot put into words the suffering I underwent.

Difficulties During My Practice

My hard practices caused agony to my body, nerves and mind and to my very soul. I was tossed from one side to the other. Sometimes the body and at other times the mind, refused to cooperate, moving alternatively.

My spirit oscillated. My energies were sapped and I was mentally fatigued. The self within grew restless if I did not try and failure brought on dejection when I tried. Exhaustion very often brought me to the point of collapse. I could neither eat nor drink with comfort. Sleep was almost impossible as both my body and my mind were restless with pain and failure. Dejection and doubt tormented me though I continued practicing yoga for

years. My mind found no rest except in renewed effort. Each day was an ordeal but God's grace forced me to make one more attempt for every failure. I made enormous mistakes as I had no guidance but I learned discrimination from observing my own errors. I had to go without food for days when circumstances forced me to live on my own. Often I lived only on a cup of tea. My inner flame kept on persisting me to continue my daily practice with zeal and zest. Slowly I

"I am now inter-linked with Yoga and Yoga with me. It is now difficult to consider Yoga and myself as different entities."

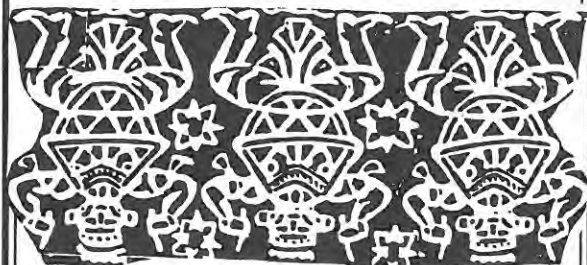
began to feel that my body was growing in strength and my mind was gaining stability. It was only in 1946 that an inborn interest arose in me though I started practicing yoga in 1934.

My Transformation With The Blessings Of The Lord

My sudden interest in yoga was brought about by a vision of our family deity Lord Venkateshwara (commonly known as Balaji) who smiled and blessed me in a dream. I was told by the Lord that my vocation was to practice and teach yoga. The Lord blessed me with one hand and gave me a few grains of rice with the other. The benevolent deity told me that I would no longer have to worry about my physical survival. The same night my wife too had a dream where Devi Lakshmi gave her a coin saying that she was returning what she had borrowed from me long ago. The very next day my pupils called me for lessons and from then on my stars have been good and the grace of God continues to be with me. My only regret is that I am not thanking Him, as I was quick to curse Him during the hard days of my life. From 1934 to 1946, yoga was

THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
PRESENTS

A Sunday Workshop **INVERSIONS**



with
Leslie Hogya

Explore the world upside down
and what we need to arrive there:
alignment, awareness, strength
and balance.

Sunday, April 14, 1996
10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Refreshments and discussion
to follow.

FEE: \$25.00 YOGA CENTRE MEMBERS
\$30.00 NON-MEMBERS

FOR MORE INFORMATION
PLEASE CALL
LESLIE AT 383 6301

attached to me but today it is I who am attached to yoga.
However, life has not been all that easy.

Hurdles In Practice

In the year 1958, I felt I was loosing 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 that married life and age were taking their toll. Even the forward bends were very painful. However, after another three years of effort I recovered and regained control. In 1979, I met with two scooter accidents immediately after the celebration of 60 years of my life. I had to start yoga all over again as a beginner after these accidents. All my old aches and pains reappeared. It took me more than eight years to fight and regain control. This again was due to my determined effort to get back my yoga and yoga graced me to embrace it with reverence.

The Effect and Power of Yoga

I will not say that I have completely mastered this art and science even today in spite of all my efforts. The more I work toward refinement, the more insignificant my efforts appear to be and I feel that the perfection has yet to be reached. This way, I am learning to be constant with this divine discontent that drives me on.

My Advice

Practice takes my mind and intelligence closer to the core of my being. I advise you on the basis of my experiences that we should not reduce our efforts if perfection tries to elude us. Yogic discipline lifted me from a subhuman existence and made me a man of confidence, sincere in my efforts, hardy and honest, clear in my thinking and clean in my conscience.

Probably this art would not have reached the average man nor would it have become so popular if yoga had not stuck to me and me to yoga. I, who was overlooked

and branded by people as a mad cap may be pardoned if I say that I am the proudest man on earth as I carried the message of yoga along with many of my pupils in the form of physical health, mental poise, intellectual clarity and spiritual solace for millions and millions of people all over the globe. Yoga has made me to see God in all. If yoga could do so much for me, who was not blessed in his early life, how much could yoga help those who started yoga in more fortunate circumstances would be beyond my imagination.

No doubt this art and science of yoga is vast and progress therein seems to be very slow. I was expected to live only up to the age of 20 because of my tuberculosis but yoga not only made me live a life of satisfaction and joy but also made me carry the message of Yoga all over the globe. I am now inter-linked with Yoga and Yoga with me. It is now difficult to consider Yoga and myself as different entities. I do not hesitate to share my experiences with my pupils and am still experiencing new feelings and new light even though age is telling upon me. I live in my cells and in my heart. I would like to practice Yoga till my last breath as my humble services to Yoga and my only wish is to prostrate to God, surrender to God, surrendering my last breath while performing Yoga. I am sure that after me, my pupils, my grandpupils and great grandpupils will carry the message of Yoga to every nook and corner of the globe so that all may live as one human race without geographical division or division of caste, colour, creed or sex. ♦

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Published by Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute and the Light on Yoga Research Trust.

THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
PRESENTS

YOGA for HIPS AND SHOULDERS

An all levels workshop
with
Ann Kilbertus

Sunday, March 10th, 1996

10:00 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Yoga Studio: Victoria YM-YWCA

Refreshments to follow

Asana practice and general anatomy descriptions will be used to guide participants toward a deeper understanding of these areas and how they relate to Yoga.

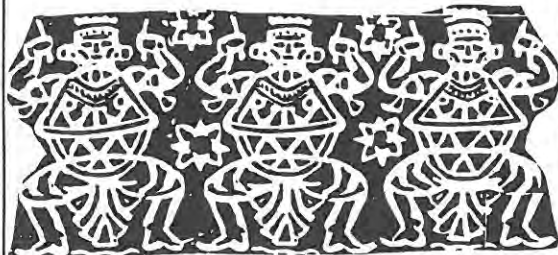
FEE: \$25.00 YOGA CENTRE MEMBERS

\$30.00 NON-MEMBERS

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YOGASANAS

THE SEARCH OF THE INFINITE IN THE FINITE BODY

B.K.S. IYENGAR

Our systems of philosophy are known as Darshanas (mirrors or direct spiritual perceptions of the Ultimate) the Real. These systems were based on the firm foundation of experience. Unfortunately, this great and glorious tradition of experiential moorings has been forgotten. Hair-splitting textual scholarship and logical skills of intellectual endeavour are taking place. Even yoga, which is a practical discipline par excellence, has become an arm chair philosophy.

Denigration of yogasanas as physical, which is of no use for those seeking the Supreme, has created doubts in many practitioners though Patanjali accords an important place for yogasanas in his treatise. According to Patanjali, mastery of asanas is a precondition for pranayama. In the sadhana pada, three sutras are devoted to asanas but in vibhuti pada, references to the wealth of the body (kaya sampat) and physical attainments (siddhi) are replete.

Many yogic texts emphasize dhyana-asanas (meditative postures). It is also equally true that yogic texts like Siva Samhita speaks of 84 lakh asanas revealing that there are as many asanas as species on this planet.

It is rather hard to describe asanas at one stretch as each asana has many subtle and fine adjustments, not only in the limbs of the body but on the very fabric of the intelligence and consciousness. One has to train and tone the body to have strength, flexibility, endurance, poise and integration to sit comfortably and correctly for a considerable length of time even in a meditative posture.

The value of asanas is explained as tapas by Patanjali in Yoga Sutras II.43 wherein he says that one has to burn out the impurities of the body, senses and mind for the soul to rekindle the spark of divinity which is hidden within. Hence, I feel that asanas are a form of tapas demanding rigorous discipline.

Today, this rigorous discipline has been transformed into soft instant yoga. This soft casual practice has lost the critical, scientific, experimental and experiential exposition of asanas but abundant stereotyped facile writings on the subject are available.

Though asanas have been accepted as an alternative method of medicine due to health consciousness in people, let us not forget the holistic nature of the body as each asana is filled with profound scientific know-how of the body and mind, art and philosophy, starting from the gross body and then piercing the various inner layers (sheaths) of the body to reach the inner ruler - the atman.

Asanas, as a science, deal with health and perfection of the body and helps to uncover the differences between the body and the mind in order to keep the self in a crystal pure state.

Healthy plants and trees alone yield good flowers and fruits and horticulture was developed so as to grow healthy plants and trees. Similarly, asanas sublimate the senses of perception and organs of action, develop harmony in the functioning of the body and keep the entire nervous system free from blockages. We cannot forget that the body is the only instrument to be used for worldly as well as spiritual pursuits.

Let us start to learn from the unknown, the visible object like the body before exploring the unknown in order to move toward the subtlest of the subtle - the Self.

Asanas play a major role in correcting the defects of matter (body) and energy (prana) so that they are educated to move toward the refinement of intelligence and consciousness.

The structure of the asana cannot change as each asana is an art in itself. But when the sadhaka performs, he does as if it is his best. One has to study the structure of each asana, arithmetically and geometrically

measuring the dimensions and analysing the forms, so that the real shape and form of each asana is expressed in the presentation.

Asanas may be angles or triangles, straight or oblique, circles or arcs, round or oval shaped. One has to note all these points in each asana by observation and study and then act in the field - the body - for the fielder - the Self - to perform in its pristine glory. It means total involvement of the whole body with senses, mind, intelligence, consciousness and self. One has to be careful not to create room for emptiness and forgetfulness in the known and the unknown body of a practitioner.

It is not right to perform asanas according to one's pliability and mobility. One has to mould the body to the asana and not an asana to fit into the body. It is at the same time not ethical to do the pose to one's convenience. Constant study and trial is needed to educate and mould the limbs of the body to fit into the right frame of each asana.

Know the structure, process and functions of an asana and how it interfaces with body, mind and soul. In each asana one has to feel the flow of intelligence and consciousness from the periphery of the body toward the centre - the atman - and from the atman toward the periphery. Asana is not a posture wherein one mindlessly and mechanically scrambles in and out.

First, one has to configure the structure of an asana and realize the basic or fundamental points by cognitively spacing the structural or anatomical body, by adjusting and arranging the limbs for placement in the movements, then one has to mould the body to fit into the structure of the asana. Resistance and movement should move in concord. Distribution of weight should be even in the muscles, bones, joints, mind and intelligence.

Cut the jewel of the body like a well-cut diamond by creating space in joints, muscles and skin so that the fine network of the body fits into the asana. This helps the senses of perception to cognize the cognitive action. This conjunction between organs of action and senses of perception brings reflection in thought and subjective understanding begins to prompt re-adjustment. Then one begins to act, react, reflect, re-adjust, correct and perform the best in a conscious way.

One can go further toward the subtle actions and feelings for further growth of sensitivity in intelligence

and consciousness, so that the body with the mind and consciousness come closer to the Self. The life force then moves from the skin to the Self and from the Self to the skin, introducing the new light of discrimination for evolution of purusha (atman) and involution of matter (prakriti) to unite. Then harmony and balance, equipoise and serenity set in. The doer, the body, and the asana become one - three in one.

From here the sadhaka uses the body as a bow, asanas as arrows to hit the target - the atman. Yoga is practiced in four stages viz., arambhavastha, ghatavastha, parichayavastha and nishpathyavastha.

In the arambhavastha asanas are done objectively and mechanically. In the ghatavastha one performs with a series of adjustments. Then one tries to acquaint the mind and intelligence with the pose. This is parichayavastha. Then one does a perfect pose with absolute consciousness where the divisions vanish and the asana, the body and the soul are blended together. This is nishpathyavastha.

Performance of asanas can also be studied and understood in terms of panchabhutas (five elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether), and their counterparts - infra-atomic particles (namely aroma, taste, shape, touch and vibration) to gain rich insights into the structure, process and functions of each asana.

Earth and aroma represent anatomical sheath and physical health, water and taste represent physiological sheath giving organic health. Fire and shape characterize mental health by burning out the toxins and bring coolness and poise in the mind.

Air and touch help the intelligence to discriminate and discern the effect of asana and to diffuse it all over the body, the mind and the self. This contact and touch enlivens the atman to expand or contract in the ethereal sheath listening to the vibration of the body known as the language of the body.

Each practitioner has to feel these five elements with their dynamic qualities working with unison in each asana or in each flow of energy in pranayama. Then the asana is perfect, comfortable and stable according to Patanjali. Till then it is not a perfect performance of an asana but a process toward it.

The final stage of perfection lies in the smooth

...continued p. 19

THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
AND THE VICTORIA YM-YWCA
ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE AN

IYENGAR YOGA INTENSIVE

July 15 - 20, 1996

with

Shirley Daventry French

Dr. Derek French

Leslie Hogle

Ann Kilbertus

Jim Rischmiller

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

Fee: \$375.00

Victoria is an active centre for Iyengar Yoga, whose teachers maintain close contact with Mr. Iyengar through regular trips to India and participation in conferences where he is in attendance. Our 1996 Summer Intensive will combine the skills of one of Canada's leading yoga teachers, Shirley Daventry French, with physician Derek French, occupational therapist Ann Kilbertus and experienced yoga teachers Leslie Hogle and Jim Rischmiller.

The residence at the Y has a limited amount of inexpensive accommodation for women. billets are available with members of the local yoga community and as a popular tourist centre, Victoria has a wide selection of hotels and motels.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
3918 OLYMPIC VIEW DRIVE R.R.4 VICTORIA, B.C. V9B 5T8
TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES: SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH (604) 478 3775
OR LESLIE HOGLE (604) 383 6301

Something for Everyone – at the Victoria Yoga Centre –

by Melanie Jollymore

Whether you're a seasoned yoga veteran, or a beginner still puzzled about how to roll your thigh bones in and spread your toes out, there is a Victoria Yoga Centre event in alignment with your needs. In February, I attended two workshops at opposite ends of the experience spectrum: Felicity Green's weekend workshop from the 2nd to the 4th, and Lauren Cox's beginners' workshop on the 18th (students in Lauren's workshop were inspired by her toe-spreading example, and dutifully undertook to "weave" their toes together to experience the sensation). On the more subtle level of sound vibration, Yoga Centre members and guests learned about the power of mantra from Jessica Sluymer of Radha House, at January's Friday Night Gathering.

Felicity Green is a senior student of Mr. Iyengar, and former occupational therapist, who travels the world teaching yoga. Several themes emerged out of Felicity's workshop, which was so well-attended we had to bring in extra chairs and bolsters to accommodate the crowd. She spoke of the 'creative resistance' we must develop in the poses to produce the right action and the release of energy. She reminded us that our spine does not stop at the 7th cervical vertebra, and urged us to be constantly aware of the front and back neck spine, to visualize the neck in its natural curve and to keep it in this position, rather than unnaturally extended up the back with the chin tucked in (which shortens the muscles of the front neck and puts strain on the upper trapezius). 'Rotation' was another key concept – not just the inner and outer rotation of the upper thigh bones, but also the rotation of the arm bones and of the shoulderblades in such poses as downward and upward facing dog and Gomukasana.

I think 'breakthrough' was a theme for the weekend as well. Although the tendency is to be absorbed in one's own body in yoga classes, and to pay little attention to others, I sensed from the energy in the room that many people were going places in their bodies they had never been before. Especially in the intense backbending session on Saturday afternoon. The sense of exhilaration was palpable. People who had never done Urdhva Danurasana found themselves in the full pose, and others worked themselves deeper into the pose than ever before, coaxed by Felicity's precise sequence of instructions and her gentle but demanding presence.

My major breakthrough was in Supta Virasana. I had been doing the pose with the support of two bolsters up until Christmas, and had just weaned myself to one a month before the workshop. To my amazement, Felicity helped me into the pose with none! Instead of supporting by back on a bolster, she set me up so my knees were supported on a rolled up blanket. This changed the mechanics of the pose to allow the psoas muscle, which runs from the lumbar spine to the top of the femur, to lengthen. As Felicity so aptly pointed out, this is the muscle that needs to lengthen to allow us to do the pose without support, so why not set it up in such a way as to encourage this progression? I can't say I was blissfully comfortable in this position, but it sure was an eye-opener.

Another breakthrough came in Sirsasana. I had always tried to minimize the pressure on the top of my head. Fearful of compressing the vertebrae in my neck, I would take the weight of the pose in my shoulders, then wonder why I was so tired and why my neck still felt jammed. The paradox presented by Felicity was that to prevent neck compression, we must actively push the tops of our heads into the floor, thereby increasing the pressure on the head but releasing the neck (that creative resistance concept). It also takes a lot of the load off the shoulders, so they don't get so tired that you end up collapsing in that area and compressing the neck after all. In comparison, I now feel like I'm floating in Sirsasana and can hold the pose much longer with no ill effects to my neck. In fact, doing the pose this way strengthens the neck.

The weekend with Felicity was truly incredible. She is a wonderful teacher whose instructions are crystal clear even when very complex. Mark your calendar for her next visit in November 1997.

Participants in Lauren's 'Yoga for Beginners' workshop experienced breakthroughs as well. Just under 20 students attended. Most had been to intro classes at the 'Y', but for one woman it was her first-ever exposure to yoga. She was doing so well we didn't even realize she had never done yoga before. The whole class was a breakthrough for her!

In addition to learning to spread their toes, the class learned to get in touch with the 'hinge' where the pelvis meets the thighs, lying on bolsters on tables, doing half-dog pose at the ledge and the full pose at the wall and in the ropes. We did more hip work in Supta Padangusthasana.

We concentrated on our feet and toes in Tadasana, and on inviting space into the body and quietening the mind. "Close your eyes and enter the inner room of your body temple," Lauren instructed. "When you're in the room, clear it up and make space to receive."

The room filled with a profound stillness as the students concentrated on reaching this place of inner silence. With quiet brains, open hips and active feet they were able to go on to do perfect tree poses, rooting into the earth and reaching up to the sky with unfaltering stability.

This workshop was a great opportunity for beginners to gain a deeper experience of yoga than possible in a one-and-a-half hour class. All the Sunday workshops offered by the Victoria Yoga Centre are designed for all levels, so beginners can benefit by attending. They work at their own level but see what the more advanced students are doing in the poses, and what is possible for them to achieve with practice.

A capacity crowd turned out to learn about mantra at the January Friday Night Gathering. Jessica Sluymer of Radha House spoke to us of the power of sound to invoke the Divine, and played the melodies of several mantra on the harmonium. I was fully convinced of the power of sound when one particular sustained high note provoked twitching around my left eye and temple so intense my eyes watered. We chanted AUM emphasizing all three syllables, and the more complex melodies of mantra like 'Om Tara' and 'Hari Om'.

A woman sitting near me with an angelic soprano made me feel as if I were in the presence of the Divine in that moment. I found out later she is an opera singer – what an addition to the chorus! We, and the universe, are physical manifestations of subtle vibrations, so the use of mantra connects us to this universal energy. According to Jessica and several others who spoke of their experience with mantra, regular chanting of a mantram as assigned by a teacher or chosen for oneself produces profound spiritual change and growth.

Melanie Jollymore is an apprentice teacher of Iyengar Yoga at the Victoria YM-YWCA.



...continued from p. 14

release from the asana by retracing the movements, step by step to come back to the starting point. One has to see that no jerks or jolts occur in the body, mind and soul nor the intellectual flame and energy fades or brightens. This is how the asana's performance has to end.

Observe and study the placement of muscles, joints, tissues and cells at the starting point; in the asana, feel the adjustment, reflect and re-adjust. Similarly, while releasing from the asana, retrace all the points and return to the starting point. This is the right key to be used for mastering an asana.

Conscious and regular practice keeps the cells of the body which have their own intelligence and memory to develop healthily and at the same time makes the gems of the body (hormones) wealthy, creating purity in thought to move closer toward the atman.

Thus, practice of asanas with reflective and meditative attention leads the sadhaka to move with the right attitude, right poise and stability bringing about loveliness, liveliness and dynamism. This method of practicing asanas carries one from the banks of sorrow toward the banks of emancipation and freedom. ♦

Tatah dvandvah anabhighatahah (Yoga Sutras II.48), i.e. From then on the sadhaka is undisturbed by dualities.

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Published by Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute and The Light on Yoga Research Trust.

The Gift: in remembrance of Swami Radha's Mantra Pronouncement, Sept 8, 1996

*As her precious body is gone from
our midst*

*So, too, is gone her body's pain
From this earth the fleeting body
the fleeting pain*

Both have disembarked.

*Yet embarked hath some other part.
That essence to me yet barely known
hath found its place*

*Its place of joy of sweetness
of grace*

*As she hath graced my mala
and yours, too*

*So hath she graced our lives
our destinies
our futures*

*She hath touched me to the core,
Old Friend*

And you, too.

*Never again shall we see those
gentle
crippled
hands*

*Do their work
Never again shall we see that
impish smile*

cont'...

transform her face...
 transform it for a
 moment too beautiful to imagine
 But always
 throughout my life
 and yours, too, Old Friend
 Shall remain the image of her
 strength
 her beauty
 Her example of toil and devotion
 Her endless work for thee
 and for me.
 My familiarity with and eventual
 acceptance of the word
 'gratitude'
 This gift I have received
 Along with it have come moments
 of humility
 some love
 some devotion
 some worship
 I shall grow, Swami Radha, as
 I am one seed planted
 by you
 Ever to be nourished by you
 by your legacy of
 love and compassion
 Ever to be touched and guided by you
 I shall grow. ♦

Jo Anna Hope
 November 30, 1995, Victoria

RADHA HOUSE



Saturday Morning with Tortoise Pose: Saturday, March 16, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. This is the Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga® approach to Kurmasana. Tight muscles, stiffness of the limbs point out tensions that may reflect many fears. Do you have the patience to develop the flexibility to practice this pose and explore its meaning? This workshop is followed by a potluck lunch.

Divine Light Invocation: Saturday, April 27, 10:00 a.m. – 6 p.m. The Divine Light Invocation is a powerful yogic practice for healing oneself and others and for realising the Light within.

Rose Ceremony: Part 1: Saturday, June 22, 8 – 9 p.m. **Part 2:** Sunday, June 23, 8 – 9 p.m. The Rose Ceremony is a personal dedication to the Divine, a time to re-establish one's commitment to the very finest within and to reaffirm one's ideals.

Continuing Classes: Kundalini: 11 classes, \$121. The Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga®: 11 classes: \$121; drop in: \$11 per class. Dreams: 11 classes, \$121. Bhagavad Gita Reading Group: No fee, registration is open. Sundays: Satsang and Bhajans.

Further daytime classes can be formed if interest warrants. Fees due at first class. Participants will be asked to sign a release form.

Private Sessions: Students are encouraged to work on their issues during classes and workshops. However, private sessions are available at \$40/hour.

Registration: and further information: 595 0177.

YOGA CALENDAR

MARCH

- 1: Friday night Yoga Centre Gathering.
- 2: In Metchosin: A Day of Yoga with Shirley Daventry-French.
- 10: Sunday Workshop.
- 30: Teachers' meeting.

APRIL

- 12: Friday night Yoga Centre Gathering.
- 14: Leslie Hogya and Carole Miller will lead a workshop.
- 27: Teachers' meeting.

MAY

- 10: Teachers' demonstration at Friday night Yoga Centre Gathering.
- 25: Teachers' meeting.

JUNE

- 31, 1, 2: Saltspring Retreat.
- 22: Teachers' meeting.

JULY

- 12-14: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' AGM on Saltspring.
- 22-27: Yoga Intensive in Victoria.

SEPTEMBER

- 27-29: Father Joe Pereira.

OCTOBER

- 25-27: Saltspring Retreats.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM:

Please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to the
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY. 927 Jenkins Avenue, Victoria, BC V9B 2N8.

Membership/Subscription fee is \$20.00 and renewable each January.

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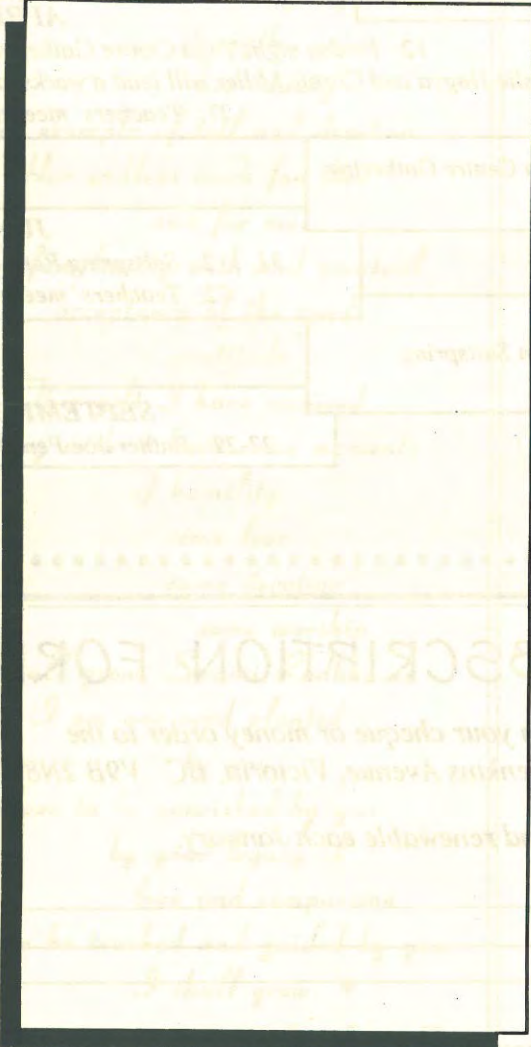
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* Do not mail me my newsletter during sessions, I'll pick one up at my Y class: ☐

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VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY
3918 Olympic View Drive, RR #4
Victoria, BC V9B 5T8





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



IYENGAR YOGA INTENSIVE

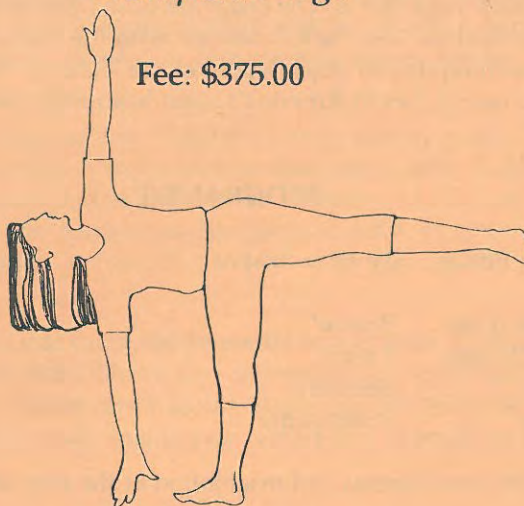
July 15 to 20, 1996

with

**Shirley Daventry French • Dr. Derek French
Leslie Hogya • Ann Kilbertus • Jim Rischmiller**

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

Fee: \$375.00



For further information contact:
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3918 Olympic View Drive
RR#4, Victoria, BC V9B 5T8
Telephone Enquiries:

Shirley Daventry French (604) 478-3775 or Leslie Hogya (604) 383-6301

SUMMER OF '96

Iyengar Yoga Intensive in Victoria

July 15 to 20, 1996

The Victoria Yoga Centre, in association with the Victoria YM-YWCA, is pleased to present its eighth annual summer yoga intensive. Victoria is an active centre of Iyengar Yoga, whose teachers maintain a close contact with Mr. Iyengar through regular trips to India and participation in national and international conferences such as the one he attended in Toronto in 1993. Our 1996 intensive will combine the skills of one of Canada's leading yoga teachers, Shirley Daventry French with physician Derek French, occupational therapist Ann Kilbertus and experienced yoga teachers Leslie Hoya and Jim Rischmiller. Shirley will be the principal teacher for the asana and pranayama classes, assisted by the other teachers who will also present afternoon seminars.

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, 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

Monday, July 15 to Friday, July 19 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

*There will be a brief introduction and orientation at the start of the Monday class.

Saturday, July 20

9:00 am to 12:00 noon	Asana
1:30 pm	Picnic lunch and afternoon of rest and relaxation at the French's residence and nearby Witty's Lagoon Beach & Park

THE TEACHERS

Shirley Daventry French is a longtime student of the Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar and a respected teacher of his method of Yoga. She has been teaching in Victoria for twenty-four years, and gives workshops nationally and internationally. Shirley has studied in India many times with Mr. Iyengar, most recently this past winter. 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 practical work of asana and breathing.



Derek French is a physician in Victoria, BC with a special interest in musculo-skeletal problems, chronic pain syndromes, stress management and hypnotherapy. 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.

Leslie Hogya has been teaching yoga in Victoria for over twenty years. She has travelled twice to Pune to study with B.K.S. Iyengar and his daughter Geeta. Leslie has also studied extensively with Swami Radha and Swami Padmananda at Yasodhara Ashram and Radha House, Victoria. She has been a director and active member of the Victoria Yoga Centre since its inception.

Ann Kilbertus is an occupational therapist presently working for Capital Regional District Community Rehabilitation. She is also an experienced yoga teacher who, in her classes, draws from both her health care training and extensive study of Iyengar Yoga. In 1992, Ann travelled to India to study intensively with B.K.S. Iyengar and his daughter Geeta.

Jim Rischmiller has been a student of Iyengar Yoga since 1981 and a teacher since 1986. He has studied three times in India with B.K.S. Iyengar and Geeta Iyengar, most recently in 1991. Jim is the Past-President of the Victoria Yoga Centre. He is also studying Kundalini Yoga at Radha House, Victoria and has a special interest in integrating the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita with daily living.

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: \$224.64 for a single room with shared bathroom, \$336.96 for a double room. Prices include tax. A deposit should accompany your request for accommodation (\$37.44 single; \$56.16 double). Early reservations are recommended.

Bed and Breakfast - \$20.00 a day

University of Victoria Residence - Single rooms and double rooms are available; \$36.95 and \$51.65 per night. 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 15 TO 20, 1996

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

Province _____ Postal Code _____ Telephone _____

Please find me Bed and Breakfast accommodation in a private home. ☐ \$20.00 per day
(Pre-payment is required by June 15 when balance of course fees is due. Send a separate cheque for this amount payable to Victoria Yoga Centre.)

Please reserve a room in the Y Women's Residence

July 14 to 20: ☐ \$224.64 single ☐ \$336.96 double

Non-refundable deposit is enclosed ☐ \$37.44 single ☐ \$56.16 double

TO REGISTER A deposit of \$150.00 will reserve a place in this course. Payment in full is due on June 15, 1996. Refunds, less a \$50.00 cancellation fee, will be given if notice of cancellation is received by June 15. After June 15 refunds will be given only when the space is filled by another student.

REGISTRATION FORM

Iyengar Yoga Intensive - July 15 to 20, 1996

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

Province _____ Postal Code _____ Telephone _____

Are you a teacher? _____

Briefly describe your yoga experience.

- ☐ Deposit of \$150.00 enclosed
☐ Full payment of \$375.00 enclosed

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

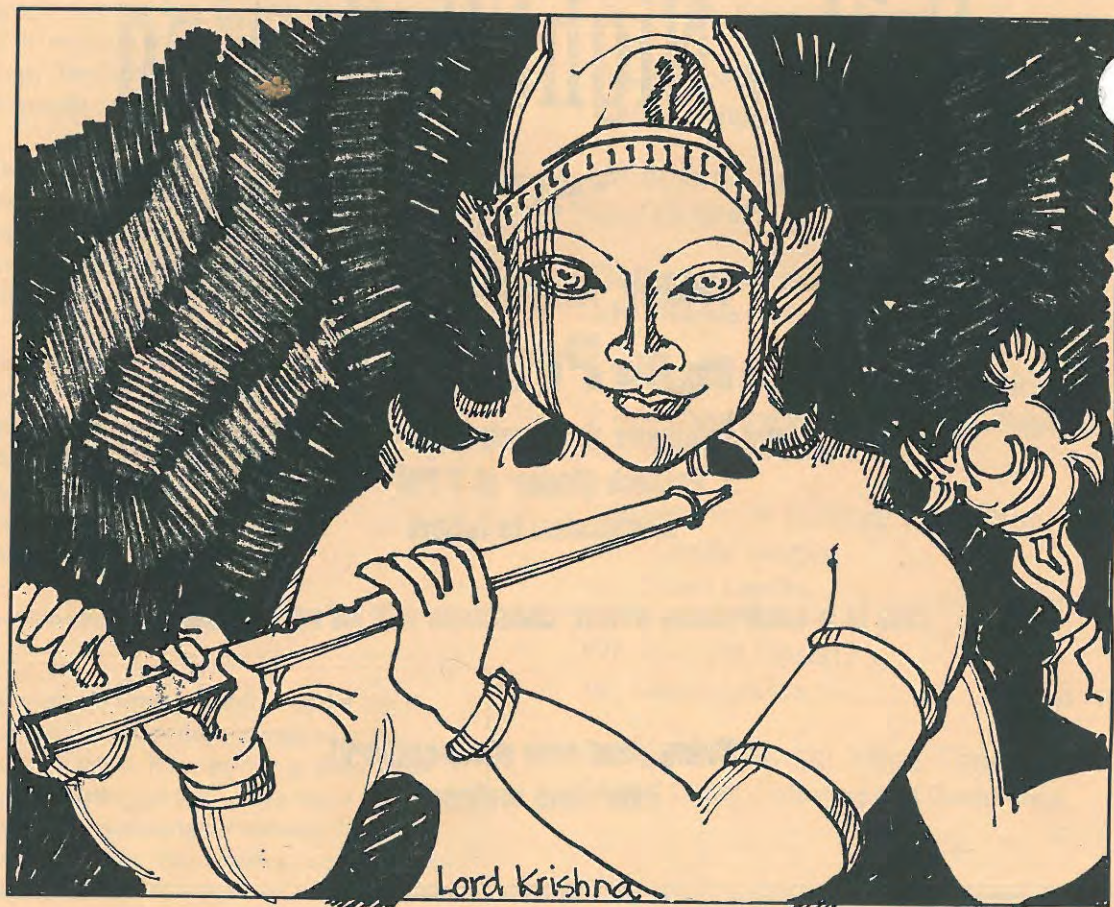
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



May/June 1996

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The
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and the
Victoria YM-YWCA

Welcome you to a



Friday Night Gathering



Friday, May 10, 1996

Big Big Practice

and teachers demonstration at 6 PM

Potluck dinner at 7 PM*

Discussion to follow

This is a fundraising event; donations will be appreciated.

***(Bring your own plate/cutlery).
Everyone welcome**

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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 persons of the 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 the Victoria area and 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:

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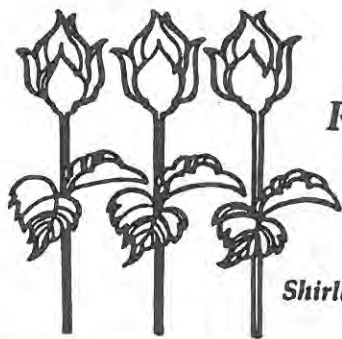
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Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

*Burning zeal in practice,
self-study and study of scriptures,
and surrender to God are the acts of yoga.*

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras: II-1
translation by B.K.S. Iyengar in
Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

Why yoga? Why has it assumed such a central role in your life? What brought you to yoga? These questions were posed by someone who was interviewing me for a small regional newspaper published monthly in the area where I live. This man, who is one of the editors of this publication, had just completed a course of classes at my home studio so knew a little about my work.

I was not surprised to be asked the above questions. In the West, interest in yoga has grown over the past thirty years, but it is still a rarity to meet an otherwise normal and rational woman, who on the outside looks pretty much like everyone else, whose life has become so involved with an esoteric Eastern practice. What did surprise me, was that a very large part of this interview was devoted to questions about my life before I began yoga. I was also surprised at how I little I wanted to talk about this part of my life preferring to get on to what interests me now. Of course, I understand that the philosophical precepts of yoga are, at best, of limited concern to most of the

readers of this newspaper, while they may be interested in what led me to forsake one way of life for another - and I do hope the message will come across that Yoga is, above all, a way of life.

At other times, in other places, with less discerning interviewers, I have been asked: Is Yoga a religion? Is it a cult? Are you cured yet? And the perennial questions: can you do lotus posture and stand on your head?

It's not that I had a bad or a dull life, before yoga. It was full and interesting, challenging and diverse, with many adventures, some of which have become the stuff of family folklore. It was a good life, so what did bring me to yoga?

Once upon a time, there was a young Englishwoman who met a young Englishman. They fell in love, and after many trials and tribulations, they overcame the obstacles placed in their path, got married, travelled, immigrated to Canada where he opened a medical office, she had three lovely children (in four years), and they lived happily for a while. Then questions began to surface like: What am I doing here? Why am I here? What is the purpose of my life? Who am I?

There was a tendency to answer (or avoid answering) many of these questions by blaming, i.e. if only I were still in England, why did I let him talk me into coming to Canada; or by trying to change the world out there, i.e. becoming involved in politics, trying to change the local education system, and the health care system in the province. From time to time another question arose: why don't you try to change yourself?

One day, I decided to explore that possibility. I started Tai Chi, was initiated into Transcendental Meditation, and also took leave of my family to attend a week long course which was grandly called "Sensitivity Training" and turned out to be an encounter group - a popular form of self-discovery in the late sixties. What I began to encounter was myself, and I did not like much of what I saw.

I have always had an interest in sports and physical exercise, so after my children were born I joined the Y and became involved in fitness classes and swimming. I also fulfilled a lifelong desire to study ballet, and joined a beginners' class for adults who had never danced before. Then the time of my dance class was changed to an inconvenient hour, and that same week in the changing room at the Y I met a woman who was taking yoga classes there. What she told me sounded intriguing, so I substituted yoga for ballet. At first I was there merely for the exercise, but then began to notice something more was happening - to my mind!

The teaching was not Iyengar Yoga which had not yet arrived in Canada, but I was fortunate to find a good teacher who herself wanted to learn more about yoga. When she discovered that there was a noted yogini who had established an ashram not too far away in central British Columbia, she invited Swami Radha to Victoria. She also recommended Mr. Iyengar's book *Light on Yoga* as the best book on yoga which was available, and often in class we worked with it as our guide. I bought the book and a few weeks' later attended a lecture given by Swami Radha. The seeds were sown for my yogic journey.

I listened to Swami Radha speaking about yoga philosophy and psychology, and I was intrigued. She even asked the group some of the questions I had been asking myself: Who are you? What is the purpose of your life? What makes your life worth living? I was excited, so much of what she said made sense; but she left me with more questions than answers, and I continued my quest by studying at Yasodhara Ashram, attending more classes and workshops in and around Victoria, and eventually travelling to the source of these teachings, India itself. It was at Yasodhara Ashram that I took my first class in Iyengar Yoga taught by a teacher who had just returned from studying with Mr. Iyengar in Pune, and it was she who paved the way for me to go there.

Yoga took over more and more of my thoughts, words and deeds to the point where once, in frustration because I was not meeting some of his expectations,

my husband burst out that I was a yoga fanatic. The zeal of fanaticism is always misdirected, but zeal is a necessary ingredient on the yogic path which is steep and twisting, paved with temptations to give it all up, and other obstacles, such as seductive suggestions that you have done enough, you deserve a rest, and there must be an easier way to self-realisation.

In the West, Yoga is seen largely as a means of becoming more flexible or more relaxed, both of which are by-products of the practice. However, facing your limitations, physical or otherwise, is not relaxing; it can be intimidating, frustrating and exhausting—and is certainly hard work unless you are one of those rare souls who has evolved sufficiently to be able to surrender and practise non-attachment in all aspects of life.

Over two thousand years ago, the renowned sage Patanjali, an expert in yoga, compiled and systematised the available knowledge and teachings of yoga into one hundred and ninety six terse aphorisms or maxims which are known as *Patanjali's yoga-sutras*. Sutra means thread, and in her book *Language of the Gods*, Judith Tyberg says: "Sutras are pearls of thoughts sewn together on one string." Originally written in sanskrit, an ancient language in which many of the Eastern spiritual texts were written, the sutras have been translated by many people, numerous commentaries have been written on them, and they are the subject of a great number of books, large and small.

Patanjali divided his aphorisms into four sections. The first chapter *Samadhi Pada* is directed towards individuals who have already travelled far along the yogic path (in this life or past lives). According to Mr. Iyengar in his book *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, this chapter "is directed towards those who are already highly evolved to enable them to maintain their advanced state of cultured, matured intelligence and wisdom."

For the rest of us, while it is important to study the first chapter which gives a good overview of yoga, the workings of the mind, and the obstacles we face, the

work we have to do is more clearly laid out in the second chapter which is called *Sadhana Pada*. *Sadhana* is spiritual practice, the means by which one can attain spiritual realisation. Judith Tyberg says: "Sadhana is the act of mastering Yoga. It is one's worship or method of spiritual fulfilment, spiritual self-training and exercise."

Sadhana Pada begins with a definition of *Kriya Yoga*, the yoga of action which has three tiers: *tapas*, (self-discipline); *svadhyaya* (self-study); *Isvara pranidhana* (surrender to God). *Kriya Yoga* includes the three great paths of yoga: *karma marga* (the path of action), *jnana marga* (the path of knowledge), *bhakti marga* (the path of devotion). Those of us who practise Iyengar Yoga are practising *Kriya Yoga*. In the third sutra of this chapter, Patanjali lists five afflictions (*klesas*), which impede progress: ignorance, egoism, attractions, repulsions, and clinging to life, and further states that ignorance is the source of all the rest. Does this sound familiar to anyone?

At the end of *Sadhana Pada* we are introduced to *Astanga Yoga* (the eightfold path or eight limbs of yoga). Here we find *tapas*, *svadhyaya* and *Isvara pranidhana* appearing again under the heading *niyama* or individual ethical observances which are the underpinnings of the practice of *asana* and the second of the eight limbs - *asana* being the third. The practice of Iyengar Yoga also incorporates *Astanga Yoga* which is introduced towards the end of *Samadhi Pada*.

These divisions are merely a means of creating a structure within which to do our work, a structure which offers support and guidance. Study of the sutras helps us to develop a better understanding of this path on which we have embarked, like a map of the territory which gives a sense of direction. Study of the sutras can help us to move along a little more quickly, and prevent us from losing our way or wasting too much time by going down cul-de-sacs which lead nowhere. Mr. Iyengar always refers to his work simply as Yoga, and it was a long time before he accepted the use of the term Iyengar Yoga even

though his students had begun to use it as a means of identifying themselves as pupils of this Master. Now it is widely used, teachers are being trained in this type of Yoga all over the world, and if you practise Iyengar Yoga you are part of an unbroken tradition which can be traced back to Patanjali. I am honoured to be a part of this tradition.

What a blessing to have had the opportunity to study with two great contemporary masters of yoga, but with this comes a responsibility to do the work myself and pass on what I can to others! Swami Radha may have gone physically, but her teaching lives on. B.K.S. Iyengar is still alive with a worthy disciple in his daughter Geeta who under his tutelage has become a master of yoga in her own right. I hope I will never stop learning from them, so that I can develop a deeper understanding of the ancient teachings of yoga, remarkable teachings which have survived for thousands of years. This is what I would have like to have talked about in my newspaper interview, but this column is probably a better place for such ruminations.

Swami Radha used to talk about Lord Krishna's flute, on which he plays a variety of tunes to entice different people to approach the Divine. A newspaper article may encourage someone to try yoga for the first time, while hopefully an article like this one encourages those who have already embarked on the path of yoga to read and reflect on the yoga-sutras and what relevance they might have in their life. Beginner or advanced practitioner, for all of us there was a remark, an event, an illness, an injury, something or other which got us into yoga in the first place. For me it was because my dance class was cancelled.

Om Krishna Guru.

NOTE: Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali by B.K.S. Iyengar, is available for purchase through the Victoria Yoga Centre at \$19.00 a copy from Linda Benn at (604) 478-0757, or in Victoria order through your yoga teacher.

THE VICTORIA



YOGA CENTRE

is pleased to present

The 1996 Weekend Retreat
at The Saltspring Centre
with

SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH

For All Levels:

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

Friday, May 31, 6:00 pm through Sunday, June 2, 2:00 pm

Registration begins – March 20th for Victoria Yoga Centre members only
Fee: \$225.00

March 30th for non-members
Fee: \$245.00 (includes membership fee)
Camping: as above, less \$30.00

Refunds are given only in the event that the space is filled.

All refunds are subject to a 15% administration fee.

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 cheques – for the full amount – payable to the Victoria Yoga Centre
and mail to

Maggi Feehan, 221 Ontario Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1N1
For further information phone Maggi Feehan at 383-9987 or Wendy
Boyer at 598-9321

There will be a 1996 fall retreat, in October, so please watch for the flyer.

An Auspicious Coming Event

—Geeta S. Iyengar in the United States, May 1996



In May, Guruji's foremost disciple, his daughter Geeta, will visit North America for the first time as guest of honour at a Teachers' Exchange for certified Iyengar Yoga Teachers sponsored and organised by the Iyengar Yoga National Association of the United States. Geeta was also invited to Canada by the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association, but there was insufficient time for her to visit both countries. However, she ended her letter on an encouraging note by saying: "Therefore, this time I won't be able to come to Canada, but certainly some other time." Let us hope so!

Geeta cannot visit us this year, but a number of Canadian teachers will be travelling to Colorado to honour her and to participate in this very special event which is being held at Estes Park, Colorado from May 19th to 24th. Four Victoria teachers are among the Canadian contingent: Linda Benn, Lauren Cox, Shirley Daventry French and Ann Kilbertus, accompanied by Sheri Berkowitz of Salt Spring Island.

Sheri, who has recently moved to the west coast, was influential in establishing Iyengar Yoga programs in Winnipeg and Kenora. We wish all of them bon voyage, and look forward to learning from them on their return.

To Geetaji

- Welcome to North America, and many blessings for a safe and pleasant journey.

To our colleagues in the United States

- Thank your efforts in bringing Geeta to North America, and extending an invitation to Canadian teachers to participate in the ongoing learning.

With warmest wishes for a successful conference,

From the executive and members of the Victoria Yoga Centre, and the Iyengar Yoga Teachers' of Victoria, Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands of British Columbia.

What is an Asana?

by Karl Baeir

What is an asana? This is a question aimed at the core from which and by which an asana is what it is and as it is. It is a philosophical inquiry into its essence.

From the old Indian sources through the Yoga literature of our times the question about the essence of asana has attracted astonishingly little attention. The texts are mostly interested in the way the poses should be performed and their affects.

I wish to give two examples, an old one and a new one, to prove this assertion.

An 'ancient' explanation of an asana

Patanjali states in Yoga Sutra (YS) II. 46 '*sthira sukham asanam*' i.e., The posture is to be firm and delightful. This is surely not intended as a definition of the essence of asana. Patanjali already presupposes a certain understanding of what an asana, a so-called yogic posture, is. He does not say what he means by an asana, and the essence of it in which the possibility of firmness, happiness, and all the other qualities and effects of asana are rooted, is not disclosed. He only describes the way it should be performed. In a similar manner YS II. 47 and II. 48 define the criteria of perfection in asana and the results of mastering it.

A 'modern' explanation of an asana

M.M. Gore in 'Anatomy and Physiology of Yogic Practice' has made an attempt to explain what is an asana (p 72-77; 1991). "Traditionally," he says correctly, "asana means a sitting position or position of the body which contributes to the steadiness of the body and mind and the sense of well being. The term asana is also used to indicate a carpet of grass, well tanned deer-hide, a square piece of cloth or a mat which is utilised as a comfortable (seat) on the ground for sitting". With these introductory words of his inquiry he describes the traditional meaning of the term and paraphrases YS II. 46.

Obviously this only gives an outline of what an asana is. The core of the matter is not yet touched, because the essential inner process which leads to steadiness of body and mind and a sense of well being is not given. After this, he criticizes three translations of the term (asana) into English because they do not capture its essential meaning: Asana as a posture, pose and exercise.

Is asana a 'posture'?

Firstly "Asanas are often translated as (postures). It is true that asanas are the modified part of the three basic human postures i.e., standing, sitting or lying postures and bear most of the characteristics of posture. Yet asanas and postures differ in many respects. The term does not convey fully the meaning of asana". What are the differences? He argues that the state of the mind is not very important in the postures used in daily life. Most of the time we are not aware of the postures we perform. We develop and maintain them without noticing them while we are attentive to the various kinds of thoughts, tasks and work we do. On the contrary "Asana is acquired voluntarily, with full concentration on what and how we are doing it."

Is asana a 'pose'?

Another translation of asana is pose. According to Gore this is also not a suitable word. "Pose is not a natural position of the body. It is assumed artificially to express some emotion or thought." A Yogi performing asanas is not an actor who poses to express some feelings.

Is asana an 'exercise'?

The term 'exercise' is also not satisfying because it is linked too much to sports and gymnastics. "The word exercise gives us an idea of quick and forceful movements of the body or its parts and repeated actions which usually lead to exertion, tension, and fatigue. Asanas, on the other hand, are practiced slowly and steadily which bring about physical and mental relaxation. The purpose of body building is

absent in asanas." The background of this argument is the style of performing asanas at Lonavla. But even if one takes into account that in the modern schools of Yoga which were inspired by Krishnamachar (Iyengar, Desikachar, Patabhi Jois), dynamic ways of practicing were developed which also train the muscular strength of the body, the term "exercise" without further explanation does not convey the peculiar feature of asana which differs from sports and gymnastic exercises.

Is asana a 'postural pattern'?

After the critical discussion of the usual translations of asana, Gore tries to give a new one. He translates and thereby defines asana as a "postural pattern". Although this proposal is not bad it is not sufficient for an essential definition of asana. Gore does not explain the significant structure of the inner life of the so-called postural pattern. The experience which discloses the true meaning of asana is not analyzed. Instead of this Gore, like all the other authors on the subject, immediately turns to describe how they have to be performed and their effects.

These two examples may be enough to show that the problem of a definition of the essence of asana from Patanjali up to our time is an unanswered question.

But how should one be able to practice something and how should one understand the effects of practicing, if no one has no insight concerning its essence?

What is the essence of an asana?

It is true that every attentive practice leads towards an inarticulate familiarity with the essence of whatever is practiced. But the articulated question and answer about the essence is nevertheless of great importance because it helps one to avoid wrong ways of practicing and points to the deepness of experience. A deepness which is very soon hidden through a superficial understanding and which even the very experienced practitioner has to bring to her/his mind again and again to bring deeper life to it. Senseless and shallow routine starts if the essence of asana is

not understood or forgotten. Especially the teacher should have a profound and clear knowledge of the essence of whatever she or he teaches because of her/his responsibility of communicating the very core of the subject that is taught.

During my stay in Pune in July 1992 I had the opportunity of discussing various problems concerning the history and philosophy of Iyengar Yoga with its founder. In one of our talks I asked Guruji the question which was not answered by the yoga books that I had read: "What is an asana?" He thought it over for a moment and then gave the following concise, philosophical definition:

What is the definition of an asana?

Asana is a process of posing and reposing through which by balancing its involutory movement the mind reaches the state of tranquillity.

This statement tries to unveil to some extent the essence of asana. In a terse, sutra-like form it contains important thoughts which are worth being considered by every Yoga practitioner, because they are able to guide us into the deepness of the yogic experience. I shall give a short commentary by explaining the terms of the definition.

Asana Is A Process

Asana is not something static. It is not a transformation of a living person into a statue made of stone. On the contrary according to Guruji, the very essence of the asana is a steady movement, a process which does not simply end but finds its fulfillment in tranquillity.

One tends to think that what can be seen on the photographs of Yoga books is identical with the asana. But what one sees on the photograph is never the pose in its true being; it is a snapshot which only captures one short moment of what in reality is an ongoing process of posing and reposing.

From the point of view of the practitioner's experience there is no pose (as an externally perceived object), there is only the act of carrying out the

posturing. The question which now arises is how the process of carrying out the asana is structured. It is answered in the next part of Guruji's asana-philosophy.

Asana Is A Process Of Posing And Reposing

The terms posing and reposing define the peculiar character of the process, which constitutes the essence of asana. Both have their special meaning within Guruji's asana-philosophy.

Posing is not the artificial expression of some thought or emotion, as Gore defined it, but: "Posing means action. Pose is assuming a fixed position of the limbs and the body as represented by the particular asana being performed." (*Tree of Yoga*, p. 54). The word repose is used in an unusual way: "Reposing means reflection on the pose. The pose is re-thought and readjusted so that the various limbs and parts of the body are positioned in their places in a proper order and feel rested and soothed, and the mind experiences the tranquillity and calmness of the bones, joints, muscles, fibres and cells." (*Tree of Yoga*, p. 54-55)

As a combination of posing and reposing carrying out an asana reveals itself as a process with a circular structure. The practitioner repeatedly comes back to the assumed pose to readjust it. The readjusted pose is the starting point for new readjustment. What can be gained through this strenuous purification? Which are the principles that give the readjustment its direction?

A clue is hidden in the term repose. Notice the double meaning that Guruji gives to it: Re-pose means to take up the positioning again, to re-adjust the pose, and secondly repose in the usual sense of the word means rest, coming to a standstill, gaining silence.

I shall speak about this aim of the asana at the end of the commentary. Before this we must consider the means by which tranquillity is gained. What are the principles that guide us to tranquillity? And most of all: What is the nature of the process of posing and reposing?



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Asana As Posing And Reposing Is A Kind Of Balancing

Guruji describes the process of posing and reposing as a balancing movement. What is balance? To be in balance is a way of being which is granted to entities that have a specific structure. A thing is able to be in balance or out of balance when its being is constituted in its wholeness by antagonistic elements which are related to each other in such a way that they are able to harmonize and so create a unity with one another or on the contrary, disturb each other and destroy the wholeness of the entity which they constitute.

Balancing these constitutive elements means to strive for a state of equilibrium between them so that they work together in building up and unifying the wholeness which they constitute although they oppose each other. For example, in order to ride a bicycle the tendency to fall to the right side and the opposite tendency to fall to the left have to be balanced. There is a danger of a cyclist losing his balance if the bicycle leans toward one side and then the opposed tendency has to be strengthened by adding more weight on the other side. The attempt to equalize the predominance of one side by giving more weight to the other is always liable to cause the reversed loss of balance. The art of balance is the art of not overemphasizing one side. If the movement is balanced it doesn't wobble from side to side but is held on the straight middle line. On the middle line the opponents which constitute it become invisible. The result is a steady and calm movement with a single direction that does not fluctuate.

Asana Is The Blanching Of The Evolution And Involution.

To be in balance means to be constituted by the integration of antagonistic principles. Therefore a definition which describes the essence of asana as balance has also to define these opposed primary constituents.

In every pose two basic contradictory tendencies are set in motion which Guruji in his definition calls

involution and evolution. As in every structure which is constituted by a balancing process, they always are in danger of overwhelming each other, so that equation is lost. Therefore, the basic task in the process of posing and reposing is to balance involution and evolution.

Evolution is the movement from the center to the periphery, from the inside to the outside, from the muscles to the skin, from the source of activity into the vastness, openness of our world. It is connected with effort, fire, sweat and heat which awaken our sleeping powers. Evolution in asana means to bring the stretch to its maximum. One could call it *pravritti marga*, the part of activity within the performance of asana, which is a creation of space that opens the practitioner towards the world. According to Guruji, this principle also has an analogy in the yoga sutras which describe the first of the two necessary means to gain the restraint of the fluctuations of consciousness as *abhyasa*, or dedicated, steadfast effort (YS I. 13-14).

Involution is the contrary movement from the periphery to the center, from outside to inside, from the skin towards the muscle, from the world towards the self. It is the element of relaxation and surrender within extension. Involution in asana represents what is called in Indian philosophical terms *nivritti marga*. Regarding the yoga sutras this element corresponds to *vairagya*, freedom from desires, detachment (YS I. 15-16).

With concern to the practice of asana, involution is a more inner and hidden movement than the evolutionary one. Guruji gave a practical example of this principle in one of his talks; "Stretch your hand. You say 'oh, I feel my finger has got long'." But when I stretch, I see how much my energy has come back nearer to me. In my stretching I don't look at the length of my hand, I look at the length of my energy which comes from the peripheral areas to my mind. That is *vairagya*. In my practice, although it appears to you external, I am a *vairagya* inside" (70 glorious years, p.215).

Both tendencies of movement, the evolutionary and the involutionary seem to be contradictory. But nevertheless, in a correct pose they are interlocked and even support each other. The more evolution, the more involution. Only if we open ourselves and extend to the maximum do the barriers break and we can enter the inner core because perfect extension creates a flow of awareness from the periphery to the source of activity, the center of the body and its rootedness in the ground. Thus complete extension points back to where it starts from and unveils the source of the movement.

In his *Tree of Yoga*, Guruji compares the twofold movement of evolution and involution with the movement of life within a tree: "In practicing asanas, you feel the energy flowing in your system. You feel how it is working, how it is flowing. In the tree, the energy flows from the seed to the leaves, and as the leaves make contact with the air they feed energy back on a reverse journey through the branches and the stem to the root, and the root makes the tree grow further to produce the blossom, fruits and flowers." (Tree, 116)

The aim of asana as balancing involution and evolution is tranquillity of the mind.

If evolution and involution, *abhyasa* and *vairagya*, *pravritti marga* and *nivritti marga* are balanced within the pose a new tranquillity of awareness emerges. The practitioner is now in a state of poise and tranquillity.

Calmness and tranquillity are not the mere opposite of movement but its perfection. A movement which is balanced and without inner or outer hindrances has the quality of a calm and steady flow. It does not disturb the hidden center of the moving entity but reveals it. Therefore, tranquillity is not boring emptiness wherein nothing happens but the peak experience of abundance and vitality connected with a stability and centeredness which keep the practitioner in steady touch with his/her innerself. Tranquillity does not mean being untouchable and non sentient but it means the ability to span the openness of the

universe and remember the core of existence even in difficult situations. Calmness is the appearance of the origin. It happens when the presence of the source shines forth. Whenever we are touched by the source of being we become calm because our wishes and desire vanish as we feel an inner abundance which has no end.

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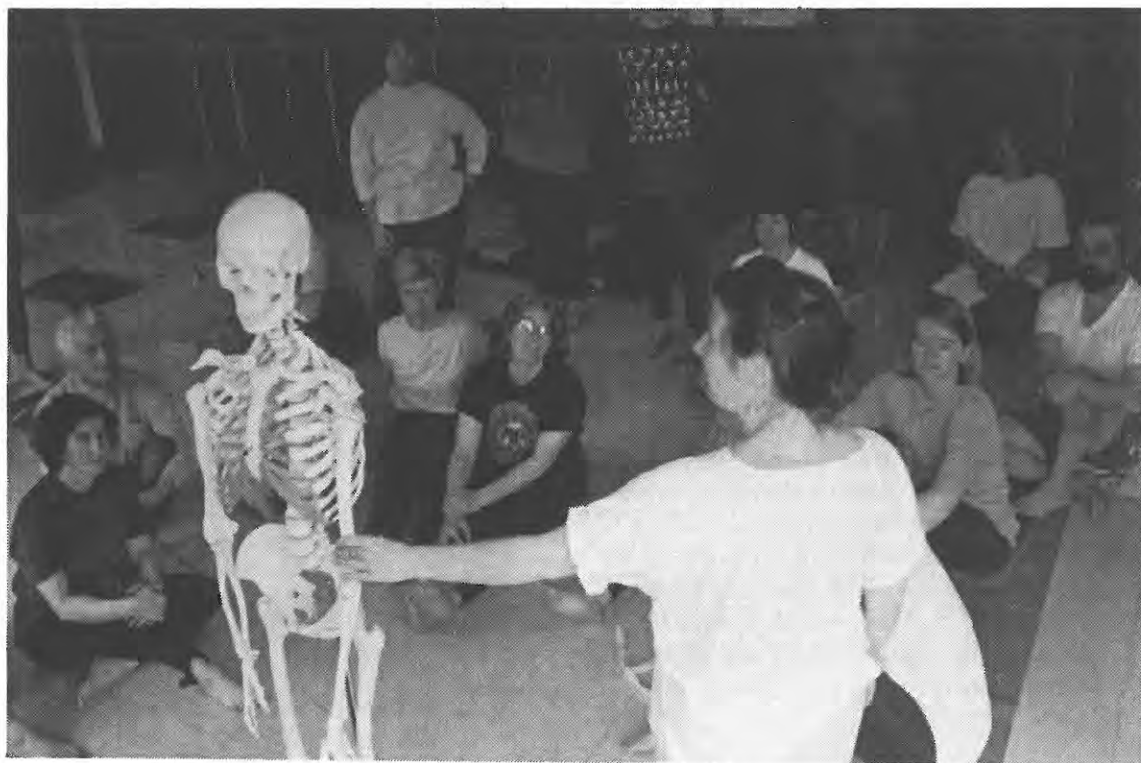
ANN KLBERTUS' NEPHEW - LUKA

Getting to Know Your Girdles

by *Melanie Jollymore*

While women no longer squeeze themselves into those anachronistic, constrictive undergarments known as 'girdles', many women and men find their movement restricted by the tightness of their girdles. Not the rubber kind - these girdles are made of bone, and encased in ligament, tendon and muscle. They are the pelvic girdle and the shoulder girdle, complex parts of our anatomy that provide support and structure and allow us to move our arms and legs. This range of motion can become limited over time as physical and emotional stresses tighten the muscles connected to the hip and shoulder joints. Indeed, these areas seem prone to stiffness, and therefore a great deal of attention is paid to opening the hips and shoulders in yoga.

Occupational therapist and yoga teacher Ann Kilbertus helped 25 students become more familiar with the workings of their hips and shoulders at the March 10 Yoga Centre workshop. She was ably assisted in this by a skeleton borrowed from the Arthritis Centre, dubbed 'Fred Skelly' by the group (the Yoga Centre is looking into getting its own skeleton). Students crowded around for an inside look at the structure and mechanics of these important joints, as Ann explained their components. The pelvic girdle consists of the sacrum and the two pelvic bones, each composed of three bones - the ilium, ischium and pubis - fused together. These bones form a socket for the head of the femur, or thigh bone. The shoulder (pectoral) girdle consists of the collarbones (clavicle) and shoulderblades (scapula), attached to the skeleton via a tiny joint at the sternum but otherwise floating free. This gives great mobility to the arms, which are connected to the shoulderblades via a ball and socket joint and layers of ligament and muscle.



'FRED SKELLY' & ANN



First, we concentrated on the pelvic girdle. "Before we can begin to work with the hips," said Ann, "we must learn to stand, to bear our own weight properly." We practised Tadasana with blocks between our upper thighs to teach our femurs how to rotate inward and push back. With clearer pictures in our minds of what was going on in our bodies, thanks to Fred Skelly, we were able to relate easily to Ann's instruction to imagine rolling the pelvis over the top of the hip joint going into Uttanasana, maintaining the leg action with the block. We repeated Tadasana and Uttanasana with the block between every standing pose, to continually bring awareness back to the alignment and energy of the legs. According to Ann, this kind of repetition is required to create an understanding in the body as opposed to an understanding in the mind.

We worked further with awareness of the pelvis in standing poses by practising Trikonasana and Parsvakonasana with the toes of our front feet braced several inches up the wall. This brings the weight onto the back leg and heightens the sensation of the pelvis rotating over the femur. Ann pointed out that many people have a tendency to drop the front of their pelvis as soon as they rotate their front leg forward, instead of holding it level then releasing into the pose. "Collapsing the pelvis like this shortens the leg before you even get into the pose," she said. "You don't get the space in the hip joint." I noticed that I shared this tendency, particularly in Parsvakonasana, and was amazed by how much deeper into the back-leg groin I was able to take the stretch when I maintained my pelvis in an upright position then released into the right angle.

To experience full extension and rotation of the shoulder joint, we did the 'pole roll' exercise, which consists of holding a pole in front of you with straight arms, hands about three feet apart, and raising your arms then lowering them behind you, then going back and forth several times. This stretches the chest muscles as well as the deltoids and biceps, helping to free up the shoulders. We continued working with the pole in Parsvottanasana, holding it in the crooks of our arms at the base of the shoulderblades. This brings awareness to the shoulderblades, which grip the spine in this pose, and helps lift the sternum and create a profound opening of the chest. "We want to develop both flexibility and stability in the thoracic spine," said Ann. "We develop flexibility by creating awareness. Using the pole wakes up this area of the back and also gives some support so that the opening can come."

In dog pose we worked with both the shoulder and the hip action. Ann had us do the pose with our hands facing out at the wall, to get the shoulders turning out and opening. It is extremely important that the hands are working properly in this pose, because if the hands are not working the shoulders cannot work, Ann explained. The hands in dog pose are like the feet in Tadasana - a base of support. "You want to lengthen and broaden your base of support. If you constrict your hands, the energy can't flow in the arms and shoulders." She also pointed out that tightening the hands tightens the shoulders, so we want to learn to keep our hands soft and relaxed in everyday life to minimize shoulder and neck tension.

Learning to lift the sternum, broaden the collarbones and open the chest in daily life is also crucial to preventing upper back strain and eventual collapse of the thoracic spine (the 'dowager's hump'). "Collapsing the chest pulls the shoulderblades up the back, while opening the chest allows them to rest in their proper position down the back," said Ann, adding that overshortening the abdominals with too many sit-ups makes it even harder to open the chest. She instructed us to work in partners with a strap around the shoulders like a harness to teach the rolling down

of the shoulderblades (see photo). We worked with this action even further doing backbends supported on chairs, then released our spines with a simple twist using the backs of our chairs for leverage. Ann reminded us to feel the skin of our shoulders rolling back and down as we turned into the twist.

We practised Gomukasana as preparation for shoulderstand because, as Ann pointed out, the lower arm does the shoulderstand action (external rotation) in this pose, while the upper arm does the headstand action (internal rotation). Shoulderstand deeply works the rotator cuff muscles of the shoulder girdle. We separated the hip action in shoulderstand with Eka Pada and Parsvaikapada variations, where one leg at a time is lowered then raised. From there we moved into the classic hip opener, Baddha Konasana, concentrating on moving our knees away from each other and stretching the inner groins. To balance this strong external rotation, we did squats to roll the thighs in.

To wind down the workshop, Ann took us through a series of forward bends - Janu Sirsasana, Upavista Konasana and Paschimottanasana. These poses require the same awareness of the legs and pelvis as the standing poses, but with a different base of support and relationship to gravity. She instructed us to roll the tops of our thighs in and our buttocks out to gain more awareness of our pelvises, and to feel the support of our sit bones firmly on the floor. The stability of this base is reduced by tight hamstrings, Ann explained, as the hamstrings run from the sit bones to just below the knee joint, and prevent the forward tilt of the pelvis that allows you to really ground through the sit bones and thighs. Sitting on blankets helps lengthen the back of the legs so you can learn to rotate the pelvis over the femurs. "You need to learn how to soften the groins and release the hamstrings," she said. Hamstring and other limitations often cause the back to be overworked in forward bends, so Ann finished the class with what she calls a 'remedy' for the back - lying on the back with the knees pulled into the chest. "This almost always relieves any discomfort in the back, if you did a good practice," she said.

It'll Really Deepen Your Practice: A Little About The Intensive and Two Retreats

by Neil W McKinlay

I made a leap this September—after three years in a Level One class, I jumped to Level Two. I'd like to claim I made this move with little personal trauma, but I can't.

I don't recall it being a big deal when I left my Beginner class. Maybe it was because I really didn't like that class. Nothing against the teacher you'll understand. It was just that we met so early—I think eight-thirty or nine! Now, when I have to I can drag my bones out of bed at the crack o' dawn with the best of them. But yoga is voluntary, you see. Yoga I do for pleasure. And holding some unpronounceable pose for seconds on end whilst trying with all my might to stifle a yawn or whatever... No, it wasn't such a big deal to leave Beginners. I was glad, in fact - Monday morning's Level One didn't begin until eleven!

I was not at all glad about moving to Level Two.

I just couldn't really avoid it. As mentioned, I had been in my previous class for several years, and while it had not become easy, there was a sense of being ready for something a little more. "Level Two," Lauren used to prod. "You should really try Level Two. Come to Thursday morning - Shirley's class - I'm in it."

Here, I must be honest, lay the core of my reluctance. Okay, my fear. In spite of feeling a need for further challenge, in spite of Lauren's friendly push, in spite of the fact my partner was going to move from Monday to Thursday whether I did or not - where's the support in that I wondered?! - I could not willingly enrol in a class taught by Shirley Daventry French.

Longtime local practitioners perhaps are not aware of this; the same may be true of brand new members of

our community. But there is a ghostly sound that twists through Victoria's Y. A soft whisper that repeats over and over in the Yoga Lounge, in the change rooms, up and down the staircase. It's like a mantra - a sacred phrase imbued with power only initiates really understand. "Shirley? I took a class with her once, she's haard."

I have heard this phrase often over the years. Heard the inflection that stretches the last word until it nearly snaps, longing for release. I have heard, and have come to feel cold fear strike my heart with the impact of a sudden wind on dark and lonely winter nights at the mere mention of the name.

No way I was moving to Level Two.

Fall, however, saw Shirley Daventry French out of town, travelling the globe on two of the world's four least safe airlines. As result, for the first months of the yoga year Thursday morning was taught by Leslie Hogya. I leapt at the opportunity. Not that Leslie's any slouch, but I'd never heard anyone say: "Leslie? I took a class with her..."

It was a wonderful experience.

A short but wonderful experience.

The first class of '96 came far too quickly. I recall sitting in the chairs outside the Lounge, the back of my legs sticking to the vinyl with sweat, my stomach turning, my head light. I recall my relief when Leslie showed and said she would be taking us today.

The gods, the gods, those wonderful gods...

I couldn't hope to avoid the inevitable forever, though.

And the next week I didn't.

At work several hours after that class, I was talking with a friend who also does yoga who also knows Shirley - telling her I was having trouble standing, having trouble holding my bike, just plain having trouble. She smiled. "Oh I've done classes with Shirley before, she's haard." I groaned; she continued. "But you know what, you'll really get a lot out of her. It'll really deepen your practice."

It'll really deepen your practice.

I didn't understand what she meant.

It'll really deepen your practice.

And I hurt too much to try and figure it out.

I haven't been to class in four weeks because of injury and illness.

And I don't know if I'll be there tomorrow.

My response through this prolonged absence has been interesting: I have diligently worked to keep yoga in my life. Admittedly, four weeks is a long time. And four weeks scarred by an inability to lift my left arm, or an inability to stand without spiking a fever or having to blow my nose is even longer. In this span, I think it would be easy to drift away from yoga, to let it slide for now, to get back to it later. But that hasn't happened. Certainly I don't do near as much near as regularly as I typically might, but I do something at least every other day. Whether it be ten minutes of *supta baddha konasana* or *tadasana* (the only poses I can really handle), or a couple minutes reading *Tree of Yoga*, or even a few seconds visualising sun salutation...I do something.

And through this, I'm beginning to understand what she meant.

It'll really deepen your practice.

I thought this meant I'd come to some amazing realisation about my practice or find some life-altering inner peace or become way better at arm balance, but now I suspect that's not it at all. Not necessarily anyway.

The above described commitment to practice is new in my life. So is asking what my kneecaps are doing in *tadasana*. And considering why I avoid certain poses and daring myself to try them - even if only once. And acknowledging when I ease out of something not from fatigue but from doubt and fear. And trying to devise means of incorporating yoga into my work with competitive swimmers. These are all new developments, and they have come into my life without conscious invitation. They have - as my

luchtime friend put it - "just kind of insinuated into me," risen from the depths to enter my experience.

Risen from the depths of the practice.

The depths of my practice.

"Oh I've done classes with Shirley before, she's haard.

But you know what, you'll really get a lot out of her.

It'll really deepen your practice."

It has. And it shows - as commitment, as curiosity, and as daring.



The *Oxford Encyclopaedic English Dictionary* defines intensive as meaning "thorough, vigorous; directed to a single point, area, or subject." This same book claims retreat as "a period of seclusion for prayer and meditation." In a way, my experience with Level Two and with Shirley has been both intense and retreat-like. The additional challenge posed by a new teacher and by more experienced classmates has certainly been the former. And the two hour class has very much become a retreat for me - a period of seclusion from both my ordinary pattern of daily living and my typical pattern of personal practice.

These words have been an important part of the class for me. They have played an important role in deepening my practice; no - an essential role in "insinuating" yoga more deeply into my being. Without their push and their support I doubt I would have found a way to practice through these past weeks. I doubt I would have been committed, curious or daring enough to try; I doubt I would have found the energy.

The Victoria Yoga Centre attaches 'intensive' and 'retreat' to a couple of now traditional summer events: the Iyengar Yoga Intensive, and the Weekend Retreat at the Saltspring Centre. These usages point toward opportunities to, on the one hand, explore yoga in a fully focussed and energised way and, on the other, to experience a period away from the concerns of the world, a period in which one might turn one's gaze from the question of how to get the

kids to school on time and toward the issue of trikonasana. In other words, these usages point toward contexts offering challenge, support, push and seclusion - contexts offering the potential to deepen one's personal practice.

Patti Miles attended the Intensive two summers ago, in 1994. A long standing student, she was drawn to participate for many reasons - not least the "challenge" posed by the event. Simply asking her to recall the experience makes clear the impact of that week. Speaking at the end of a long day, her voice came alive as we talked, as we chased something that happened long ago, yet continues to resonate today. And as our conversation travelled its course, I kept coming back to that phrase. It'll really deepen your practice. And back to my understanding of its meaning.

Commitment.

"Starting the week after (the Intensive) I got up every morning at 6 am...and that lasted for eight months. Normally I couldn't even get up at that time, but after the Intensive...it was easier and the poses flowed more, more smoothly, more one into the other."

Curiosity.

"Asana practice every morning for three hours...really wakes you up. I mean, it really wakes you up. It's like you've been in a twenty year sleep and it wakes you...The next week I noticed everything...Whatever you're doing, you notice it - the beauty, everything...It's a feeling of being really, fully alert. I think most times we walk around in a bit of a fog. I mean on average days you do so many things by rote - you're driving to work, already working on some project, not really paying attention. But you don't do that after the Intensive; you notice everything around you and it's...a refreshing view."

Daring.

"And the Intensive really made me get into the literature, do the reading. I've done (a lot of) reading on the Iyengar way of yoga. And now what fascinates me is drawing similarities between the (ideas) behind

yoga and Christianity. I used to think they were contradictory, but not now. There are so many parallels between the two that I've found...the principles are very close and this has very much reaffirmed my spiritual beliefs."

Energy, I thought. It's about finding the energy inherent in the practice. About making that energy evident. That's what it is to deepen one's practice. And we can do this with the help of any number of vehicles - a class, a weekend seclusion, a week long immersion - that we are fortunate to have access to in this community. Mostly, though, we can do this by simply doing.

As if reading my mind, Patti then wound our time to a close.

"But I wouldn't say (all this) was just the Intensive. It all began - really - the very first day I began taking class at the Y. The Intensive, really, was like a springboard for me... (And) I'm probably going to take it again this year; in fact I've already taken the month of July off work...(to) get that kickstart."

The Victoria Yoga Centre offers both an Intensive and a Retreat each summer. This year, students have the added bonus of a Fall Retreat. These events offer detailed instruction in asana and pranayama. The Intensive also features afternoon presentations by members of the local community; these seminars are intended to broaden participants' understanding of yoga psychology and philosophy, and select other subjects. The Intensive will be held July 15th to 20th at the Victoria YM-YWCA; enquiries may be directed toward Shirley Daventry French (604 478 3775) or Leslie Hogle (383 6301). The Summer Retreat will take place May 31st to June 2nd at the Salt Spring Centre; the Fall Retreat will take place October 25th to 27th. Contact Maggi Feehan (383 9987) or Wendy Boyer (598 9321) for more information about these events.

Inversions: A Sunday Workshop with Leslie Hogg

by Caren Liedtke

I coach swimming three times a week at the Commonwealth Pool. Across the pool from where I coach, the divers practice. They are hard not to watch. Chiselled bodies performing twists and turns while falling ten meters through the air. Or kicking effortlessly into a handstand poised at the edge of a tower. Holding it, then somehow lifting up and dropping over the edge, slicing through air then water with barely a splash.

Watching the divers reinforced my idea that full arm balance and related inversions were something spectacular to be performed with ease by Olympic athletes. And by looking at their bodies, these inversions required Herculean strength.

This Sunday, Leslie helped me to re-learn that it is more these two faulty beliefs, than some lack of muscle power, that is keeping the strength out of my inversions.

The foundation of inversions is to be found in something much less spectacular than a three and a half somersault with a French twist (with a Daventry twist?). It is to be found in that most boring of poses - Tadasana (look at me, I'm doing yoga!). Proper alignment and active legs, are two of the keys that unlock the inverted door. According to Leslie the more active the legs, the lighter the inversion. This can't be emphasised enough, as Leslie found out when one of her students, three months into class queried, "You mean we are supposed to be working our legs?"

So we began with Tadasana. We put a block between our legs to help increase awareness and activity - drawing the block back by rolling the thighs in and counteracting this movement by tucking the tailbone under. We did dog pose with the block. And later headstand, first with a foam block between our legs, then with a belt around the thighs. Trying to draw

more and more life and activity into the legs until, Leslie claims, on a good day, you feel like you are floating in headstand. Although Olympic upper body strength isn't required to perform inversions, some helps. If you are struggling with lack of strength and therefore lack the confidence or ability to do the full inversions, Leslie suggests and we tried the following: Dog pose. Dog pose with arm balance arms. Dog pose with head stand arms, head off the floor. Arm balance and elbow balance with legs at a right angle and feet on the wall. I personally found these last two variations much harder than the full poses as my legs felt twice as heavy. (There's that legs thing again.)

Just as important as strength in the arms and shoulders is openness. In dog pose we focused on rolling the shoulders out, creating breadth across the upper back, and lengthening the spine to the sacrum. We came back to these movements in arm balance and headstand.

Between the active legs and open shoulders is the torso. Shirley tells a story about getting the idea to wear her husband's back brace in Chaturanga Dandasana to create stability in her torso. She tells how easy the pose was with the brace, with the connection of energy between the upper body and the lower body. This torso stability is required for healthy inversions and can be created without the wearing of corsets. Leslie helped us create strength and awareness in our abdominals with the following poses - Urdhva Prasrita Padasana, Jathara Parivartanasana, Paripurna Navasana (with toes on the wall, then lifting off), and Paripurna Navasana.

Inversions aren't all impressive display (interesting that Pinca Mayurasana is the tail feather of a peacock). Viparita Karani is also an inversion. The three hour format allowed us to take our time with some cooling and quietening poses. After Halasana and Sarvangasana, we spent 10 minutes in Setu Bandha Sarvangasana and then 10 minutes in Viparita Karani. I felt a real sense of calm and rejuvenation (and hunger) at the end of the workshop, when I expected

to be exhausted. This expectation, of course, reveals my persistent inversion ignorance (that they are all about muscling up). Hopefully the awareness which oscillates from my stubborn brain to my body and back will slowly come closer to the median line, which is the plumb line, and my inversions will become more balanced and light. Thanks to Leslie for moving the pendulum along. And to Janine for easing my hunger with the yummy post workshop eats.

Who Could Resist?

by Caren Liedtke

Before class the other day, Shirley approached me and then Neil (my partner in crime) and asked if we would be willing to write some articles for the Newsletter. She felt it needed more local reporting, which it once had, as well as new blood and fresh horses. She said that as it stands now the Newsletter contains mainly deep, philosophical-type articles written by long time practitioners, which are good and people read and appreciate. Shirley felt these articles could be complemented by other perspectives. She said that people felt they had to be of a certain level of experience or knowledge before they could contribute. If that was the case the newsletter would be written wholly by Mr. Iyengar.

This quick conversation reinforced what I had been thinking and feeling for a while. (It doesn't hurt to be validated by a long time practitioner who has a certain level of knowledge and experience). I receive the Newsletter in the mail and read the better part of it each month. I enjoy and get a lot out of the deep philosophical articles and the transcripts of interviews with Geeta and Mr. Iyengar. But, I also find I am overwhelmed by these people's experience and knowledge and sometimes I don't know what they are talking about. They are an amazing, inspiring example of what is possible through regular long term practice, of living and applying spirituality in day to day life. And because of this they seem to be of some other superhuman race. The gap between me and them just feels too big sometimes.

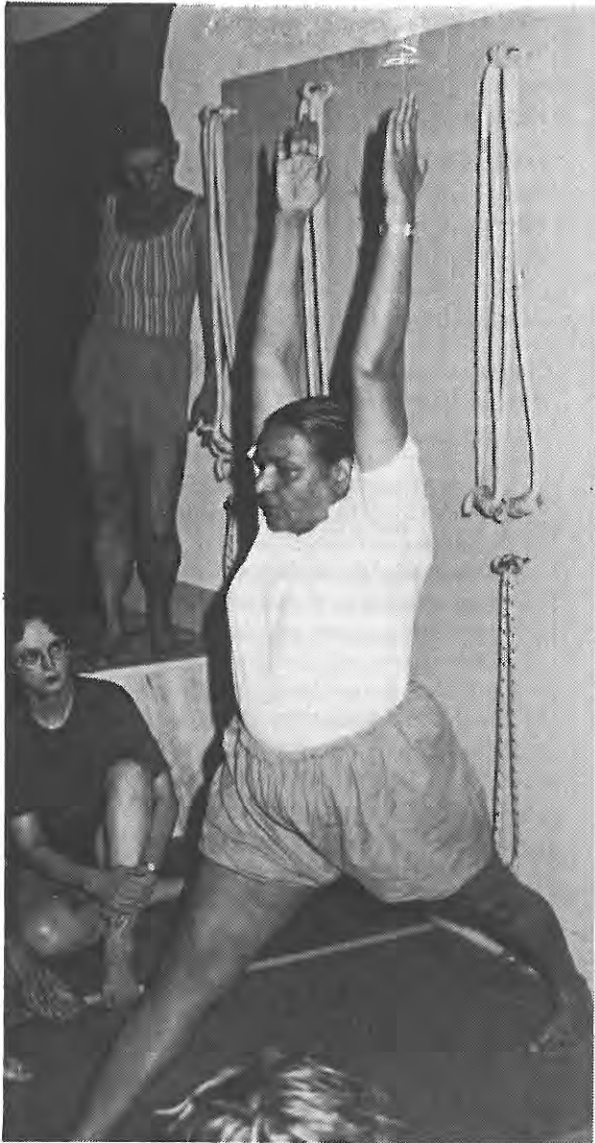
I feel a nagging desire to read about or from someone who is a little more like me. Someone who isn't sure which Warrior Pose is which, and which thigh is supposed to roll in and which thigh is supposed to roll out, and doesn't know what Parsvakonasana is without looking at someone else in the class.

I think we, beginner and post-beginner practitioners, have something to offer, something the teachers and more experienced practitioners can't give; on the spot reporting. We can give an in the moment update of what it is like for us, what is working, what isn't working, what is frustrating, and what is uplifting.

Charlotte Voko Beck, Zen teacher and author of *Everyday Zen*, speaks eloquently on the value of students sharing:

"Perhaps right now you are in the middle of opening the box [Pandora's box of self-knowledge]. At some point I would like you to share what you have found useful in your practice at this time. A student, in some ways, can be more useful to others than a person like myself, who can hardly remember this stage. I understand the conflict pretty well, but the actual memory of how difficult it can be is fading. That's one of the great things about a *Sangha* [spiritual community]; it's a group of people who have a mutual framework for practice. In the Sangha we can be honest, we don't have to hide or cover our struggles. The most painful thing is to think that there's something wrong with me, and that nobody else is having the trouble I am. That's not true, of course."

So I agreed to help. And I wonder if a few of you out there might be willing as well, willing to write a little something and add your perspective to the Newsletter. As Shirley said, it need not be much, just a paragraph or two. A long personal article is good, as is a short factual one. Perhaps if you attend one of the upcoming workshops you could write a quick report, the sequence of asanas presented or some instruction that helped you break through with a pose. Or a review of a book or a great place to eat lunch after class. Anything, really, about your practice which encompasses the whole of your life. Complete artistic freedom. Who could resist?



Canadian Iyengar Teachers' Annual General Meeting and Conference Here in July

This July there will be people coming to Victoria from all over Canada. The Victoria and the Islands Teachers' group is hosting the Canadian Iyengar Teachers' Association meeting to be held at the Salt Spring Centre. Local teachers are busy with registration, arranging to move people and props to Salt Spring, setting the agenda, and so on. Last year some of you will remember we did fundraising to send local teachers to the meeting in Winnipeg. Many of you helped by attending fundraising workshops and/or making donations. We need your help this year to make this year's conference a success. When we travelled to Winnipeg, the local group there ferried us to and from the airport and arranged billeting. We are calling on all our local members to offer these services to our visitors.

What's needed? Transportation and Billeting

When? Conference dates are July 11-14th. The most help will be needed July 10, 11 & 14,15.

Transportation: If you can help with transportation to and from the airport. Jo Anna Hope is coordinating this: 592-5215.

Billeting: Can you volunteer to house people if they need a place before and/or after the conference? Linda Benn at 478-0757 is organizing housing.

Fundraising: There is a cost to attend this conference, and we will be having our final Friday night gathering of this 1995/96 year May 10th to help send more people to the conference. So come and watch the teacher's demonstration.

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and the Victoria YM-YWCA

Are pleased to announce an

IYENGAR YOGA INTENSIVE

JULY 15 TO 20, 1996

with

Shirley Daventry French
Dr. Derek French
Leslie Hogya
Ann Kilbertus
Jim Rischmiller

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

Fee: \$375

Victoria is an active centre of Iyengar Yoga, whose teachers maintain a close contact with Mr. Iyengar through regular trips to India and participation in conferences where he is in attendance. Our 1996 Summer Intensive will combine the skills of one of Canada's leading yoga teachers Shirley Daventry French with physician Derek French, occupational therapist Ann Kilbertus, and experienced yoga teachers Leslie Hogya and Jim Rischmiller.

The residence at the Y has a limited amount of inexpensive accommodation for women, billets are available with members of the local yoga community, and, as a popular tourist centre, Victoria has a wide selection of hotels and motels.

For further information contact:

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

Telephone Enquires:

Shirley Daventry French (604) 478-3775 or
Leslie Hogya (604) 383-6301

What is the Yoga Centre

by Leslie Hogya

Shirley Daventry French has used this as a topic in her monthly columns. Melanie Jollymore wrote about the Centre in the last newsletter. We are a group of people loosely organized whose goal is to promote yoga. We have no building; we use the Y as one of our bases. The Yoga classes that run at the Y are taught by members of our teachers' group. The Y donates the Yoga room for us to hold our Friday night gatherings and teachers' meetings. This newsletter is put out on various members' computers, collated, mailed by other members. We have our executive meetings in each other's homes. The library is housed at Maggie Feehan's home. Many of us take responsibility for small or large tasks. All of you who subscribe to the newsletter are our members. Derek French said recently that we operate on the chaos theory. There are times when not much seems to be happening, then there will be a flurry of phone calls, meetings, and suddenly there's a flyer announcing a major workshop, or a newsletter appears.

Events that are coming soon are:

- **The last Friday night gathering**—May 10. There will be a demonstration of yoga poses done by senior students and teachers. The admission will be by donation to help boost our scholarship fund.
- **The Salt Spring Retreat**—May 31, June 1, 2 has been so popular in recent years that it has filled before it was even advertised. So this year, you will have noticed that registration was opened to Yoga Centre Members first. Call Maggie Feehan for information 383-9987
- **The Canadian Iyengar Teachers' Meeting** is also being held at Salt Spring July 11th-14th.
- The now annual **Summer Intensive** will be July 15-20th. For those of you who have taken it before know, this is a demanding, and very rewarding week. There is asana, pranayama and philosophy taught each day.

Those of us who will be teaching with Shirley prepare by continually learning, growing, reading, doing our own practice, attending workshops, classes and so on. The main work of the Centre happens in our homes on our blue, green or purple sticky mats, in our readings and reflections. So the Centre's work is at the centre of each of us.

Elsewhere in this newsletter is an appeal for volunteers for billets and drivers for the Teachers' Conference in July. There is also need for billets during the intensive. For this service students are asked to pay \$20.00 per night. Do you have an empty room for a visiting yoga student? It is also possible the yoga student could house-sit while you are away. Yoga students may or may not have transportation so we particularly need accommodation that is within walking distance or on a bus route to the Y. Please call Leslie Hogya 383-6301, if you have a spare room for a visiting yoga student. I know some people offered to host visitors last year but we didn't need every space, however, we have already had several requests for billets this year.

Wanted: Hosts for Visiting Yoga Students

What?	Do you have a spare room for a visiting yoga student?
When?	July 15-20, 1996 during the Summer Intensive
Reward:	\$20 per night for bed and breakfast
Call:	Leslie Hogya 383-6301



yoga centre of victoria

Workshop

with

Father Joe Pereira

September 27, 28, 29, 1996

Friday, Sept 27 6:00 - 9:00 pm Asana

Saturday, Sept. 28 7:00 - 8:00 am Meditation
10:00 - 1:00 pm Asana
3:00 - 5:00 pm Pranayama

Sunday, Sept. 28 7:00 - 8:30 am Pranayama/Meditation
10:30 - 1:30 pm Asana

Yoga Room YM-YWCA Victoria

Registration Fee:	\$135.00	Yoga Centre Members Full Workshop
	\$155.00	Non Members (includes Membership)
	\$110.00	Asana Only (plus \$20.00 for non members)
	\$ 30.00	Saturday Pranayama Only
	\$ 35.00	Morning Meditation Only

Registration Open: Saturday, June 1, 1996

Fr. Joe Pereira is an inspiring instructor who blends the wisdom of yoga with insights from the Christian teachings. He has studied yoga with Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar for 24 years, and has a Master's degree in Indian Philosophy specializing in yoga. Fr. Joe is the founder of the KRIPA Foundation in India where the focus is the rehabilitation of those with substance abuses. Under Fr. Joe's guidance 22 centres now flourish throughout India. Your depth of understanding of the Spirit will be enhanced, and future yoga practices inspired as a result from attending this workshop.

To Register: Call Marlene at 655-4306 or Celia Ward at 388-7839

Please make cheque payable to the **Victoria Yoga Centre**

and mail to: Marlene Miller
8570 Sentinel Place
Sidney, B.C. V8L 4Z7



SCHOLARSHIPS

The Victoria Yoga Centre is pleased to announce the availability of the following scholarships:

Summer Intensive	1 @	\$300
Summer Intensive	2 @	\$150
Fr. Joe Pereira Wksp	1 @	\$75
Fall Salt Spring Retreat	1 @	\$100

If you are interested in applying for a scholarship, or wish to nominate a candidate, send your request, in writing, to either your yoga teacher or to a member of the Scholarship Committee: Margaret Feehan, Linda Benn or Marlene Miller.

The Yoga of Cooking



Ayurvedic Cooking Classes

Learn the principles of Ayurveda, and to apply them in the kitchen to create simple and delicious meals for balance, health and harmony.

Call Melanie Jollymore at 595-6885

RADHA HOUSE



Rose Ceremony: Part 1: Saturday June 22, 8-9 PM
Part 2: Sunday, June 23, 8-9 PM

The Rose Ceremony is a personal dedication to the Divine, a time to re-establish one's commitment to the very finest within and to reaffirm one's ideals.

Continuing Classes:

- **Kundalini:** 11 classes, \$121.
- **The Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga®:** 11 classes \$121; drop in \$11 per class.
- **Dreams:** 11 classes, \$121.
- **Bhagavad Gita Reading Group:** No fee, registration is open.
- **Sundays: Satsang and Bhajans.**

Further daytime classes can be formed if interest warrants. Fees due at first class. Participants will be asked to sign a release form.

Private Sessions:

Students are encouraged to work on their issues during classes and workshops. However, private sessions are available at \$40/hour.

Registration and further information: 595-0177

YOGA CALENDAR

MAY

10: Teachers' Demonstration at Friday
Night Yoga Centre Gathering
25: Teachers' meeting

SEPTEMBER

27-29: Father Joe Pereira

JUNE

31, 1, 2: Saltspring Retreat
22: Teachers' meeting

OCTOBER

25-27: Saltspring Retreat

JULY

12-14: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' AGM
on Saltspring Island
15-20: Yoga Intensive in Victoria

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM:

Please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society,
927 Jenkins Avenue, Victoria BC V9B 2N8

Membership/Subscription fee is \$20 and renewable each January

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

☐ Do not mail me my newsletter during sessions, I'll pick one up at my Y class.

☐ Receipt Required.



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY
3918 Olympic View Drive, RR #4
Victoria BC V9B 5T8

Ted Mather
2738 Graham St.
Victoria BC
V8T 3Z2



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



July/August 1996

Please Subscribe



GEETA AT TEACHERS' EXCHANGE
COLORADO . MAY 1996.



▲
You could be in this picture! Watch for details concerning the October Saltspring Retreat in the next issue.

Thank you to everyone who has subscribed to the newsletter.

We appreciate your contribution.

Our apologies to those of you who have experienced delays in receiving your copy of the newsletter. If you have not received a copy of the newsletter or you require back issues, please contact the editor.

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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 persons of the 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 the Victoria area and 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,
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 Telephone: (604) 474-5630

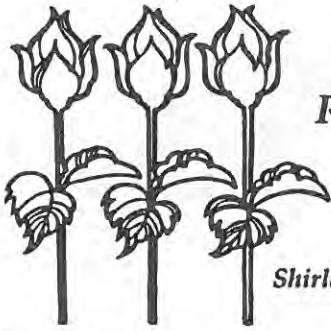
Deadline for next issue: August 10th

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Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

Wouldn't you like to learn how to teach Astanga Yoga? A student of mine recently asked me this question. Astanga Yoga is a term used to describe the eightfold path or discipline of *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* which is described in the second chapter of Patanjali's yoga-sutras. Since Mr. Iyengar's work is so firmly grounded in the sutras, I hope I already am teaching *astanga yoga*. However, this was not what my student meant. She used this term in a more limited sense to describe a system of yoga taught by Pattabhi Jois. It is often called Power Yoga, although I have no idea whether Pattabhi Jois would approve of this term. B.K.S. Iyengar and Pattabhi Jois are *gurubai*, disciples of the venerated Yoga Master Sri Tirumalai Krishnamacharya. Their teaching grows out of the same root.

No, I answered my student's question: I do not want to learn Pattabhi Jois' Astanga Yoga. I am much too busy trying to learn what I can from Mr. Iyengar and his direct disciples, such as his daughter Geeta and son Prashant, which is more than enough for this lifetime. This is not a value judgment on Pattabhi Jois or any other yogic path, but a decision made in the knowledge that I have just skimmed the surface of Mr. Iyengar's work, knowledge that is reinforced each time I go to India and most recently at the Colorado conference with Geeta Iyengar. This was a conference of certified Iyengar Yoga teachers where Geeta, a

master teacher in her own right, presented Guruji's teachings in a clear, uncluttered way, and made us aware of our responsibility to do the same. She is such a great teacher yet so humble and devoted to her father and guru. A true disciple.

Recently, when I was giving a workshop out-of-town, I was introduced as a disciple of B.K.S. Iyengar. I was a little taken aback, as I don't usually think of myself in this way, associating the word more with the twelve disciples of Jesus who surrendered to their Master (eventually), or someone as truly committed as Geeta. Oddly enough, a few days after my return home, when I was flicking through an old yoga newsletter from Manchester, looking for something else, I came across *Qualifications of a Disciple* from one of the *Upanishads* (ancient yogic texts). Oh, I thought, how serendipitous! What does this mean? So I looked up the word 'disciple' in a couple of dictionaries and found the following among the many definitions:

DISCIPLE

Concise Oxford Dictionary

(2) Follower or adherent of any leader of thought, art, conduct etc.

Random House Dictionary of the English Language

(4) One who is member or adherent of the doctrines of another.

(6) To teach: train.

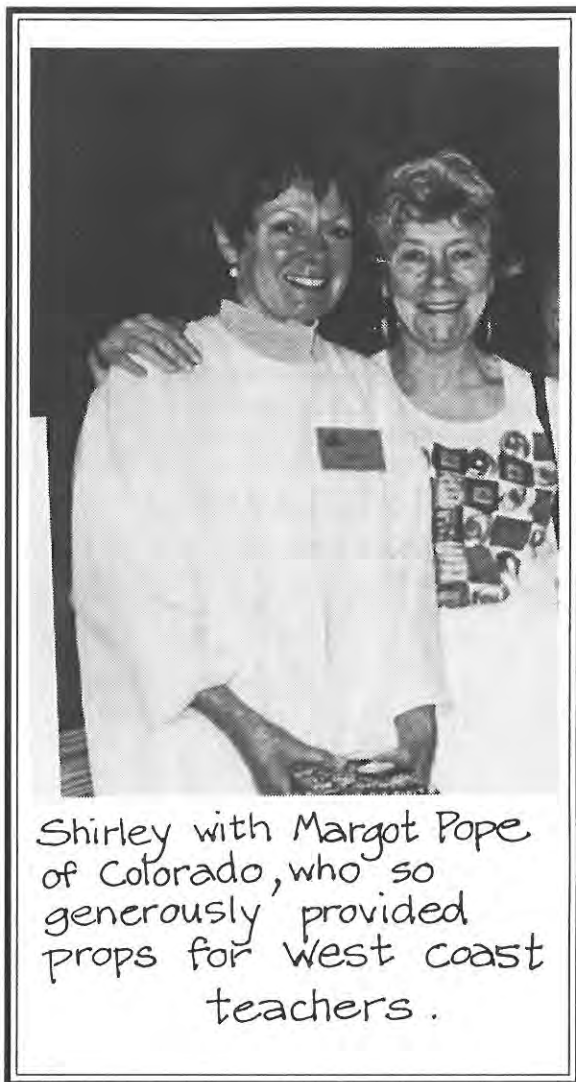
In the above terms, I could be described as a disciple although generally I would not choose to use that word but rather pupil (as Mr. Iyengar likes to put it) or student (as is more commonly used in North America). Student, pupil or disciple, it doesn't make much difference; if I benefit from Mr. Iyengar's work I owe him a debt of gratitude. As a teacher, if I use Mr. Iyengar's name to qualify the work I do in yoga, I have an even greater responsibility to uphold his name by presenting his work in as straightforward a manner as possible. If I call him Guruji, my commitment and responsibility deepen.

When I first went to India in 1979, it was rare to hear anyone at the Institute in Pune call Mr. Iyengar: Guruji. Only a few of his Indian pupils used that term. Now it is widely used by pupils from all over the world, including myself, and it is important to consider what this means. *Gu'* means darkness and *'ru'* light. A guru is one who removes the darkness of ignorance and enlightens or gives knowledge. How can we repay such a gift?

A few years ago, at Guruji's request, we began to chant an invocation to Patanjali at the beginning of our classes. Guruji's work is a direct link to the teachings of Patanjali, who is widely known as the 'father of yoga', because around two thousand years ago he compiled and systemised the teachings into the yoga-sutras. But the link goes back even further than that to the *vedas*, ancient texts of Hinduism.

What a privilege to be a part of such a tradition. Every day of my life, I have reason to be grateful to B.K.S. Iyengar for the practices which I have learned from him which sustain me through the challenges of my life. What benefits I derive, I owe to him. Where I fall short, it is through my ignorance; and, as Patanjali tells us in Sutra II-4, ignorance is the source of all our afflictions.

In Victoria, we are preparing to host the ninth annual Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Meeting (on Salt Spring Island to be exact, but organised by Victoria teachers). As teachers prepare to travel here from all across Canada, it seems a good time to publish the *Qualifications of a Disciple*, in honour of our Master, B.K.S. Iyengar. Whether we call him guru or teacher, whether we call ourselves student, pupil or disciple, howsoever we benefit from his teaching, we are indebted to him. 🌱



Shirley with Margot Pope
of Colorado, who so
generously provided
props for West coast
teachers.

(From *Taittiriya Upanishad: Shikshavall*)

1. Bow down to Lord Narayana.
2. The Guru is Brahma, the Guru is Vishnu, the Guru is Mahesvar, (the creator, the preserver and the destroyer). The Guru is the Universal Spirit, therefore pay homage to the Guru.
3. Speak the truth.
4. Be virtuous. (Religion and virtue support, sustain and uphold man physically, morally, mentally and spiritually. Without them man is nothing.)
5. Neglect not the study of the sacred lore and of the Self. (The Self is a vast field — known and unknown — consisting of the body, the mind and the Soul.)
6. Having brought wealth acceptable to the teacher do not cut off the thread linking generations. (Do not cut off the thread of knowledge which has been spun by the sages of old, which has been followed from time immemorial and handed down from Guru to Guru by those who have practised and experienced and who know what is good for humanity. Do not break this tradition.)
7. Be not neglectful of truth. (Do not let egoism and intellectual arrogance stand in the way of truth.)
8. Be not neglectful of virtue and religion. (Do not despise any religion. That which is sacred to others should be sacred to you.)
9. Neglect not welfare. (Be extremely attentive for your own health and inner happiness for only then can you help others towards a better life.)
10. Be not negligent of prosperity. (Do not overlook your own self-support and maintenance. Work hard for you have to earn your own bread. Be self-reliant.)
11. Do not leave the study and teaching of the knowledge of the Self (which has been practised by saints and yogis throughout the ages. Learn to know your own Self).
12. Be not negligent in your duties to God and to your fathers.
13. Treat your mother as a god (for she gave you birth).
14. Treat your father as a god (for he gave you life).
15. Treat your teacher as a god (for he initiated you in the path of knowledge and truth).
16. Treat your guest as a god (with love, warmth, respect and dignity when he visits your home).
17. Do what is irreproachable: discard the rest. (Do what is auspicious and good, not what is merely pleasant to the senses. The good is pure and lasting, conducive to happiness and spiritual progress. The pleasant is only momentary and brings sorrow. Therefore resist temptation.)
18. Follow the path shown by illuminated souls in thoughts, words and actions. Discard other paths.
19. Whoever is learned, whoever is spiritually involved, respect him and treat him with reverence and offer him a seat in your heart.
20. Give with faith (and love and dedication whatever you have been graced with). Do not give without faith. Give plenty. Give with modesty. Give without fear. Give with sympathy and compassion (expecting nothing in return).



And God is within you. You are illuminated and those who come to you for guidance are guided for the betterment of their lives.

At that moment he was my Guru

by Leslie Hoggia

Shirley requested we think about what it means to be a disciple of Iyengar. I am more comfortable with the terms: teacher and student. I would say I am indirectly a student of B.K.S. Iyengar: indirect because my main teacher has been Shirley Daventry French, and even though I was able to be part of two Intensives to Pune, both times Geeta was the main instructor. I have been in classes when Mr. Iyengar taught, and I have heard him speak and answer questions. I was very lucky to be asked to help cook for him and his entourage when they were in Toronto a few years ago, and had the pleasure of standing around the kitchen when he came in for his breakfast and strong, black coffee. I have indeed been fortunate to have this contact with a living master of yoga.

My mother told her pastor at the church where I grew up that I was a yoga student, and had a guru. I'm sure this is not something my mother, now in her seventies, feels comfortable telling an Anglican minister in a small conservative town in the middle of North America. I don't go around telling people I have a guru, either, so this sort of surprised me.

When I think about this further, maybe my mother has recognized that I have made a deep commitment to yoga. It is not a passing phase. I'm in it for the long run. As long as I'm physically able to move around I will do yoga. If I get to a point where I am no longer able to move, but am still able to think, I will continue with inner reflection that has become a part of my life.

What it means to be a serious student of yoga, a committed student of the yoga as taught by B.K.S. and Geeta Iyengar, this is something I can write about. Being a serious student means getting up every morning and having an intense relationship with my sticky mat, strap and blankets. It means continually learning, continually finding newness in *trikonasana*. It means being humble; there's no point at which one

graduates and "knows" yoga. It means reading the books the Iyengars have both written, and reflecting on their words. It means passing on what I have learned by teaching others. When I am teaching, it means not mixing in other forms of yoga, massage, or new age techniques. It means finding time to be an active yoga centre member, write articles about yoga, and help set up a program that promotes yoga. It means bringing the teachings into my home and into my life.

There was a time when I felt that my yoga practices were a little too offbeat for a mother in the twentieth century. So it was as if I had put my spiritual life in a container, a basket in the corner of my room. The basket started to overflow. I took over a spare room for my yoga practice. I put up an altar to the Divine. There is a statue of Tara there. (Tara is the Goddess of compassion in the Buddhist tradition.) I began writing articles for the Yoga Centre Newsletter about my family and the connections to yoga. I put my beliefs under public scrutiny.

Back to B.K.S. Iyengar. When I think of my commitment and wonder why I chose a path that is so full of challenges and demands, I come across a video with Mr. Iyengar teaching and giving his all, demonstrating arm balance ten times in a row at his seventy-fifth birthday course, or an article that explodes with his enthusiasm, and I am both humbled and inspired to continue.

One of those moments came in Toronto. Mr. Iyengar had us gather round him as we ate birthday cake in his honour. He was preparing to leave. He had just finished a short but intense conference with us. He had given us all his attention, teaching the entire conference, both asana and pranayama, answering questions, giving interviews. He was unstinting in his generosity. As he was leaving he brought his hands together in Namasté and thanked us. *Thanked us!* He had been the one who had been giving to us. I was humbled by his commitment and devotion to the art of yoga, to the art of teaching, and to us, his pupils. At that moment, I was filled with awe — at that moment, he was my guru!



Disciple of Truth

by Adrienne Rhodes

I have reflected on what it means for me to be a disciple of B.K.S. Iyengar and have been unable to generate much feeling. I can relate more to being a disciple of the Truth who uses Iyengar style yoga as a means; in other words I do not see myself as a disciple of anyone but rather a seeker of the ultimate liberation.

So if I may write about this..... the Iyengar style of yoga has been a wonderful means for me of getting in touch with my body which has always been taken for granted. Occasionally there is a union of body and mind. The generosity, respect, virtues and commitment of the Victoria Yoga Centre teachers to yogic principles has inspired me to accept some responsibility in passing on the teachings. This is how I came to be in the teachers' training program.

You could be in this picture! Watch for details concerning the October Salt Spring Retreat in the next issue.



In the footsteps of Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar

by James Currie-Johnson

I have just finished my first year of teaching Iyengar Yoga in Victoria. The teaching has brought a renewed enthusiasm for my practice. I respect Mr. Iyengar teaching even more as I gradually develop my own teaching style. His teaching will always be a model for me with its thoroughness, enthusiasm and compassion.

It is so memorable meeting Mr. Iyengar! When I was practising yoga in Vancouver in 1984, I heard he was going to visit. I immediately signed up to attend his class. I was deeply impressed by his dynamic teaching and intense awareness. I began to see why so many of the Vancouver yoga teachers revered him. I followed Mr. Iyengar to his next stop in Victoria and enjoyed his teaching at the Victoria 'Y', followed by a reception at Crystal Garden.

He is truly a renaissance man. He exemplified creativity, self-discipline and openness to new experiences. As I begin my second year as a yoga teacher, I hope to help fulfil Mr. Iyengar's wish that Canada receive the gift of yoga.



Only the Dance

by Ann Kilbertus

As a teacher in the Iyengar tradition, I feel that my awareness as a student has had the opportunity to deepen. The method is clean and direct, encompassing the confusion and paradox that is so visible in the body/mind.

As a student of B.K.S. Iyengar, one becomes so aware of how little time there is for wasting energy. The present is the opportunity to create changes.

So much of the paradox in living is embraced by this method: what areas are awake, where consciousness is lacking, and how much space is available to move into. The practice of Iyengar Yoga enables me to face obstacles that come — in whatever form they may take.

For me, this is a tradition that speaks to my heart and to my head with a compassion that is always present.

I am reminded of one of those inflatable clowns with sand in the bottom. Children can knock these down in any direction and they pop back up again because of the stability that the particles of sand provide at the base.

As a student and a teacher in the tradition of B.K.S. Iyengar, the yoga has allowed me to deepen my connection with an inner source of stillness as the ups and downs of life continue.

The words of T.S. Eliot further reflect this meaning when he says :

"Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance."



The Bounty That Has Been Given Me

by Caren Liedtke

"While you, like myself, may hesitate to use the word 'disciple', I think that this would be an appropriate and auspicious time to publish some of the thoughts and feelings of local teachers and senior students about what it means to be a student of B.K.S. Iyengar...." (With these words Shirley sent out an appeal for help with this issue of the newsletter.)

Yes, I feel uncomfortable, as well as unworthy and unqualified, to write on what it means to be a disciple of B.K.S. Iyengar. I don't even think I am in the ball park of "senior student". In my intermittent ongoing practice of yoga, I am painfully aware that my commitment and effort are not what they could be.

And perhaps this awareness could provide a jumping off point for my reflections, for I was not always so gracious or humble (not that I am a model of either quality now). Humility must surely be a quality of a disciple, and perhaps a commentary on how I found a little of this quality in myself would make a worthy article.

When I first came to yoga, I was arrogant and greedy. I had the mentality of a paying consumer, with the right to get my money's worth. I wanted to be convinced, won over. I wanted yoga to show me that it was worthy of my valuable time and effort.

During this time of my initial foray, I was reading various books about different people's encounters with spiritual teachers and gurus and *The Divine* in the form of mystical experiences. I felt sorry for myself and in the privacy of my own head pouted like a petulant child. Why hadn't I been visited by such good fortune, by an inspiring vision or a great teacher? Oh, woe is me. My lack of enlightenment was obviously no fault of my own; the Universe was choosing to keep me in the dark. Or perhaps my attention was selective. I remember now that in one of the movies I watched during that time the main

character had to prove his worth to his teacher before his teacher would instruct him, as apparently used to be the case with many of the martial arts. The protagonist visited the teacher's school daily to see if the teacher would take him in. Day after day the teacher refused. The student would stay and watch through the window and after a while began practising in the courtyard. Eventually, the teacher, embarrassed by what he saw outside his window, gave him a few basic moves and told him to go and practice them for five hours every day and then come back and show the teacher his command of these moves. One of the moves was a starting point stance which resembled *tadasana*. The student protested, he wanted to learn more elaborate and difficult moves. The teacher refused, the student must prove him self worthy of such moves. The student went away and practised as instructed.

Conveniently, I didn't relate this part of the movie to myself. I didn't consider the possibility that I might need to be worthy of yoga and not vice versa. I was too busy pining for somebody else's experiences, somebody else's teacher, somebody else's practice. And so not having the tools or good sense to appreciate, respect, or revere yoga, I came to it aggressively, violently, rudely, like a drunken bear might stumble through a thicket and upon arriving in a clearing announce, "Here I am now, entertain me." Show me your stuff. Impress me.

And yoga did. Immediately. Impress me. It was hard! Even after seven years of a fairly intense training schedule in competitive swimming, it was right up there as one of the most physically demanding things I had ever done. This "work-out" appealed to me, sold me, and I came back. I wasn't a disciple. I found that yoga did have something to offer me, and I took it, thinking that when it stopped having something to offer I would drop it and move on to the next thing.

I didn't think I would stick around for four years. I didn't think. I drifted from one class to the next. Took a session, skipped a session. After a year or so, I

became frustrated with my waxing and waning commitment. I saw the physical benefits of yoga and decided I wanted to take a stronger hold of them. I took the Summer Intensive to kick start a more regular practice. It worked. A year of regular classes. Another Summer Intensive. Another year of regular classes.

And somewhere along the way something happened, something more than a loosening of my hamstrings: my field of view widened and became more detailed. I began to see more of myself and the way I was interacting in the world.

From my competitive swimming experience, and to a large degree from public schooling as well, I was taught and learned that when "the going gets tough the tough get going". I learned that when I was tired I should ignore it and roll out of bed anyway, keep swimming, try harder, muscle and will power forward. This was the way to victory and success. Through yoga, this lesson began to unravel. Intense, focused, aggressive effort wasn't always the right answer. Sometimes working harder made me injured or more tired or sick. Sometimes I found it was more beneficial to do quiet or restorative poses. For one week each month, when I menstruated, this quiet, restorative yoga was prescribed. And it began to make sense. It began to make sense that it was counter productive to go upside down during this time.

Life was becoming more complex and more subtle. My simple world and my singular response were dissolving. A better one was certainly taking its place, but I fear change, unfamiliarity, and resulting discomfort, and therefore I didn't embrace this new world. I had prized myself on being A Hard Worker, and yoga was teaching me that I was actually pretty lazy, lazy in more ways than I could have dreamed possible. I was was lazy in the standard way, when I stopped instead of continuing, when I came out of a pose sooner than I needed to. But, I was learning that it was also lazy to keep going when I should rest, to stay in a pose when I got wobbly, to stay up late when

I was tired. I was learning that it was lazy to not take a moment to figure out what was the best course of action, to pause and see if I was really fatigued or just caught up in mental chatter or fear and doubt.

Through yoga I have become more aware of my complex needs and how to meet them, and by doing so, how to better function in the world at large. And, sure, these changes have happened partially through some effort on my part. But I feel like my efforts could never begin to match the work that yoga has done on me, quietly, secretly, when I wasn't looking, kneading its wisdom into my being, until one day an insight bubbles up into my awareness unbidden, "aha!" Where did that come from? Often at a time when I least expected it or felt I least deserved it (and nowhere to be found when I felt I did deserve it). I feel like it would be an insult to such a gift to take credit for it, to think it was of my own doing or construction.

One normally thinks of a disciple as the initiator, acting out the qualifications until being worthy of being called a disciple. I feel like yoga has initiated me, opening within my heart a deep and felt and growing sense of respect and humility and thankfulness for the gift of yoga and the unbelievable dedication and hard work of B.K.S. Iyengar and his disciples who have brought and continue to bring this gift to me.

A poem by Huston Smith comes to mind. It is in dedication to his parents, and appears at the beginning of his book, Religions of Man.

*When I behold the sacred liao wo my thoughts return
To those who begot me, raised me, and now are tired.
I would repay the bounty they have given me,
But it is as the sky: it can never be approached.*

(liao wo is a species of grass symbolising parenthood)

I bow in homage to B.K.S. Iyengar and his many disciples. "I would repay the bounty they have given me, / but it is as the sky: it can never be approached."

Hiking, Yoga, and the new Juan de Fuca Marine Trail

by Leslie Hogya

I love to walk along beaches and through the forest. I had not had such opportunity to extend a walk into an overnight camping trip, until my son, Brooks became trained as an outdoor guide and helped found Slipstream Adventures. Now I will get the chance to combine hiking and yoga on a four day yoga retreat/hike this August on the new Juan de Fuca Marine Trail. The trail hugs the shore but also dips into old growth forests. It is south of the West Coast Trail. Standing poses were not meant to be done in hiking boots... however, if we're camping, the ground is more than likely to be uneven. So we'll have to adapt and adjust the poses to fit the terrain.

4 Day Yoga Retreat
on the Juan de Fuca Marine Trail
Offered through
SLIPSTREAM ADVENTURES LTD.

Slipstream

with Yoga instructor Leslie Hogya
AUGUST 2-5, 1996
\$498.00 + G.S.T.

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Includes: all group camp equipment,
all meals and snacks, transportation
from Victoria, and Yoga instruction

The other trips I've been on were wonderful. Many of the things I like about yoga were true on these hikes. It was peaceful, there were friendly companions along for the journey, I had to challenge my own limits. The places we went were breathtakingly beautiful and afterwards, I felt nothing short of terrific. The food was unbelievably good; there was an artichoke, pine-nut, pasta dish I've been trying to reproduce ever since. We were, literally, looked after every step of the way. So I'm hoping for some clear skies, and friendly companions the beginning of August.

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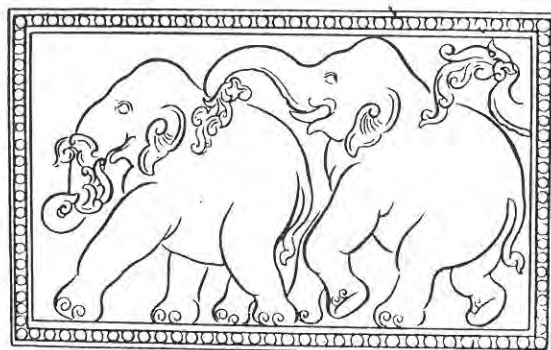
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VIRA(1) MARGA THE WARRIOR PATH

by Christian Pisano

'There is a war that opens the doors of heaven, Arjuna! Happy the warriors whose fate is to fight such a war.' (2)

RIDING THE STORM

You and I have something in common which makes us dangerously close; we are going to die. The Italians have a saying: 'everybody is going to die, me too maybe.'

This 'maybe' is the postponing attitude which makes us row in the galley, illusory rowers of an illusory galley on an equally illusory ocean.

Do not the Rishis say: "I was not born, how then could I die? The Atman is beyond birth and death. Who is bound, who is freed?"

What a great insight! All this was just a big joke. A kind of cosmic candid camera that consciousness was playing on itself. And here we are enjoying a good mug of Amrit on the shores of eternity. We had such a fright.

Every human being one day has to face the fact of his own death. In every situation there is an ultimate challenge, the action of awareness, walking without leaving any trace, or pushing death far away to unreal tomorrow and living in fear.

THE MONKEY'S DANCE

When faced with the fundamental insecurity of life, the frightening intuition of death, we freeze the ever changing moment and we try to create a permanent entity that we call 'me'.

In eastern scriptures there is an analogy comparing the mind to a mad monkey which is drunk, was bitten by a scorpion and locked in an empty room. This monkey has already tried many alternatives but

neither the drug culture nor the latest psychotherapy has made any difference. The restless monkey is just playing with one of his reflections in the mirror of life. Suddenly at last he discovers the ultimate distraction, what we pompously call spirituality. The monkey was in an empty room with the walls naked and hard. He found the going too rough, so he covered it with a new decor.

The monkey is the best customer of the 'new age' supermarket where he chooses different products to make himself secure according to his current preconceived ideas, neurosis and idiosyncrasies. This pseudo-spirituality is another way to prove himself. Whatever he does is a process to accumulate good deeds and virtues; it is a goody goody trip. The change takes place only with the uniform.

The monkey is going around in circles (*Samsara*). He continues to weave webs of security in which he entangles himself. Afraid of falling down he develops a network of eyes, arms, hands and legs, made of beliefs and concepts all born out of fear.

So you want to be a monk? Don't play until you're ripe.

If you crush half grown mustard seed you get neither oil nor pulp.' (3)

THE SUTRAS OF FEAR THE FORGETFULNESS OF OUR HEROIC NATURE

'What think ye, mendicant brothers; which is more - the water which is in the great four seas or the tears which have been shed by you in this long time passing and being born again groaning and weeping because of union with the unpleasant and separation from the pleasant? (4)

Let us imagine an immense hall as high as the canopy of heaven and loosing itself in the horizon. Imagine it

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A Teachers' Exchange

On the final evening of the conference held recently in Colorado, acting as spokeswoman for the Canadian contingent, Shirley Daventry French thanked Guest of Honour, Dr. Geeta S. Iyengar, and the United States National Iyengar Yoga Association, as follows :

Students of Iyengar — especially those who have been to Pune — are familiar with the expression: "Move into Vastness!"

Lying to the north of the United States is an area of vastness known as Canada; an area which has a longstanding Iyengar Yoga community.

Thanks to the generosity of the American branch of the Iyengar Yoga family, seventeen teachers from Canada were able to spend this wonderful week with Geetaji.

On behalf of all of us, I would like to express our appreciation of the foresight, persistence, effort and countless hours of karma yoga — before and during the conference — which enabled it to unfold so harmoniously.

Thank you to the Iyengar Yoga National Association of the United States.

Thank you to all of you who welcomed us so warmly. Most of all, thank you to Geetaji.

When we heard Geetaji was coming to North America, we invited her to Canada. She declined due to lack of time, but she did say — and we won't forget this — "Perhaps next time!"

Thank you Geetaji.

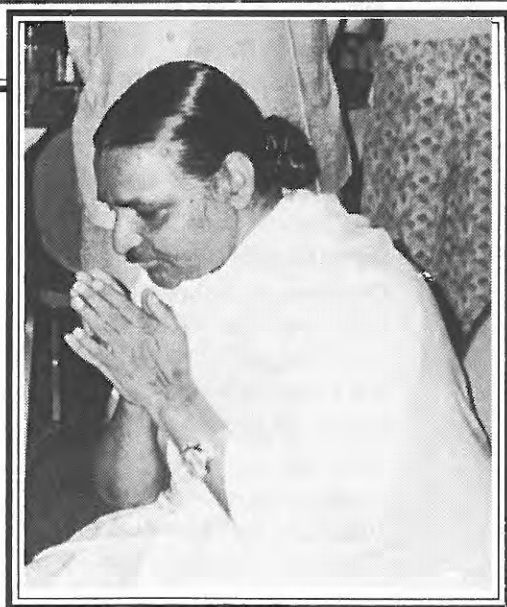
Thank you for the inspired teaching and guidance.

Thank you for your patience and generosity.

It was a great blessing to be here.

Geetaji, we wish you God Speed on your journey home. Our love and respect go with you. Please pass on our greetings to Guruji, and our gratitude for the Light of Yoga which shines from Pune into all of our lives.





Summer Reading

Here are the titles of some of the books in the Yoga Centre library
Ask your teacher for details

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Yoga Sutras of Patanjali,
70 Glorious Years of Yogacharya,
The Human Body: its structure and operation
On Yoga: The Synthesis of Yoga
The teachings of Don Juan: a Yaqui way of knowledge
Yoga for Children

Props and Ailments
The Runner's Yoga Book
Buddhism; Its doctrines and its methods
The Secret Oral Teachings
Creative Imagination
Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa
the tibetan book of the dead
The Essential Gandhi
Man's Search for Meaning
The Way of a Pilgrim and the Pilgrim Continues His Way
Yoga and Pregnancy
Concentration and Meditation
My Guru and his disciple
Iyengar; His Life and Work
Light on Pranayama
Light on Yoga
The Tree of Yoga
Yoga a Gem for Women
The Varieties of Religious Experience
How to Grow a Lotus Blossom
The Wild, White Goose
Psyche & Symbol
Kundalini
On Education
You Are the World
Pilgrims of the Stars

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Roshi Jiyu-Kennett
Carl G. Jung
Gopi Krishna
J. Krishnamurti
J. Krishnamurti
Dilip Kumar Roy
Indira Devi

TITLE

The Divided Self
Relax & Renew
Inner Beauty, Inner Light
The Nature of Man according to the Vedanta
Immediate Knowledge and Happiness: Hindu Doctrines of Vedanta
Bioenergetics
The Bhagavad Gita
Yoga the Iyengar Way

The Seven Storey Mountain
Reflections on Life After Life
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...continued from page 15

padding with consoles synthesising the infinite input of neuronal information. The hall itself is drowned under an ocean of synaptic connections and interconnections.

Welcome to your brain. Landscapes of accumulated memories (*Samskara*) generating indigestible programmes even for the most sophisticated computer. These programmes keep on repeating, ad infinitum, the virtual reality of the ego.

Genetic, emotional, intellectual and spiritual programmes which give an answer to every situation of life according to our own conditioning.

Despite this superstructure we have created, a breach remains, which lets the wind of insecurity blow in and scour us to the deepest of our cells. This breach is suffering and our own death. The world of the ego is made up of routines and habits based on a very simple rule: to keep the reality of its illusion at all costs.

Acting as analgesics, routines and habits diminish the direct perception of reality increasing the number of distractions to avoid the ultimate confrontation. They allow the show to go on. This show is sponsored by five interwoven prison-realms generating mental fluctuations (*Citta Vritti*). They are known as afflictions (*Kleshas*): ignorance (*Avidya*), the sense of 'I' or 'me' (*Asmita*), attraction (*Raga*), repulsion (*Dvesha*), and the clinging to life or the desire to continue (*Abhinivesha*).

The personality is always an actualisation of memories (*Samskara*). It is a fragmentary and conflictual actualisation between the power of *samskara* and the censor of personality. Ceaseless movement of the memory from the known to the known.

The image that the observer has of the world is just memories. Every perception is filtered through memories. There is no more perception but recognition. Memory has built a wall of resistance trying to recreate pleasurable experiences and avoiding painful ones. Every perception happens in the dichotomic

sphere of attraction and repulsion. The brain is also selecting information. What is not necessary for immediate survival is filtered.

'If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.'

This bio-computer moulds reality. It can only repeat the programme but it can never go beyond.

Whatever the monkey does he acts in the field of memories. He is a product of that. He can enlarge his prison but he can never break through the wall to contemplate the unknown. To discover the unknown the monkey must die.

'He understands it, who conceives it not; and he understands it not, who conceives it. It is the unknown to the man of true knowledge, but to the ignorant it is the known.' (6)

THE EMPTINESS OF SOLUTIONS

'The map is not the country.' (7)

The monkey is greedy for solutions and he collects them. He wants to act on the effects but not on the problem itself and the 'how' binds him to the slavery of some miraculous recipe. Every new solution is a new illusion, a new distraction.

The answer is in the question if we dare to ask the right one. This question cannot be answered by the brain. When the mind drops the idea of finding a solution, staying completely with the question, something entirely new is born. The questioner with his hope or despair is no longer there.

'When Bhava was questioned by Vaskali, he expounded the nature of Brahman to him by maintaining silence. "Teach me" said Vaskali, "most reverent sir, the nature of Brahman." Brahman, however, remained silent. But when the question was put a second and third time he answered: "I teach you indeed but you do not understand; the Atman is silence." (8)

THE CALL OF THE WARRIOR, BREAKING THE PATTERN

'I do not regard him as a hero who is able to battle successfully against a mighty army; only him I consider a hero who is able to cross the ocean known as the mind and the senses.' (9)

In spite of our cowardice each situation possesses its own dimension of courage, strength and awareness. It is in this awareness that the warrior finds the sword of wisdom.

The call of Yoga can be heard in different ways. The three main streams are: the therapeutic aspect whereby there is a physical or emotional problem; the well being aspect, to improve the body-mind integration; and the spiritual quest. However, in all three it is the awareness of our limitations. The desire to explore our limitations is the first stage in Yoga called *Arambhavastha*.

The first encounter for the practitioner is the body, for he has to come out of his artificial world and meet a much more concrete and pragmatic reality.

It is like having spent all our life in an upper class suburb where we feel safe and protected and going to a red light and cut throat area.

To ground oneself in the body is the first step to total health. This grounding happens with the practice of *asana*. From the arrogance of the intellect the practitioner must descend to the darkest corner of his body where he can meet his organic reality. The practice of *asana* is to meet the body without any embellishment as it is, which can be very frustrating.

There are two main points in every posture: the sense of direction and the centre of gravity. To maintain the centre of gravity all the muscles have to be aligned with each other. The practitioner must sharpen his attention and observe how he places his body, partly at first, then totally keeping the right and left sides of the body symmetrical in every pose.

This observation of the body as it is during the *asana*, is the seed of sincerity. The practitioner needs to

experience what is actually happening. This direct approach will build confidence and clarity.

The first encounter with the body can be at the beginning very gross and unrefined but it is far better than second hand knowledge. The practitioner will not merely 'do' but will use the poses as a challenge to sharpen the awareness, to learn the dynamism of life in the poses. He will thus create motion and break the inertia of the body. In that process there will be pain, laziness, doubt, fear and despair. It demands courage to not run away. The practitioner creates a kind of intimacy, a raw contact to explore fear and pain. They will be his companions along the way.

Motion activates the body but it is not enough. Motion has to turn into action. There is a certain repetitiveness in motion which is good at the beginning. The repetition develops the power of postural analysis. The sharpening of the senses is the way to action. Action is the intelligence in motion. Each pose is like being in a state of emergency where all the senses have to be fully alert. The posture is questioning the practitioner. He does not ignore it but explores it from the different sensations of the body in the pose, e.g. why is one part of the body light and the other heavy? The practitioner must examine the pose from all angles. Therefore the learning process is not rigid and does not stick to recipes.

The practitioner will then have access to the organic body and start to understand how the *asanas* interact with the organs. This understanding which is born from the purification of the gross body is called *Gathavastha*. It is the second stage in Yoga. In the first stage motion and doing are important, in the second stage it is action and feeling. In this phase the practitioner builds up the *Dridha-Sharira*, a firm and stable body.

This second stage opens the doors of intimacy between the mind and body. In fact the separation did not exist. Wherever the body is touched the feedback is consciousness. This extreme fusion of the

practitioner awareness and the body intelligence is the third stage called *Parichayavastha*. The practitioner is not merely satisfied with a peripheral approach but observes how the attention flows from the periphery to the centre and the centre to the periphery. The adjustments are made from the structural body. This intimacy is obtained through maturity of the breathing process. This state of awareness where there is unification between body, senses, mind and breath is called *Kaya Prana Indriya Citta Samgati*. Each posture becomes the expression of the inner mystery. In that stage the practitioner has access to the Vajra Deha, 'adamantine' body.

According to the Yogi's experience the body is composed of three universes made up of different constellations. The first is the gross body the *Sthula-Sharira* consisting of the anatomical sheath (*Annamaya-Kosha*). This universe is explored during the first (*Arambhavastha*) and the second stage (*Gathavastha*). In the second stage the practitioner begins to explore one of the constellations of the second universe, *Pranamaya-Kosha*, the physiological sheath being part of the subtle body the *Sukshma-Sharira*. The *Sukshma-Sharira* includes the psychological sheath (*Manomaya-Kosha*) and the intellectual sheath (*Vijnamaya-Kosha*). This second universe is explored in the second and third stage (*Parichayavastha*).

Then the practitioner starts to explore intuitively the third universe the *Ananda-Maya Kosha* or spiritual sheath of joy, being part of the *Karana-Sharira* or causal body. Like the earth releases its fragrance after the rain the practitioner will feel the fragrance of the Self saturating the body.

When the three universes are one and lose their identity in the Self (*Atma-Samyama*) it is the harvest time or complete maturation called *Nispattiyavastha*. The asanas are no more performed in duality, there is no more performer. Outside and inside have disappeared. The body is perceived as *Deva-Alaya*, the temple of God.

'When you cannot hold the gross body still, you cannot hold the brain still. If you do not know the silence of the body, you cannot understand the silence of the mind.' (10)

ON THE RAZOR'S EDGE THE WEDDING OF THE THREE SHAKTI

In the second chapter of the Yoga Sutras, Patanjali defines Yoga as: 'Tapah svadhyaya isvarapranidhani kriyayogah.'

Tapas is the burning desire to cleanse the body, senses and psyche. It corresponds to *Karma Yoga*. *Svadhyaya* is the study of one's self going back to the source of our actions, i.e. who is behind the doing. It corresponds to *Jnana Yoga*. *Isvarapranidhana* is to surrender whatever we do to God. It is a deep trust in life. It corresponds to *Bhakti Yoga*.

Yoga is union of action awareness and love. None of them can be favoured without creating imbalance. There is no need to ask what kind of Yoga one is practising, physical or spiritual. Yoga is one.

THE ART OF LEAVING NO TRACE

Enslaved by our desires we react blindly to our impulses, splashing our actions and the world with confusion. Constant duality between what we did and what we should have done, between what we are doing and what we would like to do. An endless fight between thought and emotion. We are all schizophrenic.

We have seen that the monkey is always escaping the fact of his death with the postponing attitude. Knowing very well that he has no time, the warrior finds a natural morality which is not the result of cultural conditioning, but is born out of the fire of urgency (*Yama and Niyama*).

Yama (non-violence, truth, non stealing, continence and non-coveting) discipline the five organs of action: arms, legs, mouth, the organs of reproduction and excretion. *Niyama* (purity, contentment, self-purification, self study, surrender) control the organs of

perception: eyes, nose, ears, tongue and skin.

Yama and *Niyama* are interesting words. Beyond the superficial meaning of commandments lies a deeper meaning. *Yama* is also the name for death (the great restrainer), which means that without awareness we are already dead. In *Niyama* 'ni' is a privative, a negation. Awareness is the conquest of death. It is the foundation of the practice of *asanas*.

Nandi is the vehicle of Shiva. Nandi is a magnificent strong wild bull and Shiva is sitting on top very cool. Nandi represents the senses, the sensual nature of man. The body and the senses are fully awake but they are controlled by awareness. That is the meaning of Shiva riding the bull. Usually when we speak about control and discipline one fluctuates between indulgence and repression. It is the process of castrating the bull. It is easier to ride an ox.

Through the postures the practitioner learns the art of action not tainted with past or future. He learns to walk without leaving any trace.

'When you are doing the posture, the ethic of the right foot, the ethic of the left foot, are they even or not? If you let loose, that is untruth....' (11)

THE INNER SMASHAN

'Of all the gifts one is supreme. It is the freedom from fear.' (12)

A smashan is a charnel ground where dead bodies are burned or buried. For the practitioner his mat becomes a 'smashan' where everything has to be burned and turned to ashes. One may experience a terrible loneliness when facing the practice mat. This loneliness is very healthy, it is a clear cut with the chattering mind and one's personal history. Loneliness becomes a stepping stone to aloneness.

We have seen that the world of the ego is just routines and unconscious habits. The warrior uses the practice to turn his gestures and the rest of the day into a ritual of awareness.

The practitioner will meet distractions and obstacles. They are the fulcrums to breaking through. One should be aware of certain strategies in which one can be trapped.

The **ostrich strategy** is the strategy of the 'victim' who wants to be pampered by the practice or the teacher. The ostrich lives in fear and indulges in it. The ostrich student runs away at the first discomfort, makes up excuses and acts like a spoiled child. He is constantly acting out the psychodrama of his soap opera.

The practitioner must kill the ostrich without mercy, if not the ostrich will kill him. A good teacher has to kill the ostrich first in himself then in his students; otherwise his students will chain him up and vampirise him.

The ostrich teacher does not know anything but pretends he does. He covers up his insecurity with theoretical knowledge but hasn't any practical experience.

The ostrich teacher can be very successful business-wise, but he can't take you very far.

The intense practice of *asanas* generates seven precious allies which help to rid us of the ostrich strategy. According to the *Gheranda Samhita* they are: purification (*Shodhana*), strength (*Drdhata*), steadiness (*Sthairyam*), composure (*Dhairyam*), lightness (*Laghavam*), realisation of what is (*Pratyasham*), and solitude or to be able to stay with oneself (*Nirliptam*).

The **monkey strategy** is more elaborate but it is still rooted in fear. The monkey learns through imitation. It may help at the beginning, but the monkey is such a good imitator that he might believe he has understood everything. He becomes very dependent on his model and therefore limited, which deprives him of freshness in his practice.

The monkey teacher is like a carbon copy, he teaches through imitation. He is not grounded in his practice which makes him feel very insecure. His orthodoxy kills the spirit. At this stage he is more interested in

where he is in the hierarchy than investigating his Sadhana. He has built a wall of authority to become the local guru. He could be very demanding with his students but not with himself. He instills fear in his students to enslave them to the cult of his personality. He stands on a pedestal and lives in fear of losing his territory. He wants more and more power, he embodies the perfect J.R. in his Dallas Yoga serial.

To overcome this strategy the practitioner has to return to the beginner's mind which does not know. The monkey teacher has to come down from his pedestal, let his students challenge him and practice with them. The monkey will be exorcised through sweating, but mind the monkey when you think he's gone, for he may return galloping on the ostrich. When the practitioner gets over fear and imitation he can discover the inner **tiger**. The tiger walks silently. He is almost invisible. For him everything is food, weakness, strength, pain, pleasure, success and failure are oblations to his sacrifice.

The tiger is a loner therefore it makes him vulnerable. For the warrior this vulnerability is very precious. That's where he can taste life. In this vulnerability there is the strength of his own presence. So he can stand on his own and walk fearlessly in his inner jungle.

The tiger teacher teaches from the experience of his sole practice. He lives in the passion of his art. He is consumed by it. To stay with a tiger teacher requires courage for he is merciless. He does not cultivate any personal image and one never knows on which foot to stand. He may smile at you and the next moment swallow you up. With a tiger teacher you are always in a state of emergency. He uses fear to free his students, to make them stronger and independent. He wants his students to surpass him. The trap could be in the very power of his *Sadhana*.

The practitioner has to realise that he stands on a plateau which could easily become a ceiling.

He has to carry on his exploration. He is nothing but a tool in the hands of a mystery beyond his understanding.

Footnotes:

1. Vira: according to the Dhatupatha (Sanskrit etymology dictionary) the seed root is Vir: in stepping or striding through, striding everywhere, all pervading power you find the nature of Vir. A brave or eminent man, chief, hero, warrior. Latin VIR: a man.
2. Bhagavad Gita chapter 2.32
3. Kabir
4. The Buddha. Samyutta Nikaya, Nidana-Vagga, Anamatagga-Samyutta, Sutta 3.
5. William Blake
6. Kena Upanishad. Chapter 3, mantral
7. A.H. Korzybski. General semantics
8. Shankara on the Brahmasutra, III.2.17
9. The supreme Yoga. Yoga Vasistha translated by Swami Venkatesananda I.9.
10. B.K.S. Iyengar. Yoga Darshana, London 1970-74, Savasana, Pranayama, Sutra. Page 96 No. 65. Compiled by Dona Holleman.
11. B.K.S. Iyengar. Idem. Page 114 No. 36.
12. Padma Purana

Christian Pisano was the director of the Iyengar Yoga Centre in Nice, France. A student of B.K.S. Iyengar who stayed in India for 4 years to study at the Iyengar Institute to which Christian returns regularly. Christian now lives and teaches in Sydney, Australia.

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Additional writings by Cristian Pisano will be published in the September/October Newsletter. 

YOGA CALENDAR

JULY

12-14: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' AGM
on Saltspring Island
15-20: Yoga Intensive in Victoria

NOVEMBER

22-23: Julie Gudmestad teacher training
22-23: Julie Gudmestad, all levels workshop

SEPTEMBER

27-29: Father Joe Pereira

OCTOBER

25-27: Saltspring Retreat

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September/October 1996

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In keeping with the mandate of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society Directors, 1996, to update, review and document policies and procedures, the newsletter committee submitted a policy which has been adopted by the Board of Directors as follows:

- advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the newsletter of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society
- yoga advertisements must only be for Iyengar Yoga or Radha House/Yasodhara Ashram
- priority given to advertisements:
 - about Victoria Yoga Centre events
 - from Radha House/Yasodhara Ashram for YMYWCA events
 - from Victoria Yoga Centre Society members
- advertisements taken with proviso subject to space

Cover Photo

Canadian 1996 Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association (CIYTA) Annual General Meeting, Saltspring Centre, July 11-15, 1996

From Top, L-R

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The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in the Victoria area and 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:

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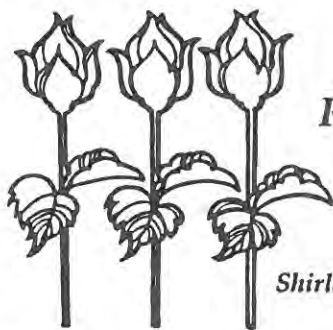
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Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

Eight years' ago, in anticipation of Mr. Iyengar's seventieth birthday, an invitation arrived to submit articles for a commemorative volume to mark the occasion. This publication was being planned by Light on Yoga Research Trust of Bombay, an organisation of Guruji's students which supports and propagates his work in many ways. Their efforts produced the book *70 Glorious Years of Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar* (which is available for purchase from the Victoria Yoga Centre via Linda Benn). I sent an article about the Victoria Iyengar Yoga community, which appears in a section of this book containing articles from around the world, called "The Tree with its Branches". At the same time, I received a request from the Institute in Pune for a map of Canada showing where the various Iyengar Yoga centres were situated. I sent this too, and it became part of an exhibit at the Institute showing the universal nature of Iyengar Yoga.

I had chosen to write about community, because this is one of the main lessons I have learned from yoga and from the example of Mr. Iyengar: that while the practice is personal and the effort must be made by me and me alone, the fruits of the practice do not belong to me. I must give something back. If I benefit, if I gain something: knowledge, skill or whatever, it is not for me alone, I must pass it on. At the very least, I must give thanks, express gratitude for what I have received — even the very difficult lessons, because these usually generate the greatest learning. If I can, I

must do more and share these fruits in some way — and there is always some way for each individual to practise *karma yoga*, which Georg Feuerstein in the *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Yoga* translates as "Yoga of self-transcending action".

In addition to teaching, I have chosen to be an active participant in the yoga community at local, national and international levels. I must say that time and time again I have asked myself, why? *It is so difficult to get along with some of these people! It takes so much time!* The yoga community is like a family. Like it or not, we are drawn together by our common interest in yoga. Unlike friends, we do not select our yoga companions voluntarily because of personal attraction, and while some of us might have become friends had we met in other circumstances, some of us definitely would not. However, when friendships are formed within the yoga community, they are generally very supportive and enduring.

It is difficult to work within a group. In all the yoga groups in which I have been involved, from time to time someone withdraws in the face of a controversial issue with a high-minded comment that they aren't interested in politics and only want to do yoga. In all the yoga groups in which I have been involved, as far as I can see, everyone there also only wants to do yoga but has a broader picture in mind *that this work is Yoga*. One of the things which Mr. Iyengar said to me last winter in Pune was that he wants associations to be formed to cement people and not for friction. Since most of the people who volunteer to work within associations are strong minded, full of enthusiasm for the work, with varying ideas of how it should be done — friction inevitably does arise. But it mustn't end there! When this happens we have been provided with a divine opportunity to practise the skills we have learned from yoga, draw on our resources, and do as Mr. Iyengar has asked us: "cement".

Yoga does not end with your personal practice, although this must provide the foundation for any work you do. It doesn't end with the changes it brings to your personal and professional lives. The practice

of yoga is very demanding and engrossing, and, if you become serious, will spill over into all aspects of your life. In fact, it will become a lifelong quest. It is the path of a warrior, and your yogic training prepares you physically and mentally to face threats to your spiritual development. Yoga develops strength to overcome your obstacles, and stamina to sustain this effort throughout your life, because this is a path strewn with obstacles. Moreover, warriors on this path don't retire or fade away, but continue on active service until their death.

In the West, yoga is often promoted as a means of making you feel better or look better, as therapy for musculo-skeletal or health problems, or as stress management. While yoga can definitely be applied to all of these problems, and is probably the ultimate method of stress management, this is not its primary purpose. The practice of yoga helps you develop to your fullest potential as a human being and gain awareness of the divine self manifesting in this body for this lifetime. The purpose of Yoga is self-knowledge or self-realisation, which necessitates a radical shift in identification from the ego-personality to the transcendental self. Physical limitations, psychological imbalance, stress should not be ignored but faced and dealt with in such a manner that you can get on with your spiritual journey. For instance, it's hard to maintain a spiritual frame of mind with something like toothache; first you must take care of this, probably by a visit to the dentist. If it's a health problem that you cannot alleviate, then you must learn to adapt your practice, but you can still practise yoga — no matter how enormous this challenge may be — until the day you die.

Yoga requires that we put aside time for a formal practice or practices to be performed regularly. To sustain this commitment, we must learn to be discriminating and not fritter our energy away on trivial pursuits, allow it to be drained by emotions, or distracted by minor discomforts and imagined slights. Our energy has to be conserved for the journey we must make, and the major challenges

which will be frequent or even constant companions on our path.

Some yogic traditions demand celibacy and renunciation of family life by their adherents, because it can take so much time and energy away from focussing on spiritual growth. They have formed another kind of family where there is a goal in mind, hopefully most of the time, of the necessity to concentrate on this spiritual journey towards the self. However, in my observation the people in these communities are still caught up in many of the strategies which confront those of us who live in a more conventional family.

Can we remain in a secular community, and pursue a spiritual path wholeheartedly?

The answer to this question lies in other yoga traditions which embrace family life, and the Iyengar tradition is one of these. Mr. Iyengar's Guru, Krishnamacharya, was married to Guruji's older sister Namagiramma. They had six children, one of whom is a noted yoga teacher himself, T.K.V. Desikachar. Following in this tradition, Guruji also married and had six children, two of whom are renowned as yoga teachers: his daughter Geeta, and son Prashant. The October 1995 issue of *Yoga Journal* contained an article called "The Life and Yoga of Krishnamacharya" in which Desikachar was asked a question about why his father chose family life rather than *sannyas* or renunciation. He answered: "To be a sannyasin means to give yourself totally to a higher power, to God. I think my father was a good example of that." If you read B.K.S. Iyengar's autobiography *IYENGAR – His Life and Work* (also available through the yoga centre), or better still if you have been fortunate enough to have had contact with Mr. Iyengar in person, you will have seen the same ability to surrender to divine will.

Obviously my choice, and that of most readers of this newsletter, is what is commonly called the path of the householder. In the same article in *Yoga Journal*, Desikachar quoted another learned sage called Nathamuni who said that family life is the most

important part of one's existence, but it does not just mean having children, but living as others do and having responsibilities.

A yogic life is a totally involved life: in personal development, family (if that is your choice), right livelihood, and the community. Here in Victoria, there is a working spiritual community which has evolved through the Victoria Yoga Centre whose work reaches across our country, our continent and worldwide. *It is difficult to get along with some of these people! It does take a great deal of time! It is a priceless opportunity for spiritual growth!*



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From the Editor

In this issue and in others yet to come, we are trying to develop a 'community' theme. At a newsletter committee meeting the question "How Can We Develop A Spiritual Community" was asked and we thought it would help to answer the question by reading about how people use their yoga, hatha, kundalini, mantra, and so on, to help them in their daily life.

So you will be reading articles by people from all walks of life and who live in all sorts of different types of communities. There will be reflections on spiritual communities, small communities, island communities, national and international communities. We hope to give you a sense that we're all part of a community of one sort or another and that our own personal input is part of what makes the community the way it is. We're sure that everyone would like to read about your community, but until you've written that article, sit back and read what's happening in The Spiritual Community.

Good news on the newsletter front! During the past year, the newsletter committee has grown by leaps and bounds until it is well over twice its original size (its grown from three people to eight!). The growth has not just been in size, but in energy, enthusiasm, and ideas. I'm sure this growth will reflect in future newsletters and I'm looking forward to the next potluck meeting at Lauren's house on September 19, 1996. If anyone is interested in helping with the newsletter, you are welcome to join us to plan the November/December issue at that time.

The newsletter committee is:

Jennifer Rischmiller, Shirley Daventry French, Lauren Cox, Melanie Jollymore, Marlene Miller, Caren Liedtke, Neil McKinlay, Louine Niwa.

Renate Grinfelds maintains our membership/ mailing list, prepares labels for mailout, collates the newsletter.

Jill Roberts prepares the newsletters for mailing.

Thank You.

Jennifer Rischmiller, Editor





YOGA

PROGRAM OF CLASSES IN THE IYENGAR APPROACH TO YOGA



Introductory Yoga

Monday, 9:00 - 10:30am	Lauren Cox	Wednesday, 9:00 - 10:30am	Lauren Cox
Monday, 4:15 - 5:15pm	Jo Anna Hope	Wednesday, 6:00 - 7:30pm	Wendy Boyer
Monday, 7:30 - 9:00pm	Ann Kilbertus	Thursday, 4:30 - 6:00pm	Linda Benn
Tuesday, 7:00 - 8:30pm	Leslie Hogya		

Yoga - Level I

Monday, 10:30 - 12:00pm	Lauren Cox	Friday, 9:00 - 10:30am	Linda Benn
Tuesday, 5:30 - 7:00pm	Leslie Hogya	Friday, 4:30 - 6:00pm	Maggi Feehan
Wed., 7:30 - 9:00pm	James Currie-Johnson	Saturday, 9:00 - 11:00am	Celia Ward

Yoga - Level II

Thursday, 10:00 - 12:00pm	Shirley Daventry French	Thursday, 6:00 - 8:00pm	Linda Benn
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Yoga - Level III

Monday, 5:30 - 7:30pm	Shirley Daventry French
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Noon Yoga

Tuesday, 12:00 - 1:00pm	Linda Benn	Thursday, 12:00 - 1:00pm	Lauren Cox
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Sixty & Better

Wed., 10:30 - 12:00pm	Shirley Daventry French	Friday, 10:30 - 12:00pm	Linda Benn
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Gentle Yoga

Tuesday, 10:30 - 12:00pm	Linda Benn
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Special Needs Yoga

Wednesday, 4:30 - 6:00pm	Shirley Daventry French & Ann Kilbertus.
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Pranayama Yoga

Monday, 7:00 - 8:00am	Celia Ward
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Restorative Yoga

Friday, 5:00 - 6:00pm	Leslie Hogya
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Term I: September 9 - October 27 Term II: October 28 - December 15

REGISTRATION: Victoria YM/YWCA, 880 Courtney St, Victoria, B.C. V8W 1C4 Telephone:
386-7511

INFORMATION: Linda Benn, 478-0757

An Interview with Linda Benn

by Caren Liedtke

"For we all have stories. And they must be told. In telling our stories we affirm our selves, our very being, and thereby the purpose of our Creator and our lives."

- Sophie Burnham

I knew who Linda was. I had taken a class or two from her, taken workshops where she was assisting, talked with her casually at a function or two. But I knew little of her story. I was excited by the opportunity to interview her and learn more. We met at the yoga studio one afternoon and she reluctantly talked with me for about forty five minutes. I say reluctantly because one of the first things I learned about Linda is that she is actually quite shy.

Could you give me a brief synopsis of your background in yoga?

The first time I did yoga I was pregnant. I did yoga watching Kareen's Yoga on TV. I never went to prenatal classes, so I did yoga. Then I was into raising kids and got pretty burnt out. I didn't take any time for myself. I did get into playing soccer and even running but my body kept getting worse and worse. Eventually I realised I had to give up doing all that stuff. I decided I would try some yoga, which I did here at the Y. Very very quickly it seemed just the right place to be. I was really delighted, I think, that it offered a way of healing myself. There were definite techniques that one could learn and maybe gain some control over one's body – and emotions too, instead of going to various doctors who you never really trusted. So there was this feeling that this was where I needed to be for this time in my life and it evolved from there. It wasn't until I started taking two classes a week that I started to notice changes. That would have been around 1980. I started teaching in 1987.

How did you get involved in teaching?

Shirley asked me to. I hadn't really thought about it.

What did you think when she approached you?

I was scared to death. I have never been one to be able to talk in front of groups of people. I guess I knew I had the capacity to do it. And as every teacher you talk to says, as soon as you start teaching, your learning takes a great leap forward. Suddenly you have more questions than ever. You may know it in your body, or think you do, and then to express it and communicate it to a group of people, is a real challenge.

Since then I have been teaching a lot at the Y, usually five classes per week.

Eventually I took over administrat-ing the courses here at the Y. When Donna Fornelli left for Ottawa, I took over that position. So I organise the classes and the program, and oversee the equipment.

Do you ever feel that with your own practice, and teaching five classes, and all the work that you do here and for the Yoga Society that you are burnt out on yoga?

Sure. I think everyone who gets involved at that level of yoga feels that way sometimes. I think you would be dishonest if you didn't. After you have been doing it for a while, you know these phases pass. It's the same in any part of your life, really: in relationships, in going to school. You have down times, or very difficult times. But once you go through them several times, you can sit back and say: "Okay, this is something I just have to go through, do the best I can." And you know that you are going to come out the other side, and maybe even have learned something from it.



One of the suggested focuses for the newsletter was spiritual community, the Yoga Centre as spiritual community, do you have any thoughts on that?

That's a part of yoga I have a great deal of difficulty with, to be honest. I have been thinking about this lately. I think that I am a person of questions. I don't have any answers to these kind of questions. I know other people on spiritual paths have faith. They have found answers that may work for them. I find I am still always questioning, always questioning. In the last Newsletter there was an article by Christian Pisano. I was really delighted to see in one paragraph he talks about, don't worry about the answers, just stay with the questions. Because when you are always looking for an answer, you are either caught up in hope or despair: hoping for an answer or a reward, despairing because you haven't got the answers. Staying with the questions, for me that's where it's at. That's where all of life is at.

Could you give an example of some of the questions?

All of the big questions. Why are we here? and What is the purpose of my life? You can even ask questions like, Why do I teach yoga? Why do I do yoga? Life just seems to be so chaotic and sometimes very joyful but sometimes very cruel. Sometimes I am totally unable to understand what this life is about. So I just find that I am always asking questions, but now I don't expect answers so much. And again that goes back to one of the yoga sutras, or maybe it is in the Gita, it says: "Don't expect any rewards, all you are entitled to is the work." I was offended by that the first time I heard it. I had lived my life, in a sense, always thinking I am going to be rewarded for being good. I am more relaxed about that now. And I think what that has enabled me to do is to be a little more in the present, in what's actually happening in the moment.

Could you relate that in any way to spiritual community? Or do those words not work for you?

Certainly community has helped me a great deal. A great, great deal. The friendships I have had through

yoga and the opportunity to talk about these kinds of things with people in the yoga community. Knowing that the yoga community is there. That you help them out when you are strong, but when you are feeling perhaps a little weaker or unsure of yourself, that they are there to support you.

Related to the idea of community, you have done a lot of work for the Yoga Society over the years, maybe you could talk a bit about the things that you have done and why you have worked so hard for the yoga community.

My actual work is really the work I do here at the Y, organising the program. I have been on the Executive of the Yoga Centre for many years, I don't know how long. And I help organise workshops, take care of the books. Book sales, mat sales. I used to keep the Yoga Centre Library. I've done more than I thought. I used to do the layout of the Newsletter, the work that Lauren does now, which I loved doing – the creative aspect of it. But there came a time to let that go and Lauren was the perfect person to work on that. It is always a give and take thing. I learned so much doing the Newsletter and it gave me a lot of confidence, at the same time I wanted to give back. Something about the yoga, once you realise how much it has benefited yourself personally, it feels right to return that in some way. And it doesn't have to be teaching, it can be many other ways as well.

You went to the Teachers' Exchange in Colorado with Geeta. Is there anything you wanted to share about that trip?

Two hundred and fifty teachers were there, eighteen from Canada. A lot of senior teachers from the United States were there, so it was interesting seeing them.

What's it like being in that atmosphere with all those people together?

They each are very powerful people in themselves, but they were working together. A lot of those senior teachers never got to do an asana class because they were always helping in the larger group, going around checking or doing things that Geeta asked them to do for individual people. They gave up a lot to be there, they really did.

A dumb question would be - did you learn anything new, and if so, was there anything you wanted to share?

Probably the prime thing I learned is how to look, how to see. Geeta, because it was a teachers' group, really focused on that. She was up on a platform in the middle of the room and she either had some of the senior teachers up on the stage doing the poses, or walked around periodically and brought individuals up on to the stage. She had them do poses and then pointed out things in that person's body in the pose. She would have that person face one direction, then go through all the instructions again with them facing the opposite direction. She was always concerned that all of us saw what she wanted us to see in that pose or in that body. This was ongoing, everyday, it wasn't just one day. So by the end of it, I really felt I was seeing more, and I really noticed it the day I came back to teach. I looked around the class and felt overwhelmed. This was a class where there were people with many problems, and I looked and was seeing the various traumas that we all have in our bodies, but they all kind of came out at me. So the next step, of course, is once you begin to see those kinds of things, how do you begin to work with them.

I would think it would be overwhelming at first, you would just want to fix everything, and how do you key in on one thing?

That's true and you don't want to, you can't just jump in and meddle with another person's body. And it's more than their body, it's their emotions, everything. And Geeta, of course, showed that as well. How to look for areas in bodies where the energy isn't flowing well. How to see where someone is perhaps moving too much. She separates the words *moving* and *action*. Mr. Iyengar does too. *Movement* and *action*. *Action* referring more to a flow of energy in the body.

So maybe you could see gross movement, but a lack of energy?

Yes. Or often it will be blocked in a joint, or bunched up muscle somewhere. She showed quite clearly on

some bodies how to move energy in those areas to create more balance. She was *constantly* saying to us when we were in the asanas, "Look within." If there was any theme to that conference, I would say, "Look within."

How does that relate to looking at other people? The first point, about seeing other people better?

I think you have to develop that ability in yourself first, before you have the experience to begin to appreciate how to work with someone else.

Looking at you own body in your own practice? Yes. Do you practice daily?

I miss days periodically. For example, on Tuesday, I teach two classes at the Y and one class at home and I really find it hard to fit in a good practice. I do pranayama in the morning. So, on Tuesdays, sometimes, I may not do a practice. I used to feel fairly guilty about it, but I don't much now. Because other days I do a good two hour practice. I certainly could be practising more, there's no doubt about it.

One thing I wonder about is...having a practice at your level, I just can't imagine it right now. Can you remember back to when you were struggling to develop a more regular practice?

It's really been a struggle for me. For years. I still often come to two classes because I need someone to tell me what to do. I'm that type of a person. When my children were at home, it was really hard to do a regular practice. I was exhausted all the time. And then to find the time, and the energy, and have everything come together at the same time was really difficult. Even Geeta and Mr. Iyengar talk about this. There is the yoga of being a householder. And it may not always be doing your practice. It may be how you prepare the food or sweep the floor. All of the things we have to do. And while you are doing that you can perhaps be aware of your posture, how you're breathing, which is a big one for me 'cause I tend to hold my breath a lot. So you just do the best that you can do at the time, and try not to keep knocking yourself.

That's hard, that line between trying to stretch yourself and beating yourself over the head.

Yes. And we all make mistakes. We all push ourselves too hard sometimes, or other times we are too lazy. Maybe what happens is you go to that one extreme of pushing too hard, maybe to the point where you injure yourself, then other times you are really slothful and lazy, swinging from one extreme to the other. Then as you realise that you don't feel good about this, and you don't want to do that anymore, those swings become less. You become a little more refined, perhaps, as you stick with it over time.

Maybe patience is a part of that, not being too greedy to jump ahead of the process.

That was one thing Geeta said often, particularly in the pranayama, that most of us try to jump ahead much too quickly. Another thing that I really liked, she said even when you start working on the more complex poses, the more dramatic or difficult poses, you're only doing those poses to make the *basic* poses, the simple poses, better. And that was a totally different way of looking at it. In the magazine we got from the conference is an article by Prashant, Mr. Iyengar's son, and he talks about *kapotasana*, which is quite a deep backbending pose. He says you are not doing it to do a deep backbending pose, you are doing it to prepare your body for pranayama and mediation. It was a different way of looking at things.

I think that's good for the ego because the ego wants to do these flowery, hard poses. It's good for the ego to think the purpose is to go deeper into something more simple.

Yes, that's a nice way of putting it. To go deeper into something that's more simple.

Have you been to India?

Once. I went in the fall of '92.

What was that like?

Oh, gosh, there is no one answer ever for India. I found it very difficult to be there in terms of the diet. I wasn't aware of it at the beginning, so I plunged right

into drinking lots of chai tea and the hot curry food and just loved the flavours. But I realised after a week it totally addled my system. So I didn't feel well for a good part of the time I was there. It certainly is a very different culture. Not that I didn't really expect that. But combined with the heat...the heat is very powerful. My body is fairly sensitive. I don't adapt well to a lot of different changes.

How challenging was the practice? Was it mainly Geeta that was instructing?

Geeta was mainly instructing. The first three days there, we just had Geeta. And then Mr. Iyengar, who had been away, came back. He hangs around the edge of the class and jumps in periodically, when he feels there needs to be something pointed out or emphasised. He has these flashes of energy and insight that are just amazing.

I found the asana work very good. They really just emphasised the very basic work. The standing poses. I don't think we even did all of the standing poses. In headstand you stayed up as long as you could, but you could use the wall, and if you had to come down, you came down. You really worked hard because you wanted to and they certainly inspire you to work hard. And the heat, of course, loosens your body up really nicely. It feels good. You're hot, but there is always a breeze going through the room.

How about some things that interest you other than yoga.

My family is extremely important to me. One of my hobbies is gardening, though I garden in pots right now. My life has simplified from what it used to be. And I like reading.

Is there something you have read recently that you have liked?

The one I just finished is *Red China Blues* by Jan Wong. She's a Chinese Canadian. She was born here and went back during the Cultural Revolution and became very much a Maoist and worked in the farms and in the factories and went to school. She was very ardent and supportive of that whole movement and

wanted to contribute to it. And it's really the story of how she slowly became disillusioned. She eventually came back to Canada, went to school here, and that's where she got her training as a journalist. She worked for the *Globe and Mail*, became their correspondent and was in China during Tiananmen Square. It's really a fascinating book. She has a nice way of revealing herself with a sense of humour. Another book I pick up periodically is one of Ken Wilber's books, *A Brief History of Everything*. He's one of those people that can look at history and ideas and force you to look at everything from a totally different perspective. Three years ago one of my daughters died, and a book I read soon after that was his book, *Grace and Grit*. I got an enormous amount out of that as he talks about his wife dying of breast cancer. It's beautifully written. A wonderful book.

Was there anything else you wanted to talk about?

For some reason, I wanted to say something about a woman who died recently who came to our over sixty group for many, many years. She had Shirley as a teacher for many years, and myself for a few years. Her name was Lillian Sprinkling, and she stayed with yoga well into her eighties. Lillian's daughter, Susan, is married to Dennis Fafard, who was actually president of the Yoga Centre for a while. So they are both yoga people as well, though they are not actively involved at the moment. Lillian was a delightful lady. Earlier today I went to her memorial service, and it was really interesting listening to Susan speak about her mother. Lillian had lived a very very full life. She had been a school teacher, took her training in Ottawa in nursing and nursed in many little out of the way places in B.C. Then she got married and had Susan. Her husband got ill quite young and she went back to work full time. A very full rich life. She loved walking, even when she couldn't do yoga anymore, she was still walking five miles a day. Eventually she had some strokes and ended up in a care centre and finally had a stroke that prevented her from walking. Apparently she decided at that point that it was time to go. She stopped eating. And eventually died. There

was something about that story...there is a sense of completion to the whole story. A complete life. It just struck me that it was quite wonderful.

Blessing Prayer

May I be filled with loving kindness

May I be well

May I be peaceful and at ease

May I be happy

May you be filled with loving kindness

May you be well

May you be peaceful and at ease

May you be happy.

Author: Unknown

Source: Father Joe Pereria

Apply this prayer to yourself, your precious loved ones, your community, the world and so on, moving outward in concentric circles.

Father Joe Pereria uses this prayer at the end of the meditation cycle.

The Victoria Yoga Centre
is please to present

Yoga — A Spiritual Path

A weekend Retreat at the Saltspring Centre

with

Shirley Daventry French
Leslie Hogya
Marlene Miller
Ann Kilbertus

Begins Friday, October 25, 6:00 through Sunday, October 27, 1:30 pm

*Yoga is an art, a science, 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*

— B.K.S. Iyengar

Light on the Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali

Yoga in the Iyengar tradition is firmly grounded in the ancient yogic texts such as the Bhagavad Gita, Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras and Hatha Yoga Pradipika. This weekend retreat will focus on the development of asana and pranayama as spirital tools which open up a path to one's Higher Self and provide the energy and resourcefulness to undertake this spiritual journey. Classes and discussions will be led by a panel of Victoria teachers with many years experience of studying and teaching yoga, including several visits to India to study with Mr. Iyengar and his daughter, Geeta.

Registration

- Begins September 9th for Victoria Yoga Centre members. Fee: \$230
- Begins September 16th for non-members. Fee \$250 (includes membership fee)

Please make cheques — for the full amount — payable to the Victoria Yoga Centre and mail to:

Lauren Cox
1174 May St.
Victoria BC V8V 2S5

Shared accommodation. Vegetarian meals.

Refunds are given only in the event that the space is filled.
All refunds are subject to a 15% administration fee.

For further information, phone Lauren at (604) 382-3287,
Ann at 598-0976 or the Victoria Yoga Centre at
(604) 386-YOGA (9642)

So Many Ways To Find The Spirit Within

by Kathryn Wiggins

So many ways to find the Spirit within! (someone said this at the Summer Yoga Intensive in Victoria, July 1996, and it seemed to be an appropriate title for this article)

Would I write something brief about my experience at the intensive for the newsletter? Yes, I will do that.

Rarely do I find myself in Victoria in July. I live in the Queen Charlotte Islands, and visit my elderly parents in Victoria a couple of times a year. My father was scheduled for surgery in July, I wanted to be there for him, and I also realised the intensive was in July and I could attend. I'm glad that I did!

Imagine thirty Yoga students in a big room with one full wall of windows that look out into the parking lot of the downtown Victoria YM-YWCA. Then see these thirty students at about 4:30 p.m. standing in this room facing the window, with their heads wrapped with cotton bandages. I can't remember why we were standing up at that point in our pranayama class, but there we were. Now see other people outside getting out of their cars to come into the Y, or going to their cars after their workout, walking by our window and looking in, then quickly averting their gaze, presumably trying to comprehend what they were seeing. Now see these thirty enwrapped students bursting out in one synchronous and spontaneous moment of laughter. This was one of my numerous pleasurable remembrances of the week – there were many other moments of warm humour through the week!

Attending an intensive is a gift to me. Each morning I experience a quiet joy, knowing I'm going to class for the day. A typical day would unfold with Shirley Daventry French teaching asana for three hours, followed in the afternoons with a two-hour seminar, presented variously by Jim Rischmiller, Ann Kilbertus, Lesley Hogya, Derek French, and then ending with an

hour of pranayama taught by Shirley. Exactly what I wanted to be doing. No desire to be anywhere else or be doing anything else. This state of mind in and of itself allowed for some stilling of my mind. *Yogah citta vritti nirodhah* (Patanjali's *Sutras* 1–2, translated by Iyengar as “Yoga is the cessation of movements in the consciousness”) was a sutra that was present throughout the week in a variety of ways.

As I reflect upon the intensive while writing this, I am aware of many wonderful moments and understandings in each class throughout the week. For this article, I have decided to confine my comments to the discussions of Yoga philosophy and Derek's back seminar.

I very much enjoyed the experience of examining and discussing with the group the *Sutras* (Lesley and Shirley) and the *Bhagavad Gita* (Jim), presented in the afternoon seminars. We explored these in the light of both ancient thought and our present day thought. Over the years as I return to these sutras, I invariably deepen my understanding, appreciation, and application of this philosophy to my daily life. For example, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 4 on action and inaction, verse 14, Krishna says to Arjuna: “I desire no fruit of action and actions do not define me; one who knows this about me is not bound by actions”. I related to this, in that my life feels too full of doing (action) at times. I continue to want to refine my life and values to reflect more balance in action/non-action.

In the evenings at home, I was reading Sylvia Boorstein's book *It's Easier Than You Think, The Buddhist Way to Happiness*, which was very complementary to the discussions of the daytime classes. Once again I had further insight about the close correspondence between the Buddhist Eightfold Path and the Eight Limbs of Yoga. For example, Boorstein describes Aversion as the energy of anger and negativity. She quotes the Buddha about aversion, and ends by saying: “Knowing that negativity or aversion is a transient energy never means to ignore it. It means to see it clearly, always, and work with it wisely.”

Iyengar in *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* (p.109-110) discusses aversion, one of the five Klesas (afflictions of the mind that cause suffering). He concludes by saying, "Pain, sorrow and misery trigger a chain of hate or aversion. ...A discriminating person strives to acquire knowledge so that he may strike a balance between *sukha* (pleasure) and *duhka* (pain) and live at the mercy of neither pleasure nor pain."

And the back seminar. Derek French, M.D., took us down into our back with humour, personal insight and knowledge. At one point we walked around with a foam block on our head and lifted our chin to have it parallel to the floor. This aligns the head with the cervical spine. Ta Da! An uplifted feeling and the beginning of good alignment and healing for the dysfunction (more often than disease) that is in our backs. The root cause generally is how the body is being used. So that's what's important. How we use our body.

Derek described how the sacroiliac or SI joint plays a large role with back problems, as much as 80% of the time. We cannot necessarily cure it, yet we can manage it. He talked about how SI pain can mimic sciatic pain, testicular pain, ovarian pain, and appendicitis. Personally, I was just recovering from a week of disabling SI pain and found this information timely. We then proceeded through a sequence of corrections for the dysfunction, which helped me and one other person (and possibly more) immediately. It is not practical to describe these corrections here. I would gladly share the information as I understand it with anyone, and perhaps one day Derek will put some of this information into writing.

I appreciate the labour of love from each person involved in organizing and presenting this intensive. This was combined for me with a special, cohesive energy from other participants, that made the week a delightful and deepening experience. 

Kathryn Kelly is a longtime student of Iyengar Yoga who lives and teaches on the Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia

The Same But Not

by Doug Bauer

"Alright, no-one leaves the room until we get some facts straight on this Summer Intensive Business."

This weeklong Yogathon was attended by folks whose backgrounds and lives are as diverse as the delicate patterning of snowflakes, and yet with such a strong common bond that these distinctive creative energies built a strong foundation for growth, learning, and possibly the odd personal breakthrough. "Forming the clay into pottery," as Shirley put it.

A veritable oasis of earthly delight, the environs of Victoria seem to emanate a certain relaxed calm, conducive to the practice of Yoga with a seemingly down to earth wholesomeness with a ginger mint flavoured breath right in you face. (Mind you a person becomes rather "blissed out" after a straight week of intensive practice, changing the problems and worries of our daily routines into a composted fertile ground for development within ourselves.)

The combined integrity, knowledge and insights of the teachers involved, reflected warm beams of sunlight on the various limbs of the Tree of Yoga, allowing its roots to nurture and entwine within, its fruit nourishing our bodies and minds.

And speaking of "grub", only the orgasmic Ayurvedic dinner on our final day at the home of Shirley and Derek (with my compliments and a translucent proposal of marriage to the cook) surpassed the culinary rapture of the exquisite Veggie dining establishments of Victoria.

The Victoria yoga community seems to me a true representation of the cumulation of Iyengar's work, outstanding senior teaching with the Intensive a mere ripple in a bottomless pool of wealth of Yogic learning. 

Doug Bauer is a student and teacher of Iyengar Yoga from Kelowna, British Columbia

A Balanced Meal to End the Intensive

by Melanie Jollymore

In an issue devoted to the theme of spiritual communities, it seems appropriate to talk about food. Coming together to share earth's bounty is surely one of the earliest ways our ancestors formed the bonds of community. In the Ayurvedic tradition, sharing food with loved ones enhances the amount and quality of "ojas", the vital essence and subtle energy of food that is released as the final product of proper digestion, nourishing the body tissues and even the aura. This tradition also holds that the love and attention a cook puts into preparing a meal makes it more nourishing, and that the attention and gratitude of those eating further increases the value they will receive from the food. In our era of fast food franchises and mindless munching, it is important to remember that food is our connection to the earth and to life, and can be used to support our connection to each other.

Since I have been studying and teaching ayurvedic cooking, I thought it would be appropriate to offer my services to prepare the meal for the annual post-Intensive "picnic" at Shirley's. Mind you, I quickly learned that it's no picnic to prepare ten dishes for 40 people in less than four hours in an unfamiliar kitchen, even with the able assistance provided by Jennifer Rischmiller and Linda Benn (to whom I am eternally grateful). Fortunately, everyone was very patient as we chopped, simmered, seasoned, stirred and blended away — a couple of people jumped in and helped out (Adrienne Rhodes saved the day on the Samosa front), and we were able to present a sumptuous buffet only an hour off-schedule. I was paying particular attention to presentation at the end, running around garnishing with pickled turnip slices cut into flower shapes with carrot centres, little purple hearts cut out of beet root, radish roses, cilantro sprigs and the like (all prepared the night before). This may seem like attention to detail on the

level of insanity, but to me it was just as important that the food please the eye as the palate. In Ayurvedic philosophy, the Pitta (fire) principle that governs digestion is manifested through the eyes as well as the stomach. An attractive presentation enhances digestion by pleasing the mind and spirit and making one more receptive to the food.

Beyond the appearance of the food, in designing an Ayurvedic meal it is crucial to consider a variety of other factors, such as season, time of day and the constitutional types of those eating. Since summer is Pitta season, I designed the menu to be primarily cooling. It turned out to be not such a hot day, so I upped the heating spices in some of the dishes to create a balance of heating and cooling energies, especially important for those people who tend towards the cooler doshas of Vata (air) and Kapha (earth). As we were eating near mid-day, the time of day when the digestive fire (Agni) is burning brightest, I knew it would be okay to present a wide variety of foods, including several protein sources (almonds, dhal and yoghurt) and some raw food (salad). Had we been eating in the evening, I would have prepared a much simpler meal of grains and cooked vegetables with very little protein. Protein and raw foods are heavy to digest so need a strong fire — Ayurveda recommends that lunch be our heaviest meal and to eat very lightly in the evening and morning.

Basmati rice is the fundamental food of Ayurveda, being cooling, light, nourishing, easy-to-digest and very Sattvic. I included it in two dishes, a Basmati and mung bean pilaf called "Kicharee", which is used extensively in Ayurveda for cleansing and rejuvenation, and a Basmati and barley pilaf with currants, dried pears and raw almonds (soaked overnight and peeled for easy digestion and an unusual crunchy texture). An excellent grain for Pitta people, barley is also considered to be quite holy — people give it to Buddhist priests in Sri Lanka.

To round out the meal, we served red lentil dhal with coconut (red lentils are high in iron), new potato and

cauliflower subji, roasted squash samosas with wholewheat-ghee pastry, and a large green salad with tamarind-coconut dressing. (Tamarind is a sour tropical fruit that cleanses the stomach and binds flouride in the bones. Coconut, along with lime and cilantro, is very cooling). For condiments, which are actually designed to be digestive aids, we prepared fresh mango and ginger chutney, yoghurt raita with shredded radicchio and watercress (bitter greens are cleansing and tonifying to the system), and a spicy "liver-enlivening pickle" of shredded carrots, beets and daikon radish. As "Prasad", sweets given as offerings in the Hindu tradition to signify the sweetness of the spiritual life, we enjoyed little coconut-covered balls of ground almonds, dates, fennel and cardamom. Another vital principle of Ayurvedic cooking is that of the six tastes: sweet, salty, sour, bitter, pungent and astringent. All six should be present in every meal to satisfy the three doshas (Vata, Pitta and Kapha). Certain tastes are more balancing for certain doshas, however, so the emphasis should shift accordingly. For example, sweet, salty and sour tastes are most balancing for Vata; bitter, pungent and astringent tastes are most balancing for Kapha; sweet, bitter and astringent tastes are best for Pitta. I focused on sweet, bitter and astringent tastes for this meal, since we were in Pitta season (Vata season is in fall and winter, Kapha season is in late winter and early spring), but balanced these with judicious hits of salty, sour and pungent tastes.

As I was preparing a meal for a group of yoga students just finishing a week of intense asana and pranayama practice, I wanted the meal to enhance their Sattvic state. Sattva is one of the

three Gunas, forces of nature discussed by the group in an afternoon philosophy session during the Intensive. Sattva is purity and light, Rajas is activity, and Tamas is inertia. I didn't want to dull the Sattvic energy produced by everyone's concentrated efforts of the preceding week by serving tamasic foods, such as meat (obviously) or mushrooms, or too many rajasic foods such as cheese or over-spiced food. I also eschewed the delicious flavour and many health benefits of onions and garlic, since they are considered to be disturbing to the mind. Instead, I used a few pinches of asafoetida, an Indian spice which mimics the flavour of garlic while delivering powerful medicinal actions of its own. It is particularly useful in aiding the digestion of legumes.

If my menu was on target, everyone should have left the table feeling satisfied but light, clear and enlivened – as long as they did not overeat (tamasic), or eat too quickly (rajasic)! To eat with awareness, attention, gratitude and love is Sattvic. Yoga cultivates this approach to eating, as does following the principles and practices of Ayurveda. As Mr. Iyengar says in an issue of "Yoga Rahasya", a newsletter of the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, "For me, the practice is more important than the diet. The discipline of yoga disciplines my food habits. It is not the discipline of my food habits that disciplines my yoga practice."

Behind the scenes ►

Jennifer, Melanie & Adrienne preparing the Ayurvedic dinner wrap-up during the intensive.



Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Conference and Annual General Meeting

A report by Leslie Hogya

The Salt Spring Centre proved to be a pleasant backdrop for the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association (CIYTA) 1995 Conference and Annual General Meeting. The spiritual community at the Centre did a wonderful job of welcoming us, and filling us with their delicious food at frequent intervals. Representatives from St. John's, Toronto, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, the Gulf Islands and Victoria, came together for four days July 11–14.

Linda Benn, Shirley Daventry French, Marlene Miller, Ann Kilbertus and I, taught asana and pranayama throughout the weekend. Linda, Ann and Shirley were able to share some of what they learned at the

recent conference of certified teachers in Colorado where Geeta Iyengar had been the honoured guest. On Friday, no-one was interested in the evening sauna since the room we met in turned out to be somewhat sauna-like. By late Saturday afternoon we spontaneously chose to go swimming in nearby Cusheon Lake instead of having a second pranayama class.

Since our last meeting in Winnipeg in July 1995, we have refined, adapted and begun to work with a new organizational document. (From now on it will be referred to as The Document). It is an attempt to meet people's needs for non-hierarchical structure. The format used is that of three committees with regional representatives being the conduit for information.

The newly formed committees met for the first time Thursday afternoon, and after dinner that evening the committees reported to the larger group, and we began to look at the priorities of how to use our time

Members

Regional Representatives
Elected by the regional membership

Coordinating
Committee
4 Members

Membership/Fundraising
Finance Committee
4 members

Professional
Development Committee
10 Members

over the weekend. The pressing business seemed to be to get on with certification. Marlene Mawhinney (Toronto) asked us to ponder the following question over night: What needs to happen to have the certification process in place by September 1997? She proposed that she and Vial Paape (Winnipeg) work together and take us through a problem solving process on Friday morning as a large group. This session proved to be an excellent way to move us forward. We broke into small groups and each person had a share in bringing forward ideas and solutions. By the end of the day a sense of direction emerged. (Minutes and summaries from the meeting will be available for teachers through their reps. soon.)

From this larger session, small working groups met and worked over the weekend. People not already on one of the main committees listed in The Document above, formed ad hoc groups. One of these groups looked at our lineage, and another at the attitudes we have. We talked about the time needed for fun, for inclusion. Maureen Carruthers said we need time for the spiritual side in action – doing the work, the yoga, together. Another group looked at ethics of the organization. This group will continue the work begun over the weekend throughout the year, and will hopefully have something to present at the next AGM.

By Saturday night, the working groups and committees had done all they could in the time available and we were able to join with the Salt Spring Centre group in chanting to the Lord in many names and forms. *Kirtan* is the word for singing in this way. Anuradha, a Salt Spring resident, explained that these chants are ways of using our energy in a sattvic way. Until 9:00 pm the room was filled with clapping, singing, drums and tinkling

bells. Any tensions that had built up during recent discussions dissolved in a spirit of divine grace.

Sunday morning was the formal Annual General Meeting. Several local teachers joined the larger group to formalize the work we had done. This was the first meeting we've had working with the new Document, so refinements and improvements will develop over the year.

At the start of the meeting on Sunday, I thanked everyone who had helped bring the weekend about. I'd like to do that again. A special thank you to Marlene Enns from Vancouver, who volunteered to

take minutes the *entire* weekend! I also want to thank Marlene Miller who chaired the registration committee. She fielded many, many calls from across the country at all hours. She also helped design the brochure and issued receipts to all. Thanks also to Jo Anna Hope who chaired the committee that moved props, arranged rides and billets, and Linda Benn who helped make arrangements at the centre. I also want to thank everyone of you who helped in large and small ways, even by offering to help, by moving props or adding up columns of numbers, helping give ideas and energy at meetings and so on. It's a privilege to be part of the Victoria group. We work together well, co-operate and support each other in countless ways.



▲
Pip, Linda & Jean at the
Intensive dinner

Next year's date is moved to the end of May since so many teachers will be in Pune next July attending a Canadian Intensive. Place is to be announced. 🌍

[A special vote of thanks from all of us to Leslie who efficiently and cheerfully chaired this whole operation and directed the work of all the various committees.—ED]

My Personal Journey

by Jeannie Stevens

When I was first asked to write this article, I wondered how could I possibly convey the vast nature of Yoga? It has so many facets, from what perspective should I speak? After mulling it around for a week or so, I decided that to speak of my own personal journey might give a glimpse of what the practice of Yoga has done and continues to do for me.

Little did I know, when I walked into my first Yoga class in 1974 and felt that "ah ha", that it was to change the course of my life. I began with a Hatha Yoga class, but had in fact begun a journey of self exploration about my self, my relationship to others, and the interconnectedness of "All My Relations".

I had the grace to meet my teacher Swami Radha at the end of my first year of Yoga. At that time, I began a series of workshops where I was asked to investigate myself in a critical and straightforward way. Swami Radha was a no-nonsense kind of gal. She asked me to think about: what do I *really* think about things; how do I *really* perceive the world? She asked me to investigate the workings of my mind, and how it is integrated with my body. She spoke of the body as a spiritual tool. In her teaching of Hatha Yoga, she took us one step further by asking us to look at the symbolism of our own personal lives and to contemplate the symbolism of the ancient postures or asanas, as a tool for personal growth. She further asked: what is the purpose of your life and with what do you identify? Is it the Most High in others? And what are the obstacles that keep you from doing this?

At that same time, I had the opportunity to work with teachers who were studying with Mr. Iyengar in India. Mr. Iyengar's teachings, particularly his work with asana and pranayama, have inspired a detailed investigation about how the body works, our relationship with our breath, and, in turn, our relationship with mind and spirit. How do the knees work, what is the texture of a certain part of the body, what does it mean to be grounded? Through his efforts, Yoga has

From our Northern Correspondent

Dear Jennifer,

I was recently asked to write an article on Yoga for a local paper here in Whitehorse, and I thought in response to your request for articles for your newsletter, I would send you a copy.

Your newsletter is always welcome here, and I particularly like the sharing of workshop information. Keep up the good work

In the Light,

Jeannie Stevens

Whitehorse, Yukon

become a household

name in the West and well-known for its therapeutic attributes.

After those first few intense years, I found my path leading up north. At first I felt very isolated from the yogic community, but it gave me the opportunity to practise and see for myself what this kind of investigation might bring. It has had its ups and downs; but through Yoga, I am gaining a sense of empowerment about my life, and am learning how to make everything that happens to me an opportunity for my growth. I am learning to be more accepting of my humanness and my imperfections. And as I lighten up a little about my life, it seems there is more room for me to be myself.

Intrinsic within Yoga is the joy of self discovery. Yoga does not give any answers but gives each one of us the opportunity to reflect upon our lives in order to increase our awareness, thereby allowing us the opportunity to co-create our lives with the Divine. It does not limit our definition of the Divine, but rather gives us the opportunity to experience it first hand in our own way.

Yoga is a journey, not something that can be accomplished in a short while. It is an investigation of our own lives with the purpose of being able to move closer to the most high in ourselves. But this is far

from easy to do. We encounter many obstacles on our journey, the greatest being our lack of awareness in what we are doing and how we are leading our lives. Yoga has the capability to awaken our awareness. Whether it is from the first time you *feel* a part of your body, and take the time to really be in the present moment. Or when learning to relax, you realise that more than just the physical body lets go, that something in your mind or heart feels a little less rigid and you feel a little lighter. As we learn more about ourselves and become more accepting of who we are (both the good and the bad), there is the opportunity to become a little easier with those around us and more accepting of another person's ways. This in turn fosters an attitude of increased harmonious relationship with the world.

Now, over twenty years later, I have come and gone from the North many times and feel a sense of gratitude to be back in the North once again. The land here calls to us all to be in the present moment, through its splendour and beauty.

I am pleased to say that there are now four yoga teachers in town, and ongoing classes are available offering students the opportunity to experience first hand the joys and liberation of Yoga. 



Into The Unknown

by Caroline Sophonow

Since my interest in yoga and with more understanding, I've gradually increased my enthusiasm of focus on this newly found freedom. My curiosity is continually being stimulated for more of the unknown.

Shirley my teacher of five years, has shared her knowledge and time, and has awakened in me my ability to release trapped energies that have been conditioned into place for some time. She has warned of awakening areas of myself unexplored. She has inspired me with her expertise, words of wisdom and some guidance for self structure in all of my bodies. With her individuality, I've found a way to grasp her concept of teaching and have established for myself a home practice. Retreats and workshops are now my mode of 'Life's time outs'. Kind of like a sneak preview for all that I work for.

The more meaning I have found from yoga, the more freedom of discovery I deserve. The more I work at my yoga, there's more time for yoga, there's more time for adventure. The more energy I expel in my yoga, the more energy I get.

All of this is my sign of balance. I have within me this quietening, calming, internal place of stillness that I can reach whenever I want. Sometimes I get glimpses of eternal emptiness with my increased ability to be.

What I really want is to share the love and respect I have for Shirley and her work, for she has instilled in me the ability to lengthen my life, stretch, release, extend and broaden it. 

◀ A photo from Family Yoga Class.

from foreground: Noren,
Billie, Anna



The
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and the
Victoria YM-YWCA

Welcome you to a



Friday Night Gathering



Asana Practice at 6 p.m.
led by Jo Anna Hope

Potluck dinner at 7 p.m.
in the Yoga Lounge at the Y.
(please bring your own plate/cutlery)

Followed by a discussion with
Jessica Sluymmer,
Director of Radha House, Victoria.

Date: Friday, October 4, 1996

Everyone is welcome to join us.

On Friday Night

by Neil W McKinlay

Ten years ago, Friday Night Gatherings were a regular fixture in my life. I was living in Colorado, attending school, and - with my Canadian room mate - pining for the homeland. Recognising that others too might be feeling a little homesick, a little lonely we decided to open our apartment to peers (it was a small school) on Friday evenings.

The Gatherings were born.

They meant a lot to us, those evenings. It felt good to bring people together. Good to share in their company. Good to share the same space, the same time. It felt good to be part of a group, part of a community. And while the community was made up of a dizzying and diverse range of individuals, we all shared a school and a common loss of home - and this, I know, made all the difference.

Like the events in Colorado, the Victoria Yoga Centre's Friday Night Gatherings have community at their core - a community sharing the pursuit of yoga. For four years, the Gatherings have provided local practitioners the opportunity to gather one Friday each month, the opportunity to share the same time and the same space.

Unlike Colorado, however, the Yoga Centre Gatherings have a structure, even if only a loose one. This structure arises from the fact the latter events are about more than simply coming together. There is another agenda at work.

In *The Tree of Yoga*, Mr Iyengar writes: "...yoga is more than physical. It is cellular, mental, intellectual and spiritual - it involves man in his entire being (ix)." Classes offered by the Yoga Centre, classes at the Y and elsewhere, are excellent at addressing the physical aspect of yoga. In fairness, however, the ninety minute span of an average session does not allow much room for consideration of matters other than physical; ninety minutes is barely enough time to

cover the importance of lifting one's kneecaps, much less the intellectual and spiritual aspects of practice. It is the recognition of this fact - the recognition of a gap in local instruction - that provides Friday Night Gatherings their structure.

Each Gathering begins with an hour-long asana practice lead by one of the teachers. A potluck dinner is then shared amongst all participants. Following this meal, is a discussion period. This period is sometimes structured around a guest lecturer, sometimes structured around a specific topic; whatever the case, the intent of the discussion is always the same: to address concerns, troubles, and questions that typically arise during practice. More specifically, the discussion period exists to address concerns, troubles, and questions that are - typically - other than physical in nature. And so a short list of Friday Night discussion topics reads very differently than the sort of issues raised in a weekly class: karma yoga, chanting, stress, dreams, the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Aurobindo, mantra, and so on.

Thus, the Victoria Yoga Centre's Friday Night Gatherings - like the Centre itself, like the Workshops, like the Intensives and the Retreats, like the Newsletters and like the special events that come around once in a while - are attempts to round out our experience, our practice of yoga. They are attempts at integration. Attempts at bringing the discipline more fully into our lives. Attempts to acknowledge our "entire being." And attempts to provide yet more guidance as we journey along that path.

The Gatherings are also a good way to end a week, a good way to begin a weekend. A good way to simply share some time, share some space with others of common mind.

Friday Night Gatherings are held the first Friday of each month in the Y Yoga Lounge. They begin at six and run for approximately three hours, though anyone is welcome to come late and/or leave early. Upcoming Gatherings are advertised in the Newsletter and mentioned in weekly classes.



The
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and the
Victoria YM-YWCA

Welcome you to a



Friday Night Gathering



in the Yoga Lounge at the Y.

Asana Practice at 6 p.m.

- Followed by a demonstration of Yoga by the Victoria teachers
- Followed by a potluck dinner and discussion on 'How to Practice' (please bring your own plate/cutlery)

Date: Friday, November 1, 1996

Everyone is welcome to join us.

Give Thanks

by Neil W. McKinlay

It begins with a call - a request. "Will you address the Coaches Conference?" I have been a swim coach for years; the suggestion is an honour, the answer already certain. "What's the topic?" I ask. "Keeping it fresh." Pause. "You've done this a long time. How do you keep it fresh?"

Good question, I think, hanging up.

I have coached for years; so many that staleness now seems a constant possibility - born of familiarity and of time; manifesting as certainty, as conviction I have the answers, as belief I know best. As confidence. As *overconfidence*. A possibility that deafens me to other ideas, other opinions, other approaches. A possibility that wraps me in a lead blanket of self import, closes me to the world, and cuts me off from inspiration, freshness.

How do I keep fresh?

Good question.

This is months ago. December.

The Conference is in April.

I have been practising yoga for five years. Five years - nothing compared to the time I have invested in coaching, in swimming. Yet it sometimes get boring, yoga. How many times can I do trikonasana? How many hours must I spend in tadasana? So much sameness. So much repetition. So much familiarity. I know this pose. We've done it before. Over and over. What more might I possibly learn, gain from bending over and looking at my knees pull upward?

It gets boring.

Consider how class begins. Always. Kneeling, eyes closed, palms together and before the heart, we chant the invocation to Patanjali:

YOGA IN METCHOSIN with Shirley Daventry French

Asana Classes

morning and evening classes

plus an afternoon class for

people with special problems

Classes commence September 17th

\$85.00 for eight-week session

Pranayama

for experienced students

Saturday mornings

October 5th, November 2nd

December 7th

\$28 per class (\$75 for 3 classes)

A Day of Yoga

Asana, Pranayama, Philosophy of Yoga

Saturday, November 9th \$55.00

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

Information: 478-3775

*Yogena cittasya padena vacam
Malam sarirasya ca vaidyakena
Yopa karot tam pravaram muninam
Patanjalim pranjalir anato smi*

*Abahu-purusakaram
Sankha-cakrasi-dharinam
Sahasra-sirasam svetam
Pranamami Patanjalim*

Over and Over.

Initially I hated this chant. I felt stupid reciting strange sounds, muttering words I didn't comprehend, for a reason I didn't understand. I did it anyway though. Week after week; over and over. I did it because - to be honest - I would have felt even more ridiculous being caught mouthing by those beside me. So I followed the group, listened to the teacher explain the intent of the exercise, and

And as I did this, something happened. Something was revealed. I began to understand a few things. To appreciate. Yoga is not a given, not a right. My practice would not exist were it not for the efforts of others - the efforts of Patanjali, of B.K.S. Iyengar, of all my teachers in Victoria. Of who else, I can only guess. And there is so much in this exercise, this discipline, this centuries old tradition. So much that, again, I can only guess at. So much is being offered, so much to learn.

Maybe I didn't know as much as I thought.

Maybe there was - even in something so basic as standing - much to discover.

Maybe - through yoga - I might learn.

I began to feel humble, grateful.

And my practice - my several years old practice - altered. It became hard to be bored. At least for any length of time. There was a difference - a feeling of freshness in each stretch, in every bend.

I remember talking to a friend about this. I remember sitting on his boat - enjoying its movements, a cup of

tea - talking about humility and gratitude. Talking about how these had affected my yoga. And talking of a wish - a need, almost - to bring them on to the pool deck, into my work. To bring in these attitudes that together create a truly fresh view of the world. A view in which I is not the beginning or end, in which I is not the most knowledgeable, the most important, in which I cannot, in fact, exist without other.

"Sport is so self important," I said. It is so easy for coaches, for swimmers, for parents, to get blown up, cocky, absorbed. Humility and gratitude, I thought, might challenge this. Humility and gratitude, I suspected, might broaden the spectrum of my work, might ground us in our common humanity, join us not only as coach and swimmer and parent, but as fellow human beings as well.

What I didn't know at the time - not consciously anyway - was that I was expressing more than this. That I was expressing, as well, a wish - a need, really - to bring humility and gratitude into my greater life. I am so vulnerable to self import, to blindness, to forgetting. To forgetting the largeness of this enterprise. Forgetting the web that supports us, allows us to be. Forgetting that I don't have all the answers, that I don't know it all.



◀
Maureen & Anna
in Bharadvajasana

I am on a Journey

The following article is a paper written by Linda Shevloff for a Kundalini Yoga class. The paper is based on the Expanded Method of working with dreams as outlined in Swami Radha's book **Realities of the Dreaming Mind**. The technique is to treat every word as a key word or phrase and investigate it, through rapid-fire questioning, in relation to every other association. This method is very good for going into depth and speeds up the development of awareness by diminishing the ideas and concepts that hold us back.

So, using a phrase describing a dream, Linda wrote:

A DREAM EXPLORATION - AN EXPANDED OPENING SENTENCE

based on Swami Radha's book, **Realities of the Dreaming Mind**.

I am on a journey - crossing land and needing to cross water. This opening line was almost the same for two different dreams recently.

"I am on a journey" - in passage, on a trip, going from one place to another, a long time, moving toward a goal, going a long distance.

"crossing land" - passing over the ground, walking, riding, moving, solid territory, changing perspective, leaving.

"needing to cross water" -

"needing" - a necessity, a stipulation, a requirement, an important essential requirement

"to cross water" go to the other side, a vehicle is needed to cross water, travel over great depths, mystery of life, move over emotional depths, not solid, uncertain and changing.

In Passage

- Where am I going?
- Where am I passing to?
- What am I passing by?
- Where am I passing from?

On A Trip

- On an adventure
- What trips have I taken before?
- What is the purpose of the trip?
- Do I like this trip?

Going From One Place To Another

- Why change places?
- What is my place?
- What was my place?
- Can I have a new place?
- Will I know my place?
- Do I want to change places?

A Long Time

- How much time?
- How much time will I give?
- It might take all my time?
- How much time do I have?
- What do I do with my time?
- Is any time mine?
- There is no time.
- Time is a concept.
- Do I make good use of my time?
- What time is it now?

Moving Toward A Goal

- What is my goal?
- Why?
- Are there many goals or just one?
- Is this a game?
- Can I aim accurately?

Going A Long Distance

- How far will I go?
- How far should I go?
- Will I ever come back?
- Could I find my way back?
- Will I want to come back?
- How far do I need to go?
- Where am I going?
- Do I know where I'm going?
- Do I know how to get there?

Passing Over The Ground

- What ground?
- Will the terrain be rough or easy?
- How much ground have I covered?
- What are the grounds for my journey?
- Am I grounded to one place?
- Am I groundless?
- How will I pass over the ground?
- I am passing..... I am not failing.
- This is not a test - is it?

Moving

- Is everything moving?
- Is anything still?
- What is still?
- Will I always be moving?
- How do I move?
- What movement do I make?
- What moves me?

Solid Territory

- What territory is familiar to me?
- Why does it feel solid?
- Is anything really solid?
- What is the solid territory in my life?
- Do I feel more comfortable with the solid things?
- Why does the solid seem safe and stable?
- Solids can be broken or shaped.
- Solid territory is hard.
- Solid territory can be mapped and claimed more easily than liquid.
- Do I want some solid territory?
- Do I need to pass over it?

Changing Perspective

- Can I look at the familiar from a different angle?
- What is my perspective now?
- Has it changed already? How?
- Would I like a new perspective? Why?
- Is perspective always changing?
- Can I choose to change my perspective or not change?
- Will I understand more?
- Will I recognize and appreciate the changing perspectives?

- Will I remember them?
- Will I be different or will only my perspective be different?
- Who am I - a being with perspectives?
- Am I looking for variety or insight?
- Can perspectives bring insight?

Leaving

- What am I leaving behind?
- Who am I leaving behind?
- Can I leave something of myself behind?
- Why am I leaving?
- Is it time to leave?
- I am taking leave.
- I am leaving home.
- Do I ever really leave home?
- Is my home a place?

Needing

- What are my needs?
- How can making a journey over water be a need?
- Do I need to learn something about myself?
- Do I need to face or pass over the water, the emotions, the undercurrents of my life?
- Can my needs be different from someone else's needs?
- If I need something, then it is vital to some part of my existence.
- Why do I need to make a journey?

A Stipulation

- Is a need a stipulation?
- Maybe not.
- Who is stipulating?
- What is being stipulated?
- Are there rules?
- Probably not, but if there were, what would they be?
- Be honest, alert, aware.

A Requirement

- What is required for the journey?
- What needs to be brought along?
- What might I be required to do?
- Who is setting the requirements?
- Are they my own requirements?

- Are there any requirements?
- Why do people set requirements?
- Do I set requirements?

An Important Essential Requirement

- What is the important essential requirement?
- In what way might this journey be an important essential requirement?
- Are these important essential requirements for personal growth, change and awareness?
- Why is crossing over water an important, essential requirement?
- Why does it feel so vitally important?

At this point in the paper, I feel I must make this journey.

Go To The Other Side

- What side am I on now?
- Right/Left.
- Right/Wrong.
- GoodGuys/Bad Guys
- Familiar/Unfamiliar.
- If I cross water and go to the other side will I be functioning with a different part of my brain?
- From the other side, the perspective will be reversed.
- Do I take sides?
- What's it really like on the other side?

A Vehicle Is Needed to Cross Water

- Is it?
- What is my vehicle for the journey?
- Is my body my vehicle?
- Can I bring myself across the water?
- Can I transverse my deep, mysterious, unknown life force and get to the other side?
- What am I talking about here?
- I'm getting lost in the pools of my mind.

Travel Over Great Depths

- What are the depths?
- How deep are they?
- Where is the bottom?
- What is there?

- If I cross over, I don't need to go down or in, but I will have to recognise the vastness of the ocean of me.

Mystery Of Life

- What seems mysterious?
- What mist blocks my vision?
- What is the meaning of my existence?
- Why am I alive and aware of it?
- Why am I aware of some aspects of myself but ignorant of others?
- Where are we all going and where are we coming from?
- This is a journey from life to death and then?
- Will I ever know the answers to my questions?
- Will a time come when everyone will be happy?
- A time of no sorrow for anyone?

Move Over Emotional Depths

- Where have these emotional depths come from?
- They surprise me.
- Sometimes they embarrass me.
- Can I move over them without plunging in?
- Could depth mean going inward?

Not Solid

- Is solid more knowable than liquid?
- Does solid seem more certain and reliable?
- Is the certainty of the solid just an illusion, a mind trick?
- What if nothing is solid?
- Is solidity something I look for?
- What is solid?
- What is dependable?

Uncertain And Changing

- Am I uncertain and changing?
- Is it important to be certain?
- What can I be certain of?
- Can I accept uncertainty and change?
- If I don't go on this journey, what would I be certain of?
- Is there any certainty in staying still?
- Would that be a good thing?

After doing all of this thinking and reflecting on one sentence, I feel unable to write much more. The questions I ask myself point to my answers. "I am on a journey crossing land and needing to cross over water..." Yes. I am. No, I can't answer all of my own questions but I can answer many of them. I am a Knight in search of the Holy Grail. I am everyone, in search of the ultimate truth. I am going on this journey.

But wait, something has just emerged from the depths about the one important essential requirement. It is love. Go with love, move with love. Then all will be well.

Om Om

Linda Shevloff.



Linda left Victoria recently, for the second time, to join her husband, Michael, to live and work in Hong Kong for an unspecified period of time.



▲
Maureen & Giovanna
having fun at Family Yoga

VIRA(1) MARGA THE WARRIOR PATH

by Christian Pisano

These writings are continued from the July/August issue.

THE FRAGRANCE OF PRACTICE

Postures aim at mobilising the whole body. Different groups of postures transform the body's biochemistry and produce different sensations and states of consciousness. Certain poses tonify, others are nourishing or soothing. The practice of asanas follows different types of action, for example:

VINYASA: poses are codified, different parts of the body are put into a precise structure to produce beneficial effects.

VINYASA KRAMA has three definitions:

1. the starting point, how to go into the pose with the precise gesture synchronised with the breathing.
2. the gradual progression of flowing postures synchronised with the breath.
3. preparation for poses which have not been mastered. This preparation follows step by step progression.

PRATIKRIYASANA is the action of the counter pose.

There are two processes involved in asanas and pranayama which are known as *Langhana* and *Brimhana*.

Langhana is the process of contraction in which all the 'fasting poses' are included.

Brimhana is the process of expansion in which all the nourishing poses are included.

Then the practice of asanas should differ with age and aspiration:

SHRISTI: practice for young people should develop strength and agility.

STHITI: practice for adult, should emphasise the organic action to promote health and balance.

ANTYA: practice for aged people should keep the body nourished through good circulatory and respiratory systems. It should also lead to the natural movement of introversion.

There are mainly three stages in practice which are not divided but interlinked and take into consideration the maturity of the sadhaka.

CIKITSA-KRAMA is intended to rid the body of impurities, cleanse the organs, nerves and nadis. It leads to the **SHAKTI-KRAMA** stage where one develops the seven allies (as previously mentioned). At that stage the practitioner tests his will in mastering the advanced asanas. It leads to the **ADHYATMIKA-KRAMA** stage where the practice is used to go beyond the senses and surrender to life.

Practice should never be mechanical. With time and experience one should tune the practice to the needs of the body, one's emotional and mental states. The same pose practised in different ways can have different effects. For example *halasana*: in case of mental fatigue independent *halasana* is suitable, *halasana* with support won't help much. In case of physical fatigue *ardha halasana* is more recommended.

The practitioner should not favour one group of poses which is almost done unconsciously according to our facilities and limitations. On the contrary one has to use the different actions of the different postures to work on one's weaknesses.

Regarding *pranayama* the major texts of *Yoga* say that *pranayama* is to be taught only when one is firmly established in the practice of *asanas*. As long as the body has not been cleansed the practitioner is not stable enough for subtle work of *pranayama*.

In all the poses there is an education of the different openings of the rib cage and lungs.

The different breathing patterns which occur in the asana can be integrated in *pranayama*.

The yogic tradition talks about **GRANTHI** or knots. These knots correspond to physical, physiological, emotional and intellectual blocks which prevent the

free flow and good functioning of the ten *VAYUS*. (13). They are known as the **TRI-GRANTHI, BRAHMA GRANTHI, VISHNOU GRANTHI, RUDRA GRANTHI**. Practice (*ABHYASA*) and dispassion (*VAIRAGYA*) should walk hand in hand. Thus ups and downs, successes and failures would be seen as the same process in discovering one's self.

THE CRAZY WISDOM OF THE GURU

The guru is one of the best selling articles in the market place of the spiritual mafia. The ego has projected all its expectations, all its hopes, all its childish and romantic ideas onto him.

He looks like a Santa Claus with his sack full of toys and sweets. He is going to fulfill all our dreams on a cold winter's night near the fireplace.

And the big joke starts. We don't really like the look of this guy with his strange grin. He is humming Jim Morrison's song which gets on your nerves. "This is the end beautiful friend. This is the end my only friend. The end of our elaborate plans, the end of everything that stands. No safety or surprise, the end. I'll never look into your eyes again." Suddenly Santa Claus throws away his beard and takes an axe from his sack to kill us. No need to scream it's too late.

The guru is the only friend, the spiritual friend with whom you can confront yourself. He is a mirror. In this relationship there is no mercy, nothing you can hold back, nothing that you can hide. It is a continual process of surrender and opening.

The essence of this relationship is complete insecurity and uncertainty. In search of special, exotic and extraordinary experiences we can be very disappointed and frustrated. The spiritual friend is so ordinary that he is boring to death. This boredom pushes us to explore our own emptiness.

For the ostrich student anyone who can pull the strings of his fear (and it is very easy) becomes his guru. This leads to all the abuses of power we know in the New Age shopping centre.

The monkey student follows blindly. He wants to be in the front row and be part of the court. His closeness with the spiritual friend is reduced to climbing up the ladder of hierarchy with flattery and politics. At this stage the *Sadhana* is just an accumulation of tricks that are gathered from one workshop to the next. It is like putting make-up on a corpse.

The relationship of the tiger student with the spiritual friend is a mutual challenge. He might have rare contacts with him but his intimacy is generated by his intense practice where he can taste the wildness of the spiritual friend.

Anyway, whatever the case the guru will break the cocoon. The expectations of the ego are neurotic. The madness of the spiritual friend is the only sanity.

'You have to die one day. When you die doing Yoga at least your mind is free.... Because your mind when you die is so fresh and clean.' (14)

A PATH WITH A HEART

The warrior has to touch the bottom of his sorrow to find compassion where he will see that his path is that of every human being. He has no more proud feelings of doing something special spiritually.

The ego is evolving in a world of enemies and competition, wearing armour and protecting itself.

Every body is an alien, a danger. It can only use people for its own interest.

The relationships of the warrior are heart to heart. There is only friendship which does not mean absence of conflict but he can see in all happenings the play of the spiritual friend.

THE LAST FIGHT

Practice is a privileged moment to regenerate one's self, purify the body, cleanse the senses, oxygenate the brain and bring them back to their silent source. This will help the practitioner to live fully and fearlessly.

For the warrior there is no more duality between his practice and his other daily activities. Life itself is Yoga. He is in a perpetual process of learning, never saying 'I know'. Grounded to the now he has overcome the arrogance of the ego knowing finally that he does not know. The absence of second-hand knowledge brings a sense of humility and sacredness. This sacredness does not belong to the churches or the temples but in the wholistic perception of his daily life. In this aloneness the everlasting mystery of life touches him.

The warrior is ready for the last fight at every instant. Because the only way for him to live is to die to the past never holding any psychological memories.

On the battle field of truth, on the battle field of life (*Kurukshetra*) the battle lasts an eternity in the horror of blood and tears. But the warrior keeps in his eyes the nobleness of a prince and the innocent smile of a child.

The voice of Krishna still resounds: 'Kill with the sword of wisdom the doubt born of ignorance that lies in thy heart. Be one in Yoga and arise great warrior, arise.' (15)

Footnotes:

13. The wind, the vital airs regulating the functions of the body. Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana, Samana, Naga, Kurma, Krikara, Devadatta, Dananjaya.

14. B.K.S. Iyengar, - Yoga Darshana, London 1970-74 vol. II: Savasana, Pranayama, Sutra. Page 118 No. 108.

15. Bhagavad Gita. Chapter 4.42.

Christian Pisano was the director of the Iyengar Yoga Centre in Nice, France. A student of B.K.S. Iyengar who stayed in India for 4 years to study at the Iyengar Institute to which Christian returns regularly. Christian now lives and teaches in Sydney, Australia.

Reprinted with permission from Dipika, January 1996.



Yoga in My Daily Life

Jennifer asked me to write something about yoga in my daily life and I quickly said "no problem". That was a month ago and here I am the night before it's due, searching through my thoughts. Yoga does not cure my procrastination!

Yoga has become such a part of my life that it is difficult to separate out the pieces and look at them. I began practising yoga in the early seventies, starting at home with Karen Zebroff's book. From that point, yoga has never really been out of my life, even if I haven't attended classes. These last ten years have been a wonderful balance of Iyengar Yoga at the Y, and Kundalina Yoga at Radha House. They blend together in my daily life into a package that has become quite private and personal to me, guiding my daily decisions and actions. Still, I find it difficult to describe what a yogic perspective is. It means I am aware of my body and I can turn to hatha poses that will heal me or make me feel more open. I watch my reactions to situations, especially if I become angry, and I can remove myself a little and ask "what is *really* happening here?" These days I seem to catch negative things in my body or spirit before they become truly hurtful to myself or to others. Most of all, after all these years, I see everything as a process and not a final goal.

One of the best things I ever did was to attend the infamous Monday night teachers' class. Truth be known, the only reason I went was because I wanted Shirley Daventry French as my teacher, and it was the only time I could co-ordinate with a class of hers. It wasn't without hesitation that I took that class, full of teachers as flexible as cooked spaghetti, doing every pose with know-how and grace to go with it! It was there I learned how much I competed in yoga (like anything else) and when there was 'no contest' in this class (I couldn't possibly be like them) I had nowhere to go but inward. I had to look at my own process, feel that connection with body, mind and spirit, even if it was for brief glimpses. Oh, I'm no saint, and I did

more than enough moaning (arm balance is still no fun) but what a treasure to take to my daily life. It is from this point that I developed a morning yoga practise.

Yoga in Victoria has given me two teachers: Shirley Daventry French and Jessica Sleuymmer. Their wisdom and humour have guided me on the yogic path. Compassion without stickiness, guidance that leaves me looking for my own inner strength and wisdom. Having teachers on the yogic path is essential to me. I can't even imagine my life without yoga, it's just too finely woven into my life. I am so thankful to my teachers and to Mr. Iyengar and Swami Radha for bringing yoga to the West in a way that I can understand. After all is said and done, I am truly grateful for all that yoga has brought into my life.

Sincerely,
Caroline Meggison
Victoria

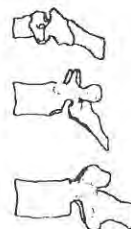


from foreground :
Marie, Karen .

Anna, Bruce . A photo from Family Yoga
Noren, Billie .



The Victoria Yoga Centre
is pleased to present



ANATOMY AWARENESS IN ASANA with JULIE GUDMESTAD

Part I: For Iyengar intermediate level students, teacher trainees and teachers:

Friday, November 22, 6-8:00pm

Saturday, November 23, 10:00-1:00pm, 3:00-5:00pm

Fee: Yoga Centre members: \$95.00

Non-members: \$109.00

Part II: For Iyengar teachers and teacher trainees:

Sunday, November 24, 10:00-1:00pm

Fee: Yoga Centre members: \$43.00

Non-Members: \$49.00

FEE FOR FULL WORKSHOP: Yoga Centre members: \$130.00

Non-members: \$150.00 (includes membership)

This workshop is designed to acquaint yoga practitioners with musculoskeletal structures, vocabulary and movement patterns. The focus will be on hips, pelvis and spine. The classes will utilize discussion, demonstration and asana practice. This is not a therapeutic workshop, thus is not suitable for those with acute problems. Note that the Sunday class is only for Iyengar yoga teachers and those doing teacher training. Teachers are encouraged to take the full workshop.

INSTRUCTOR

Julie Gudmestad is a licensed physical therapist and certified (IYNAUS) Iyengar Yoga Instructor in private practice in Portland, Oregon. She has 19 years of orthopedic and rehabilitation physical therapy experience and has been teaching yoga since 1970. Julie has integrated Western medical knowledge with Yoga training into a unique teaching style, and has taught many workshops throughout North America.

Registration opens Sept. 20 for Yoga Centre members & Sept. 30 for non-members.
Refunds are given only in the event that the space is filled; subject to a 15% administration fee.

Please make cheques - for the full amount - payable to the Victoria Yoga Centre and mail to:

Linda Benn, 698 Rockridge Place, Victoria, B.C. V9E 1H3

For information phone: Linda at 604-478-0757 or the Victoria Yoga Centre at 604-386-YOGA(9642)

RADHA HOUSE



Workshops and Events

Open House

- **Sunday, September 8, 3-5pm**

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

Guru Puja

- **Sunday, September 8, 8-9pm**

A special Satsang of gratitude to honour our teachers who have dedicated their lives selflessly to help others find their inner strength and life's purpose.

Dreams: Gift of the Night

- **Friday, October 18, 7.30pm to 10.00pm**

Saturday & Sunday, October 19-20, 10am to 6pm
In this workshop, you will have the opportunity to explore your dreams in depth and 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 from Yasodhara Ashram. Fee: \$125, deposit \$25

Introduction to the Kundalini System

This is a six week course.

- **Tuesdays: 12.45-2.45 pm.**
- **Thursdays: 8-10 pm.**

Fee: \$60

The Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga

- **Mondays: 5.30-7.30 pm. All levels. Ongoing**
- **Thursdays: 12.45-2.45 pm. All levels. Ongoing.**
- **Saturdays: 10.30 am to 12.30 pm. All levels. Drop-in.**

Swami Radha's method of hatha yoga aims to integrate body and mind, and to unlock the deeper meaning of the asanas. A continuing study of this method can bring both an improved physical and mental condition, and a deeper understanding of the body as a spiritual tool. Please note: No drop-in class on Saturdays when coinciding with scheduled workshops.

Fee (11 classes): \$121, \$11 per drop-in class.

Dreams

- **Wednesdays: 1-3pm**

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

Fee (11 classes): \$121

Introduction to Concentration, Chanting and Reflection

- **Saturdays: 8.30-10.00am**

We will work in a variety of ways to prepare the mind for eventual meditation. Visualization, breathing, chanting, reflection, etc., will be practised.

No fee but a donation would be appropriate.

Registration required.

Satsang and Bhajans

- **Sundays: 7.30-9.00pm.**

Satsang is a time to quiet the mind and open the heart: to sing to the Divine, listen to an inspirational reading, and chant mantras for those who have asked to be on the Prayer List. All are welcome to join us in this time of prayer and meditation. If you wish to be on the Prayer List, please contact us by phone or letter.

For further information, please call 595-0177.

YOGA CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- 9: Y Fall classes begin (see ad. this issue)
- 21: Teachers' meeting
- 27-29: Father Joe workshop, Marlene Miller co-ordinator

OCTOBER

- 4: Friday night gathering at the Y (see ad. this issue)
- 5: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French (see ad. this issue)
- 6: Sunday Workshop at the Y: Focus on Women
- 19: Teachers' meeting
- 25-27: Saltspring Weekend Retreat

NOVEMBER

- 1: Friday night gathering at the Y (see ad. this issue)
- 2: Pranayama with Shirley Daventry French in Metchosin (see ad. this issue)
- 9: Day of Yoga in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French (see ad. this issue)
- 22-23: Workshop at the Y with Julie Gudmestad (see ad. this issue)
- 24: Teachers' workshop with Julie Gudmestad (see ad. this issue)

DECEMBER

- 7: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French (see ad. this issue)
- 15: Light on Yoga workshop led by Shirley Daventry French in celebration of the birthday of B.K.S. Iyengar

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM:

Please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society, 927 Jenkins Avenue, Victoria BC V9B 2N8

Membership/Subscription fee is \$20 and renewable each January

Name: _____

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☐ Do not mail me my newsletter during sessions, I'll pick one up at my Y class.

☐ Receipt Required.



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Victoria BC V9B 5T8



Ted Mather
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Victoria BC
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VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



November/December 1996

Please Subscribe

*Happy
Birthday*



A DAY OF YOGA

Asana and Pranayama
in the Iyengar Tradition
with

Shirley Daventry French

**Saturday,
November 9th 1996**

10am to 4 pm in
The Yoga Room
3018 Olympic View Drive
(in Metchosin close to
Witty's Lagoon)
FEE: \$55.00

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

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The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in the Victoria area and 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:

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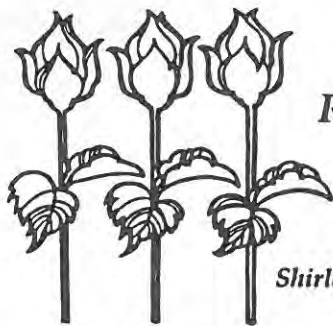
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Reflections

by

Shirley Daventry French



I am in my home office. Where shall I begin? A large box sits in the middle of the room containing books discarded in an attempt to make space in my bookshelves for more books stacked up elsewhere. Shall I continue with this, or turn my attention to the filing cabinet: I can hardly get anything more in there. It's

not long since I did that task, but it's full once again. Heaps of papers and journals cover the couch, and on the floor there are three piles: one for filing, another of items to pass on to fellow teachers and members of the yoga centre executive, and the third for mailing, banking or some such action. How quickly the paper mounts up! Once I read a stress management technique which said: never move the same piece of paper twice. Sometimes I contemplate a move of all the papers lying around my office into the incinerator. Would it really make any difference in the broader scheme of things?

Perhaps I should first attempt to clear my desk, deal with matters which are most pressing. Trouble is when I do that, I never seem to get around to things I really want to do such as work on the tapes from last year's trip to India. Where has the time gone since my

return? I have done a lot, but I have not done half of what I intended.

I have too many commitments. What am I going to do? None of these commitments are frivolous, and many of them are simply not negotiable.

Something keeps getting in the way of what I want to do. This week it is a bad cold which has prevented me from teaching some of my classes and from participating in a workshop with Father Joe which I was looking forward to. When I get sick, it usually means I need to step back from my life, pause, and reflect on priorities and where my energy has been going.

My sabbatical last year, my travels to India and elsewhere, my studies with Guruji and Geeta, were wonderful gifts. As if that were not enough, not long after my return, I was able to study with Geeta again in Colorado this spring. I was given so much, I have much to integrate – and this integration takes time and practice.

It is not a problem for me to find time for my formal practices. I am quite disciplined there. It is with the yoga of daily life that I have more problems, and although on the whole I function efficiently on the business side of yoga, I often resent the time it takes. When I was a child my mother always used to say that there were not enough hours in the day for all I wanted to do. Some things are slow to change! I need more space, I need to free up some time!

Immediately after my return from sabbatical, we were faced with a family crisis with the illness of my husband's elderly mother who has lived with us for fifteen years. One day I was having a discussion with my oldest daughter about how I would cope when my mother-in-law was discharged from hospital, and bemoaning the fact that Derek and I had never had our home just to ourselves. I didn't have any space between children and mother-in-law, since my son was still living at home when my mother-in-law arrived. "What makes you think you are entitled to that?" my daughter enquired. Her question took me aback, and what a good question it was. When your

children mature, and especially when they too pursue the study of yoga, they sometimes ask very pertinent questions.

A couple of years ago, at the baptism of my grandson (child of the daughter in question), the priest gave a provocative sermon on the perils of entitlement.

Why do I think I am entitled to more space? It is a little absurd. We have a very large house on two acres of ocean view property with more than enough space for three people. It provides a place for our extended family to gather together on holidays, a yoga studio where I can teach classes, spare rooms for guests, and has provided space inside and out for many yoga gatherings and events. It is a comfortable, well-used house, not a show place. But it requires a lot of maintenance and that sometimes seems to be a chore rather than a blessing.

At one time in my life I lived happily in two very small attic rooms in a crowded city, and felt less confined than I was feeling at the time I spoke to my daughter. As she asked her question, I realised it had little to do with physical space and more to do with a desire not to be responsible for someone who might be both physically and emotionally dependent on me. My daughter is a nurse, but nursing is a profession which has never had the slightest attraction for me. I was hoping to avoid facing my limitations in this area. My love for my children enabled me to take care of their physical and emotional needs when they were small (and not so small) without a moment's pause. Wasn't that enough?

My own mother died in England. I made several visits while she was dying, but she was in hospital and I did not have to undertake her direct physical care. She had been quite independent up until this time. It was hard being so far away from her when she did become ill, and my anguish was one of the reasons Derek and I invited his mother to come and live with us when his father died. We discussed it thoroughly including the fact that she came from a line of women who lived well into their eighties and nineties, so it was likely to be a long term commit-

ment. If she became frail, we thought it would be easier having her here than trying to take care of things at a distance. My own grandmother had lived with my family when I was in my teens until she was very old and failing in all her faculties, so I had no illusions on this matter. When the time came we would do whatever we had to do. However, I always hoped for a experience similar to that of a friend of mine. One day, after an afternoon of gardening, her mother came into the living room, sat down, said she felt tired, closed her eyes and died.

That was fantasy. The reality facing me is different. In terms of yoga and the law of karma, life has dished up another opportunity to overcome yet another obstacle in the way of my maturity as a human being. On this difficult path of yoga, we will be tested again and again, as we are presented with what is needed for our evolution rather than what we would like. Sometimes I rail against the fates, crying out to whomsoever up there might hear me, that this is not my karma which you keep sending to me, you've made a mistake!

Contrary to popular belief, yoga does not make life easy. This is not its purpose. If you do not believe this, read some of the life stories of the great yogic teachers. Patanjali in his yoga-sutras, warns that once a yogi has attained a certain powers of awareness, he or she will be even more strongly tempted to stray from the path. And perhaps this is what we are seeing with many of the contemporary Yoga Masters who have fallen prey to temptation.

Sometimes, when we really are stubborn and refuse to make changes, the pace quickens and challenges arise everywhere. This is how I have felt in my personal life this summer. It has not been easy but I felt reasonably on top of things until I started teaching again two weeks ago, when the business of yoga began to intrude full steam ahead in my life. Practising is no problem. It is a joy. Teaching is no problem. It is very fulfilling. But with the organisation which ensures the continuation of the yoga classes, workshops, teacher training, newsletter, yoga centre business, teachers'

business at local, national and international levels – problems abound. Sometimes, just like one's personal problems, they seem overwhelming and the temptation is to withdraw and just do my own practice.

For a time, when faced with an illness, minor or major, this is what we must do. In the case of a minor indisposition like my current virus, if you don't take heed it may turn into something more severe. However, like the personal responsibilities which are non-negotiable, the business of yoga is an integral part of what is commonly known as "the work". If you benefit from the teachings of yoga, you must give back in some way. How and how much, is for you to juggle as I am juggling with it in my life.

I must confess, I often feel that some members of our yoga community understand the concept of karma yoga much better than others, and there are many who continue to take without giving in return. For instance, with our newsletter, the majority of its readers do not give it the support of a subscription. Perhaps they do not care whether they ever see another issue, but some people might miss it.

I am doing my best to avoid jumping to conclusions about other people's choices. I learned a valuable lesson in the early days of the yoga centre. There was one woman who attended all the classes and workshops and came to meetings but she never took on any of the jobs which needed to be done. She was a shy person and did not like to be in the limelight, but there were lots of back room jobs which she could have done, but she did nothing — as far as I could see. The trouble was I could not see far enough, because later I learned (and not from her) that she was spending hours of her time putting books on audio tape for a blind person so that that person could complete a yoga course for which these twenty four books were required reading. This is the spirit of karma yoga: to do something for another over a long period of time without seeking recognition or reward, but purely as a service.

I have learned a lot about karma yoga by going to

India where people do not question or discuss their duty and responsibility in the way we do. They simply get on with it. Once I was having dinner with an Indian friend who found it difficult to get away because she was looking after several elderly relatives. When I expressed sympathy for her plight and admiration for what she was doing, she looked at me with some surprise: "But if I do not do my duty, who will take care of me when I am old?" — demonstrating her understanding of the law of karma.

One of the definitions of duty in my dictionary is "an expression of respect". In that sense when I do my duty, I am respecting others and in return gaining a measure of self-respect. Generally, when called upon to do my duty, I have managed to do so, but not always with good grace. We sometimes talk about someone "going beyond the call of duty". To my mind, this would define an action undertaken in a spirit of grace.

In India I have also learned a lot about service to the Guru or teacher. It is not enough to respect them and their teaching, although that is essential; we must serve them in some way using whatever assets and talents we have to this purpose. This concept underwrites "the work" of the yoga centre.

When dealing with my personal overload, I always come up against the problem that when I let go or delegate some of the work, it is always taken on by one of the other workers in our group who is already busy enough in their own lives and wrestling with their own overload. What if we all let go at the same time? Then there would be no yoga society, no newsletter, no classes, no workshops, etc.

Who would care? And in the broader scheme of things, does it matter?

I believe it does. Not just for ourselves, although spiritual work puts us in touch with the wholeness within us. By coming together in all these different ways, by doing our practice, by living and spreading the teachings of yoga, we change not only ourselves but the world at large. What a grandiose statement!

Nevertheless, right action generates a force which goes beyond our individual self, our family, our neighbourhood – a force which changes not only our inner environment but the world around us. After all, the energy within, the energy without, is the same divine force.

For help in understanding where to sustain my efforts and where to let go, I turn often to the third chapter in the *Bhagavad Gita* where Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna the principles of karma yoga :-

"Not by refraining from action does man attain freedom from action. Not by mere renunciation does he attain supreme perfection.

For not even a moment can a man be without action. Helplessly are all driven to action by the forces born of Nature.

He who withdraws himself from actions, but ponders on their pleasures in his heart, he is under a delusion and is a false follower of the Path.

But great is the man who, free from attachments, and with a mind ruling its powers in harmony, works on the path of Karma Yoga, the path of consecrated action.

Action is greater than inaction: perform therefore thy task in life. Even the life of the body could not be if there were no action." (1)

And the last verse in this chapter sums it all up :-

"And do thy duty, even if it be humble, rather than another's even if it be great. To die in one's duty is life: to live in another's is death." (2)

Foot Notes

1. Bhagavad Gita. Chapter 3, verses 4-8 translated from the sanscrit by Juan Mascaro, published by Penguin Classics.
2. Idem. verse 35.



PRANAYAMA

in Metchosin

with

Shirley Daventry French

Saturday mornings

November 2nd

December 7th

8:00 to 9:30 AM	Pranayama
9:30 to 10:30 AM	Refreshment
10:30 to 12 noon	Asana Practice
12 noon	Brunch

Fee: \$28.00 per class

Information and registration: 478-3775

Victoria Yoga Centre

SCHOLARSHIPS

for Yoga Centre Members

I. Julie Gudmestad workshop
November 22-24
\$100.00

Apply in writing by November 1

II. Aadil Palkhivala workshop
February 21-23
\$100.00

Apply in writing by January 20

Linda Benn

478-0757

Letter to the Editor

Dear Shirley,

Your question - "Can we remain in secular community and pursue a spiritual path wholeheartedly" - in the recent Newsletter continues to linger in my mind. Your answer raises some of the currently hot topics of spiritual life - marriage, celibacy (sex!), renunciation, Divine will, living in a community, etc. But your answer misses something important. I think you jumped to a comfortable conclusion by way of assumptions about living as a householder or as a sanyasin.

As you point out, there are and always have been spiritual geniuses who happen to be married. As well, of course, there are and always have been those who were not married. There are also many examples of those who were once married and then left the marriage, or were widowed or divorced. There are even disciples who married their teacher. And it goes on. But is any of this the point?

What should we focus on or seek to emulate when looking at the lives of genius, spiritual or otherwise? I can wear a white fuzzy wig in the hope that I will understand Einstein's theory of relativity. After all, he had hair like that didn't he! This is silly, of course, and the error of more than a little oversimplification. If left this way, this kind of illusionary thinking and acting can become quite a problem in life.

What does it really mean to be a householder in the yogic sense? It must be more than marriage and family, of which there are tens of millions. What would living in a celibate marriage be like (there are examples, including Ramakrishna's) and why on earth would anyone want such a thing? What would it mean to transform a marriage into a spiritual marriage? And what does it really mean to be a sanyasin in today's world? It is certainly more than retiring to a cave or going to live in an Ashram.

Vivikananda said that to be an ideal householder is a much more difficult task than to be an ideal Sanyasin.

Why? We don't have to look much into our own lives to know. But it takes a lot of practice and courage to be able to see the facts and to accept the responsibility they present.

As Jesus says in Revelations, there is a first love that will not be forsaken. This is a truth that will prevail no matter what other attachments we construct in a marriage, a family, or otherwise. It is not a question of "if". It is only a matter of "when" - now or

All spiritual teachers worthy of the name say the same thing. The key is to renounce, to attach ourselves only to the Divine. This is the mystical, and in the end, the only meaningful marriage. The choice is always ours. But eventually each one of us must come willingly, alone. I think this is part of what Vivekananda was alluding to, something that challenges popular assumptions about being a householder and being a sanyasin.

In Divine Light,

Don Gamble.
Yasodhara Ashram
Kootenay Bay, B.C.



Yoga in Action

November 1981 to November 1996

Fifteen Years of the
Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter



This is the fifteenth anniversary of the newsletter.

The first edition published in this format
was dated November 1981.

Thank you to all those who have
worked on the newsletter over the years.

Thank you to all those who have supported our work
by taking out a subscription.

Thank you to all those who have
expressed their appreciation in other ways.

Thank you for the many positive comments about
last month's issue.

Thank you for considering taking out a subscription in the future.

Victoria Yoga Centre Directors

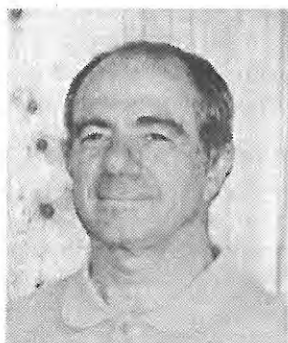


Leslie Hogya



Shirley Daventry French

Derek French



Jim Rischmiller



Linda Benn



Melanie Jollymore



Jennifer Rischmiller



Renate Grinfelds



Corrine Lowen

From the President

You will see in this issue that we have put faces to the names of the Directors of the Victoria Yoga Centre who have worked during 1996 on the administration necessary to produce workshops, newsletters, scholarships, gatherings and other events hosted by the Yoga Centre.

Another part of what goes on at the Directors meetings is not so easily listed. On a regular basis we discuss policy and procedures that fit into our philosophy. That, of course, necessitates discussions on what is our philosophy. As you can imagine, these discussions are lengthy but they are also very lively. Thoughts are shared between people of like minds trying to seek common ground, thoughts that have given me another dimension of the people who come together for the Directors meetings. Although sometimes the meetings go on for longer than I had planned (or hoped!), I always come away with some food for thought and with some helpful hints. During this year, several new Board members have helped regenerate enthusiasm and taken on tasks willingly so that energy can be renewed for the long-serving Directors.

You will also see in this issue the announcement that the Annual General Meeting is to be held on January 25, 1997, which is a change from the usual Christmas time meeting. The change has been made for a couple of reasons, to enable the treasurer to have more time to prepare the year end statements and because December is overloaded for most people! During the meeting, there will be changeover or reaffirmation for Directors and I ask that you consider serving as a Director as an indication of your support for the Victoria Yoga Centre and its activities. Many of the present Directors have indicated their willingness to remain on the Board so there will be lots of help for new members.

I hope my New Year starts by seeing you at the meeting and/or the celebration for the New Year.



Jerrilyn Wass



Paul Lescarmure

On Moving to the West Coast

by Sheri Berkowitz

There are many aspects to a cross country move, such as the one my partner, Jim Proctor and I made last October. A full year has not yet passed, so a full cycle has not yet seen its completion, nor given its full teachings, yet there is already much to say.

My first teacher in the Iyengar method was Mary Dunn. Mary, whose own mother brought these teachings to North America, resided in the San Francisco Bay area when I studied with her in 1978. She then moved and taught in San Diego and currently resides and teaches in New York. If the first note sets the tone for what is to come, Mary's lifestyle has been reflected by mine. When I first began this work I lived in Winnipeg. My teaching partner was Karen Fletcher whom many in Victoria know well. As the years progressed we were joined by our students, Hart Lazer, Val Paape and Yvonne Kipp and began Yoga Centre Winnipeg together. As time and life events moved along, I moved to Kenora, Ontario, where I taught yoga in a wonderfully responsive community for the next four years.

Then, after having owned land on Saltspring Island for seven years and dreaming of being here "some day", Jim and I found the timing was ripe and we made the move.

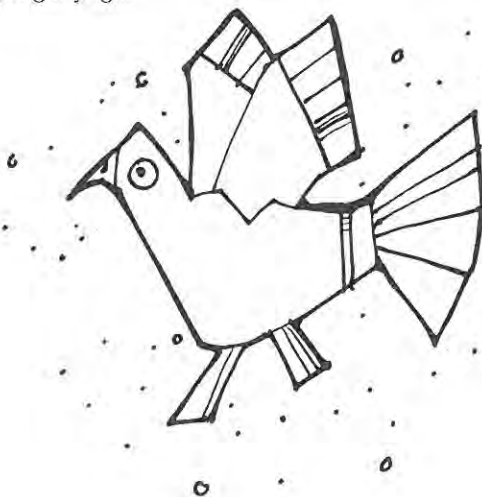
What a big decision! At once I began to worry that the people I was training to teach in Kenora were just not ready for me to leave. That my leaving was at least one year premature, irresponsible. However, I was able to arrange for Val and then Hart to begin to do workshops in Kenora. This summer Hart and I gave a workshop together so the work has been able to continue. This has been a relief as well as a major tug at my heartstrings to be able to be so indispensable!

Not only the ego aspects are involved however, as there was a very real involvement and meaning given

to my life to have dedicated myself to and integrated myself into the community in which I was living and working. The depth of this for me was measured only by the depth of feeling I experienced in myself and heard reflected in the words of others as I plucked myself out of that love and connectedness. Anyone who has moved knows that that kind of genuine caring is not immediately replaced, and this has been a time for me of some loss and aloneness.

One gift of this move, is that nearby and accessible to me is the community and in particular the teachers' group in Victoria. Everyone with whom I have connected has been welcoming and wonderfully receptive. It was fabulous for me to have a group with whom to travel to Colorado to study with Geeta in June; and to be so close to such a richness of understanding and sharing of this work under the guidance of Shirley Daventry French, is a great opportunity.

We have been busy here on Saltspring with a steady flow of visitors, and with building projects for our new undertaking, a Permaculture Centre here on the land. Part of the construction has been to complete a space at home for a small yoga studio. I am ready to begin again, here on this small island of many yoga teachers! I am ready to meet a new community of students and friends and to bring home to Saltspring the parts of my Self which find expression as a teacher of Iyengar yoga.



NOTICE OF THE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY



Saturday, January 25, 1997
50 Cambridge Street, Victoria, BC.



Business Meeting at 6:00 pm

Potluck Supper at 7:00 pm



New Year celebration to follow



EVERYONE IS WELCOME AND YOUR
SUPPORT IS APPRECIATED.

A Weekend With Father Joe Pereira

by Caren Liedtke

The saying is *not* true; the body *does* remember pain.

I remember the first Intensive I attended. I was not going to class at that time, nor had I gone for some time. I had little flexibility and less of a home practice to speak of. Each morning of the Intensive we had a three hour asana class. About forty five minutes into the class I would look up at the clock and want to cry, not knowing how I would make it through the next two hours and fifteen minutes.

This memory came back to me as Father Joe's Workshop neared. "Why do I sign myself up for these things?" I asked my partner, who has yet to sign

himself up for these things. I worried that I would find the workshop too difficult because I hadn't been to class all summer. I worried that I hadn't been practising enough. I worried that I wasn't improving, that I wasn't any good, that I couldn't hold

headstand long enough. I worried that I had too much homework to do and that Lauren had made us do too many dog poses the day before. I worried that I had left the house too late and had missed the bus.

Citta vrtti. Fluctuations of the mind. The fluctuations in my mind were increasing in direct inverse proportion to the amount of time remaining until the workshop began.



Within ten minutes of the start of the workshop, Father Joe said, "Let's make one thing clear, you will get no support from the discursive mind." Excuse me? Was I thinking out loud?

Father Joe helped us to quieten the mind and open up to a deeper intelligence. He asked us to become aware of "the bunch of muscles between the eyes". We did *uttanasana* facing the wall, hinged at the hips, our torso parallel to the floor, the "bunch of muscles between the eyes" resting on the wall, skin moving down. Throughout the workshop we rested and calmed these muscles again and again. On a block in dog pose and forward bends, and on the floor in the pose of the child.

While we were in forward bends, Father Joe instructed us to: "With each inhalation lengthen the inner body. With each exhalation lower the inner body. Breathe deeply to facilitate this process. Synchronise your movements with the breath."

We paid attention to what our eyes were doing in the poses. If the eyes look up and roll back in the head, it stimulates the discursive mind. In many of the poses, Father Joe instructed us to look towards the heart centre, to envision the heart centre.



Father Joe told a story. After six years of studying with Mr. Iyengar, Father Joe asked him why he had never been praised. Mr. Iyengar responded that if he had given praise, he would have done Father Joe a disservice, encouraging him to be content with where he was, when Mr. Iyengar could see he was clearly capable of more. Then Father Joe asked Mr. Iyengar to autograph his book. He did and it read, "With love and admiration...."

I wanted Father Joe to notice me and feared it too. I knew that being singled out in a workshop usually isn't for the purpose of being praised.

On the first evening, Father Joe talked about the skin of the head, how it should be loose on the skull. A

tight scalp is a sign of overemphasising the discursive mind. He showed us how he was going to come around while we were in supported shoulder stand and use a strap around the base of the skull and his thumbs on the forehead to adjust our scalp forward. He told us not to try and intellectually make this happen, not to envision it, but to wait for the touch of the teacher to do the adjustment, and then in later practices allow the intelligence of the body to replicate it. Once we were in the pose, he instructed us to "Let the face go completely passive. Release the lower jaw in the mouth without opening the mouth. Relax the tongue at its root. Envision the heart centre. With your eyes closed, look towards the heart." My turn came. He made the adjustment and announced, "Good" in his reverberating baritone. My pride swelled briefly and then died as I realised it wasn't praise being offered. Rather, it seemed an observation. Something had shifted and he was commenting on that shift. I hadn't made it happen. It wasn't like lifting your kneecaps.

"It is not through your will that the breath comes," Father Joe told us during a mediation session. During savasana he spoke of "wilful abandon", surrendering the body completely, cultivating a state of receptivity. "Through your will God, not mine," he said. Thy will be done, oh Lord, not mine.

"There is a calamity in the feet. You have forgotten the feet."

We laughed as we heard Father Joe turn this unusual phrase. He helped to dispel our calamity by drawing our awareness to our feet, informing us that "the secret to Iyengar Yoga is in the metatarsal." We began the Sunday asana session with three variations of *supta padangusthasana*. The anchoring foot was against the wall. With the first variation, we brought our leg to 90 degrees and put a strap across the metatarsal, each hand holding one side of the strap to increase sensitivity. We were to push into the strap

and lengthen the metatarsal. In the second variation, the strap went over the very back edge of the heel. In the third variation, the strap went across the arch, just above the heel. Father Joe told us we were sensitising our feet for later work. In *tadasana*, we lifted the right metatarsal off the floor, lengthened the foot forward, and brought it down. We repeated the process with our left foot, creating equal length. We did dog pose with our heels on the wall, our metatarsals activated on our "carpets". In the standing poses, in headstand, and in forward bends, Father Joe kept reminding us of the importance of the metatarsal, reenergizing our sensitivity with his powerful voice and precise instructions.



I feared pain. Father Joe invited it, commanded it. He instructed us to activate our quadriceps until we felt a pain, a sharp pain. "If your quadriceps hurt for a month, that is okay." Later on in Saturday's session Father Joe led us through a number of backbends. He said that if we found that our backbends were deeper and coming more freely than usual it was because of the work that had come before. It was because of the hard work, the attention paid to the coccyx, and the careful sequencing of the poses. In the afternoon pranayama and mediation session, he spoke of this again, of the importance of sequencing. "We end with prayer. We don't begin with prayer. First we must make ourselves ready."

Linda Benn spoke of similar matters in the last newsletter:

In the magazine we got from the conference is an article by Prashant, Mr. Iyengar's son, and he talks about kapotasana, which is quite a deep backbending pose. He says you are not doing it to do a deep backbending pose, you are doing it to prepare your body for pranayama and mediation.

I understood this in an experiential way for the first time. At the Intensive I struggled even more in pranayama and savasana than I did in the asana class.

My mind and emotions raced wildly and my body fidgeted endlessly when it wasn't sleeping. At Father Joe's workshop, I felt calm and steady and quiet in pranayama and meditation, more so than I ever had before the workshop. And I understood that it was because of the hard work that I had been afraid of and worried about, and it was because of the sequencing of the poses and Father Joe's careful guidance and wise presence. It wasn't because I had a good night's sleep or because I had a wheatgrass drink during the breakfast break.

I was worried about the workshop partly because I still think so much in terms of fitness. I keep thinking that I just need to get in better shape, build up the strength in my quadriceps, that this is the means and the end of yoga. Very quickly Father Joe helped me realise the absurdity of this notion. There were much more important places to go and some pain in my quadriceps is a small price to pay.



"How was the workshop?" queried friends and family. I found myself uncharacteristically without much to say. My pre-workshop frame of reference and

chatterly thoughts were mostly gone. Drained out through the bunch of muscles between my eyes, and left on a block in the prop room. My brains felt shell shocked in the absence of their constant, if unsupportive, company. I mumbled something about the workshop being intense and about Father Joe being amazing. I said something about his voice.

He had this deep, bellowing voice, that I swear I could sometimes feel reverberating in my body. It was like taking a yoga workshop with James Earl Jones.

And his words. His words that guided us through the weekend, through our citta vrttis, and towards a deeper intelligence, to our ground of being as we understood it :

"God said each one of you is most precious to me and I have loved you with everlasting love.... Let your heart be filled with thanksgiving. Give thanks for this body, this temple of God. For life and love. For the infinite capacity to forgive and for the deep reservoir of peace within each of us.....Amen. And thank-you!"





The
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and the
Victoria YM-YWCA



Welcome you to a



Friday Night Gathering



in the Yoga Lounge at the Y.

Asana Practice at 6 p.m.

Potluck Dinner at 7 p.m. (please bring your own plate/cutlery)

— Followed by a a guest speaker from Dharma Centre
talking about meditation

Date: Friday, January 17, 1996

Everyone is welcome to join us.

LIGHT ON YOGA A benefit workshop

Sunday, December 15th 1996

10:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Victoria Y.

Traditionally, on the Sunday closest to Mr. Iyengar's birthday we hold a special workshop in his honour. His actual birth date is December 14th, and this year he will be seventy eight years old. It has also become a tradition to make this a benefit workshop. The funds raised are used for the work we do throughout the year in support of Mr. Iyengar's work.

Light on Yoga, is the name of Mr. Iyengar's book published in 1966, and acknowledged the world over as a major treatise on yoga. The three words of its title have become synonymous with B.K.S. Iyengar, whose dedicated practice and inspired teaching have ignited a light in so many people throughout the world. Mr. Iyengar's birthday also happens to be close to Christmas, a season of light, making it a truly auspicious time for a celebration.

There is yet another reason for making the effort to be with us on this Sunday morning. When a group of people gather together and practise yoga in a spirit of devotion and gratitude, the energy generated by this practice will have a positive effect not only on those personally involved, but on the whole world. A grandiose statement, but true!

There is no better way to honour Mr. Iyengar on his birthday than to come together and practise Yoga.

There is no better way to get into the spirit of Christmas with its message of peace on earth, than by coming together and practising Yoga.

The morning practice will be led by Shirley Daventry French, who was the first teacher from Greater Victoria to travel to India to study with Mr. Iyengar, and who returns regularly for further study. Shirley has encouraged many others to follow her footsteps, resulting in well worn path between Victoria and Pune, and a core of well-trained teachers in the Iyengar tradition in this area.

After the practice there will be refreshments, and time to mingle with teachers and fellow students from your yoga community. All are welcome: beginners and experienced students alike.

For full details see the advertisement in this newsletter. To register contact Adrienne Rhodes at 995-0385 or your yoga teacher.



THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
presents

In the Light of Yoga

A special benefit workshop
in celebration of the birthday of
Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15TH, 1996
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

To register: Phone Adrienne Rhodes at 995-0385
or Victoria Yoga Centre at 386-YOGA (9642)

Gurupurnima

Gurupurnima is the birth anniversary of Sage Ved Vyasa who is considered as the foremost of all Gurus. This day is traditionally celebrated as a day on which sisyas (students) pay their obeisance and respects to Sage Vyasa as well as their own Guru.

The Significance of Vyasa Purnima

The following lecture was given by Geeta S. Iyengar at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune on July 18, 1989.

Respected Guruji and fellow students,

Vyasa was a great sage who was well versed in *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and *Darsanas*. He has written commentaries on almost all subjects. He is also the author of the *Mahabharata*.



Today being *Vyasa Purnima* (full moon day) everyone in India celebrates this day with reverence and respect. The seat of the Guru, and the platform of an artist, is called *vyasapita*, the seat of Vyasa. This is the rainy season, and the four months from this day are considered auspicious by those who like to practise, proceed and progress on the spiritual path. It is the time to proceed in the fields of *jnana*, *bhakti* and *karma margas* or paths.

Vyasa is considered *chiranjeevi* (ever living) by the aspirants in the field of art. His spirit gets established in the *sadhaka* knowingly or unknowingly. Though he has been considered as a great Guru by everyone from time immemorial, his teachings have special significance in this age - the *kaliyuga*. In this age, people are caught up in worldly pleasures, inviting sorrows and pains in their minds and bodies. In this age is the age of darkness and ignorance of spiritual knowledge. Hence, sage Vyasa's writings show us the path of self realisation to follow. As he is considered as the only guide in philosophy and life, we salute him as our deity on this auspicious day.

Maharsi Vyasa had a clear foresight of this future generation, which may be incapable to follow the path of spiritual realisation. In order to help the people of this age, he compiled the *Vedas* into four parts, namely *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda* and *Atharvaveda*. Then he wrote *Mahabharata*, *Bhagavatam* and the *Puranas*. This is why he is a guide to each and every Guru. Because of his readiness to help, the seat one occupies is *vyasapita* and the one who sits on that place is considered the Guru.

'Gu' means darkness and 'ru' means light. One who leads from darkness to light is a Guru. One who talks on spiritual knowledge on a platform is called *Guru Vyasa*.

In Visnu Sahasranama (the Thousand Names of Vishnu), it is said, "*Vyasaya Visnu rupaya, Vyasa rupaya Visnave.*"

Patanjali says '*tatra niratisayam sarvagnabijam.*' If Lord Vishnu is the seed of all knowledge, Vyasa is the embodiment of all knowledge. There is nothing in the world that was untouched by Vyasa. He knew the past, the present and the future. He had tasted all knowledge and whatever one claims to have discovered was already known to Sage Vyasa. If Lord Visnu was knowledge incarnate, Vyasa was communicating that knowledge not only for elites but also for average individuals.

Patanjali in one of the sutras says '*purvesamapi Guru kalen anavacchedat.*' It is the Lord (*Isvara*) who is the first and foremost Guru of all Gurus - the greatest preceptor - unconditioned by time. He, the Lord, transmitted knowledge to Vyasa and we are the recipients of that knowledge as *prasadam* (grace) in a diffused form.

In turn our Gururji becomes the messenger of that knowledge which he gathered from his Guru and thus the *parampara* (tradition) continues. Therefore, it is our bounden duty to show our gratitude and reverence to our teacher - our Guru - on this full moon day. Though knowledge shines like the shining Sun, we should remain cool and calm like a full moon. This is the lesson to be learned on this day - to remain humble though one is proficient in knowledge.

Today I am focusing on two aspects. First the method of teaching and imparting knowledge followed by our Gururji and what he expects from his students and, secondly, the relationship between *Guru* (master) and *sisya* (pupil).

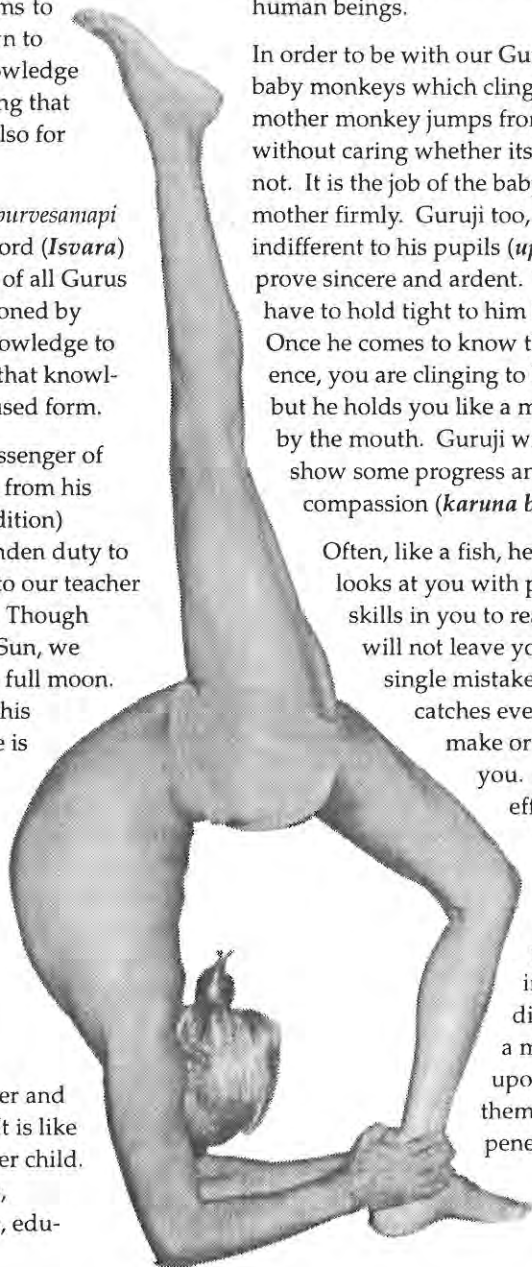
The relationship between the teacher and pupil is of a very peculiar nature. It is like the relationship of a mother with her child. The mother loves, fondles, caresses, nourishes, nurtures, guides, cajoles, edu-

cates, protects, shouts at, rebukes, scolds, hits, uplifts and sanctifies her child by treating him or her as a special human being. In the same way, our Gururji uses all these means and perhaps adds his own flashes of temper to make us extraordinary and super-human beings.

In order to be with our Gururji, we have to be like baby monkeys which cling to their mother. The mother monkey jumps from one tree to the other without caring whether its baby can hold its grip or not. It is the job of the baby monkey to grip its mother firmly. Gururji too, in the beginning, remains indifferent to his pupils (*upeksa bhavana*) until they prove sincere and ardent. That is his way. So you have to hold tight to him but he does not hold you. Once he comes to know that, despite his indifference, you are clinging to him, he will not let you go but he holds you like a mother cat holding its baby by the mouth. Gururji will be after you till you show some progress and development. This is his compassion (*karuna bhavana*).

Often, like a fish, he keeps his eyes wide open, looks at you with penetration and develops skills in you to reach his expectations. He will not leave you until you get it. Not a single mistake can escape his eyes. He catches every possible mistake you make or trick you play and silences you. He demands a genuine effort and, when you show it, he is happy. That is his joy (*mudita bhavana*).

The moment he sees that you are following his instructions accurately, as a disciplined student, he is like a mother tortoise which looks upon its babies and nourishes them just by its look. It is his penetrating and shining eyes which enliven and elate you. This is his *maitri*



bhavana (friendliness). It is his proximity and manner which affect your practices.

Now about pupils:

A good pupil is one who is obedient, earnest, serious, and ever ready to follow the teachings; he shows eagerness to learn.

Guruji does not give a list of codes of conduct to follow. The way he behaves and teaches makes us become good students and true disciples of Yoga. He does not demand discipline but commands attention. Also the way he teaches and imparts knowledge develops discipline in us in an unconscious way. He attracts us towards attention and earnestness. He is not strict though he appears so. He is intense and creates a burning desire to know and learn more and more.

His authenticity, accuracy and exactness is unique. Whatever he instructs in the process of teaching, he creates total confidence in his students. He develops willpower to face things with joy. He does not tell us to do *tapas*, but to follow his method itself is a great *tapas*. Whenever he adds new points to his techniques, it does not mean that he has changed his views, but only he opens our eyes and creates new dimensions to see. He induces us to develop new zeal and zest. He makes our intelligence grow vertically as well as horizontally.

Some may criticise Guruji, saying that he only teaches two limbs of Yoga, *asanas* and *pranayama*. You should realise that Guruji uses these two limbs as a springboard to express the other six limbs of Yoga. He clearly brings the principles of *yama*, *niyama*, *pratyahara* and *dharana* to each asana, in each breath. While teaching asanas, he talks to the cells of our body and takes us to a state of tranquillity. It is nothing but *dhyana* (meditation) is it not?



He straightaway asks us to act with total attention. Is it not *ekagra chitta*? He asks us to spread the consciousness evenly in the entire body while in an asana or in pranayama. Is it not *dhyana*? He asks directly, if we cannot see the hand clearly, how will we be able to see the soul. In this way he spiritualises each asana and each cell of the body, each breath, mind and intelligence, and throws the ball into our court to see whether we experience that oneness or not.

His insistence on precision is not just to improve in asanas or pranayama but for inner discipline. Yoga is discipline (*anusasanam*). The Yoga text begins with *anusasanam*. Without discipline, nothing can be achieved. Indiscipline does not bring freedom.

It is not strictness that Guruji enforces but the building up of awareness. He encourages us to remain ever alert in the pursuit of our sadhana. He kindles each time the fading light of our awareness. He sharpens our awareness, and this is mistaken for discipline. He kindles the power of discrimination in our intelligence. This is the discriminative intelligence (*viveka khyati*) which leads towards emancipation. His disciplinary method is not regimentation though it appears so in the beginning, because we cling to him. If we do not, then he holds us like a mother cat until the point when, like a fish, we can keep our eyes and ears wide open. All his ways of imparting knowledge bring cleanliness in body and develop an ethical character. Like the tortoise's look, his look brings us mental clarity and intellectual purity.

Guruji tests his pupils' depth of devotion and steadiness, as he himself is honest and straightforward in his approach. He is casual to those who are casual, but he tolerates such behaviour as well as those who weep for nothing. He dislikes those who have high

ideas without actually putting them into practice. He is practical. He wants each one of us to live philosophically and not to view philosophically. He is not a person who says one thing and does another. What he says, he does, and what he does, he says, and that is why he demands uninterrupted, steady and honest practice accompanied by smiles. He has not patience for those who have the habit of complaining for the sake of it. If he thinks that the complaint is genuine, he goes out of his way to help. You should see what his compassion is when someone is really suffering. In fact, he suffers more for the sake of such students — yet, remember he is shrewd in judging the extent of suffering.

Many people think that Gurujī is harsh and lacks compassion and patience. He does not want to convince them with soft talk and sweet smiles. He does not like to be emotionally attached nor does he expect emotional attachment from us. His compassion is involved in helping people, but with a non-attached mind. This inherent nature of his has made him a great teacher and a philanthropist. Even when his income was meagre, he went out of his way to help those in need.

When Gurujī teaches, he admonishes all and corrects all. He neither deceives nor is deceived while teaching and practising. He is neither an impostor nor a propagandist. For him, the art he loves is important, not expressive sentiments. He follows the yogic path and urges his pupils to do right, to think right, and to act right. His emphasis is on perfection which has to be earned and achieved so that divine light may flash soon. Casual practice gives only imperfection. This is natural *svabhavic*, but perfection requires effort with total attention and involvement of the heart.

Effortless, perfect presentation of an asana without feedback is not real perfection. He considers this as a wrong *sadhana*. Gurujī works to feel the reflection of action so that effort is transformed into effortlessness. He wants each one of us to grasp quickly the rightness of the asana, or of the breath. For him practice is penance (*tapas*). He demands this from us all.

People say that Gurujī has no patience. He is not an incarnation of patience, but I daresay that his patience is in his impatience. His expressive impatience springs out because we are not courageous to take his work with confidence. He cannot remain patient with our repeated faults and go on forgiving us.

If someone says that Gurujī is harsh, rough and a man of anger, then know this truth.

Christ was an incarnation of love. But did he not chastise his pupils for their upliftment? Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, a great saint, spat on his pupils. Swami Ramdas asked his pupil Kalyan to drink pus and blood from his open abscesses. The harshness of Gurujī is the hidden love, affection and compassion for his genuine pupils. Only we, as students, have to prove that we are worthy students.

Gurujī does not cajole or flatter anyone to get popularity. He has faith in his pupils though they may not respond to him quickly. He loves and trusts all, hence there are no chances of misguiding or misleading anyone. He says "*truth is harsh and is not a thing to be compromised.*" There is not short cut to truth. Though it is dominant in each of us, Gurujī encourages and leads us to see from within. That is how we enjoy even the simplest of asanas when performed accurately, because the light of illumination of intelligence shines forth. This is *sattva guna* - where inner satisfaction, balance and harmony are felt in body and mind.

The impulses (*samskara*) and desires (*vasanas*) subconsciously make one believe that the body is the soul and the soul is the body (*dehatma buddhi*). This feeling entangles our intelligence and consciousness: our Guru helps us to break these shackles.

Faith (*sraddha*) and aim (*nista*) are the



key points for every disciple for success in the sadhana. If sraddha is faith, nista is the inherent energy to follow up faith. Guruji does not ask us to have blind faith in him. He wants our eyes and ears always wide open to see and listen: our brain sharp to think and act, our mind to be quick to receive the teachings clearly and our body to practise. Guruji does not work for the sake of prestige, but to make us worthy of practice. He does not want our ego to get inflated and never likes any one of us to boast that we are his students.

As we remove our shoes and sandals at the entrance of the Institute, he wants us to leave our ego there also. As we remove our headgear, he wants us to remove unwanted and confused thoughts from our mind and brain. We have to empty our brain to learn from him. He never encourages us by patting our back. He does not allow anyone to be puffed up with pride, which may burst like a balloon at any time. He does not want success to contaminate the head. He subjugates the ego and not us, with an occasional kick or a hit. He says, *"keep success at your feet and failures in your head,"* and repeats, *"Let success salute you and failures humble you."* He humbles but does not humiliate us.

In this Institute, a very strange thing is happening. All the beginners' classes are held on the second floor and senior classes are on the first floor. The significant fact is that some time later, the beginners are demoted to the first floor. That is the sign that we must deflate our ego to attain emancipation.

We are made to know the faults and weakness in our practices and taught to rectify these so that self-study sets in to go towards self-realization.

Learning is an art, just as teaching is an art: but learning is a hundred times

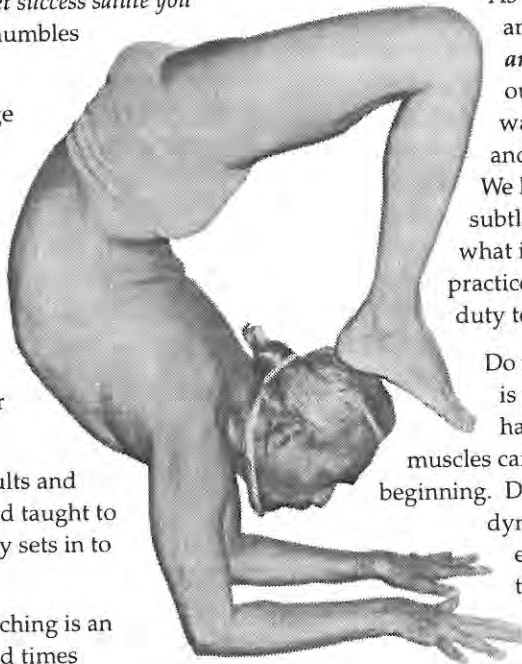
superior to teaching. A pupil is expected to be like Nachiketa who went to the Lord of Death (yama) for spiritual guidance. We have to die to gain knowledge. We have to put aside our personalities and reduce our ego to ashes in order to reach the soul. Total surrender to practise is a must.

When Guruji teaches, touches, moulds or explains, receive it with receptive alacrity. Practice stabilizes; and while practising remember each word, each action and ponder over it, love it, live and grow with it. Analyse his sayings while practising and consolidate your experiences. Then knowledge and understanding follow with ease.

Do not calculate success before practice. Practise by trial and error to get precise motion and action. Learn to convert Guruji's expression of direct experiences into first-hand experience. Do not repeat like a parrot. Renew the experiences by ardent practice so that they remain fresh in your mind. Guruji's experiences pour like heavy rains. We have to develop discrimination in our day-to-day practices.

As the moon fades for fifteen days and flows for fifteen days as *amavasya* and *purnima*, we find in our practices also that we wane and wax. We progress to a certain level and then lose what has been earned. We have to build on it to experience subtle transformations without losing what is achieved. Never allow your practice to deteriorate. Dereliction of the duty to practise is a spiritual sin.

Do not be afraid of bodily pains. That is part of the game of practising. We have to overcome pains as the muscles cannot work harmoniously in the beginning. Do not practise mechanically. Life is dynamic and practice should be energetic. It should take us beyond the body-mind apparatus though these are used as instruments.



Chitta prasadanam (diffusion of consciousness) throughout the practice of Yoga is essential. Be aware of the body pain. Penetrate it mentally to understand its cause and how to come out of it. Do not allow the consciousness to become insensitive. When the mind fails to follow a certain discipline, it fails to receive the good and bad effect of practices. An insensitive mind can reject anything easily. For example, if one takes an extra cup of tea, it does not pinch, but if asked to perform Pincha Mayurasana, it pinches.

Bodily pain is experienced at once but not so the pains of the mind. If these are felt, they are ignored and we refuse to face them. That is the weakness of the mind. If the biceps pain, we accept it: if the mind is full of lust, we do not accept it as unhealthy. In a way, bodily pains are a blessing as they sensitise the mind. As we are eager to remove bodily pains, we should be equally eager to remove the afflictions of the mind.

Purnima does not come every day. It comes only once a month. Fading or descending is essential in order to ascend or shine. Old cells have to die for new cells to form. The birth of a new cell is in the old cell. Similarly, previous performance leads to a new approach in sadhana. A new light dawns, hence nothing is wasted.

Today's pupil (*sisya*) is going to become a master (*guru*) tomorrow. Therefore, practise. Doing in a class and practising alone are not the same. In a class we receive instructions but in our own practice we bring the points that are learnt in the class to the surface. While learning we should not only be curious but enthusiastic and anxious too, alert but not tense, serious but not stupid, cheerful but not morose. Have the goal of self-realisation and not selfishness. Learn to hold but not grab. Be courageous and not careless.

Practise for the sake of gaining self-knowledge (*atma jnana*). While teaching, treat Yoga as a perfect

science, and while practising treat it as an art so that you can impart it as art also.

"Teach what you know and not what you do not know. Teach what you follow and not what you do not practise. See that your knowledge is filtered by experience. Be clear in your mind, firm of will and determined in intelligence to tread the path of self-realisation. Have a methodology (riti) and a morality (niti)." This is what our Guruji says.

His success is in his religiousness and honesty in practice. He is clear in what he does and hence his inner voice is clear. He does not borrow other experiences but takes from his own hard work. He wants us to face the hardships of practice with equanimity. This is *yoga marga*, the path of Yoga. He

wants his students to follow the path which is self-built and self-made. He says, *"you should certainly imitate me, not for the sake of emulation but for evolution."* Let us follow his footsteps for the sake of perfection and precision, as perfection is divine. He wants us to imitate his discipline and his approach, so that disparities are removed and Guru and Sisya shine as equals, though the Guru remains a Guru and the Sisya a Sisya.

We, as sisyas of our Guruji, will always remain his sisyas. Let us all pray to the Lord Vyasa, to give our

Guruji a beacon in his hand so that he can lead us towards the light where all darkness is banished from our minds. If our Guru shines like a Sun, let us be as moons to him.

Guru Brahma Guru Visnu
Gurudevo Maheshvaraha!
Guru saksat Param Brahma
tasmai Sri Guruvenamaha!

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An Interview With Helen And Fran

by Neil W McKinlay

It was rainy and grey when I met Helen Pirie, seventy eight, and Fran Garratt, seventy three. Shirley had suggested the get together - thought we might talk about yoga and whatever else, put together something for the Newsletter. We were, to be honest, a little shaky in the beginning. We babbled over tea about our common ground, about the Newsletter, and about how we could *never* create anything as interesting as the Linda Benn interview that appeared in the last issue. This got us laughing - me because Helen and Fran seemed so concerned, they because I was so worried - and sent us on our way. It was a fascinating conversation. And afterwards, as I walked beneath the west coast drizzle, I was appreciative to have spent some time with these recently transplanted Ontarians, with these two senior members of our community.

How long have you been involved in yoga?

Fran - I started about a year after I came here in 1990. Helen had been doing yoga at the Y and she introduced me to it.

You knew each other before you started yoga?

Fran - Just barely before. Helen had been living here, and I came about a year later. I met her through her

son who is a chiropractor - my daughter was working for him at the time. We met and she said "You'll have to come to yoga at the Y." I started in September '91 and I've been going ever since.

And, Helen, you started...

Helen - I started in September 1990. I had always wanted to practice yoga but I'd never - even at that late stage in my life - found a place where I felt easy about it. I remember once about twenty-five years ago, getting a book out of the library and doing some yoga by myself. Of course I realise now how completely useless that was - there was none of that fine instruction about what you were supposed to be doing. I had a friend who had some small children and she was doing yoga out of a book too. I remember her saying that one day the kids were sleeping and she got into a position that she couldn't get out of! So I decided that wasn't such a good idea! And I just never did find a place where I trusted the teacher. So when I saw the Y offering it, I figured that they would be responsible and that the teachers would be good. My first class was with Shirley and I remember I felt so inexperienced - a lot of the people had been going for years and years. And I was so completely stiff the next day! I could hardly move! But I persevered. I went back. Because I had paid for it! And then for that year I just went to one class a week. And then I started two a week, which was much better.



Were they both Sixty and Over classes?

Helen - Yeah.

Fran - Then we started taking the Tuesday class - the Gentle Yoga - so we were doing three.

Three classes a week?

Helen - Yeah.

Fran - And then about two years ago, I had a bad fall and broke a vertebra in my back and was out of commission for about six months. I started back by taking the Special Needs class with Shirley and Ann Kilbertus. And gradually worked back into the Gentle Yoga. And then started the Friday class and now I'm back in Shirley's too.

And what about practising at home? Do you do anything on your own?

Fran - A little bit...not as much as I should.

But no one does as much as they should!

Fran - I try to do the stretches and a lot of those sort of things, but I'd really like to get some kind of a program going and discipline myself some more.

Helen - I do some salutations to the sun a few times every morning, but... I'd really like to do more. Like maybe come home from a walk and put my feet up the wall!

I'd like to go back to your yoga class. You're in the Sixty and Better class, how do you think your class differs from non-aged classes?

Helen - I don't think we do as many of the traditional poses - headstands and this type of thing. And definitely we're not as...well, I shouldn't say flexible because many of us are quite flexible. Shirley said one time she was going to tell her Introductory Class about her Sixty and Betters being more flexible! Though a lot of people do have stiff joints or bad knees so we don't do some of the poses that are more

complicated. But Shirley attempts headstands in our class. You know how Shirley is...

Fran - Yes. Shirley goes right into it! She always does.

Helen - ...so she has us do headstands. I personally can't do them because of eye problems, but there are quite a few people who do them. And I know that's supposed to be the ultimate pose.

It sounds like what you're asked to do isn't necessarily less, but there may be more personal issues - joint problems or whatever - that have to be worked around.

Fran - Yes, I think so.

Helen - Shirley probably asks us to do most things but they're perhaps not done as completely as a younger person would do them. You know, when you put your hands up the wall and you can't get your arms straight, things like that... But definitely there's improvement...

Fran - Oh! It's just fantastic. I'm sure it's contributed to my recovery.

You've noticed the influence of yoga in your lives then?

Fran - Oh yes.

Helen - And, definitely, it's more than the physical. Particularly in the last couple of years, I think there's more inner awareness when doing the asanas. It's almost a meditation, the concentration that's involved. At first you're wondering what your neighbour's doing and whether you're doing it properly. Then you get so you're really not aware of all these people. So I think definitely it does affect your everyday life. There's something about it that makes you calm and relaxed and quiet. Perhaps your mind isn't quite so cluttered. It's a subtle thing: you gradually get more interested in the spiritual side of it... Shirley's giving a seminar, a weekend...

Fran - Well not really Shirley but some of the teachers are giving a retreat at Saltspring Island.

Helen - ...and we think we might do that.

Have you done a retreat before?

Fran - We did one a couple years ago.

Was that Saltspring?

Fran - Yes.

And what was that like?

Helen - It was good! There were lots of things we couldn't do! But that's the nice part of it, you can go to your own limit.

You felt very supported working at your own level?

Fran - Yes. Oh yes. The teachers are wonderful.

Do you think that is part of the reason you are still doing it?

Fran - Oh absolutely.

Helen - I think I've become addicted! I can't imagine life without yoga.

Shirley said something in our Thursday morning class. We were doing some horrible pose and she commented that we could groan all we liked but we were all hooked for life so we'd best just get on with it!

Fran - That's right.

Is yoga something you'll be doing the rest of your lives?

Fran - I certainly will.

Helen - As long as I'm physically fit I will.

How do you think your yoga will progress over that time?

Helen - I think the spiritual side will develop more.

Fran - Yes. I think that's quite true. And through yoga at the Y we've learned about Radha House. And we had a wonderful experience with Radha House down

in Mexico last year that has definitely inspired us to carry on with the spiritual side of yoga.

Do you want to talk about that experience a little?

Fran - Helen and I went down last winter, not knowing what to expect really. And when we got there, we got totally involved in everything they had to offer.

Helen - We did the yoga that they do at Radha House. We used to do that every morning. So we would do the tree pose, for instance, and then we would write down how we felt while we were doing it. And then we took a dream interpretation course that was interesting, and a lot of writing again. And the other one was what they call a Life Seal and you were supposed to draw pictures that represented all your senses plus consciousness and then the teacher interpreted it all for you. So different things were revealed by what we drew. It was quite fascinating.

Fran - You began to look into yourself. And see your different qualities and the different things you believe that might interfere with your life or that might enhance it in some way. It was a wonderful experience and we just got totally involved.

I've heard that spirituality becomes more of a concern in your life as you get older. Is that something you would attest to?

Helen - Oh definitely. You become much more aware of your mortality the older you get.

Fran - It's interesting. I've been searching for many years and it's led me into all kinds of different areas and brought me here, where I am today.

So this has been an ongoing journey. It didn't just start when you stepped off the plane from Ontario?

Helen - Oh no.

Fran - No, it didn't. It started back in the sixties for me as I began to explore metaphysics. And it just seems like the yoga and all the sequence of events,

they've just been part of one, long experience. And I wouldn't trade it for anything.

You know, the two of you describe trying this and doing that and going to Mexico and to Saltspring. There seems to me a stereotype that as one gets older, you stop learning and you stop doing new things and you stop trying different things...

Fran - Oh no, it's an exciting time. To have the independence and the freedom and the time to do this - looking at yourself and exploring yourself. It's a good time.

Do you ever find yourself struggling with this stereotype?

Helen - I don't think that stereotype affected me. Mind you, I think it would have had I stayed in Ontario. I might have become that way. But as it was I went to Australia where nobody knew me; you can change your whole image when you move away.

And was there a big change?

Helen - Oh yes.

Fran - I go back and fit into it a little bit, but it's always wonderful to come back west and be more like who I really feel I am.

And yoga is a big part of that?

Fran - Well, we've developed a wonderful camaraderie with our friends that we've met - bonding with our teacher and with the people in our class. You know when I hurt my back I was so overwhelmed because Linda got a beautiful card, had everybody in the class put a message on it and sign their names. They sent it to me and I just had never realised how important all of it was to me, the whole yoga community. It was just terrific.



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Sequencing the Asanas

by Geeta Iyengar



Original tape transcribed by Julia Pederson and edited by Susan Robertson, adaptation by Francie Ricks and Geeta Iyengar

In the courses in *Light on Yoga* the asanas come one after the other from Tadasana up to the last Savasana. You find Sarvangasana in the middle instead of at the end. You find Savasana followed by pranayama, whereas now we prefer to separate the asana practice.

Sirsasana and Sarvangasana

As far as practice is concerned, you can do Sirsasana at the beginning and Sarvangasana at the end because Sarvangasana brings rest to the body. Or Sirsasana and Sarvangasana can be done one after the other immediately. Sirsasana must always come first. After Sirsasana, doing Sarvangasana (Sarvangasana, Halasana or Setu Bandha) at some point in the practice is essential. One cannot just practice Sirsasana and avoid Sarvangasana. Inversions always give sensitivity and energy. You might put them both at the beginning if you feel dull or low. You finish your Sirsasana and Sarvangasana and then you find some life is coming, some sensitivity is coming, and that weakness has gone—weakness, not because of disease or anything but you just feel low. At that time,

when you feel low, after Sarvangasana you can do forward bends and that will be helpful.

You should not do backbendings after Sarvangasana. In Sarvangasana you put your brain and everything to rest. Sarvangasana brings the blood pressure down; that is why it is so helpful for high blood pressure. Sarvangasana, Halasana and Setu Bandha are all very helpful. After Sarvangasana the blood pressure comes to normal. Then if you do backbendings the adrenal glands are activated so much that the blood rushes to the head and this kind of imbalance is very bad. On one side you increase your superiority complex by doing backbendings and then when you overexert yourself the inferiority complex begins. Excitement and depression are two sides of the same coin.

In backbendings the adrenals are stimulated. In Sirsasana also the adrenals are activated. After activating the adrenals you have to do something that pacifies them or you will lose your mental balance, lose your temper or remain shaky. In order to avoid mental and hormonal imbalance, you have to pacify the adrenals. In Sarvangasana the adrenals get calmed down so you have to do Sarvangasana and Halasana after backbendings. So instead of doing Sarvangasana twice, avoid the first attempt and do it at the end. That is how balance has to be brought.

After Sarvangasana you can do forward bends or lateral twists. Forward bends and twists also quiet the adrenals, so you find a continuity of pacification after Sarvangasana. Backbendings energize the body but at the same time, they may generate too much energy or excitement. Whereas in forward bending and twists the energy is subdued. That is the nature of these poses. So you should see that before Sarvangasana you finish with poses that are activating.

For that reason if you are doing strong standing poses it is better to do them before Sarvangasana, so that after your standing poses and backbends you can use Sarvangasana and Halasana to pacify yourself. That should be the nature of your practice. When you activate yourself to that optimum level, the balance

should be brought later to pacify yourself. This pacification is possible with Sarvangasana, Halasana, Setu Bandha and Viparita Karani. The pacification has to be at the end.

Savasana

In every program it is written that at the end you lie down and you calm all your nerves, you bring that balance etc. If that can be done with Viparita Karani, or if that same quietening effect can be brought by some other postures, such as Sarvangasana, Halasana and Setu Bandha, then Savasana is not necessary. If you are in a hurry to complete your practice, then these pacifying asanas at the end will serve the purpose. Normally we do Savasana at the end of the practice but then our lazy nature is such that if we do Savasana we go to a sleepy state. We all long to lie down in Savasana but we should not indulge in our *tamasic* nature. That *tamasic* nature has to be broken in some way. If your Savasana is of a *sattvic* nature, it is appropriate, but when it is making you *tamasic* it is not good. Since you are not a yogi of a standard that you have conquered everything, you may be tired after your practice and you will find a period of rest in the beginning which is *sattvic*, which is pure. Your body essentially needs the rest and you feel very nice. But then you find that feeling of "essential" rest is gone and you stay there because you enjoy it. It becomes a sensual practice. In the beginning there is a keen observation and you allow that part where you are tense to rest. You find that if your breath is dancing inside, you need to pacify it. But then when the breath gets pacified, when the cells get pacified and everything becomes quiet, gradually you start going towards sensuality. That should not happen.

As a teacher, you may give Savanasana to the students. For a beginner it is all right to do Savasana, then at least he will be free from tensions and you know that he will not suffer with high blood pressure, headache or other problems. But in your own practice this question always arises as to whether Savasana is *sattvic* or not. It gradually gets transformed into a

tamasic state. You mind is first of all *rajasic*, so after you rest fully you find that your mind starts playing tricks from inside, you start calculating what you have to do, you start having thoughts that are irrelevant at that moment although they may be relevant to your daily life. Thoughts soon come to the surface of the mind. You may not show any mobility from outside but inside the mind is dancing. That is *rajasic* nature. *Tamasic* nature is such that you are completely relaxed, but while you are not thinking or disturbed physically or mentally, you may go to a sleepy state. From outside it seems perfectly all right, but it is such a dull state that the moment you get up from that Savasana you are just blank at that time. Savasana should not be a blank state. The resting process should be such that you face your inner fully wakeful state. Your consciousness should spread all over the body; you should feel its existence as though it's all pervasive. The moment that fades you go to *tamasic* nature. Savasana is not just relaxation; you must witness that relaxation. That is *sattvic*. After Sarvangasana you Savanasana should be *sattvic*. If your practice has ended with a pose of a *sattvic* nature such as Paschimottanasana or Setu Bandha Sarvangasana, you don't need much of Savasana. If you are going to continue with pranayama, then you are ready to switch over to pranayama. When you have developed that *sattvic* nature, when the mind is pure and not disturbed and it hasn't gone to the state of *tamas*, when you have witnessed yourself and your existence, then you are ready for pranayama.

Asanas before Pranayama

There should be a gap of at least fifteen minutes after inversions before you do pranayama. This time can be allotted to Savasana. The sequence should be inversions, Savanasana, and then pranayama. Never do Sirasana after Sarvangasana. This includes rope Sirasana. And Viparita Dandasana on the backbending bench with the head down is also an inversion, in a sense. It's not fully an inversion, because the legs are downwards and it can be done during menstruation. But the curvature in Viparita

Dandasana is such that since the anterior spine curves for the back arch the nerves are absolutely in a wakeful state. That is why when you do backbending there is excitement, even irritation if you do too much. For your pranayama practice, the excitement and restful state of the nerves should be balanced. The nerves should be in a fully wakeful state but not in a state of excitement. You also can't start in a sleepy state. If you suffer from high blood pressure, keeping the head down in Viparita Dandasana you are also likely to increase your blood pressure a bit, which before pranayama can be harmful. So you must do a pacifying pose. There is always a pair of asanas to be done. If you do Viparita Dandasana, Setu Bandha is the pair of that. Sarvangasana is the pair of Sirsasana.

When the wife and husband are together, there is mutual understanding and a harmony in the house. Similarly, harmony in the body is also required. If you do Viparita Dandasana and then you do Setu Bandha after it, you find your neck having that curvature where you balance on the shoulder or neck and that pacifies your glands. The excitement will lessen, and the nerve fibres that you have awakened in Viparita Dandasana will be pacified. Similarly in Sirsasana you find that you are completely in a wakeful state but Sarvangasana is pacifying, Halasana is pacifying. Sirsasana and Viparita Dandasana stimulate the pituitary whereas Sarvangasana pacifies the pituitary. You find that in Halasana the throat and the head are relaxed more, and in Setu Bandha Sarvangasana the release of the chest is more. If you feel compression in the chest in Halasana, Setu Bandha Sarvangasana will release that compression.

So before pranayama you can do these six asanas in the following sequence, Sirsasana, supported Viparita Dandasana, Sarvangasana, Halasana, Setu Bandha Sarvangasana and Viparita Karani. Or if you have less time, you have to see that you do only pacifying ones like Sarvangasana or Halasana or Setu Bandha Sarvangasana. If you have only ten minutes you can do Setu Bandha Sarvangasana. You have to suit your practice to your requirements at that moment. For

instance if I have a class at nine o'clock I can't remain in Viparita Karani until the last minute and then suddenly begin at the class. Because if I go to too much of a restful state that makes me too quiet and serene. A peaceful, *sattvic* nature of mind is not too good for teaching; you need a more *rajasic* state of mind. Alertness is required for teaching, and also for pranayama. If I really need rest, say if I exerted myself and I need rest, then a short time in Viparita Karani so that I am fresh will help. But if I just lie down and sleep for fifteen minutes that will bring on a *tamasic* state and to teach in that state is impossible. In this manner you have to see with which poses to end the practice. Before pranayama, the excitement should not be there, and the blood pressure should not vary as it does in Sirsasana where the blood pressure is raised and then later it drops. When the blood pressure varies you can't relax yourself as required for pranayama. That is why you have to end with Sarvangasana, Halasana or Setu Bandha Sarvangasana, or keep your pranayama practice as a separate practice at a different time from your asana practice. In the early morning or in the evening at the time of twilight one can do pranayama. This is how one has to adjust. Following this sequence will create balance of mind and make the body and mind conducive to the practice of pranayama. The sequential order of the inversions is like a threshold between asana and pranayama. They energize the body and enliven the mind without creating excitement. And in addition to creating balance by the way in which you sequence the asanas you do, you also have to train your mind in that manner, so that it is ready and capable to go to that state of passivity necessary for pranayama. 

Printed with permission from the Magazine of A Teachers Exchange with Geeta Iyengar in Colorado, May, 1996.

**The Victoria Yoga Centre
presents a
Weekend Iyengar Yoga Workshop
with
Aadil Palkhivala
February 21-23, 1997. All Levels**

Schedule

Friday February 21

6 - 8 p.m. - Asana

Saturday February 22

8.15 - 9.15 a.m. - Pranayama

10.30 - 1.00 p.m. - Asana

3.30 - 5.00 p.m. - Asana

Sunday February 23

8.15 - 9.15 a.m. - Pranayama

10.30 - 1.30 p.m. - Asana

Cost

Full workshop - \$155.00

Pranayama only - \$30.00

Asana only - \$135.00

Location

Victoria YM/YWCA Yoga Lounge

Aadil Palkhivala has an advanced Yoga Teachers Certificate and is Director of Yoga Centers, Bellevue, Washington. He has studied with B.K.S. Iyengar since the age of seven and has taught yoga workshops internationally for many years. He regularly conducts teacher training intensives. Aadil is a very inspiring teacher who brings maturity, depth of perception and refinement to the art and practice of yoga. We welcome him back to Victoria.

Registration

Registration opens November 15, 1996, for Yoga Centre members and November 30, 1996, for non-members.

Mail cheques payable to Victoria Yoga Centre to:

Celia Ward,

4-335 Moss Street,

Victoria, B.C. V8V 4M9

For information phone Celia at 388-7839 or 386-YOGA

Refunds are given only if space can be filled and are subject to a 15% cancellation fee.

RADHA HOUSE



Workshops and Events

Saturday Morning with Cobra Pose

- **Saturday, November 16, 9.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.**
This is The Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga exploration of Bhujangasana, the Cobra Pose. Like the cobra, we have to continually shed 'the old skin' in order to grow and to let a new way of being emerge. The serpent symbolizes both wisdom and temptation. This is a three-hour workshop followed by a potluck lunch. Fee: \$25.00

Rose Ceremony

- **Part 1: Saturday, November 30, 8-9 p.m.**
- **Part 2: Sunday, December 1, 8-9 p.m.**
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YOGA CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 1996

- 1: Friday night gathering at the Y.
- 2: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French
- 9: Day of Yoga in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French
- 23: Teachers workshop with Julie Gudmedstad
- 24: Sunday All Levels workshop with Julie Gudmedstad

DECEMBER 1996

- 7: Pranayama in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French
- 15: Light on Yoga workshop with Shirley Daventry French in celebration of B.K.S. Iyengar's birthday

JANUARY 1997

- 1: Let's Do Yoga Every Day workshop (New Year Resolution time)
- 17: Friday night gathering, see ad this issue
- 18: Teachers meeting
- 25: Annual General Meeting and New Year Celebration of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society

FEBRUARY 1997

- 2: Sunday workshop at the Y, Family Yoga with Lauren Cox
- 15: Teachers meeting
- 21-23: Aadil Palkhivala workshop

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM:

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Membership/Subscription fee is \$20 and renewable each January

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