

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



January/February 1997

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Happy New Year
from the Victoria Yoga Centre

Associations are like guardians, not parents.
Association is to guide others – not supreme.
Association is to cement people,
and not meant for friction.

— B.K.S. Iyengar

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 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.

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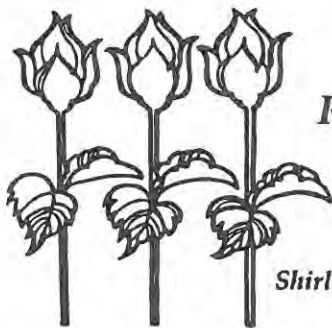
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Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French



It is mid-November, and the organisation for the January Friday Night Gathering is well under way — an unusual circumstance! More often than not we are scrambling at the last minute to get the brochures printed and posted in time to be of much use. This is not totally inefficient, because an announcement will have

appeared in the newsletter, but we have been slow to disseminate this information further afield. Why? Because the responsibility of promotion has fallen onto either the president of the yoga centre (who already has a great deal on her plate) or one of the teachers (who are also up to their ears in karma yoga).

This time is different: the notices for January's gathering were prepared two months' ahead of time and distributed to teachers and possibly others. Why? Because of the enthusiasm of the organiser for his task, and the freshness with which he is approaching his assignment. He even took the trouble to contact me by phone enquiring whether I would be able to attend, and doing this in a manner which made we want to be there. I made a verbal commitment, and when I put down the phone wrote the date in my 1997 calendar — in ink.

For our first gathering of the new year we have invited Lama Tashi Mangyal of the Victoria Buddhist Dharma Society as our special guest. His name was put forward by a yoga student who has also been attending the Dharma Centre. The chairperson of our program committee quickly asked him if he would like to take responsibility for inviting the Lama and look after all the arrangements.

Yesterday, as I came out of the yoga studio at the Y after teaching a class, I bumped into this particular man enthusiastically talking to a couple of other students. "He's so excited about the Lama's visit," I remarked teasingly. "No I'm not. I just want to make sure everything is taken care of." My comment had been made in admiration; I was delighted by his enthusiasm and said so: "Oh, but it's wonderful to be excited. We need passion on the spiritual path. We need it to keep going."

The teacher and philosopher Joseph Campbell often spoke about following your bliss. I remember one of his interviews on television, where he was asked about a peak moment in his life. At this time he was in his eighties at the end of a long life full of accolades and accomplishments. His answer, which came without a moment's hesitation, was a little surprising. His face lit up as he relived the memory of running one leg on a university relay team and helping them win an important athletic championship. I found it interesting that he did not choose one of his considerable individual intellectual achievements, but an athletic feat and one accomplished as part of a group. It was obvious, as he spoke, that he had passionately enjoyed this moment.

I had seen a similar look once, on the face of Carl Jung, during a film on his life. Again, he was in his eighties, and was being questioned about his spiritual life and beliefs. The interviewer asked him whether he believed in God and an afterlife. Jung paused and a beautiful smile lit up his face: "No, No," he said, "I don't believe." Then pausing again mischievously, he added: "*I know!*" This statement made such an

impression on me; I have never forgotten it. It was clear to me that he meant what he said. How I envied him, and at that moment I determined to pursue this knowledge.

Last week I acquired a wonderful new book: an anthology of contemporary spiritual writing called *God in All Worlds*. In her introduction, the editor, Lucinda Varley spoke directly to my own experience.

"Spiritual experiences are unique to every individual, yet there is a familiar form of awakening and journeying that does not change. It is prevalent in the mystical writings of the past as it is in the writings collected here. In this life, the search for the spiritual begins with the longing of the soul for nourishment. This longing prompts the search for meaning and goes on to the quest itself. And this in turn usually leads to an excitement about what is revealed. And then to the trials of change." ⁽¹⁾

Interestingly enough, excerpts from the work of both Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung are included in this book.

Trials will come! This has become a familiar refrain in my reflections lately. Trials will come whether you are embarked on the spiritual path or not, so you might as well get going because this is a journey you are going to have to make sooner or later. You do have a choice, but it is limited. As the philosopher Cleanthes stated so succinctly: "Some follow the Gods willingly, the rest are dragged!"

One of my fears in my early days in yoga was that if I gave up this emotional roller coaster on which I spent much of my life and which for the main part I enjoyed, it would become dull and boring. Not so! Dull is not a word which describes anything which has happened to me since I embarked on the yogic path. Difficult, yes. Challenging, definitely. Boring, never!

The body of philosophy on which the practice of Yoga is based, appealed to me from the very beginning. It made so much sense! Sceptical of the first talks I attended and the first books I read, nevertheless a

voice within me was crying out: I know this. A struggle ensued as my intellect marshalled its forces and attempted to undermine this knowledge, but the feelings lingered strongly enough to encourage me to intensify my efforts on the path of yoga in my search for truth.

I developed a regular practice, but at other times tried to drown out this inner voice. I diverted energy into resistance, excuses, procrastination, along with attempts to modify the yogic practices and make them more palatable and comfortable so that they would be less difficult and consequently less disturbing. Despite this — and this is the beauty of yoga — my practice began to bear some fruit: my resistance lessened and more energy was available to deepen my practice and develop an understanding of the relevance of yoga to all of my life. In the most difficult of times and when you feel least like practising, steel your resolve because this is when the practice is most essential. Not only will it help you through the current crisis, but this is a fertile time for growth.

I remember reading an article by Ken Wilber in *Yoga Journal* where he stated that If you're doing meditation correctly, you're in for some very rough and frightening times. "Meditation as a 'relaxation response' is a joke." The same applies to the practice of yoga which inevitably will bring you face to face with aspects of yourself and your life which you will not like, but which have to be faced and removed before the true self is able to emerge. Until this happens, they act as veils of ignorance obscuring the Self.

It requires courage to tread this spiritual path and overcome the fear which accompanies us on our journey into the unknown. Fear arises from ignorance, and as Patanjali tells us in the yoga-sutras, ignorance is the greatest obstacle we face and the source of all other obstacles. He is speaking about spiritual ignorance: lack of awareness of who we really are. Courage, though vital, is not enough: it requires strength and stamina to persevere and sustain progress, and

this is where the practice pays dividends. A regular practice generates resources which can be drawn on in the difficult periods when enthusiasm has dried up and inspiration is in short supply.

Courage is required to battle our base instincts, our negative and destructive traits, and the training and discipline of yoga enable us to tackle them with intelligence and aplomb. One of the basic ingredients for acquiring courage is passion for a determined goal, which fortifies us and drives us on against enormous and, occasionally, seemingly overwhelming odds.

Human beings are capable of incredible acts of courage, prompted by war, disaster, disease and other cataclysmic events of a personal or universal nature, where fear is facing us squarely in the face and there is no possibility of avoidance. But courage is also required on an everyday level to overcome those obstacles which, firmly in place, prevent us from taking risks and lead, if not to a wasted life, at best to mediocrity.

After my initial encounter with the man who is arranging January's gathering, I asked him if he had time for coffee, and we sat and talked. He has been attending this Buddhist centre for a while, and finding the teachings there compatible and helpful with the practice of yoga, which is why he raised the idea of inviting the Lama to one of our meetings. One night, he took the opportunity to make this invitation, only to be refused absolutely. The response was: no, no way, there was no interest in this kind of thing! He was embarrassed, felt awkward and a little crushed — but not for long. After a suitable period of time, he plucked up courage, faced the risk of rejection and hurt pride, and asked again. The Lama laughingly agreed to come.

He was lucky he did not have to do this a third time, because this is often the tradition in the East: three being considered an auspicious number. It is also a tradition to test the aspirant in this way, to see if they are really sincere; if their thirst for the teachings is so

great they will make a determined effort to receive them. Those who give up after one rejection obviously do not want it that badly.

The spiritual teachings are too valuable to be given away casually. I once read a book about Tibetan Buddhism called *The Secret Oral Teachings*, which stated that the secrecy of the teachings was dependent on the disciple and not on the Master. The teachings will remain secret for those with dull minds who, while they may listen to and even hear the words of the Master, cannot grasp their meaning. The role of a Master is to open the door but the disciple has to be capable of seeing what lies beyond. However, no Master worthy of the name is going to act as a doorman unless he believes in the sincerity of the disciple.

Once, during a course I attended at Yasodhara Ashram, there was a young woman who frequently interrupted whoever was teaching with inappropriate and irrelevant questions which drew attention to herself and distracted the rest of us. This happened, one day, when Swami Radha was teaching. As was her style, the young woman interrupted with a spurious question. Swami Radha paused, looked her straight in the eye and in no uncertain terms told her that she was a nuisance, and unless she changed her behaviour and learned to listen, she would have to leave. The rest of us sat there smugly, pleased that finally someone was saying what needed to be said. Then Swami Radha turned to the rest of us and said: "But she will learn, because she takes risks!"

Bravo Brian, for taking a risk and approaching the Lama a second time. Thank you also for your enthusiasm, some of which rubbed off on me. Sometimes, those of us who have been immersed in this work for a long time, become bogged down, losing sight of the spiritual richness of our own community. Gatherings, workshops, meetings are seen as liabilities rather than opportunities or even blessings. We are fortunate to be able to do this work — and that includes any part of it: teaching, writing, organisation, administration,

procuring and maintaining equipment, raising funds, donating funds, and much, much more.

All are welcome to join the Victoria Yoga Centre family of karma yogis and participate in this work. We are not attached to doing it all. Your contribution, like Brian's might refuel the energy and reignite the enthusiasm of those in whom it is lacking at present. And there is one great advantage of working and teaching as part of a group: at any given time, some of us are up and going, and others are struggling. We are never all down in the dumps at the same time — and so the work goes on.



Foot Note

1. God in All Worlds, An Anthology of Contemporary Spiritual Writing, edited and with introduction by Lucinda Varley, published by Random House. p.xvii

YOGA PROPS

Blue Sticky Mats

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Shirley Daventry French
478-3775

Growing Old — A time of growth

*with Jessica Sluymer and
Shirley Daventry French*

Wednesdays — 1:00 to 3:00 pm
at Radha House Victoria,
1500 Shasta Place

11 weeks commencing January 15 1997
Fee: \$60.00



Using the teachings of Yoga as a guide, this afternoon group will offer women of sixty years of age or older an opportunity to explore their personal spiritual goals.

For registration or information phone:
Jessica 595-0711 or Shirley 478-3775

Teachers' Corner —

Iyengar Yoga Teachers of Victoria,
Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands

Bon Voyage to Melanie Jollymore as she and her husband drive across Canada (in winter no less!!!) to return to their native Nova Scotia. Melanie moved to Victoria from Whistler, B.C., to apprentice in our Iyengar Yoga teacher training program. She began teaching recently, and has been actively involved in many yoga centre activities including the newsletter. We shall miss her participation in our community, but have no doubt that she will become equally involved with the Iyengar Yoga community on the east coast.

Pip Van Nispen who came here from Vancouver to finish her apprenticeship, has moved up-Island where she will teach in association with Tricia Arpino in the growing Iyengar Yoga community in the Nanaimo/Parksville area. Pip will travel to Victoria once a week to attend the Level 3 class with Shirley, and to continue her teaching at the Victoria West Y.

Two teachers have left, and another has arrived in our midst. Rosie Holland, a certified Iyengar Yoga teacher from New Zealand recently moved to the Victoria area with her Canadian husband. We welcome both of them, and are pleased to announce that Rosie will be joining the faculty of teachers in our Iyengar Yoga programme at the Victoria Y.

We are also pleased to welcome Adrienne Rhodes to the roster of Y teachers. Adrienne has been co-teaching with Leslie Hogya, and in January will teach a class of her own.

Congratulations to Vicky Catchpole of Cumberland and her longtime partner and new husband, Ian, on their recent wedding performed by Father Joe Pereira. We also congratulate Vicky for her dedicated work over many years which has built a thriving Iyengar Yoga community in the Comox Valley.

Whenever possible, the teachers from up-Island and the Gulf islands, travel to Victoria for our monthly teachers' meetings. In the case of Yvonne Kipp from

Cortes Island, this involves taking two ferries and an overnight stay en route. Yvonne, who began her yoga teaching career in Winnipeg, teaches on Cortes and recently introduced Iyengar Yoga to Campbell River. Occasionally teachers' meetings are held up-Island in the Parksville area and Victoria teachers do the driving — however, we have yet to meet further north than Nanoose Bay.

At our Saturday meetings we practise together, teach each other, learn from each other. When the introductory phase of our Iyengar Yoga apprenticeship comes to a close and the student teacher makes the transition to teacher, this is only the beginning. Following the tradition of B.K.S. Iyengar, and knowing that he would expect no less, the Iyengar Yoga teachers of Victoria, Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands continue to come together learn more about the vast subject of Yoga — how to deepen our practice, how to refine our teaching skills. The monthly teachers' meetings are one of the ways this is done. Senior and junior, no matter how long they have been teaching, no matter how many times they have been to India, teachers and student teachers alike make these teacher training sessions a priority. Of course, the more experience you have, the more times you study with Guruji and Geeta, the more you appreciate (as Guruji would say) the vastness of Yoga!

In November teachers and student teachers, along with some students, benefitted enormously from the *Anatomy Awareness in Asana* workshop presented by Julie Gudmestad of Portland, Oregon. Julie is a certified Iyengar Yoga teacher in the United States, and a Registered Physical Therapist in private practice. She combines these two skills in a practical and experiential presentation of basic anatomy as it relates to the practice and teaching of Iyengar Yoga. She taught with great clarity and considerable humour, and it was amazing how quickly three hours passed. There was total agreement that this was a unique and beneficial workshop, and we would like to have her back for more!

Shirley Daventry French





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)

We are delighted and honoured to welcome as our guest

Lama Tashi Namgyal

of the *Victoria Buddhist Dharma Society*,
who will speak about the Four Noble Truths;

1. Truth of Suffering.
2. Truth of the Causes of Suffering.
3. Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.
4. Truth of Path to the Cessation of Suffering.

*Please join us for an evening of yoga and enlightenment with this
extremely good natured, witty and insightful teacher.*

Date: January 17th, 1997

Yoga and Men

Part One - A Personal Perspective

by Neil W McKinlay

I remember driving down Oak Bay Avenue a couple of years ago. My brother and his partner were in the car - she up front, he in the back - and we were just about to cross over Foul Bay Road. We were stopped at the light when Roxie, looking out the passenger window, pointed and asked "What's that?"

That was a small one story building - nothing more than a couple of rooms, really - which had until recently been occupied by a bicycle shop. "The Men's Centre," I answered, ducking my head and taking a look myself.

I had been by the place plenty of times - had even dared a glance once or twice - but had never allowed my gaze to linger as long as in this moment. There was a tan and green facade, hand-written signs in the window - 'Talking Circle,' 'Parenting Classes,' 'Anger Management' - chairs and desks in the front room, a coffee pot. All obscured by a blur of moisture that soaked the in- and the outsides of our vehicle.

"Why do men need a centre?" she asked.

And then maybe the light changed. Or maybe the way the question was voiced made clear there was no need for a reply. Or maybe I was just too uncomfortable to say anything - to admit I thought the Centre a good idea, but had little sense why. I don't know. But I didn't answer.

Instead, I slid into first gear and drove away.

This recollection has haunted me in recent weeks. Hovered near ever since I agreed to write this piece. Agreed after discussion of a women-oriented Newsletter raised the suggestion such an issue might alienate the male minority in our community. Turned to for my opinion — yes, that might happen — I accepted the task of presenting a man's perspective.

I accepted in the interest of balance, and because the undertaking felt, in some vague way, worthwhile. And, to be honest, because it seemed easy.

What, after all, could be so hard? Gather together three or four men, talk about our experience, tape the conversation, and then transcribe. In a casual atmosphere - one guided by some rough-sketched questions - I thought everyone would feel at ease and would, eventually, come up with some interesting comments. No, I thought after the meeting. No, as I noted the idea in my journal and began to imagine pulling everything together. No, this won't be too hard. Not at all.

But I was wrong - this has been very difficult.

And the problem has been the questions. Our conversation's "rough-sketched" markers. I wasn't able to think of any. Really. Not one beyond such standards as: How long have you been involved in yoga? How did you first get started? More precisely, I have been unable to derive a single question from the project's guiding light: What is men's experience of yoga? Over and over, I sat and pondered and drew blank upon blank until I found myself back at the corner of Oak and Foul Bay, waiting for the light, looking at the building, and hearing the question lift into the air: "Why do men need a centre?"

I couldn't answer that question then. And I can't now. No more than I can provide some sort of reply to the enquiry: What is men's experience of yoga? The two generate nothing for me. All that comes to mind when I ask them of myself is the thought they are both valid questions, are both worthy of answering.

I am reminded of a *Yoga Journal* that came out not too long ago. There was a feature article on 'Yoga And Men' that I felt drawn to when I first saw the magazine. It might even have been the cover piece. I remember searching the stacks at the public library, finding the issue I wanted, and taking it to a stall feeling a little excited and really quite curious. After reading the table of contents, after finding the page numbers, I began thumbing through only to discover that a previous reader had torn out the whole section.

· This episode captures much of my experience of yoga as a man: I know it exists, but I can't quite find it. Remember the early days of Snuffleupagus on *Sesame Street*? That mysterious beast only Big Bird seemed to encounter? To see? To describe? Same sort of thing - there but not there.

And I'd guess I'm not alone. I'd guess that many men in this community — especially those who are not senior students — would express something similar if asked to articulate the male experience of yoga. Would say, yes, there are qualities and challenges and needs distinct to the male experience, but, well I'm really not too sure what they might be - though larger chairs might help with supported shoulder stand.

Part of me attributes this situation to numbers. If only there were *more* — more men students, more men teachers, more men-centered workshops. If only there were more of these, things would be different. There would be more questions, more answers, more discussion - and I would have more of a feel for yoga from a male perspective. I would stop drawing blanks. Identity is, after all, a social construct - a bigger, a more defined social context would undoubtably lead to a greater, a more defined sense of male identification.

Fair enough. But another part of me that knows numbers aren't the whole issue.

I recently read that most men are unaware of the warning signs that accompany serious threats to their health. The same book noted that many men address illness by denying the problem for as long as possible, and by turning instead to mood altering substances and activities. Also relevant was the claim that doctors find men very poor at accurately describing their condition when help is eventually sought, and very poor at reporting the outcome of such seeking to friends and to family.

Each of these points hints at a disconnection from personal experience that seems very much related to my mind blanks. Each of these points hints at a personal ignore-ance that seems a likely root for my

"there but not there" sense of male experience - at least as likely a root as the gender makeup of Victoria's yoga community.

Traditionally, men give little heed to the subjective qualities of their experience - how does it feel? Men also get little practice communicating such experience - how do you feel? This is especially true when with other men. Little awareness and little discussion is a difficult inheritance, a circular trap really. And it is an inheritance that runs deep and stubborn - I see it in myself too much of the time, and I see it now as central to my situation: How can I describe something I tend to ignore? How can I convey something I rarely discuss?

These are very good questions.

And yet I do have some sense of my experience of yoga as a man. I have a vague feeling of unique qualities and challenges and needs. Doing a good supported shoulder stand, for instance, in the small chairs at the 'Y' is a real problem given the height of many men. I also have an uncomfortable sensation of there being little else I can say when asked about my male experience. "There but not there" - just like the *Yoga Journal* article, just like Snuffleupagus - *that* is my experience.

On the one hand, this causes me distress. As I said, it is a difficult inheritance. It is disturbing to know something is there and, at the same time, to not really know what it is. Not at the moment anyway. I go back to that day in the car, to that minute outside the Men's Centre and think not of the questions asked but of the fact the Centre seemed to close up shop a few weeks later, seemed to disappear without me ever finding out what it was all about. I fear something similar may happen here, with yoga and with men; that I will never find out what it is all about.

On the other hand, though, I am hopeful.

Another memory: On my first day of yoga at the 'Y', Linda Benn singled me out for a demonstration. We were doing trikonasana. She tapped me on the

shoulder, asked me to stay for a moment, and called everyone else around to watch. I don't know what she did other than shift something here and adjust something there, but the effect was shaking. I remember thinking, My legs! I can feel my legs! Though I had always known they were there - these two things that more or less held me up and helped get me where I wanted to go - it was like feeling them for the very first time. There was a thigh and a knee and a calf; pretty gross awareness thinking about it now, but awareness nonetheless. Awareness where before I had felt none.

I remember not ever wanting to come out of that pose.

Since that day I have found myself very slowly coming to know more about my legs. Bit by bit, piece by piece there are revelations. That the thigh is actually a whole bunch of different muscles that work with and against one another. That things can move and shift and lengthen. That the backs of my knees feel like the twin pages of a wide-open book when I pull my kneecaps, ground my heels, lift my sit bones.

Bit by bit, piece by piece. This, perhaps more than anything else, is my experience of yoga.

And maybe this is what will happen with more attention and discussion, with more time and with more practice. Bit by bit and piece by piece I will find some answers. Some answers to the question: What is men's experience of yoga?



India:

Leslie Hogya

Many of us are preparing to travel to Pune in July of 97. Everyone who returns has stories and the legends and myths build. When I think of my experiences in India, I am excited at the prospect of returning, but there's a reluctance too. I know I will work hard in classes, until I am dripping from the exertion and straining to understand. Yet I know I will be rewarded with a depth of experience and an enrichment of my yoga practice and ultimately teaching.

In the yoga sutras there are five kleshas or obstacles to spiritual growth. One is attraction to pleasures and its opposite, aversion. *Ragad dvesha*. I am attracted to India. It is rich in history, culture, art, and it is a land of wonderful people. Many people I met in India have a very real spiritual life. Their connection to the spiritual nature of life gives great depth and joy to many daily interactions with people one meets. There is also an aversion to the more difficult physical discomforts one is likely to meet in India. There are often long line ups at the bank and post office. We have no similar experience of a long line here in Victoria. Trying to find an answer to a seemingly simple request at an air ticket agent can end up with days of frustrating phone calls and visits to the same office, always to be told something different. India teaches one patience. A need to find a washroom when out in public can be a rather scary adventure. Fortunately our hotel was very clean and I learned a great deal of body/mind control.

Following are some excerpts from a letter I recently received from a friend of mine, Jeremy Carlson, a 1994 graduate of Uvic Theatre Department, who lives in Seattle. He was recently on a trip to India and Thailand and places in between.



YOGA ORDERS

Purple sticky mats:

Lise Gagnon, 995-1387

Bolsters, straps, blocks, blue mats:

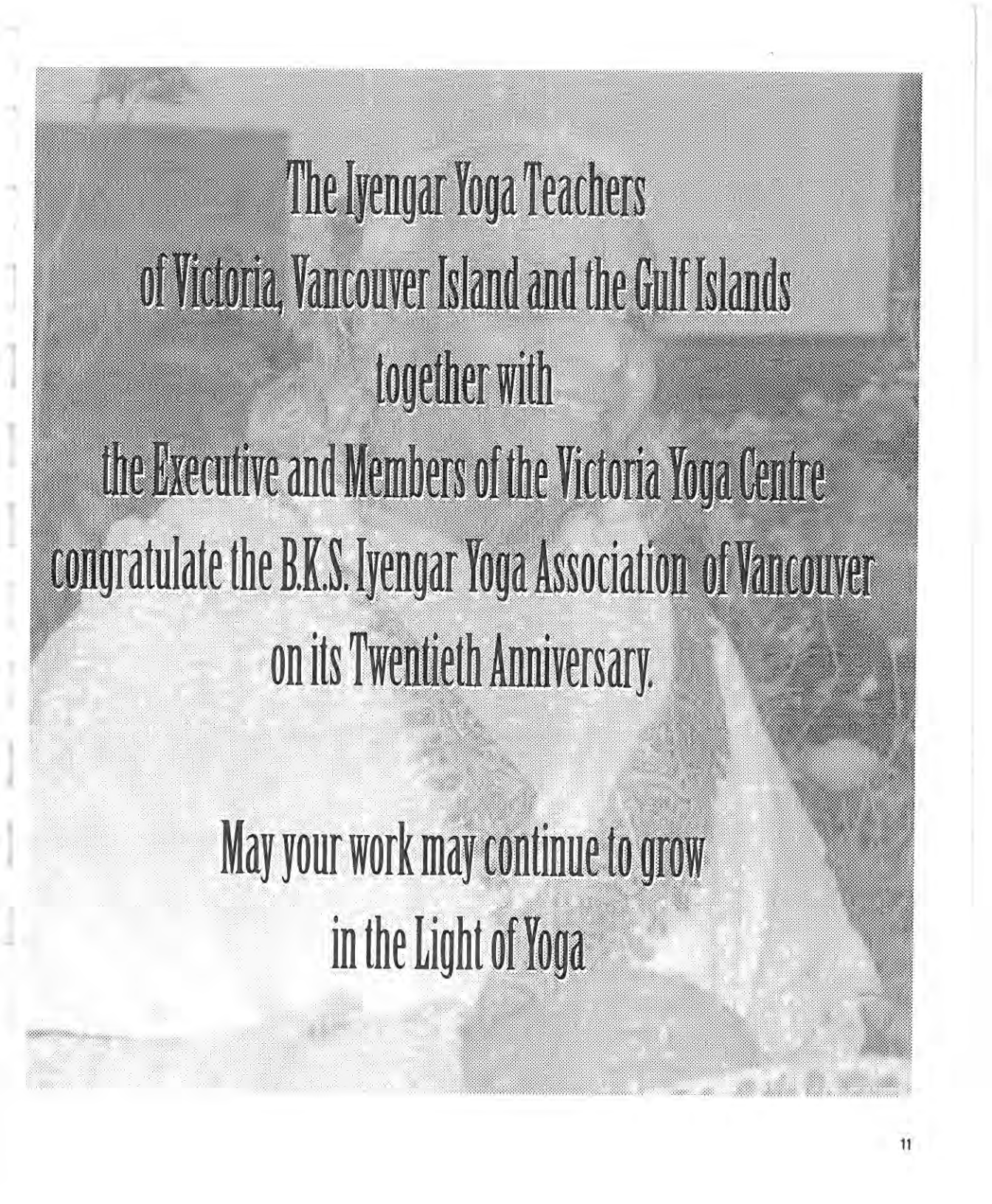
Shirley Daventry French, 478-3775

New books:

Celia Ward, 388-7839

Library books:

Maggie Feehan, 388-9989



The Iyengar Yoga Teachers
of Victoria, Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands
together with
the Executive and Members of the Victoria Yoga Centre
congratulate the B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association of Vancouver
on its Twentieth Anniversary.

May your work may continue to grow
in the Light of Yoga

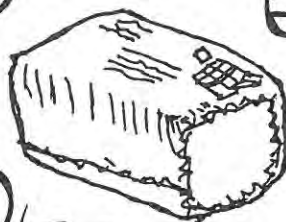
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LUCKY FOR YOU THERE'S A MAN OUTSIDE THE POST OFFICE WHO CAN DO JUST THAT! BUT WHAT IF YOU DISCOVER IT'S TOO HEAVY AFTER IT'S SEWN UP? WHY, NO PROBLEM! MR. PARCEL

WALLAH* SIMPLY RIPS THE STITCHES AT ONE END, CUTS INTO YOUR BOX WITH A BIG KNIFE, AND YOU CAN FISH AROUND FOR SOMETHING TO PULL OUT. LET'S HOPE YOU DIDN'T HAVE A SILK SARI RIGHT THERE! BUT MR. PARCEL WALLAH, THEY SAY THE BOX IS TOO BIG; WHAT TO DO? HE'LL TAKE CARE OF THAT TOO, ARRANGING THE BAKSHEESH** YOU WERE TO GIVE THE OFFICER BUT DID NOT KNOW BECAUSE YOU WERE A STUPID FOREIGNER. IT DOESN'T GET MORE EXCITING THAN THIS — BUT DON'T FORGET THE HAND-ROLLED STAMPS AND THE OBSCENELY TEXTURED GLUE! WHAT MORE COULD YOU ASK?



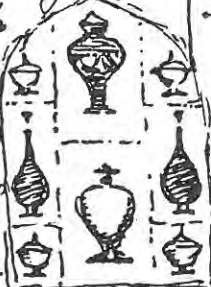
*WALLAH" — MAN WHO DOES SOMETHING. A DHOBI-WALLAH WOULD WASH YOUR DHOBIS, IF YOU HAD ANY. **"BAKSHEESH" — THE SURREPTITIOUS TIPPING THAT MAKES INDIA RUN MORE SMOOTHLY FOR YOU, IF YOU CAN FIGURE OUT WHEN TO GIVE IT & WHEN NOT.

GLASS HOUSES

An early example of recycling? An architect confused on the concept of windows?

You make the call. The walls of the Glass Palace in Amber Fort are all studded with hundreds of different colored vases, mirrors, and bits of glass.

One room has thousands of rounded mirrors that look like twinkling stars when lit by candlelight. Cool, huh?



ALL THIS EXCITEMENT, AND MORE!
COME TO INDIA TODAY!

...Never a dull moment in India. What could possibly be more exciting, except a total solar eclipse? Well, the sun and moon came together on that one while I was in Thailand in October...
...But that's another story.

PAGE FIVE

Dec 18th — this has taken a while. Well, I'm stuck in...

A Wedding and A Workshop

by Vicky Catchpole

To be married after twenty two years of sharing life and children together is a wonderful thing. And to have Father Joe Pereira there to bless our union was very special. Our local Unitarian minister was able to make things official.

Our long distance planning got foiled every time. Father Joe only received our ceremony pans one week prior to the wedding day, and we met ten minutes before the ceremony in a parking lot one block away from the Old Church Theatre. This was Ian's first meeting with Father Joe. We only had time to greet each other and agree that spontaneity would be fine!

Well, what a wonderful time we had. So much was unrehearsed that all of us listened wholeheartedly with no preconceived ideas! Our guests were a great audience who cheered and applauded throughout. A reception at the Kingfisher Inn followed with good food, excellent speeches, songs and skits. A yoga skit in barbershop quarter style had Father Joe and all yogis in gales of laughter. The celebration seemed a fine way to welcome Father Joe to the Comox valley community.

That was Sunday evening. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings were workshop time. Ian and I called it our honeymoon! We had a full hall of keen students, some of whom were experiencing their first workshop. At one point Father Joe called it a marriage encounter workshop, because there were several couples there.

There was also a two hour morning session of restorative poses for persons with chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia. Another morning, Father Joe gave the Grade Nine girls at a local junior school a one hour yoga class. It was interesting to see how he challenged each group differently.

Over these busy and inspiring four days, a couple of hundred people were touched by Father Joe's energy and presence. I send him our love and gratitude. ☸

Vicky Catchpole is an Iyengar Yoga teacher living in Cumberland, B.C. who has established a thriving Iyengar Yoga community in the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island. The Directors and Members of the Victoria Yoga Centre congratulate Vicky and Ian on their marriage and send them many blessings.



Let's Get Philosophical

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 ⁽¹⁾ helped his audience to recognise 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 practise — 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 closed 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 to 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 a 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 daunt-

ing 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." ⁽²⁾

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 then 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 *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. Perhaps I should explain a little about the reasons for this youthful obsession. I had become a very ardent Christian at the age of twelve 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 to 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 very 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 led 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 with his teacher. We learnt to chant the sutras and began to memorise 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 to put 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 realised 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 practised 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 *Pratyahara*, 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 and 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 behaviour. 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 (*prakriti* — which

Women and Spiritual Life

A weekend retreat
with
Jessica Sluymmer and
Shirley Daventry French

March 14—16
at Swannick Study Centre

In today's busy world, is it possible to live a spiritual life and at the same time fulfil the demands of family, profession, business and society? Take time to explore this possibility in the company of other women, and nurture your self through the practice of yoga-asana, pranayama, chanting, reflection and discussion plus superb vegetarian meals prepared in a spirit of devotion. Swannick Study Centre is in Metchosin, 30 minutes from downtown Victoria on beautiful waterfront acreage.

Fee: \$240.00

Registration and Information:
Khairon Quadir 604-737-4762 or
Shirley Daventry French 250-478-3775

includes our senses, mind, ego, 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 practising 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 practise 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 hell 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 practise, the more refined these adjustments become and each refinement of *prakriti* (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 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 practising *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 inwards. The serenity we experience when we are working well in asana comes because our centre 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 told his students to observe their bodies as if they were a parent watching their child asleep.

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 ⁽³⁾ about Mr. Iyengar's new book and about the possibility of starting a similar group here. Silva kindly 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 practised 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*.

Footnotes:

1. "What is an Asana?" by Karl Baier, Victoria Yoga Centre newsletter May/June 1996 p. 7 reprinted with permission from Yoga Rahasya Vol.2 No.1

2. B.K.S. Iyengar - *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*: Preface pp. xix-xx .

3. Silva Mehta, with her daughter Mira and son Shyam, co-authored the book *YOGA - The Iyengar Way*. A devoted student of B.K.S. Iyengar, Silva taught Yoga in England for thirty four years before her death in 1994.

This article was first published in LOYA News – the magazine of the Light on Yoga Association (UK): Issue 17 Winter 1994-5 . It is reprinted here with their permission. The book Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali may be purchased through the Victoria Yoga Centre. Contact Celia Ward at 388-7839 .



The Victoria Yoga Centre Society is pleased to announce the recipients of scholarships awarded in 1995/96:

Camp Thunderbird Teachers Retreat:
Celia Ward, Melanie Jollymore, Adrienne Rhodes

Felicity Green Workshop:
Wendy Boyer

Saltspring Retreat:
Nan Brown

Victoria Iyengar Yoga Intensive:
Pip Van Nispen, Betsy Wallace, Jane Stedman

Father Joe Pereira Workshop:
Carole Miller

Fall Saltspring Retreat:
Lise Gagnon

Inspiration from India

Following are a few statements by Guruji taken from notes I made during my trip to India in 1994. Some of them were made during class and others during conversations in the library. They were first published in our December 1995 newsletter but in the process of being transferred from my Macintosh computer disk to an IBM disk, they became a little mangled. We are pleased to offer these pearls of wisdom in an unadulterated state, with warmest wishes for a Happy New Year!

— Shirley Daventry French

Asana develops character where consciousness is made to understand it exists *everywhere* in the body, not just in the head.

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.

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 his personal 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!"

The purpose of adjustment is to 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.

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.

Always come to the base

— find the basic intelligence
— learn to do simple movements without disturbing the vrittis

Ask:

What basic intelligence is here?
What is there?
And how to make the intelligence pass into areas where it is lacking?

In an external pose, breathing is on the periphery
In an internal pose, breathing is from inside out.

Better to hold a good pose a short time
then a bad one a long time.

Listen to the cells of your body.
When the cells say 'enough' come down!

It is hard to sustain the action of *Sarvangasana*, especially in the legs. When you're losing it, it is egotistical to continue. Instead, use *Halasana* as a resting pose to reactivate the arms and legs and then go up again.

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

Knowing that yoga practices liberate energy
—what is this energy to be used for?

Yoga is not alternative medicine.
It is natural medicine.

On the Sutras

Guruji is constantly refining his interpretation of the sutras through practice and reflection.

In commentaries on the Sutras,
all agree that meditation is the key,
but most dismiss asana as a prelude to meditation
whereas Guruji meditates in and through asana.

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.

Yoga Sutra I-3 states: "Then the seer dwells
in his own true splendour."

In his commentary on the above 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.

On teaching

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 Iyengar system.

Inject into the body and not into the mind.
Memory has to be in the body not in the mind.

Practice from memory,
but teach from what you see.

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

Two aspects of teaching
— *subjective*: what you know and can transmit
— *objective*: what is received.

Receiving is most important
— if they don't receive
the whole technique has to change.

How is the brain working?
Where is the intelligence?

Guidelines are always a movement, not a stagnation.
With ethics, there is no middle way.

Associations are like guardians, not parents.
Association is to guide others – not supreme.
Association is to cement people, and not
meant for friction.

Build up – that's all!

Let knowledge be important not power.

From Geeta

It is a blessing to do the *sadhana*.

Guruji is giving us the Art of Penetration.

Strong will and will power
—this is definitely required for yoga.

If your heart is in the practice your will
will never make you to waver.

When you proceed and prolong your practice with
perseverance and persistence,
then you can penetrate and the heart comes.

Know the whole practice in total.

Do not leave the base.

Base intelligence is stable.

Inversions take you to the threshold of spiritual life
but too much generates energy and power
which you don't know how to use.

After your practice, when you get energy
— does it go to Yoga or Bhoga?

Yoga is not a fashion.
It's an evolution.

Yoga

In Metchosin

with
Shirley Daventry French



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

Information: 478-3775

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morning and evening classes
plus an afternoon class for
people with special problems
Classes commence January 14th
\$85 for eight-week session

Pranayama

for experienced students
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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.

Patanjali's Path

Guruji speaks of the challenges met and the understanding gained on that path in the writing of his "Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali"

Interview with Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali taken by Christian Pisano and Claus Grzesch. Recorded at the RIMYI, Pune, January, 1994.

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 on this book. So I thought that if it is possible whether I could touch 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 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 on 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 realise 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 without creating any confusion, because all books do confuse. I have done my best to minimise the confusion to a great extent or I might have eradicated it in some people. But if you take the book as a whole I think it is more direct, more clear, more straight forward and point to point without doubt, clearing the feelings of the students who have got confused mind or confused understanding. I think to a very 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 only done work from the head, not from the head to the heart. Here I also use my head and also use my heart and that is why I say I have done good work. I think the way the books have sold in a very short period, I feel that people have appreciated 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 you 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.

Guruji: 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 in this book. They need not be lovers of Yoga but they can also live in Yoga.

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

Guruji: My friend, all philosophies are a journey towards the core of the being of the source of life. This text is a two way path. You can go from the periphery towards the source and you can also come from the source towards 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 those 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 that consciousness automatically learns that it is not dependent on the elements of nature, so that being the finest points of the elements of nature, naturally embraces the cause for that consciousness which is the core, to reach the core. So hence it is a challenge and a counter challenge. Challenge from the external body to reach the inner body and the counter challenge from the inner body to the outer body, so that these two currents of incoming and outgoing currents interchange and interact and this action brings a new dimension in the practitioner for him to see a new light in his 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*?

Guruji: Asana and pranayama is a penetration from the external towards the internal. That's the beauty because once you reach the internal then you start using the external body as an internal means to come back to the external 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 towards the flesh, from the flesh towards the circulation, from the circulation towards 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 characteristics hidden in these five elements known as vibration, touch, shape, liquidity and solidity.

So if you can penetrate these five aspects of the 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 external vehicles to go towards the internal structure of the soul and dharana, dhyana and samadhi is the subtlest part. These three aspects of Yoga are the subtlest part. So hence Patanjali, for convenience's sake divides astanga yoga into two parts: bahiranga and antaranga: bahiranga being these five - yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara; antaranga being these three - dharana, dhyana and samadhi. The latter three of course are beyond the mind; yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara within the mind. He makes the mind as a bridge within the physical and spiritual body. So the moment you cross over naturally the mind takes you to the other side, the other bank of the river that is antaranga. So hence for convenience only Patanjali divides bahiranga and antaranga but actually when he uses the word bahiranga, it means that you have to use the 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 an average intellectual as well as an undeveloped intellectual. So we have to see in 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. So the visible body is what he speaks from niyama to pratyahara and the invisible body when he speaks of dharana, dhyana and samadhi. He directly touches towards the core so hence, 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 towards 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 this is rhythm and balance as 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 subtle intellectual growth and from that point of view I think that Patanjali is the only person who has shown the way and means without confusion to show that this is the visible function as we can visibly 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 perception 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 senses of perception. When that comes you have achieved that understanding between the senses of perception, which are 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 the usage of energy, the flow of energy. So through pranayama you develop the energy what we call *shakti*. So it is a shakti, it is a power. Vital power is shakti. So 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 twin sisters so hence, 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 the senses 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?

Guruji: 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 sense 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 towards dharana, dhyana and samadhi so that from the emptiness you go towards 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? So that is samskara, by birth: you know what you call genius people, so these genius people, who are they? They have done something, so that is why the moment they come to life they are considered to be a born 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. So we have to think from that angle: is it only meant for a few people who come only in two or three centuries, or is it meant for all? So if you read it, 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 *vitarkabaddhane pratipaksabhavanam* (II.33) and the use of the opposite?

Guruji: Badhana means kleshas, Vrtti. so badhana means pain, suffering, greed, obstruction, obstacles. So what does it convey? So 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 a feeling of pain of one side; there is a feeling of non-pain on the other side, is it not? Then you have to study yourself. Why I have a feeling of pressure in this side; why I have 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-violent. 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, bhaddana 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 I am doing here. So can I compare this non painful positioning of the body in the pose, to the positioning of the other side when 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 readjust on the side that is giving grief or creating obstacles then you can break that obstacle. So I take that as a guide for the student to study on either side to find out the feelings and the obstacles. So if there is a grief then you should know pratipaksa that there is something wrong in this side that I am doing. 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. So the feelings are even on either side, 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 on which you can not 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. Let me 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 readjustment - that is pratipaksa.

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

Gurujī: 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 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. So 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* (II.46)?

Gurujī: It is a very tricky translation by all. Patanjali is also a very tricky man! When he speaks of *sthira sukham asanam* and the next sutra speaks of *prayatna saithilya ananta samapattibhyam* (II.47) that means he speaks of three sutras with four dimensions and that is where we are not understanding his calibre of intelligence, calibre of spiritual advancement.

Sthira sukham means comfortable and stable is it not? 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 painful and uncomfartability sets in. The moment uncomfartability 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 comfortability or in stability and this is the *dvandvah*, the word which is in use in the third sutra - *tatah dvandvah anabhighatah* (II.48). 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 *sirsasana* for one minute; after one minute what happens? You have to readjust, yes or no? Then where is the stability? That means according to the sutra stability may become unstable, comfortability may become uncomfortable. Your effort may fade. The moment effort fades you lose the quality, you lose the stability so you have to exert again. So 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, comfortability, which may become uncomfortable; your effortfulness may fade. So that means it has opposites: *sthira* has *asthira* as opposite; *sukha* has *dukha* 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 pranayamah* (I.49) is one sutra. *Bahya abhyatanra stambha vrttiḥ desa kala samkhyabhiḥ par idrstah dirgha suksmak* (II.50) is the second sutra. *Bahya abhyantara visaya aksepi caturtatah* (II.51) is the third sutra. 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 dvandvah anabhighatah* (II.48). People say honour-dishonour, heat-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 also the same example comes. The first one he speaks of the rhythmic channelising of the in breath and 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 vrtti* (II.50) - inhalation, retention, exhalation: retention whereas 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*, *samkhya*: *desa* is the body, *kata* is time and *samkhya* is precision. The third dimension is *dirga* and *sukmah* (II.50).

You can take a deep inhalation (showed by example of forceful inhalation). You can inhale like that 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 *sukmah* - "subtle". What we do is the word *sthula* - "gross, heavy". Everybody does it, is it not? Can you see? (shows example). *Sthula* and *sukmah*, he uses in other things - gross, subtle, but Patanjali without using the word *sthula* he had directly jumped to *sukmah* 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 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 puzzling is also there if you want to 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 has 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 all 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 abruptly ended, 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 the time to surrender to God, that's why I can't teach you. Do you understand now? So 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 yourself 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* is it not? How many people explain this way? So when you are free from afflictions, when you are free from waves, wandering with the mind, then

where is vritti? There is not movement at all, is it not? 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. So 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 because he has the character of God that he is the only one who is freed 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 is how you have to conclude although he does not conclude.

Claus: Why does he not conclude?

Guruji: That I do not know. He is 2,500 years old. When he has explained the quality of the Seer he did not go further because that means he has to explain from the state of consciousness but he has taken you beyond consciousness. Then you have to experience, so that's why he did not express. That is the beauty. If he expresses it is again from the state of 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, is it not? So these are all bodies to God. As we have the body to the soul, all ourselves put together is body to the God. When you have reached almost 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 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 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.

Guruji: Yes, it is correct. What I have said is a fact. When I take 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? Though at other times one may not be divine. But even one who works with me do I not treat them divine for such a long time with this hard work? So that's the quality of Yoga. That 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 that way. Why do you want to go to your old thoughts? So that means I keep your intelligence ever fresh, is it not? So 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 the time. Your mind is not on the future, your mind is not on the past, your

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with
Lauren Cox

Sunday, February 2, 1997

Ym-YWCA YOGA LOUNGE 

10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

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one child

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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 that 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 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 is it not? 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 and I was doing. 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's grace. I made up my mind to write the book when I got complete maturity on these two subjects of Yoga. From my experience I went on reading the Yoga Sutras, where my experience and his words meet. 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 level 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 to learn from the base rather than coming from the zenith towards the base. So 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 on the philosophy and created 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 be knowing its reactions on a practical aspect but those who are interested, keep *Light on Yoga*, *Light on Pranayama*, *Tree of Yoga*, also the *70 Glorious Years*, where I've got a lot of things and keep *Light on Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*; they will reach the goal faster than me. That is certain. So I consider that I have done a great service in presenting the most terse philosophy in simple language for even an average person to understand the background of life.

I have spoken about asanas and how the five controlled 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 saying that is all I 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 where it leads you.

Christian and Claus: Thank you very much Guruji.

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YOGA

PROGRAM OF CLASSES IN THE IYENGAR APPROACH TO YOGA



INTRODUCTORY YOGA

Monday, 9:00 - 10:30am
Lauren Cox
Monday, 4:15 - 5:15pm
Jo Anna Hope
Monday, 7:30 - 9:00pm
Ann Kilbertus
Tuesday, 7:00 - 8:30pm
Leslie Hogya
Wednesday, 9:00 - 10:30am
Lauren Cox
Wednesday, 6:00 - 7:30pm
Adrienne Rhodes
Thursday, 4:30 - 6:00pm
Maggi Feehan

GENTLE YOGA

Tuesday, 10:30 - 12:00pm
Celia Ward

SPECIAL NEEDS YOGA

Wednesday, 4:30 - 6:00pm
Shirley Daventry French & Ann Kilbertus.

NOON YOGA

Tuesday, 12:00 - 1:00pm - Celia Ward
Thursday, 12:00 - 1:00pm - Lauren Cox

EARLY MORNING YOGA

Tuesday, 6:30 - 7:30am
James Currie-Johnson

YOGA - LEVEL I

Monday, 10:30 - 12:00pm
Lauren Cox
Wed., 7:30 - 9:00pm
James Currie-Johnson
Tuesday, 5:30 - 7:00pm
Leslie Hogya
Friday, 9:00 - 10:30am
Rosie Holland
Saturday, 9:00 - 11:00am
Celia Ward

YOGA - LEVEL II

Thursday, 10:00 - 12:00pm
Shirley Daventry French
Thursday, 6:00 - 8:00pm
Ann Kilbertus & Leslie Hogya

YOGA - LEVEL III

Monday, 5:30 - 7:30pm
Shirley Daventry French

PRANAYAMA YOGA

Monday, 7:00 - 8:00am
Celia Ward

SIXTY & BETTER

Wed., 10:30 - 12:00pm
Shirley Daventry French
Friday, 10:30 - 12:00pm
Rosie Holland

Term III: Jan. 13 - Mar. 2 Term IV: Mar. 2 - Apr. 27 Term V: April 28 - June 22

REGISTRATION: Victoria YM/YWCA, 880 Courtney St, Victoria, B.C. V8W 1C4
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Tight hips!

by Leslie Hogya

Do your knees come closer to the ceiling than the floor in *badhakonasana*, is sitting in *padmasana* (lotus) pose a joke? Do you cringe at the sound of the teacher's words when you hear *matsyasana*? (reclining lotus?)

In ninth grade I remember sitting cross legged on the floor in gym class, then in cobbler's pose, and my knees were about as high as my shoulders. Everyone else could lower theirs towards the floor, but not me. I never really thought at the time that I would be struggling with that position most of my adult life.

I have been doing yoga for about twenty-five years. For as long as possible, I just didn't attempt lotus pose. It hurt, nothing moved, my joints just jammed up and seemed to get tighter with effort. In 1984 I was at the Iyengar conference in San Francisco; a teacher there told me to sit in cobbler's pose every day for ten minutes for two weeks and I would conquer this stiffness. I tried it, I was excited that a solution was in sight. Nothing much changed after two weeks. Last time I was in India when we were supposed to be in *ardha baddha padma paschimottanasana* (forward bend in half lotus), she just looked at me as if I was a write-off and shook her head in resignation.

Then a few years ago, somethings began to change. When I went to a week long teacher training with Felicity Green, she gave us a series of poses for this problem, there were quite a few of us present who were very tight. After two hours, I could actually sit in half lotus for the first time in my life. I got a glimmer of what worked, and what didn't. Ann Kilbertus has also helped in her hip opener workshops, when she taught us some principles of movement, that I was able to apply. Once the door opened a crack, I began expand on poses and modified positions that I could do that actually helped. I have also added things I have learned from Yoga International and Yoga Journal Articles.

I wish I could say that today I sit in full lotus, but I can't yet. Yet, it actually seems possible that one day I might! Below are some things that I have found useful for preparing for lotus or, *padmasana*.

B.K.S. Iyengar teaches us that when there is pain, we find a way to make space. I just wasn't creative enough to find that space on my own. The first way is to sit on some height to help the hips open and release instead of jamming the ball back into the socket. Ramanand Patel taught us all how to sit properly in *badhakonasana* to work with gravity instead of against it.

Badhakonasana

Hips on a firm blanket, or two,
Heels on a rolled sticky mat
toes on the floor

1. Sit in the pose with back to wall, get sacrum against wall
2. As in #1, but put a block between feet
3. Sit as in #1 Turn soles of feet towards the ceiling
4. Sit as in #1, but bend forward over the feet.
5. Do *uttanasana* and walk around to rest
6. lie down, toes at wall heels on block, reclining *badhakonasana*
7. Sit up hold foot, side of foot in elbow crease
8. *Gomukasana*
9. half lotus with belt to hold knee from torquing.
10. reclining above
11. sit up and come into *ardha baddha padma paschimottanasana*, put second belt around both thighs to draw bent knee towards straight leg.
12. Recline try and go into full lotus *matsyasana*.
13. Sit up and try full lotus



JEREMY'S EPIC ADVENTURES ABROAD

CHAPTER TWO:

Escapades in India

IT ALL

started with Ladakh.

When I left off in the first whatever-you-call-this, I was planning to go to Ladakh for a couple of weeks, this remote area with a culture similar to Tibet, to which the roads are only open in the summer, and then, okay then just a little taste of the insanity that is India, as I crossed the plains to Calcutta for a cheap flight back (towards Bangkok).

(But, then, I was really going to Indonesia for four months, back home in time for summer... so plans change a bit from time to time.)

So, the cheapest way to Ladakh from Delhi turns out to be through

SHIKHARA BOATMAN ON CANAL, SRINAGAR (OKAY, BOATWOMAN - I ASK)

A sense of hopeless meaningless plagues our normal, day-to-day lives, especially evident when we stop and look around us at our creation.

Sometimes, however, during moments of silence, standing alone by the rolling ocean, lost in the mist that made the stars, we feel connected, at peace, whole again.

A place of restful watchfulness deep inside our heart is reached, and an unexplainable purpose brings fulfillment.

Yoga helps us find that noble place inside our heart which guides us if only we'll give in to its guidance; which empowers us if only we'll pursue its power; which lifts us to lofty living, if only we'll listen to its litany; which knows the reason, if only we'll stop reasoning with its wisdom.

Thus, true yoga moves us to discover our true nature, our loving ego-free self, our profound dharma-knower, our connection with the infinite.

Aadil Palkhivala



YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA BOOKS FOR SALE

- YOGA, THE IYENGAR WAY* - Silva, Mira & Shyam Mehta (1990) - \$30.00
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- BACK CARE BASICS* - Mary Pullig Schatz (1992) - \$26.00
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- LIGHT ON YOGA* - B.K.S. Iyengar - \$28.00
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- YOGA VRKSA, THE TREE OF YOGA* - B.K.S. Iyengar (1988) - \$17.00
- LIGHT ON THE YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI* - B.K.S. Iyengar (1993) - \$19.00
- IYENGAR, HIS LIFE AND WORK* - Autobiographical writings and contributions
from many students- \$25.00
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Commemoration Volume - \$25.00
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- PROPS AND AILMENTS* - Illustrated by Bobby Clennell - \$25.00
- IYENGAR YOGA GLOSSARY* - Compiled & Illustrated by Bobby Clennell - \$6.50

TO ORDER

Please talk to your Yoga teacher or phone Celia Ward at 388-7839
Prices include G.S.T.

RADHA HOUSE



WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

Open House

- Sunday, January 12, 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.

Saturday Morning in Shavasana

- Saturday, January 25, 9:30 – 12:30pm

This is The Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga® approach to Corpus Pose. This pose of deep relaxation gives the experience of a symbolic death and points to the need to be born anew. Relaxation is an attempt to let go of old tensions and holding on, and to be born to a life free from the old programs of the mind. This is a three-hour workshop followed by a potluck lunch.

Fee: \$25

Guru Puja

- Sunday, February 2, 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.

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Kundalini Classes

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

Fee: Winter session (11 classes): \$121

Spring session (10 classes): \$110

The Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga®

- Mondays: 5:30 – 7:30pm. All levels. (Ongoing)
- Thursdays: 12:30 – 2:30pm. All levels. (Ongoing)
- Saturdays: 10:15 – 12:15pm. 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: Winter session (11 classes): \$121

Spring session (10 classes): \$110

\$11 per drop-in class

Dreams

- Mondays: 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 in an excellent preparation for kundalini class.

Fee: Winter session (11 classes): \$121

Spring session (10 classes): \$110

Satsang and Bhajans

- Sundays: 7:30 – 9:30pm

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 the 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

JANUARY

- 1: Let's Do Yoga Every Day workshop at the Y 1pm to 3.30pm with James Currie-Johnson.
- 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. see ad this issue

FEBRUARY

- 2: Family Yoga workshop at the Y, see ad this issue
- 15: Teachers meeting
- 21-23: Aadil Palkhival workshop, see ad this issue

MARCH

- 7: Friday night gathering
- 8: Teachers meeting
- 23: Fund raising workshop at the Y

APRIL

- 4: Friday night gathering
- 5: Teachers meeting
- 26: Barbara Yates workshop for teachers

MAY

- 9: Big Big Practice with Shirley Daventry French at the Y.
- 29-June 1: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association Annual General Meeting on Elizabeth Bay near Halifax, NS

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 \$25 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

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Please complete this form and send it with your payment to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society, 3918 Olympic View Drive, RR #4, Victoria BC V9B 5T8.

Membership subscription fee is \$25 and non-refundable.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

☐ Do not mail to me, send to my business address. (I will not be billed)

☐ Return form.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



March/April 1997

Please Subscribe



SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

If you have not renewed your membership to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society, please renew now! This will be the final newsletter you receive until you renew your membership.

Membership to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society provides:

- Subscription to the newsletter
- Voting privileges at the annual general meeting
- Discounts for Victoria Yoga Centre workshops
- Support for Victoria Yoga Centre activities and workshops
- Support for workshops given by guest teachers

Thank you for your continued support of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society. A Membership Subscription Form is located inside the back cover.

The Victoria Yoga Centre Society is Pleased to Offer the Following Scholarships:

1. Teachers workshop with Barbara Yates,
April 26, 1997
2 scholarships of \$50.00 each
Applications to be received by April 1, 1997
2. Saltspring Retreat, June 6-8, 1997
1 scholarship of \$100.00
Applications to be received by May 1, 1997

Apply in writing to the Scholarship Committee.
Call Linda Benn, 487-0757, for more information.

INFORMATION ON EVENTS
CAN BE OBTAINED
FROM OUR VOICE MAIL
386-YOGA (9642)



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO
ANSWER VOICE MAIL

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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,
 Victoria BC V9C 3Y1
 Telephone: (250) 474-5630

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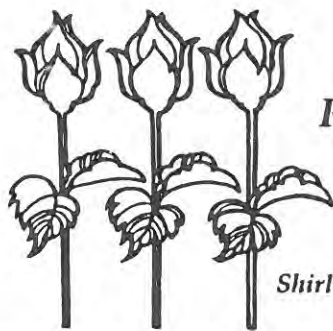
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COVER DRAWING DEDICATED TO AADIL
PALKHILVALA



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French



Since we dug ourselves out of the snow at the start of 1997, I have been busy with matters concerning the evolution of Iyengar Yoga teaching in Canada into a full-fledged profession. First I flew to Toronto for a meeting of the professional development committee of the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association. I

combined this with spending a few days at the Yoga Centre Toronto observing how they organise their programme and in particular their teacher training course. I was very impressed with their business-like approach to running their centre, and the professionally sound three-year training offered to apprentice teachers. Like Victoria, they are a centre which caters to students from out-of-town in addition to local students who are interested in becoming teachers. It is a lot of responsibility and a lot of work.

In the years since I began teaching there has been enormous refinement in the training of teachers, at least in the Iyengar tradition. In established centres of Iyengar Yoga like Toronto and Victoria, the level of expertise required to begin teaching, and the standard of practice required to begin training to teach, is being raised all the time.

There are other schools of yoga which turn out certified teachers in four to six weeks, and apparently previous experience of yoga is not a requirement. At a retreat centre last year, I met a young woman one lunchtime. When she heard I was a yoga teacher, she told me she was planning to take one of these four-week courses because she thought she would like to teach yoga. As we talked I began to get a sense that she had not actually done any yoga, so I asked her and discovered that this was true, an oversight which did not seem to bother her.

Once I had a conversation with a woman who had been involved in one of these month long courses as a trainer, and I asked her what they actually covered in four weeks. She said she was embarrassed to tell me, because only three of these weeks were spent on yoga itself and the fourth was devoted to the business side of setting up as a teacher.

Patanjali tells us that ignorance is one of the obstacles to enlightenment and the source of all other obstacles. Since there is no federal or provincial licensing board in Canada which has anything to say about who should or should not teach yoga — anyone can do it. All that is required is the confidence (or nerve) to claim to understand this vast topic sufficiently to pass it on. While an untrained and unsupervised person may know a great deal about yoga, they may be teaching out of their own ignorance. As a student, how can you tell? How can you protect yourself? A good question — and one of the reasons we are working to establish national Iyengar Yoga certification in Canada.

There are certain challenges unique to this country, with its huge size and sparse population. In most major cities there is an opportunity to study regularly with someone who has been to Pune, but in small towns this is generally not possible. A European would have little conception of the isolation of many Canadian communities, roads are hazardous during the winter and the costs of domestic air travel are very high. Geography, transport and government agencies do not make it easy for us to move around.

Once, when I travelled to Montréal to attend a workshop with Faeq Biria, it took me longer to get there from Victoria than him from Paris (and may have cost more – I don't know!). However, when the desire is strong enough the means are generally found.

Everyone has to begin somewhere and I get calls all the time from people in remote areas who have had some exposure to Iyengar Yoga, and would like to pass this on to their friends. I encourage them to get together, practise what they know, and supplement this whenever possible by travelling to centres with more experienced teachers where they can learn more. When the yoga community grows, then they can consider bringing someone in from outside from-time-to-time.

This, after all, is how we began in Victoria. Once a week on Friday evening we would get together and share what little we knew, but at the same time whenever the chance arose we went out-of-town to learn from others with more experience. We also invited a teacher who had studied with Mr. Iyengar in India, Norma Hodge, to come here and work with us once a month. We owe Norma an immense debt of gratitude for the fine start she gave us, which in the case of Derek and myself included the opportunity to go to Pune in 1979 and work with Mr. Iyengar himself. Since that time many Victorians have followed in our footsteps and a firm link has been established.

This link is the main protection for our students. Our own work is being vetted by the Master or his daughter Geeta, a master teacher in her own right. In addition to studying in India where our practice comes under intense scrutiny, many of us have had our teaching directly observed by Mr. Iyengar when he has visited Canada or the U.S. Not all teachers across the nation have been willing to place themselves in this uncomfortable position, and by avoiding the demands of the situation have deprived themselves of the benefits of receiving direct guidance from the most senior teacher of all in the Iyengar tradition. Without risks you cannot learn much, and we have tried to uphold one of Norma's dictums to "move from comfort to newness."

Returning from Toronto took me right into a series of meetings here: with local senior teachers, with junior teachers, with students wishing to begin to apprentice, and culminating in a meeting of the Vancouver Island chapter of the national Iyengar Yoga association.

Getting ready for these meetings and weighing up all the questions and ideas they generated, has been quite absorbing. It has been helpful for me to discuss the matter with Derek who, as a physician has plenty experience of a professional organisation, its strengths and drawbacks. One day we talked about the development of yoga as a profession and he compared our current situation with that which once applied to medicine.

Initially physicians trained on the job, either with a mentor or by trial and error on their own. When a mentor is available, how foolish not to avail yourself of that source of learning.

Generally training took place through an apprenticeship with an established physician. Training was not very scientific because there was very little scientific data to disseminate, and to a large extent medicine consisted of practising reassurance and developing a good bedside manner. Programs were gradually developed in universities to train doctors.

At the turn of the century, a huge amount of professional information was becoming available and this precipitated the Flexner Commission which recommended that henceforth all training of physicians be undertaken through university programs. Training, which had been very informal, became more and more systematic as the body of knowledge and scientific data grew.

As medicine began to develop in leaps and bounds — one person would have a little bit of knowledge, another another little bit. The need to codify this body of information and develop a core of essential information was recognised. Standards and procedures were developed. Means of accountability were sought.

While it could be argued that the scientific side of medicine has developed to the detriment of the bedside manner and self-healing techniques of old (another debate and not one to be entered into here), few people would choose to have their appendix taken out by a surgeon who had not practised that procedure under supervision or without an anaesthetic — except perhaps in a life and death situation in a remote area.

Most professions have evolved in similar ways to Medicine. Iyengar Yoga is no exception. Once upon a time it was O.K. for the casual practitioner to say: "I'm teaching the Iyengar method." Few people had direct experience of Mr. Iyengar and the depth of his practice and teaching was relatively unknown. Now we know that there is such a fount of information and experience to draw from, and it is sometimes overwhelming.

When the first students from the West went to Pune, they each brought back bits and pieces of information and slowly acquired some knowledge of this ancient art and science. As our understanding grew we became more and more aware how little we knew and how much there was to learn. This is what takes us back again and again to study at the source of these teachings, or in our own country to learn from those who make this pilgrimage regularly.

As more and more of us have returned to Pune and attended conferences with Guruji and Geeta in various Western countries, standards of teaching expected of ourselves and others have naturally become higher and higher. There is no comparison between the level of expertise expected from a beginning teacher in Victoria these days, and the level of expertise of those who began teaching in the early '70's.

Iyengar Yoga is a worldwide movement, and while Mr. Iyengar himself did not initiate certification, most countries in the Iyengar Yoga family have established a national certification program following a syllabus developed under his auspices. In the United Kingdom, one of the first countries to take this step, Iyengar Yoga certification was introduced (with Guruji's blessing)

because certain government bodies required it, i.e. the Inner London Education Authority under whose jurisdiction a large number of classes were offered throughout London. Accreditation in society was also a major factor in its implementation in the United States in 1982.

Although interest in Iyengar Yoga arose in Canada at much the same time as in the United States, we chose not to follow their lead regarding certification, and Mr. Iyengar concurred with this decision until 1993 at the Toronto Convention. Clearly disappointed at the low attendance, the absence of some senior teachers and some of the teaching he observed, he nevertheless gave us some encouragement. He was very pleased at the way those who did attend the conference responded in the asana and pranayama classes he taught to the entire group. "This healthy group is enough for me to transform the world", he stated, and encouraged us to build on this — which is what we have been attempting to do in the ensuing three and a half years.

During that eventful time in Toronto, specifically and repeatedly he asked four things of the Canadian Iyengar Yoga community :-

- form a national association
- develop a syllabus
- hold assessments
- maintain standards

Work is being done on all these criteria on a national level.

We are also working hard at a local level, preparing candidates for assessment when the time comes; ensuring an ongoing supply of well-trained teachers for Greater Victoria and beyond. It was very gratifying that our first teachers' meeting of 1997 was attended by more than thirty teachers and student teachers from Victoria, Up-Island communities, and the Gulf Islands. They had responded to a written appeal from me, and we began to work on refining our apprenticeship program into a more formalised teacher training course. Of those who could not attend that meeting, all but two responded to my letter

in writing redefining their commitment and offering many practical and philosophical ideas.

Today, the reputation of Iyengar Yoga is well-established throughout the world. There is a constant demand for teachers especially in communities which have no qualified teachers at present. In established centres like Victoria, our introductory classes are overflowing. To respond to this demand and at the same time maintain high standards, we are looking at a collegiate approach with a faculty of experienced teachers working together so that the workload of training teachers is shared, with the added benefit that apprentices will have a variety of experience to draw from.

This means a lot of work in addition to our teaching and practice, because most of our senior teachers also have responsibilities on committees within the national association. Our plate is full — but what better food to feast on than a plateful of Yoga! 

YOGA PROPS

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The
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and the
Victoria YM-YWCA

Welcome you to a



Friday Night Gathering



Asana Practice at 6 p.m.

Potluck dinner at 7 p.m.
in the Yoga Lounge at the Y.
(please bring your own plate/cutlery)

Date: Friday, March 7, 1997

Everyone is welcome to join us.

Teachers' Corner —

Iyengar Yoga Teachers of Victoria,
Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands

Teachers Group 1996 Annual Report



Once again it is a privilege to present the Annual Report and a snap shot of the year in review. There were 33 member teachers and teacher trainees in 1996.

1996 was a very full year for the teachers of the Victoria Yoga Centre. We continued to meet on a monthly basis with the focus being on improving our teaching skills and techniques. The practices offered opportunities for peer teaching and critiquing each other's teachings. There were also sessions of "finding the confusion in the art of teaching" and clarifying the interpretation of Mr. Iyengar's work.

In May, Shirley, Linda, Lauren, Ann and Sheri traveled to the "Teacher's Exchange Conference" in Colorado. Linda presented a practice based on the Conference, sharing with us Geeta's teaching.

The 1996 Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association Conference was coordinated by the Victoria group and held in July at the Saltspring Centre. This year's Conference took a large step towards coming together and further formalizing the National Association. Work is continuing on developing the teacher certification process with a view to implementation within the next two years.

Following the CIYTA Conference, Shirley, Ann, Leslie, Derek and Jim offered the Yoga Centre's annual Summer Intensive, which was once again well received..

In August, Marlene was in Bellingham studying with Felicity Green in teacher training at the Junior Intermediate level, following which a practice was focused on presenting some of the techniques from this workshop.

In November, Julie Gudmestad, a physiotherapist and certified Iyengar yoga teacher, gave a specialized workshop on understanding the structure and movement of hips, pelvis and spine in the asana.

Shirley led the popular and successful Saltspring Retreat in June. This year we also had a fall retreat at Saltspring Centre with four teachers: Ann, Shirley, Leslie and Marlene, collaborating in this effort. In addition to asana and pranayama sessions, Leslie presented Patanjali's sutras. A strong feeling of intimacy was present among the participants.

During the past year successful Sunday workshops were presented by Lauren, Leslie, Celia and the ever popular "Light on Yoga" workshop celebrating Mr. Iyengar's birthday was presented by Shirley. Also, the teachers continued to be involved in leading asana practices for the monthly Friday night gatherings.

Victoria has a respected reputation for teacher training. Teachers have come from as far away as Nova Scotia to specifically pursue yoga teaching. Our monthly meetings attract teachers from all of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, and from time to time teachers from other North American regions and countries visit our classes. In the fall it was a pleasure to have Rosie Holland from New Zealand become one of our teaching colleagues.

We can be proud of the high quality of trained teachers within the Yoga Centre. The teachers have been able to fulfill most of the requests for classes. The yoga programs in the Capital Regional District continue to grow. There has been an increase in the number of classes at the YM-YWCA; as well, classes at the University, recreation centres, fitness clubs, and in private home studios, continue to grow and expand both in the number of classes offered and participants. It is quite exciting. 1997 will be another full year for the teachers with eight senior students becoming apprentice teachers. As well, many of the Yoga Centre teacher members will be traveling to India for the Canadian Intensive in July. The dedication and commitment to all aspects of yoga, and the personal growth and development of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society's teachers ensures us that 1997 will be as successful and rewarding as 1996 has been.

Marlene Linda Miller



INSPIRATION from VICTORIA TEACHERS



AN ALL LEVELS BENEFIT WORKSHOP

SUNDAY, MARCH 23RD, 1997
10 A.M. - 1 P.M.

TIME	INTRODUCTORY STUDENTS	ONGOING STUDENTS
10 A.M.	Beginning Standing Poses with Lauren Cox	Ongoing Standing Poses with Maggi Feehan
11 A.M.	Releasing the Upper Back and Shoulders with Ann Kilbertus	Working in Backbends with Marlene Miller
12 P.M.	Restorative Postures with Celia Ward	Twists and Forward Bends with Leslie Hoggia
1 P.M.	*****REFRESHMENTS*****	

THIS WORKSHOP IS A BENEFIT TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE CANADIAN
IYENGAR TEACHER'S ASSOCIATION.

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IYENGAR TEACHERS.

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COST:

LOCATION:

PHONE ANN KILBERTUS @ 598-0976

\$30, or larger donation, for full workshop

VICTORIA YM-YWCA, YOGA ROOM

Letters

13 January 1997

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for sending us copies of your magazine. We really do appreciate receiving news of our oversea's counterparts in this way, and we trust this form of communication will continue for a very long time between our two organisations.

Wishing you all the best for 1997 and may Yoga grow from strength-to-strength in this new year.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Morris

Chairperson,

B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Institute of Southern Africa



January 5, 1997

Dear Shirley,

On behalf of the directors and members of the B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association of Vancouver, I wish to thank the directors and members of the Victoria Yoga Centre, for your thoughtful congratulatory message on our 20th anniversary which appears in the current issue of your Newsletter.

Please pass on to the directors and members our warmest regards and best wishes for a Happy New Year and a peaceful 1997.

Yours sincerely,

James M. MacKenzie

President,

B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association of Vancouver

Growing into Light!



Spring Renewal

- Retreats
- Easter—A Time to be Holy
- Music & Consciousness
- The Mind & Work
- Ten Days of Yoga

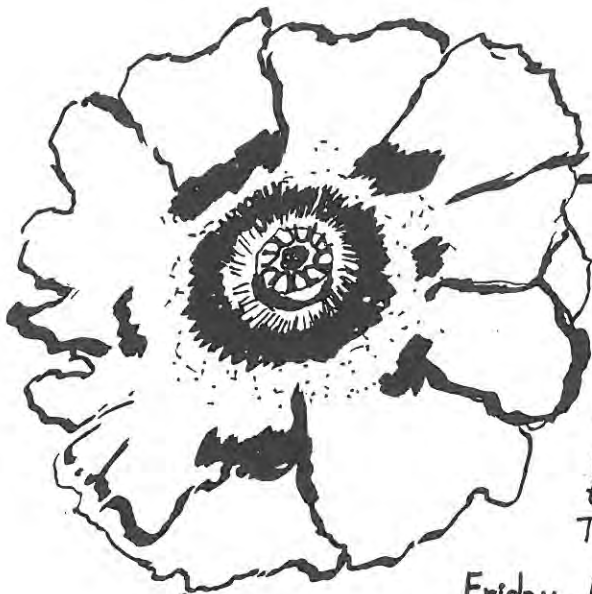


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True or false? Come and find out on...

Friday, May 9, 1997



The
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and the
Victoria YM-YWCA



Welcome you to a

Big Big Practice at 6 p.m. in the Dance Studio
led by Shirley Daventry French

Potluck dinner at 7 p.m. in the Yoga Lounge*

followed by a discussion on
Three Elements of Yoga
Self-discipline
Self-study
Surrender

~~This is a fundraising event, donations appreciated~~

Everyone is welcome
Please join us

* (please bring your own plate/cutlery)

Family and Yoga: An Interview with Lauren Cox

by Caren Liedtke

*...our family stories account a great deal for who we are,
and our soul is to be found in the details of those stories.*

— Thomas Moore, *Soul Mates*

When it was decided that Lauren would be the subject of our next Yoga Newsletter interview, it seemed only natural to me to tie that interview in with her workshop on Family Yoga. The more I thought about this idea, the pairing and exploration of family and yoga, the more I liked it. I liked it because real everyday life is messy and a lot of this messiness takes place in and involves the family. It seems to me that any spiritual practice worth its salt must also take place in and involve the family. The tradition we practise in clearly acknowledges the familial realm. Mr. Iyengar, the head of our tradition, is deliberately a family man; he consciously chose the path of the householder as the setting for his spiritual practice. In *The Tree of Yoga* he writes:

"In my early days, many people tried to tempt me to become a sannyasin (a renunciant). I said, 'No, I will marry. I will see the struggles and the upheavals of the world, and I will practice.' So I am an old soldier. I have six children and I still practice yoga." (p. 27)

What does it mean to have children and practice yoga? I don't have kids so I was curious to ask someone who does.

I liked the idea of pairing family and yoga for another reason. It provided an opportunity and a way to get a more richly textured look at some of the members of our community. I think it is a real treat and privilege to get to know something of a person's family, to see them in the larger context of their life. With these thoughts in mind I began to look forward to hearing about Lauren's family and seeing some families in action at the workshop.

Caren: How did the idea for Family Yoga come about?

Lauren: We had offered Yoga for Children in the past and it never seemed to work out. We offered it in the summer and kids were often enrolled in camps and things that lasted for a couple of weeks. Maybe it was hard for the parents to get the kids here or maybe they wanted something that was more than just once a



week. Participation was never that good and we always ended up cancelling it. This year one of my students said, "Why don't we do Family Yoga because I would love to take my kids." Okay, great idea; I thought, let's change it to Family Yoga. We lucked out by choosing right after work on Wednesday evening from five to six, before the dinner hour. It worked. I taught a fairly successful class in July.

So this year when they approached ... they always approach the teachers to donate some time by giving a workshop. Every month we offer a workshop, whether it is hip openers or shoulder work. Instead of my usual "Yoga for Beginners," which I have been doing for the last two years as a workshop topic, I said, "Let me teach 'Family Yoga.'"

What kinds of things do you do in Family Yoga that are different from a regular class?

It would never be as lengthy in dealing with a pose. You have to be really fast with the children to keep their interest. To get their interest and keep it. You have to be fast moving because that is the way they are. So I wouldn't be as fussy about alignment, perhaps, but just give them a sense of what it feels like and keep it light and fun and fast.

Do you do the same poses?

Mmm, yes. Sometimes, when I taught just the children themselves I would incorporate children's games. We would play statues. We would run around and I would say, "triangle," and they would all stop and do triangle. They love rope work. When I had the Family Yoga for four weeks in a row, the last class I felt confident enough in their ability to try ropes and hang upside down. Things like that that are fun and challenging.

I felt good in the Family Yoga, more so, because I knew their parents were there. That helped me out a lot. I'm not a great disciplinarian. When there was just Children's Yoga and I had to be the disciplinarian too, it sort of took away the fun. They are different with

their parents. The disciplinarian aspect of it I just left to the parents. If somebody was acting up, I knew that their parents would just take them aside or take them outside of the room and they wouldn't disturb anybody else. It was perfect.

It's too bad we don't have that in regular classes.

(laughing) Take Neil outside of the room, would you, Caren?

If a parent wanted to do some yoga with their kids at home, would you suggest the same kinds of things. Make a game of it?

Depending on their age. If they are younger, they can make a game of it. If they are older, more serious, then they really almost have to take the time to know what they are doing. Like myself, working with my son, who is thirteen, I rarely take him away from just working on hamstrings. He and I, when we work together, we do a ledge stretch and *supta padangusthasana*, big toe hold. That's what I am focusing on, and occasionally downward dog. It is surprising; children that age are so tight, from constant physical activity, like basketball, with no stretches before or after. Skateboarding, just going all out because you want to keep up with the pack, with no stretching before or after. And how unbalanced that is, too - when they skateboard they are always pushing off with one leg and one shoulder is constantly coming forward. So I'm really concerned about that younger generation.

But if a parent has a younger child, we have a good video now, that the Yoga Centre is thinking about selling. It is for preschoolers; it is fun and light. Some of the teachers have screened it. I had my sister over, who is a school teacher. She and I looked at it with our little girls. She thought it was great, good enough to consider buying it for the school library.

What's it called?

"YogaKids." You can get it from *Yoga Journal*. We also sell a book. [Entitled *Yoga for Children* by Swati and Rajiv Chanchani, foreward by Mr. Iyengar. Call Ann Kilbertus if you are interested in purchasing a copy.]

You mentioned that you do yoga with your son. I was wondering how that came about. Was that your idea or his idea?

At one time, it was his idea. He was ill, it was quite a few years ago, and he couldn't breathe. He came into my bed in the middle of the night. He couldn't breathe and he was really scared. What I did was talk to him and help him visualise what it felt like to be able to breath and create space in his body. I think he was really impressed. Some time shortly after that episode, he asked to do some stretches. But with life the way it is, it peetered out after awhile. Then, because of my concerns seeing the boys skateboard and play basketball, I said, "Let's do it, okay? Let's do a few stretches. Maybe five minutes. It's better than nothing." And so, he was willing. He'll do it whenever I suggest it, whenever I have free time. He'll do it, but he won't approach me now. What is interesting is I had him over a bolster one day to get him into a supported backbend. And he likes that. He'll have his walkman on, he'll wander out of the kitchen, come into the living room, and read a book lying over a bolster. We have three floating around. He'll just lie there and read and listen to his walkman. He says it kills, but I think he knows that it's good, that it feels good. I thought that was sort of cool, if he could keep that up.

How has your yoga changed, or how have you changed since having kids and having a family?

My practice is sort of like breakfast. It's piecemeal, I guess. It's not really satisfactory for a serious yogi, but it fits my lifestyle. So what I do is do what I can in the morning in between getting them ready for school. Then if I am lucky I get an hour in the afternoon before they come home. Instead of getting a really nice hour and a half in the morning all to myself, I've learned to surrender to the fact that I have children now and not to get frustrated that what used to be my time isn't my time anymore. I think a lot of people will find that yoga teaches them to surrender.

And kids, too.

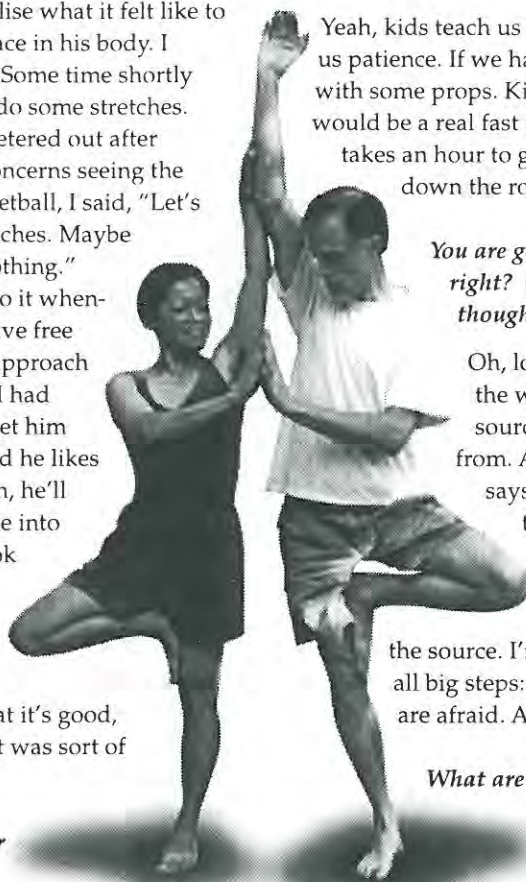
Yeah, kids teach us that, too. Exactly. Yoga teaches us patience. If we have an injury we work at it with some props. Kids teach us patience. Before I would be a real fast walker. Now, since kids, if it takes an hour to go to the bank three blocks down the road, it's okay.

You are going to India this summer, right? (Yes) Do you have any thoughts about that?

Oh, lots. It's sort of scary. Exciting in the way that I am going to go to the source from where it all comes from. And everyone that comes back says that it is important. Shirley thinks that it is important that, hopefully one day being certified as an Iyengar Teacher, you have been to the source. I'm looking forward to it. Like all big steps: you are excited about it, you are afraid. All sorts of emotions.

What are you afraid of?

Work (laughs). And yet...yeah, what am I afraid of? Everybody says it's hot there and it's polluted. I'm so



Lauren and her husband Bruce

spoiled being here with the space and the clean air. How will I react? Will I be able to cope? Hopefully I will.

I guess you won't know until you get there. (Exactly.) Something else I am interested in is your art. How did you get involved in art?

That's another little turnaround for me. When I went to school, it was all cerebral work. And then I changed and I went physical. When I finished high school, I thought, okay, I will continue on. My parents expected us to continue on. I said, I'm going to university but I don't want to do that stuff anymore, I want to do art. So I threw together a portfolio and got accepted into the Fine Arts Department which just started up at UVic in the year 1969. I was one of the few visual arts people; they were only accepting twenty students.

Did you find that you preferred working in one medium?

I guess I did. I focused on the etching aspect of it. As you can see from some of my cover drawings, I am basically pen and ink now. And I can take that with me wherever I go. I just bring a little book and a pen, it could be a pencil, it could be a ballpoint pen.

Didn't you mention once that your sister had a show somewhere?

Yeah, my sister is an international artist. She had a show in Japan. She's been invited to show at the National Gallery in Ottawa. She's shown here in Victoria. We went to her big show opening at The Vancouver Art Gallery.

What kind of work does she do?

She started off following in my footsteps. She said, my big sister did Fine Arts, I will too. And she has just surpassed me. She went to Montreal and took up paper making. Then she went to Japan and continued with her paper making training. She makes paper and

makes it photo sensitive. Most of her shows have focused on the Chinese. Like when my father first came and there was Head Tax. Young girls were brought over, my grandmother's age I guess, as prostitutes. Her work is really personal.

Is it photos that she takes?

Or she gets photographs from the archives or photographs that my mom has and she somehow makes the work photo sensitive and she will print a picture of my dad working out in the field on it. She will actually use paper and make jackets that look like Chinese workman jackets. With the paper she will make it three dimensional, sometimes, and other times she will just make it a photo show, a photo essay.

Is there any text that accompanies her pieces that explains some of the history that you were talking about?

A little bit. Most of the time there isn't and it is just left up to the viewer's imagination. There is always a text to introduce. The last show that she had at the Vancouver Art Gallery, one of my friends said it would have been helpful to have a little bit of text to explain what was the significance of certain things. Because she incorporates other things, too. She'll have a paper and she will have a plastic tube with a pump behind it pumping water with red dye in it. That was to signify the bloodline, the lifeline.

I learned about some of that in my English class this year. I didn't know a lot of it before and I'm sure there are other people who don't know the history, some of the immigration laws for Chinese entering Canada.

There were some pretty harsh ones. It is surfacing. There are so many books, like *Concubine's Children*, written by women - my age! Their lives were so full of turmoil and mine is such a piece of cake. And they are my age and my generation, it just blows me away.

Do you speak Chinese?

I speak it fairly well according to my older brother who's like another generation again because he was born in China. My older brother and sister were born there. My parents were separated for twenty years. My oldest sister must be about sixty-three years old, so that's almost twenty years older than I am. I was the first born when they reunited.

So your dad came here first?

He was born here. Then he went back [to China] to marry and had a couple of kids. He came back [to Canada] to work, for almost twenty years before he saved enough money to bring them over. So when I speak Chinese to my older brother and sister and my mom, he'll say, "Wow, Lauren, your Chinese is pretty good."

Wow, that's an amazing patience. There is a new sushi bar in town and friends of friends own it. My friend tells the story that this Japanese man came here for a holiday twenty years ago and said, "I love the island. This is where I want to live." He went back to Japan and worked for twenty years to be able to move here. I think - twenty years! My generation does not know that kind of patience.

Yeah, twenty years. Can we look down the road and say, that's what I am going to do even if it takes me twenty years. Like Shirley says, there are people who want to become yoga teachers and they haven't done any yoga yet.

YOGA ORDERS

Purple sticky mats:

Lise Gagnon, 995-1387

Bolsters, straps, blocks, blue mats:

Shirley Daventry French, 478-3775

New books:

Ann Kilbertus, 598-0976

Library books:

Maggi Feehan, 388-9989

Family Yoga: A Workshop with Lauren Cox

by Caren Liedtke

(Feel free to try these poses at home. Instructor, ropes, and cookies not provided.)

A room full of kids ranging in age from four to sixty four. Seemed a pretty tough crowd to me. Not to Lauren. She jumped right and had everyone lie down. Feet up the wall - little sandbags on little people's feet, big sandbags on big people's feet to push against and activate the legs. Lauren had everyone stand in *tadasana* and try to recreate the "sandbag" energy in the legs by pressing the feet firmly onto the ground. Next, partners sat facing one another and Lauren instructed us to weave our toes

in and out as we would interlace our fingers. No easy task! We weaved them the other way and Lauren said, "Stand up quickly." What about our toes?! "Unweave your toes first." Standing in *tadasana* again, we remembered the space between our toes, trying to spread them wide as Lauren spreads hers. "Take your fingers and place them on your thighs. Draw your thighs up. Zip up your front body, like you would a coat." Everyone stood tall with new zipped up height.

We went from being mountains to being trees - *Vrksasana*, the



tree pose. First with a partner, side by side, inner arms reaching tall and touching palms together, outer arms reaching across our chests, touching palms together. Then alone in the centre of the room, we were a forest. Who left the window open? A wind seemed to ripple through the room as a few trees swayed from side to side.

Over to the ledge for a ledge stretch. Partners took turns standing behind one another, pulling on the thighs just below the hips to draw the sit bones back and create length in the back. Then downward dog, followed by pose of the child. We closed our eyes for a few moments of quiet time. Next it was downward dog in the ropes - the rope in the hip crease, our partner pulled our wrists forward, lengthening our arms and our backs.

Lauren picked up the tempo with some standing poses. Triangle pose, first to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot," hands on the hips to create a handle and a spout. Then repeated with arms extended, "acting as one long pole." Warrior I, Ardha Chandrasana, Warrior III and it was starting to seem like my Thursday morning Level II class. Hey, these kids are pretty good!

Next came (nearly) everyone's favourite childhood activity - hanging upside down in the ropes. As David Letterman would say, "More fun than humans should be allowed." Big people and little people each took a turn, some took two. Out of the ropes, but still upside down, we did arm balance with our front torso facing the wall, legs at ninety degrees, feet flat on the wall (so your body makes an L). Then normal full arm balance, heels against the wall, partner close by for physical and emotional support. Next, Lauren showed us how to do teddy bear stand, a variation on headstand, again against the wall for support.

Back to earth. We got a mat and a blanket and sat on the ground. We paid homage to the moon with moon

salutation (a quick succession of forward bends where you roll on to your back and bring your toes to touch the ground behind your head, then roll forward into the next forward bend. Roll back and forth, following the rhythm of your breath). We saluted with 3 X pascimottanasana, 3 X janu sirsanana, 3 X 1/2 lotus, 3 X cobbler, and 3 X upavista konasana.

Next came halasana, the plough pose, and salamba sarvangasana, supported shoulder stand. The little people only needed one blanket for support, whereas big people used the requisite three or four.

Finally (for some of us big people), it was time for savasana. Someone in the crowd joked that it would be a thirty second savasana, as that was the approximate resting time of the average child. Surprisingly the room went quiet and still and savasana lasted a good two or three minutes. Just like kids to do everything fully - play hard, then rest hard. And what naturally follows any good nap (or close facsimile) - juice and cookies! During the refreshment period, I had the opportunity to talk to a few of the participants about the workshop and yoga in general:

Ty came with her 10 year old roommate and "best play-buddy" Niamh (pronounced Neve). Niamh says that they practise together at home, but it "isn't real yoga." Mainly they hang upside down on the couch (in supported shoulder



stand) while Niamh does balancings with Tikiss, her hairless cat. Niamh thought the workshop was fun, especially hanging upside down in the ropes. She thought the teddy bear head stand was the hardest part, although she was doing such a great job Ty left her in the pose and went to get a blanket. (Niamh called her back with a loud, "Ty!") Other than the rope work, Niamh liked the corpse pose, when everyone got to "just relax."

Kate, age 9, came with her mom, Tina, to help her celebrate her birthday. Tina told me that she and her husband practice yoga at home in the evenings and she wanted her daughter to know a little more about what it is they are doing. Kate had never done yoga before and she seemed to like it, especially "climbing the ropes." She thought that the head stand and the hand stand were pretty challenging. I saw Kate doing Warrior III, a challenging pose for me, and it was pretty impressive. Her lifted leg, torso and reaching arms made a nice straight line and she even managed to hold up her mom's back foot in the process. Tina reciprocated the favour when they were facing the other direction.



Penny brought son Luke, age 6. They practice together at home and balancings are their favourite, like "fly angel" where Penny lies on her back with her legs up in the air and Luke lies with his tummy on Penny's feet.



This is fun for Luke and provides a nice lower back release for Penny. Sometimes Luke just sits on Penny's feet. (I presume Penny's legs are up the wall. This is also a good lower back release and you could get a big kid or grown-up partner to sit on your feet if you wanted more weight.) When they did pose of the child in class, Luke fit in the V created by Penny's legs and she rested her torso on top of his. She said they like to do savasana together too, with Luke resting on top of her. Full contact yoga. It seemed to be popular with a lot of the kids in the workshop. I saw Shirley's grandson Miguel weaving in and out of his mother Rachel's bent arms while she was in teddy bear stand and later going in for the hug-tackle as she came forward in moon salutation. Another thing that Luke really liked was when he did turtle pose (hands on the floor, legs hooked over the upper arms) with Penny's mom at home. They put shoes on their hands and gloves on their feet and then tried to walk around.

After the workshop, Luke and Penny were headed off to the Commonwealth Pool for a swim. Do some yoga, lie down with a blanket and relax, eat a few cookies, then go for a swim. Sounds like a good life philosophy to me. Everything I need to know, I learned at Lauren's Family Yoga.



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Sequencing for Classes

by Geeta Iyengar



From a question and answer session at RIMYI, July 17, 1994. Transcribed from videotape by Rose Richardson, edited by Geeta Iyengar and Francie Ricks

Q: Should we structure our classes as you do in Pune, taking standing poses, forward bends, backbending & twists, pranayama, etc. week by week? Can this be done without giving up creativity?

A: When teaching classes normally the first week of the month we take standing poses, second week forward bends, third week backbendings, and then last one pranayama. Now you ask if the creativity comes to you should you allow yourselves to do accordingly? To answer this question, I have to say that I won't trust your creativity. If I say go by your creativity I would be responsible and I don't know your creativity.

A person can be creative even if he has been given a fixed program. You heard just now in the intensive Guruji restricted me to certain things; didn't you see that? Did he not say 'make them do Sirsasana and Sarvangasana and nothing else?' But as far as creativity is concerned, I will not lose anything by taking only Sirsasana and Sarvangasana. If Guruji told me

'that's enough standing poses, now take something else,' I would stop there. But that doesn't mean I've lost creativity in teaching. If he had said 'repeat the same pose,' I would repeat the same pose and teach again with the same creative mind, teaching what you are lacking in that pose and what you are supposed to do. So that is one thing.

Secondly, as a teacher, it is better that you don't confuse your students who are coming regularly. The best way is to start the first week with the standing poses, because almost all of the problems come from structural defects. Problems come because of the student's wrong adjustments, where they don't adjust properly or they don't adjust at all. Structural deformities create the problems. And most of the structural deformities can be taken off with the standing poses. Also the view of "exercise." When you know that certain organs within have to be worked or toned, the standing poses are best because you can manipulate the inner body with your arms and legs. Also with the standing poses it is easier to make the student understand. It is clearer to the person who is learning how to work within, even if we are working with the liver, kidney, or intestines. If I say in Trikonasana on the right side, 'turn your abdomen from the right to the left and extend your spine,' you know what is happening to your intestines, what is happening to your ribs, and how your thoracic chest is opened. So the practitioner begins to come closer and closer to his own body.

After standing poses I suggest taking forward bends. Forward bends work more with the outer muscles of the body. You start with the outer back muscles rather than directly with the inner spinal muscles. One who has not practiced before will not be very familiar with their back. What are the back muscles doing? Beginners don't know what is happening there. It is only when they come to yoga that they know where their problems are. With forward bend extensions you don't touch their spinal muscles directly. This extending is like planting a seed. The other day I said you must loosen the soil. If I want to sow a seed I loosen

the soil. You can't put the seed into the hard soil; it won't go in and it won't sprout. So first you make the soil soft from the outside. Then if you want to put the seed even deeper in, you have to dig still more so that a further layer of the soil is loosened. If you are planting a tree like mango or coconut, you have to go deep. But if it is just a small flower or the seed of some small plant, it's all right to plant it near the surface. Right? With seasonal flowers you don't put the seed too deep, just on the top soil somewhere. But still you have to loosen the soil. So now the seed of yoga has to be sown in a person. You can't start digging straight away in. The person will not be able to take it. So you say all right, just a little bit of digging of the soil and you sow the seed of the asanas there. So forward bends are better where you extend the external muscles of the back. You extend the outer muscles, at the same time working on your abdominal region.

After forward bends come seated postures or twistings, like simple lateral twists where a person again begins to work with the outer spinal muscles. It's a turning but it still doesn't go deep inside.

Lastly you come to backbending where you reach directly into the inner spinal muscles. When you are sowing the seed of the yoga plant put it deep inside like the coconut or mango tree; go for the deep end. In this manner after the one month's course, you finish with that kind of program and then take pranayama. Some asana practice has been done. A person coming once a week has been given some understanding, so the last week you do some pranayama. A beginner can just do Savasana. For beginners pranayama is not introduced in the first six to eight months, perhaps even for a year.

The one month's program we have divided in such a manner, so that first you learn standing poses, forward bends, twistings, and backbendings, then pranayama. If you want to do some balancings, etc., they go along with the twisting. To introduce more advanced poses, you put those things in as you would with a computer, sending a message to that

particular file. You open the file of twistings and you add the more difficult twisting as the person begins to progress. When you are teaching backbending you open that file. The sequence does not change.

But suppose the class has come to some intermediate state where all things are required. You know that a person comes once a week and you have to see that a touch of all the postures are given in that one class. Then in one class you may give a few standing poses first. Then you give Janu Sirsasana or something of forward bends. Then you come to a little bit of twisting. You may ask a person to do an inverted pose like Sirsasana. Then you come back to backbendings after Sirsasana. You make them do full arm balance or you may take a little bit of backbendings and then you take inversions like Sarvangasana and Halasana. Then you take Setu Bandha and Viparita Karani for recuperation, then Savasana. That means that in one class you adjust the sequence in the same way.

If you haven't practiced for a long time and you begin again, then you must see that you do two or three postures from each category, and have a touch with each so that you are doing some forward bends, some backbends, some twistings. Then when the intelligence of the body increases, when you begin to learn the essence through your practice, then you can't open too many files as once. You have to give time to one type of pose and go into the details so that you understand what is coming. Then you reflect on it. So one day you may do only standing poses. One day you may do only inversions and see how to work with the shoulders in Sirsasana, how to work with the chest in Sarvangasana, to find out where you go wrong, where you tilt, and how to lift the spine. You work in detail with the inversions. One day you choose backbends and work with those so that you realize the difference between each backbending asana. You work with those asanas to find out the differences how each pose affects you, etc. That is how the practice has to be adjusted and your teaching has to be adjusted.

In classes where the students have reached some level of understanding and maturity, sometimes you may

take just one type of poses [sic], for example only backbendings or only standing poses. Sometimes in a two hour class you take standing poses for one and a half hours, then in the last half hour a little bit of inversions so they recover and then that class is over. They have to work like that to learn. When you give a variety of poses, you cannot give all the details. So you can teach in different ways.

You also have to find out if the class is dull. Sometimes students are yawning. For them it might be boring, who knows? If you go into the details of one matter too much, they may get bored because they are not that keen yet. They have not matured. Keenness is required when you stretch your legs. If you are to stretch your shin you need keen observation because it is not just a stretch, it is a coming in contact with your own inner body. New students also may not be able to observe keenly. They fail to penetrate. If they don't achieve anything they become bored and they don't want to do asanas. When someone doesn't want to do, it is better to give a variety of poses. You make the person enter in from different files or different windows to find out how to remove that boredom, so they get some light. If one is keen, you can give two hours for standing poses because the keenness leads one to find out how each part of the body works, stretches and functions from inside. So the sequence and practice depends upon keenness, intensity and intention. That is how one has to practice. It depends upon your interest, your keenness, your requirements.

In teaching, it is better to be on the safer side, because you don't know the students. You don't know in which category they fall. When you come to Pune for an intensive we take it for granted that you are keen and it's safe to start in that way. We may concentrate on one thing and give a lot of details. But if you come for public classes, it's a general class. In general classes, you cannot assume that students are that keen. They just want to do some practice. To stick to practice some discipline is required. So you need to follow the sequence.



Photos from last years retreat at The Saltspring Centre



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Annual General Meeting of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society

January 25, 1997

Minutes:

Introduction of the 1996 Board members present: Leslie Hogya (Secretary), Jim Rischmiller (past President), Marlene Miller (past President), Corrine Lowen, Jerrilyn Wass (Treasurer), Shirley Daventry French (past President and founding member), Renate Grinfelds (Membership), Paul Lescarmure (assistant Treasurer), Derek French (vice President and founding member), Jennifer Rischmiller (President).

President's Report:

The Directors of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society met five times during 1996. Apart from the executive other duties were assigned to Linda Benn (teachers liaison person), Renate Grinfelds (membership coordinator responsible for membership and mailing list), Corrine Lowen as part of the policy committee. During the months January to May, Paul Lescarmure served as treasurer whilst Jerrilyn was working at Yasodhara Ashram. The Board of Directors extends its gratitude to Paul for his assistance.

Renate has updated the membership list and is also looking into the process of how membership payment information is recorded as there have been some gaps which led to people being left off the list. When the information available was recorded there was quite a discrepancy between the number of newsletters printed and the number of memberships received. I brought this particular item up for discussion at several directors' meetings because I believe it involves yoga in daily life, the sense of paying for what we use, of not putting value on what we receive in life. Although the mandate of the Yoga Centre is, and will continue to be, the dissemination of information, it would be helpful to receive more membership

payments so that we can continue to cover the costs of the newsletter and workshops.

The program was planned by Leslie Hogya, Celia Ward, Wendy Boyer, Maggi Feehan and Shirley Daventry French. The Friday night gatherings have been hosted by Brian London, Lise Gagnon, Adrienne Rhodes and Corrine Lowen and we extend our thanks for their work at making these gatherings so successful. All events planned were fully registered and financially successful with the exception of the fall Saltspring Retreat. Although this event was not fully registered, expenses were covered and the participants were very enthusiastic so the Directors need to review this event to check out whether it should continue or whether more publicity is needed. Thank you to everyone who made these events possible, to the people who took registrations, who provided refreshments, those who hosted participants, and most especially to the teachers.

Marlene Miller, Maggi Feehan, Linda Benn and Corinne Lowen worked on the scholarship policy committee. They updated the policy which has been approved by the Directors and will be published in the next newsletter. The Victoria Yoga Centre Society designated funds of approximately \$1100.00 for scholarships for 1996.

We spent some time at several meetings discussing the possibility of opening a physical space to use as a yoga centre. Although this idea did not come to fruition, the discussions were helpful for the directors in that we looked again at the pros and cons of a separate space for the yoga centre. During the process we tried to determine what worked and what did not. Out of these discussions came the suggestion of voice mail, so we now have a number for people to call for information on workshops, classes, etc., and we are

Statement of Operations and Surplus **For the Year Ended October 31, 1996.**

Revenue	1996	1995
Books, mats and t-shirts	\$5237.00	\$4248.00
Donations	482.00	969.00
Investment income	426.00	113.00
Membership dues	4649.00	4341.00
Newsletter and miscellaneous	919.00	1761.00
Workshops	<u>21750.00</u>	<u>14963.00</u>
Total Revenues	\$33463.00	\$26395.00
Expenses		
Books, mats and t-shirts	\$4462.00	\$3432.00
Certification	78.00	615.00
CIYTA meeting	513.00	3308.00
Gatherings	377.00	-
Insurance	771.00	567.00
Library	77.00	436.00
Newsletter	4896.00	5076.00
Office and miscellaneous	2306.00	1953.00
Professional development	800.00	-
Scholarships	1070.00	925.00
Workshops	15229.00	10201.00
Total Expenses	<u>30579.00</u>	<u>26513.00</u>
Net income (loss) for the year	\$2884.00	(\$118.00)
Surplus, beginning of year	<u>\$13998.00</u>	<u>\$14116.00</u>
Surplus, end of year	\$16882.00	\$13998.00

listed in the yellow pages, the number is 386-yoga. The directors are scheduled on a monthly basis to collect and answer messages and we welcome volunteers to answer this phone.

One of the last actions taken by the directors was to increase membership fees from \$20 to \$25 per year, a decision brought about by the increase in costs for the production of the newsletter.

This board recommends that the next board:

- reviews the constitution of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society
- reviews the investment that the Society presently has and looks into whether more money should be invested from the savings account
- adopts the suggestion of the program committee with regard to the Canadian Teachers Workshop series, that guest teachers come from Canada

I extend my thanks to the Board of Directors and all the Yoga Centre members for their help and wish you all the best for 1997.

Jennifer Rischmiller

Treasurer's Report

At the end of the fiscal year, October 31, 1996, our assets were \$21,365.00 and our liabilities were \$4,483.00. The accounts payable of \$1,822.00 includes \$274.00 held as a Teachers Fund in Trust and \$890.00 for the Victoria Chapter of The Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association designated towards travel to the 1997 CIYTA meeting to be held in the Maritimes.

We ended the year with a surplus of \$2,885.00. Compared to last year, revenues from long workshops increased significantly (by \$3,455.00); however, revenues from short workshops decreased (by \$1,695.00) and donations decreased (by \$490.00). Decreased expenses occurred for certification of Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers because the annual meeting was held on Saltspring Island and their association has taken over other pertinent expenses. Office expenses have increased (by \$415.00) in part because we now have voice mail.

Combined revenues from workshops, newsletter advertising, and the sale of books, mats and T-shirts was \$27,906.00 for our fiscal year. Once that total

reaches \$30,000.00 for a calendar year, we will be required to collect GST.

I appreciate all those involved in the Victoria Yoga Centre work that pass relevant information to me. It is only through your help that the accounts reflect what is happening. A heartfelt thank you to Paul for assuming treasurer's responsibilities for most of five months while I was away.

Jerrilyn Wass

Program Report

We've had a busy year of workshop and events. Our own teachers offered Sunday workshops over the year, plus Shirley's Light on Yoga to honour Mr. Iyengar's birthday in December.

We had many out of town teachers visit us in 1996. Felicity Green last February, Father Joe Pereira in September, and Julie Gudmested's focus on anatomy for teachers in November. All of these workshops were full to overflowing with waiting lists.

There were two retreats this year on Saltspring Island - the one in June Shirley Daventry French taught and followed the format she developed some years ago. The one in October focused more on the spiritual aspects of yoga and four teachers worked together, Shirley, Ann Kilbertus, Marlene Miller and Leslie Hoga. This retreat was well received but didn't do well financially so we will be deciding soon as to whether another fall retreat will be held.

In July, Victoria and the Islands teachers group hosted the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers conference and AGM held at Saltspring Centre. Teachers from as far away as Newfoundland, Toronto and Ottawa came. Local teachers led the asana and pranayama sessions for this conference.

The summer Intensive followed with a week of asana, pranayama, anatomy and philosophy. The Intensive was full with many teachers and teachers in training attending. One evening we added an optional

informal dinner and discussion for teachers and those in training.

Another feature of our program that has grown in attendance and popularity has been our Friday night gatherings. Many volunteers have helped make these possible. Popular topics were talks by Jessica Sluymer from Radha House and the teachers' demonstration.

Leslie Hogya

Teachers Group Report

by Marlene Miller

See Teachers Corner, on page six.

Newsletter Report

I have been involved with the publication of the newsletter for nearly a decade and this year the November/December issue acknowledged 15 years of publication in the present format. During these years the energy of the workers has fluctuated! However, this year has been a high point for me, we finally figured out how to conserve some energy by going to publication every two months instead of every month. Of course, this freed up energy for regular meetings and helped to maintain the enthusiasm necessary to make each issue vibrant and interesting.

We have offered apologies to any members who did not receive a newsletter because of the glitch in our membership registration process, please do let us know if you have any issues missing or have experienced a problem with this process. We do have some back issues stored for just this situation so we can mail them to you.

Melanie Jollymore offered to begin to learn the job of editor with a view to eventually taking over the task, however Melanie has since moved to Eastern Canada. The job is still up for grabs so if there's any interested people out there, let me know.

Jana Kalina helped for the first few issues of 1996 to set up a desktop like publishing process to assist in the printing/layout for the newsletter. This process worked so we hired Techstyle Industries to prepare each publication for paste up at a cost of \$150 per issue. We are just beginning to get the process to meet our needs and we believe it has improved the quality of the newsletter. We are still experimenting with design and layout and we do appreciate comments from readers.

So now the process is:
and the people responsible are:

creation of material	this could be YOU
gathering material	Shirley Daventry French and Jennifer Rischmiller
people typing material onto computer discs	Louine Niwa, Leslie Hogya Caren Liedtke, Neil McKinlay Shirley Daventry French Jennifer Rischmiller
computer layout	Techstyle Industries
art and production	Lauren Cox
proof reading	Shirley and Jennifer
copying	Monks Copy Centre
collation	Renate Grinfields
printing of labels	Renate
mailing	Jill Roberts
advertising	Carole Miller
index	Dave Rocklyn

We print 520 issues every two months and mail about 200 copies around the world. Each time the newsletter is published, all the issues leave the Y, either by mail, taken by students, or taken by teachers for distribution to the other places they teach.

My thanks to the newsletter committee without whose individual efforts there would be no newsletter.

Jennifer Rischmiller

Nominations for Directors:

Names submitted before the evening were; Linda Benn, Shirley Daventry French, Derek French, Renate Grinfelds, Leslie Hogya, Paul Lescarmure, Corrine Lowen, Marlene Miller, Jennifer Rischmiller, James Rischmiller, Jerrilyn Wass.

Nominated from the floor; Ann Cameron, Brian London, James Currie-Johnson. James declined the nomination for now, but may join the Board later in the year. Ann Kilbertus may also join the Board when she finds someone to take over her responsibility as regional representative for the CIYTA.

The Board of Directors for 1997:

Linda Benn, Ann Cameron, Shirley Daventry French, Derek French, Renate Grinfelds, Leslie Hogya, Paul Lescarmure, Brian London, Corrine Lowen, Marlene Miller, Jennifer Rischmiller, James Rischmiller, Jerrilyn Wass.



SWANWICK STUDY CENTRE

538 Swanwick Road, RR1, Victoria

For information contact Khairoun - 737-4762

March 14 to March 16 - Cost \$240

SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH & JESSICA SLUYMER Weekend Retreat on Women and Spiritual Life

Is it possible to live a spiritual life with the demands of family, profession, business and society? Take time to explore this in the company of other women - nurture yourself through the practice of yoga-assana, pranayama, chanting, reflection and discussion, plus superb vegetarian meals prepared in a spirit of devotion

Back to Basics,

an early spring workshop
with Shirley Daventry French
by Pip Van Nispen and Kelly Murphy

"Teach from what you see, practice from what you remember"

Badge Bourcier, a member of the recently formed Mid Island Yoga Association (MIYA), organised a workshop at Nanoose Place for Saturday, February 1st, with Shirley Daventry French, teaching all levels in the morning and instructing teachers and trainee teachers in the afternoon.

We gathered in the morning mist and the sun broke free just as we came into sukhāsana and the Invocation to Patanjali.

The focus of the workshop was working from the ground up. We began with the foundations of the feet. Using a block under the toe mounds we discovered our aggressive thighs and forward moving tendencies. We worked to bring our thighs back and our bellies into the back spine in *tadasana* and *uttanasana*. Using the wall for support and chairs to keep us from pitching forward, we began to realign ourselves in relation to the plumb line and gravity.

With the work revisited, our next challenge was opening the groins and lifting the hip to form triangles with hips raised and opened to the maximum. *Utthita trikonasana* became the exploration point for opening hips and moving buttocks back to create space for pelvic rotation. We used belts, blocks, fellow students and the wall to free shoulders, armpits and the chest area.

Shirley talked of our human tendency to oscillate, meaning to vibrate between certain limits of the work. Oscillation is also a kind of avoidance of connection; it's disassociation or disconnection of the whole body's involvement. In practice it occurs when, for example, we forget the feet, knees and hips and bring attention to the shoulders. We oscillate within the

limits of the pose from place to place until we can bring the whole body to the pose.

There was much that was new for us. After working in headstand to incorporate the work we had done in *tadasana*, we learned new ways to release the neck. On the floor, soles of the feet brought towards the buttocks and heads a few inches from the wall, we placed our hands in the position used for *urdvha dhanurasana*, and lifting the head, we tilted it to roll our foreheads onto the floor and our chests toward the wall.

A variation of the release was *adho mukha virasana* again to stimulate the pituitary or master gland and strengthen the immune system. Shirley pointed out that poses which rest the crown quieten the mind, and those that rest on the "third eye" stimulate the immune system.

Baddha konasana was our final challenge for the morning. Reminding us to sit forward on the sitting bones and ground the outer thighs, Shirley brought us back to the shoulder work she had introduced earlier. We placed belts around our forearms and lifted them above our heads to provide a counter action to the leg work.

During *savasana*, Shirley reminded us that yoga is a spiritual practice which unites body, mind and breath.

Eight eagles wheeled overhead in the sun during the lunch break.

The purpose of the afternoon session was to provide an opportunity for the teachers and teacher trainees to explore their individual concerns as regards personal practice as well as those arising from their teaching.

When asked about breath, Shirley told us that the correct sequence of instruction brings about correct breath. We were encouraged to be directive, to use verbs, rather than adjectives or descriptive language. There is a place for poetry and image in yoga, but beginners need to be directed in language which leaves no room for ambiguity or confusion. "Body, mind and speech are the means for learning the work,"



The
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and the
Victoria YM-YWCA

Welcome you to a



Friday Night Gathering



Asana Practice at 6 p.m.

Potluck dinner at 7 p.m.
in the Yoga Lounge at the Y.
(please bring your own plate/cutlery)

Date: Friday, April 4, 1997

Everyone is welcome to join us.

Shirley said. She used stories from the Bhagavad Gita to illustrate the metaphorical and historical bases for the "three Vira's", Virabhadrasana I, II and III. And she put the standing poses into the context of our whole lives. "You will see where you stand and you will learn to take a stand firmly", she said.

We worked on individual problems with group involvement. Blocked energy in backs, hips and necks got attention. Shirley made corrections with confidence and humour. "I find it very funny", she said,

referring not only to the contortions that her students get into, but also to the larger human predicament. There is a place for humour in the work. We can be serious about our practice without being unduly solemn. Laughter releases and reconfigures the meaning and shape of the work.

We drove away into the warmest day of the year. The tips of the alders are reddening and swelling and the red willows are about to burst into catkins.



New Year's Day and a Workshop with James Currie Johnson:

Building a Firm Foundation

by Caren Liedtke

The title of the New Year's Day workshop, as listed in the November/December Newsletter, was "Let's Do Yoga Every Day." The intention behind the workshop, as James explained it to us, was to help people do just that - practise every day. James wanted help the participants become more knowledgeable and better equipped to practice on their own at home. This idea, of organising a workshop around home practice, arose out of the questions James was regularly being asked in his various classes: students wanted to know what poses they should be doing at home, if some poses were more important than others, and if it mattered what order they put the various poses in.

In response to these questions and in preparation for the workshop, James consulted a number of yoga texts, such as B. K. S. Iyengar's *Light on Yoga* and *Yoga: The Iyengar Way*, by Silva, Mira, and Shyam Mehta. He looked at how often a pose showed up in the various suggested sequences. James reasoned that the more frequently a pose was recommended, the more fundamental it must be to yoga practice. He then culled these fundamental poses and put them into two sequences, based on the sequences given in the texts. Consistent with the Iyengar tradition, the first sequence consists mainly of the more active standing

poses; the second sequence covers the more quietening, seated poses. James explained that he designed the two sequences so that they could be done independently of one another or combined together for a longer practice.

James prepared a handout of the two series for us, complete with stick pictures for quick visual reference. They are reprinted here with permission (and thanks for the hard work that went into compiling them):

Sequence I

1. Adho Mukha Svanasana (downward facing dog)
2. Tadasana (mountain)
3. Trikonasana (triangle)
4. Parsvakonasana (extended angle)
5. Virabhadrasana II (warrior II)
6. Virabhadrasana I (warrior I)
7. Uttanasana (standing forward bend)
8. Parsvottanasana
9. Virasana (hero)
10. Salamba Sarvangasana (supported shoulder stand)
11. Halasana (plough)
12. Savasana (corpse)

Sequence II

1. Adho Mukha Savasana (downward dog)
2. Gomukhasana - arms only, legs in Virasana (cow's head)
3. Baddha Konasana (cobbler)
4. Dandasana
5. Paripurna Navasana (boat)
6. Janu Sirsasana (forward bend, one leg in Baddha Konasana)
7. Triang Mukhaikapada Pascimottanasana (forward bend, one leg in Virasana)
8. Pascimottanasana (forward bend, both legs extended)
9. Bharadvajasana - on chair (simple twist)
10. Salamba Sarvangasana (supported shoulderstand)
11. Halasana (plough)
12. Savasana (corpse)

I asked James where headstand would go. He stated that headstand is an energising posture. If you feel a bit sluggish or fatigued when starting your practice, you can begin either sequence (or the one long sequence) with headstand. This will help put some vitality and spark into your poses. If you feel good at the beginning of your practice, James suggests leaving headstand until later and doing it right before shoulderstand. This helps to energise the latter half of your practice, when you might otherwise begin to fade.

When putting the two sequences together into one longer sequence, as we did in the workshop, Salamba Sarvangasana, Halasana, and Savasana are done only once, towards the end. They are omitted from the first sequence and the transition between the two series is from pose #10 in the first sequence, Virasana, to pose #2 in the second sequence, Gomukhasana (while seated in Virasana).

For the actual workshop, James led us through the poses, stopping to give demonstrations and draw our attention to some of their key points. In doing so, he provided us with an experiential base to draw from when practising on our own. As we did these fundamental poses, I was struck by how many of them I

don't practise at home. If I were honest, I might admit that I even avoid one or two. There are poses that I like; with minor exceptions, those are the ones I practice. I take my time getting into them and I hold them for what I consider to be a decent length of time. Sometimes I even repeat them. Before taking this workshop, I thought that by holding and repeating these favoured poses, I was deepening my practice. Now I think that any depth I did achieve, was a narrow depth. I see that I was cutting a groove, if not getting into a rut and a rut does not make for a very steady base. By systematically and purposefully leaving out some of the most basic and fundamental poses, I was building a shaky foundation to my yoga practice.

Today in class, the first regular class of the New Year, Shirley spoke of "getting in touch with the base." After a non-routine, if not hectic time such as Christmas, she said that doing the basic poses and paying attention to their main points helps her to re-establish the rhythm of a regular practice. Shirley told us that a favourite saying of Mr. Iyengar's is: "Always come to the base." I found this statement in the list of his aphorisms published in the January/February, along with the following by Geeta:

Know the whole practice in total.
Do not leave the base.
Base intelligence is stable.

Clearly "the base" plays a key role in the Iyengar tradition. The workshop with James showed me where it needs more attention in my own practice. I like to think of this awareness as a New Year's gift - it has a nicer ring to it than resolution, and gratitude feels much bigger than grit.



Victoria Yoga Centre Society Scholarship Policy

Philosophy

- The Victoria Yoga Centre Society supports its members in their continued pursuit of personal and spiritual growth through yoga. As an expression of this support, the Yoga Centre offers scholarships to its members.

Purpose

- Scholarships are offered for local workshops and to support attendance at national and international yoga workshops, meetings, gatherings and celebrations.

They may be presented:

- To provide encouragement to a yoga student in her/his personal growth
- In recognition of Karma Yoga (volunteer work) for the Yoga Centre (although this is not a prerequisite for candidacy)
- For financial assistance

All scholarships are presented free of any obligation to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society.

Yoga In Metchosin

with
Shirley Daventry French



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

Information/Registration: 478-3775

Pranayama

Saturday Mornings
April 12th & May 3rd

Pranayama Class and
Asana Practice

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 per class

Applicant Criteria

Scholarships are offered to students who are active in the Victoria/Vancouver Island Yoga Community and have demonstrated:

- A sustained interest in yoga by way of regular attendance in asana classes and workshops
- An appreciation for the uniqueness of the Iyengar method and a willingness to study yoga philosophy and psychology.

Candidates may apply directly to the scholarship committee or be nominated by a Yoga Centre member or teacher. To be considered for scholarships, the applicant must be a member in good standing of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society. Generally an individual may be eligible to receive a scholarship only once in a program year.

Application Procedure

Applications and or nominations must be submitted in writing and include:

- Applicant's name, address and phone number
- Name of the applicant's yoga teacher
- A brief description of the reason(s) for the request

Applications are due at least **four** weeks prior to the applicable workshop or event.

Acceptance Procedure

When the scholarship has been awarded, the committee will notify in writing:

- The recipient
- The workshop organizer/teacher
- The Victoria Yoga Centre Society treasurer

The notification letter will:

- include the details of payment for the balance of fees in the case of partial scholarships
- state that in the event a recipient is unable to attend the class or workshop for which the scholarship was awarded, the funds will be retained by the Victoria Yoga Centre Society

All applicants will receive a letter informing them of the result of their application.

Funds

- Each year the Board of Directors of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society will allocate funds for scholarships.
- The scholarship committee will determine the allotment of the funds for full and partial scholarships for workshops, classes, meetings or celebrations. The scholarship committee will notify the program committee of the specific scholarship spaces for each event.
- Scholarship availability will be advertised in the newsletter.

Scholarship Committee

The three member scholarship committee shall consist of:

- an executive member of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society
- a member teacher of the Victoria Vancouver Island Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association
- a member of the Victoria Yoga Centre

The committee will make its decisions using the consensus approach. However, if consensus cannot be reached, a majority vote will be accepted as binding. If an appropriate nominee or applicant is not put forth, the Scholarship Committee reserves the right not to award the scholarship.

The committee will keep records of all awarded scholarships, the name of the recipient and the event for which the scholarship was given.

Recipients will be advised that an annual list of scholarships will be published in the newsletter.

SWANWICK STUDY CENTRE

538 Swanwick Road, RR1, Victoria

For information contact Khairon - 737-4762

June 13-19

FATHER JOE PEREIRA

Father Joe has a Masters degree in Indian Philosophy, specializing in Yoga, and has studied under B.K.S. Iyengar for more than 20 years. Father Joe is the founder of the Kripa Foundation with rehabilitation centres all over India for recovering alcoholics, drug addicts, people with AIDS.

Iyengar Yoga Teachers Focus on Women Workshop with Barbara Yates

Saturday, April 26, 1997 9:00 am - 12:00 noon
2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Yoga Lounge Victoria YM-YWCA

FEE: \$65.00 Victoria Iyengar Yoga Teachers
& VYCS Members
\$85.00 Non Members

Barbara a U.S. second level certified Iyengar Yoga Instructor has lived and taught yoga in California, and now resides in Mt. Lehman, B.C with her family and teaches yoga there and in Bellingham. She has studied in India with Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar, Geeta and Prashant. Recently Barbara has returned from the "Women's Intensive" taught by Geeta. Barbara will present insights from the Intensive. This is a wonderful opportunity for direct and fresh teachings from Geeta and Mr. Iyengar.

Registration: Make cheque payable to the:
Victoria Yoga Centre Society
and Mail to: Marlene Miller
8570 Sentinel Place
Sidney, B.C. V8L 4Z7

Information: Marlene at 250-655-4306 or
Yoga Centre at 250-386-YOGA(9642)

REGISTRATION OPENS

Teacher Members Only: February 1, 1997
March 15 for non members

NOTE: Registration open to teachers only until April 1 after which time senior students offered remaining space. Refunds given only if space can be filled; subject to a 15% administration fee.

Summer of '97

At this time of year, thoughts often turn to sunnier times ahead, and yoga students begin to think about what to do in their summer vacation. For a large contingent of Canadian teachers, their summer plans revolve around travelling to Pune in July to study at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute. Teachers from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island will attend this Canadian Intensive, representing all ten provinces. The British Columbia contingent of sixteen teachers includes eight from Victoria and three from up-Island. While this may make it difficult to offer as many classes as usual this summer, it will naturally benefit students in the long run.

Since 1988, we have offered a weeklong Iyengar Yoga Intensive in July, drawing students from across the country and from the United States. July 1997 is out of the question because of the trip to Pune. However, rather than cancel the intensive altogether, it will be offered during the last week of August. This will give the teachers enough time to return home and recover from jet lag.

There will be another change this year, in that the focus will be on teacher training. This is in response to the surge of interest in such training by students who would like to teach as well as others who are already teaching and would like to upgrade their skills. What better opportunity than to study with teachers freshly returned and inspired by studying at the source of this teaching!

The teachers for this year's course will be Shirley Daventry French, Leslie Hogya and Ann Kilbertus. It will commence on Monday, August 25th and end on Friday, August 29th. A brochure with full details is being prepared, and meanwhile a preliminary advertisement appears in this newsletter. As usual we will do our best to billet out-of-town students with local yoga practitioners, so if you have extra accommodation, do let us know.

..... and if you can't wait for summer, don't forget our popular Spring Retreat — June 6, 7 & 8 at the Salt Spring Centre (see advertisement this issue)

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

Iyengar Yoga Teacher Training

August 25 to 29 1997

with

**Shirley Daventry French
Leslie Hogya
Ann Kilbertus**

*Asana and Pranayama
The Art and Science of Teaching*

Fee: \$375.00

An opportunity for teachers and student teachers to refine their practice and teaching skills under the guidance of three experienced teachers. Shirley Daventry French is a longtime student of B.K.S. Iyengar and one of Canada's leading teachers of his method of yoga. She has been training teachers in Victoria and further afield for many years. Leslie Hogya, who has been teaching yoga for over twenty years, will draw also from her experience as a school teacher in the public school system. Ann Kilbertus combines her health care training as an occupational therapist with her extensive study of Iyengar Yoga.

For further information contact:
Victoria Yoga Centre
3918 Olympic View Drive
Victoria, B.C. V9C 4B2

Telephone enquiries:
Shirley Daventry French (250) 478-3775
or Adrienne Rhodes (250) 995-0385

A Rich and Meaningful Week

— recollections of the 1996 Yoga Intensive

by Pip Van Nispen

One of the best aspects of the Intensive was the sense of community. There is something very satisfying about knowing that a group of thirty participants were

all intent on one purpose — furthering their knowledge about yoga. In this, we were ably assisted by the leaders. We benefited from Shirley's recent trip to Colorado: Shirley shared the teachings of Geeta Iyengar and challenged us by exploring a variety of approaches to doing the standing poses, inversions, twists, sitting postures and the beginning backbends.



The classes were three hours long, therefore we were able to ask questions, clarify methods of teaching and benefit from her personal remembrances of Mr. Iyengar's style. Shirley was assisted by Jim and Leslie, who ensured that anyone who was unfamiliar with a pose received individual attention. There were several "breakthrough" moments experienced by participants during the week, especially those who were doing inversions for the first time.

In all the classes everyone appeared to sense a feeling of trust, which enabled us to go beyond our usual capabilities. There were a smattering of teachers from across the country which resulted in lively discussions



re different interpretations of Mr. Iyengar's teachings. We all gained from this sharing of expertise and personal experience.

Our bodies opened and released over the week — so much so, that on the last day I found myself feeling as though the classes really were not long enough. I

think that for many of us the Intensive provided the "kick start" needed to further develop our own practice.

The pranayama classes in the afternoon, led by Shirley, gently introduced us to our own breathing patterns and the beginning practices of Ujjayi and Viloma breathing.

The afternoon sessions were well balanced; they offered a deeper understanding of both the philosophical and spiritual aspects of a yoga practice. The sessions also provided us with the practical anatomical information necessary to conduct a restorative practice. Ann Kilbertus brought her one-legged skeleton friend to explain the workings of bones, joints and





other connections before leading us through a restorative practice. Derek French explained and demonstrated ways in which we can incorporate yoga techniques to help relieve common back problems. Jim Rischmiller personalised the *Bhagavad Gita*. He made the ancient text come alive for us and invited us to explore the many myths that govern our lives. Through individual drawings and group story telling, Leslie Hogya introduced us to the yoga

sutras of Patanjali. "Same but not" will live on as a modern day sutra forever in my mind – thanks to the up-Island contingent. Shirley Daventry French

shared her insights re the meaning of yoga within the spiritual quest – drawing from Patanjali's *Sadhana Pada*.

Many discussions continued after the sessions, and it was fun to be able to talk about the hidden effects that yoga has brought to our lives.

On the last day a feast was prepared by Melanie Jollymore that was simply yogic: Ayurvedic cooking at its finest! The relaxed gathering at the French's was a fitting ending to a rich and meaningful week. 🌿



RADHA HOUSE



WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

Divine Light Invocation

- Saturday, April 26, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

The Divine Light Invocation is a powerful yogic practise for healing oneself and others, and for realising the Light within.

Fee: \$50, deposit \$15

Rose Ceremony

- Part 1: Saturday, June 21, 8-9 p.m.
- Part 2: Sunday, June 22, 8-9 p.m.

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

For Further information, please call 595-0177

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Kundalini Classes

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

Fee: Winter session (11 classes): \$121

Spring session (10 classes): \$110

The Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga®

- Mondays: 5:30 - 7:30pm. All levels. (Ongoing)
- Thursdays: 12:30 - 2:30pm. All levels. (Ongoing)
- Saturdays: 10:15 - 12:15pm. 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: Winter session (11 classes): \$121

Spring session (10 classes): \$110

\$11 per drop-in class

Dreams

- Mondays: 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 in an excellent preparation for kundalini class.

Fee: Winter session (11 classes): \$121

Spring session (10 classes): \$110

Satsang and Bhajans

- Sundays: 7:30 - 9:30pm

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 the time of prayer and meditation. If you wish to be on the Prayer List, please contact us by phone or letter.

YOGA CALENDAR

MARCH

- 7: Friday night gathering
- 8: Teachers meeting
- 23: Fund raising workshop at the Y

APRIL

- 4: Friday night gathering
- 26: Barbara Yates workshop for teachers

MAY

- 9: Big Big Practice with Shirley Daventry French at the Y.
- 10: Teachers meeting
- 29-June 1: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association Annual General Meeting on Elizabeth Bay near Halifax, NS

JUNE

- 6-8: Saltspring Retreat

JULY

- 7-25: Canadian Intensive in Pune

AUGUST

- 25-29: Summer Intensive

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 \$25 and renewable each January

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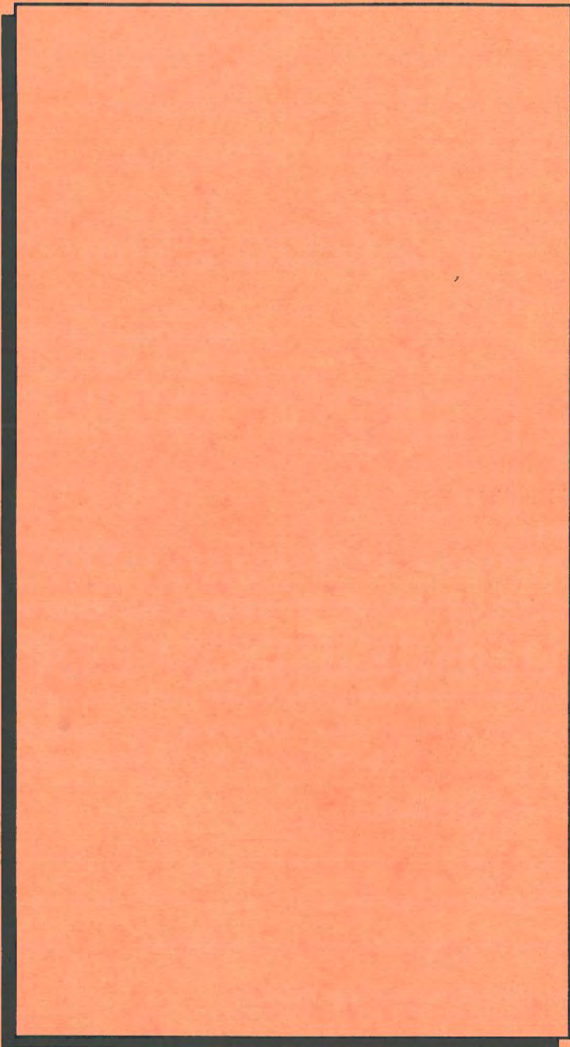
Phone: _____

☐ 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



Lauren's copy

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



May/June 1998

Please Subscribe



Saltspring Retreat June 5th – 7th, 1998

The Victoria Yoga Centre is pleased to present:



The 1998 Retreat at the Saltspring Centre

with Shirley Daventry French

June 5—June 7, 1998



Expert yoga instruction for all levels with Shirley Daventry French. Shirley is a senior student of B.K.S. Iyengar and has studied with him many times, most recently at the Canadian Intensive in July 1997.

*Pranayama, asana, chanting, sauna, delicious vegetarian cuisine!
Shared accommodation in a beautiful, tranquil setting*

Registration

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Fee: \$275.00

April 15th for non-members.

Fee: \$300.00

Camping: As above, less \$25

Commuters: As above, less \$80

Refunds are given only in the event that the space can be filled and are subject to a 15% administration fee.

Please make cheques for the full amount payable to the Victoria Yoga Centre and mail to:

Maggi Feehan

15 - 1635 Oak Bay Ave.

Victoria BC V8R 1B3

For more information phone Maggi at (250) 598-9989 or 386-YOGA (9642).

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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 may contact the The Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter:

Unit 592, 185-911 Yates St.
 Victoria BC V8V 4Y9

For more information on Victoria Yoga Centre activities and events, please call 386-YOGA

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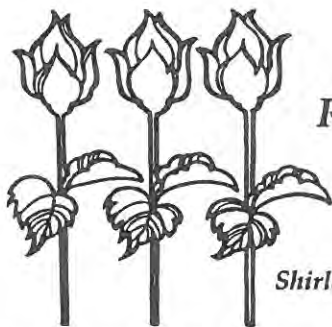
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Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French



"The game's afoot: follow your spirit"

— (Henry V, Act 3, Scene 2, by William Shakespeare)

This phrase from Henry the Fifth's stirring speech before Harfleur leapt into my mind at the start of the first Canadian Iyengar Yoga assessment held in Vancouver in March. "The game's afoot!" I felt a surge of exhilaration. "Follow your

spirit!" The spirit of yoga had brought us together in this place on this particular weekend: sixteen candidates, four assessors and three assistant assessors plus numerous volunteers from the Vancouver Iyengar Yoga community. On Saturday and Sunday, for the teaching portion of the assessment, we were joined by a selection of students from local classes.

That first Friday evening, however, the focus was on personal practice. We had been instructed by Gurujī to make sure their practice is up to standard. Two groups of eight teachers, at separate times, would perform a prescribed sequence of asanas for an hour and a half under the intense scrutiny of the assessors. We began with introductions which were followed by the Patanjali invocation, and then the eight candidates of the first group stood there in Tadasana, clearly visible in the large hall. I was moved by their courage, and very aware of the enormous responsibility of being an

assessor — responsibility to Gurujī, to the candidates, to the yoga community and to myself.

It was auspicious and exciting! The wishes Gurujī had expressed to the Canadian Iyengar Yoga community in Toronto in August 1993 had come to fruition. He had asked us to form a national association, establish a syllabus, implement certification and hold assessments. Four and a half years' later all of these tasks have been accomplished. Sixteen teachers from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and Hong Kong made up the first contingent of candidates. Coming from Hong Kong was Linda Shevloff, an

erstwhile Victoria yoga teacher and former editor of this newsletter who flew to B.C. for the

weekend seeking certification.

Certain terminology has been coined during the process of establishing certification. Gurujī awarded eleven certificates in Pune last summer to what we have called "the first wave." This assessment was the start of "the second wave" which consists of teachers who have been teaching ten years or more in the Iyengar tradition. In fact, many had been teaching for fifteen years, and some for more than that. Because of the experience of this group of candidates, the four assessors were selected from those whom Gurujī had given senior teaching credentials last summer in Pune. The three assistants had also received certificates directly from Gurujī in "the first wave." and were preparing to take on the responsibility of being an assessor at future assessments.

Readers from other countries may be surprised to learn that until July 1997 no Canadian teachers held certificates in Iyengar Yoga other than a very few who had earned them while living abroad. Occasionally teachers who had taught here for many years found themselves in a difficult position when they moved to a country where certification was already in place. From time to time we discussed the possibility, but there was no great push here towards certification until we

received what came to be known as "Guruji's directive" in 1993.

One of the objections voiced was that yoga is a spiritual practice and how can we assess spirituality? Well, of course, we can't; but we can assess competence in many areas and observe whether the teaching follows the guidelines set by Mr. Iyengar himself for those using his name. Marking sheets and categories have been carefully worked

out to get emotional judgments and reactions as much as possible out of the way, and they worked amazingly well. With the majority of candidates the assessors (and assistants) were very close in their evaluation. When there was disparity, i.e. one person marking high and another low, we took care to examine this carefully, requiring justification of the marks awarded. Here, the comments we had scribbled down

at the time were invaluable since it was not always possible to remember several hours later the exact reason for all our decisions, though some incidents stood out clearly for each of us. Here also, although many people did not take kindly to them, the large clipboards played a significant and positive role. Without them it would have been incredibly difficult to jot down observations as we moved around trying to see and hear as much as possible.

The staging of this assessment was preceded by four and a half years of hard work on the part of many people across the country, and four and a half years of patience on the part of Guruji (who does not generally receive recognition for his forbearance). Personally, I feel he showed enormous restraint in giving us the time and space to work internally to reconcile strong feelings throughout Canada both for and against

certification. As a result, we have managed to avoid fragmentation and establish a procedure which would work in a huge country such as Canada while at the same time fitting into an international model which has evolved from the experience of many Western countries in consultation with Guruji.

At one point an Indian friend and longtime student of Mr. Iyengar expressed surprise at the number of

discussions which were taking place. From his point of view, our energy would have been better directed into *how* to proceed. A European colleague also suggested that we just got on with it and others would follow. Sometimes, when impatience got the better of me, I thought this might have been a good idea. However, by waiting we are starting out with support from coast to coast.

Those sixteen candidates who passed their assessment will be awarded certificates which are

recognised throughout the world: in Europe, North and South America, Asia, Australasia and Africa. A certificate in Iyengar Yoga is a professional qualification which testifies to years of practice and study. Here in Victoria, apprentices are required to devote two years to their initial teacher training plus a year of internship; then, if they wish to continue to be members in good standing of the Vancouver Island Iyengar Yoga Teachers' group, they are expected to participate in ongoing post-graduate study by participating in monthly teachers' meetings, workshops and special training sessions plus some karma yoga on behalf of the community. They will also be encouraged to make the journey to India and study at the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Pune, if at all possible.

At this moment there are thirty one certified teachers in Canada: nineteen in British Columbia, four in



Shirley Daventry French
& Maureen Carruthers



NEW MAILING ADDRESS FOR VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE:

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185 – 911 Yates Street
Victoria BC V8V 4Y9

Alberta, two in Quebec and Nova Scotia, and one each in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario plus one expatriate in Hong Kong. These numbers are geographically skewed because the first assessment took place in the West. We will get a more balanced picture when the second assessment, which is being held in Toronto in June, is completed.

Four and a half years may seem a long time to accede to Guruji's wishes, but I was told it took seven years in France! We owe thanks to them as well as to the Iyengar Yoga communities in the United Kingdom, United States, South Africa and Australia for their groundwork in setting up certification and assessment. Their response to our appeals for information saved us from having to reinvent every step of the process. South Africa, for instance, has had certification in Iyengar Yoga since 1975 and the United Kingdom followed shortly thereafter. Personally, I am very grateful to all these countries for sharing with us the benefit of their experience, and to the Americans for allowing me to attend one of their assessments as an observer, an experience which was invaluable in preparing to become an assessor myself.

What was it like to serve as an assessor at the first Canadian assessment? An honour, a responsibility and four days of very concentrated hard work. This work was made easier by the support of the Vancouver community and especially Ingelise Nherlan, a fellow assessor and local co-ordinator, and Khairon Quadir, a longtime Vancouver yoga student, who billeted

Marlene Mawhinney and myself in her light, airy and spacious townhouse. Khairon worked as hard as anyone preparing delicious meals and devoting much care and attention to the four assessors and three assistants so we could focus on our work. It was a pleasure to be able to retire to a quiet spacious bedroom (Khairon's own room which she sacrificed for the duration) when the day's work was done and which helped me to let down and let go of all the stuff accumulated in my head.

During the closing ceremony, Marlene Mawhinney asked for comments from everyone about their experience: someone remarked that we could have been home doing yoga instead. *We were all doing yoga!* For some it took the form of teaching and practising asanas, for others it was a combination of bhakti (devotion) and karma (selfless service) yoga; and for all, it involved the practice of kriya yoga (self-discipline, self-study and surrender).

I was exhausted when I returned home, but grateful for an invaluable experience on the path of yoga. It was a pleasure to work with my fellow assessors: Maureen Carruthers, Marlene Mawhinney and Ingelise Nherlan. I have a great respect for the professional expertise and maturity they brought to the task, and also for the three assistants: Hilda Pezarro, Leslie Hogya and Marlene Miller.

Congratulations to all the newly certified teachers. And lastly thanks to Guruji for the brilliance of his work, for the light of yoga and for another opportunity to learn and grow.

Letters from India

Following are excerpts from two letters written by Shoba Setty of Udupi, India. Shoba, was brought up in Pune, where together with her mother and two sisters she became a student of B.K.S. Iyengar. After her marriage, she moved to South India. Shoba returns to Pune several times a year to visit her family and to pursue her studies with Guruji. On many occasions, my visits to Pune have coincided with hers, and she has been an assistant at several of the Intensives I attended. We have established a long distance friendship, and I took out a membership in the yoga centre on her behalf so she could receive our newsletter. As you will see, she appreciates getting our news.

Shirley Daventry French

September 1997

Dear Shirley,

Namaste! I have no words to praise your newsletter, nor words to thank you for it. Every page is filled with so much information and sharing of views that I look forward to it eagerly.

When we shifted to our new house it was quite unexpectedly as we couldn't find many auspicious days.

After shifting, time seems to be flying and we have still not settled down properly as the furniture work is going on and the workers are there in every room. So the house is a mess and I keep trying to get some order. The post was all directed here but unfortunately the postman had a fight with the previous owner and sent back all the post.

According to Indian standards my house is quite big. There are four bedrooms and a nice hall to accommodate at least ten to twelve students comfortably. I have six classes a week for adult ladies, two classes for school children and one class (private) for children. I wonder how you find time or rather manage time and do so

much. I long to do some reading but it's out. Some days I manage a good practice and then something turns up and my routine gets disturbed. Cooking and looking after the children seems to be a never ending job, and at times I get very frustrated. Maybe when my children grow up I'll get some time for myself.

When I read about all the activities in the Newsletter, I realise how much I have to read and practice and do. My heartfelt regards to the Canadian Yoga family

.....

March 1998

Your recent issue was very good, and I really enjoyed reading it. I have one request. You have been giving photos of the family class. I wish some members would write about their experiences, how they spend the whole day? Which asanas the children do and how do they interact with the adults? This would really be interesting.

Last week I was invited to train 76 Physical Education teachers for three days in Yoga. The time given was too short but it was very exhausting for me to handle 76 people the whole day long. I plan to go to Poona in April/May when my children have their summer holidays. I need rest from housework and I want to be a student of yoga and not a teacher as I am here.

***You have been giving photos of the family class.
I wish some members would write about their
experiences, how they spend the whole day?***

Hope to see you in India in the next year for Guruji's birthday. I will definitely come for at least a week. This June I will be going to Birmingham for the Lions Convention. I wish it was in Canada so that I could visit you and your classes too.

With warm wishes,
Shoba.

A Letter from Australia

Darwin, Australia

March 29, 1998

To the Wonderful Yoga People in Victoria.

For the past three months, I have been backpacking through New Zealand and Australia. Low budget travelling isn't always easy, but the scenery changes and there is always a little adventure. The Dingo stole my shoe, and somebody stole my wallet.

One of the most enjoyable and interesting things that I do, when I'm in a new city, is try to locate an Iyengar Yoga school and take a class. I can't often reach them by phone so I end up going to the studio, reading the schedule on the door and coming back for a class. It's a good way to learn a bit of the city and experience a new studio and teacher.

I loved New Zealand. I hitched around most of the North Island. There were no classes in Auckland over Christmas so I missed out there. I discovered later there were many other active groups on the North Island and I could have gone to more classes. On the South Island, I visited Rosie Holland in Nelson and we all know what a lovely teacher she is. In Christchurch, at the Yoga Room, Frances De Haas barked directions with a strong loud humorous Down Under accent. "Open the shoulders, roll the thighs in." In Dunedin, I walked up the hills to do a peaceful class in Jan Hollebon's intimate studio on the top floor of her home, and another class in an old building downtown looking out at the many church steeples. Then down around the bottom of the South Island, one last class with Frances and suddenly I was in Sidney, Australia.

Last year, Shirley gave me a list of yoga teachers she knew in Australia. I have managed to have at least one class with many of them. The first class was after a hot day at Bondi Beach. It turned out to be the *astanga vinyasa*. Shirt off and the sweat pouring off, moving quickly through the poses. Sam Wood taking my soaking shirt and lifting me further into the poses.

In her Kings Cross studio, Carolyn Coggins teaches a lovely much slower, quieter, clear class. In Glebe, the



"Ted from Canada"



main teacher, Peter Thomson was in India at the time I attended a Level 3 class. He had faxed the list of asanas for that night and everyone had a copy. They went through the list individually and ended up two hours later in Savasana. Not a word spoken the entire time. I didn't have my glasses, so I just followed a woman who had a strong, confident practice and a clock in front of her. Peter has a very large loyal following. He takes them to Bali to do workshops.

Simon Borg-Oliver does what he calls *Yoga Synergy* in Bondi Beach, and in a beautiful old church in

Newtown. Over a six week session the whole class practices a series of postures and then towards the end of the session moves through the asanas without stopping, following the breath. It is a full-on class and a very strong group. Lots of one legged series of linked postures.

In Balmain, a ferry ride from downtown Sydney, in a very nice building, Pixie Liliias teaches an excellent Level 3 with emphasis on the correctness of the postures. In St. Kilda, Melbourne, at the end of the tram line, Simon Marocco is the main teacher. Alfonso taught a very strong Level 2 class – pavritta ardha chandrasana “tighten the thigh and relax the buttocks.”

In Adelaide, a class with Vanessa Shribman at the end of another tram line in Glenelg, and another with Rebecca on Hutt St. just five women and myself, very pleasant. Here in Darwin, I enjoyed meeting and doing a class with Carole Baillargeon (formerly of Montréal—ED.) who is developing a school here.

It's wonderful to experience different teachers and styles of teaching, and also to realise that the same teacher can teach with a variety of styles depending on the class or how they are feeling.

The students here tend to be younger with more men. Because of the heat, the clothing is generally lighter and less modest. Some schools are more strenuous, others more traditional, but the asanas remain the same and the teaching is always excellent.

For myself, I have enjoyed being an itinerant yoga student. “Ted from Canada” dropping in here and there. I have a new respect for the asanas and realise how much there is to understand about every pose. Every class, I discover new adjustments, releases and openings. I love it when a teacher touches, moves, adjusts me. I don't always process the directions



auditorily. (Women can be educated, men can only be trained). Humour.

Another thing I do when traveling and there is a photo op., I set up the shot, get someone to take my camera and then move into the frame and go into a pose. Headstand is the fastest and most dramatic. I'm taking pictures for people on the other side of the earth. Got to have a sense of humour about these things. Backbend is good in front of bridges or mountain ranges. Ardha Chandrasana for statues. Downward dog for sunsets. What I notice when the pictures are developed is how badly I did the posture. It doesn't stop me. I'm a funky 53 year carpenter in great shape (touch wood) and I owe it to Yoga.

I look forward to being back at the Monday nights in Victoria, but not until I see Bali.

I am thankful for all the teachers and the teachings. God bless you.

Love you all,
Ted Mather.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to the sixteen newly certified teachers who passed the first Canadian national assessment held in Vancouver on March 13, 14 & 15 1998:

Linda Benn (Victoria, B.C.)
Rae Bittorf (Edmonton, Alberta)
Carol Brophy (Sechelt, B.C.)
Susan Bull (Vancouver, B.C.)
Vicky Catchpole (Cumberland, B.C.)
Wende Davis (Vancouver, B.C.)
Patty Dussel (Edmonton, Alberta)
Teddy Hyndman (Edmonton, Alberta)
Gioia Irwin (Vancouver, B.C.)
Ann Kilbertus (Victoria, B.C.)
Carole Miller (Victoria, B.C.)

Yvonne Kipp (Cortes Island, B.C.)
Val Paape (Winnipeg, Manitoba)
Linda Shevloff (Hong Kong)
Jo Ann Sutherland (Saskatoon, Sask.)
Kathryn Wiggins (Queen Charlotte, B.C.)

Two assessments have been scheduled this year for teachers with ten or more years' teaching experience. The second one will be held in Toronto on June 19, 20 & 21.



Rites of Passage

First Canadian Iyengar Yoga
Teachers' Assessment – March 1998
by Leslie Hogya

In traditional First Nation's culture, a young person must go through certain rites and rituals to gain full adult status in society. These rituals are physically and emotionally rigorous and challenging. The person going through them must endure whatever comes without complaint. Once the ritual is completed, there is a great sense of pride and accomplishment and a celebration.

To me, this was what the certification process was like. As I watched the 16 teachers first practice in front of judges, who walked around with clipboards, and then teach for 30 minutes a group of students they had never seen, I felt their tensions, their struggles, their relief. But it was not the same as being a participant. By getting my Iyengar Yoga teacher's certificate with the first wave of teachers, I sidestepped this. But, with this also has come a great responsibility. Suddenly, I was part of the assessors side of the room, when many of my friends and peers were waiting to be assessed.

The weekend began Friday at noon when the assessors: Marlene Mawhinney from Toronto, along with B.C. teachers Shirley Daventry French, Ingelise Nherlan,

Maureen Carruthers, and the assistants: Hilda Pezaro, Marlene Miller and I, met to finalize details for the weekend. Many years of planning and work had gone in to preparing for this weekend. But since I was not on the Professional Development committee, I had to find out what I was to do.

The role of timekeeper was to be mine. My own anxiety levels went up at those words. I am not that good with numbers, nor with the simplest technology. Hilda assured me her timer was very easy to use, and fortunately it was.

The evening began, the group of 16 teachers had been divided into two. The first eight were standing ready for me to call out *tadasana*. Many times throughout the weekend, I was grateful to have had Shirley as my teacher and this was one of them. Shirley always uses the sanskrit names when she teaches, and expects all of us use them when we teach, so I had no fear about how to say *setu bhandha sarvangasana*. Saying the names of the poses and the pushing of buttons, listening to the beep of the alarm, was my focus as I went through the list of poses twice from 5:30- 9:00 pm. As the evening progressed, I stopped trying to make any notes about what I was seeing, and eventually barely looked at the participants. I needed to make sure I knew where I was on the list, which side we were on, how many seconds the next pose would be. It's amazing how long



▲ The assessors and assistants: (l - r) Leslie Hogya, Marlene Miller, Shirley Daventry French, Marlene Mawhinney, Ingelise Nherlan, Hilda Pezzaro and Maureen Carruthers.

30 seconds can be in a room filled with perspiring intense yoga teachers striving to balance perfectly in *Virabhadrasana III* (third warrior pose).

The next morning, the participants worked in groups to plan a lesson. It was fun and exciting to watch them involve themselves into the heart of yoga, by working together, planning, organizing the sequence and linking of points.

Afternoon, the teaching began and I had the timer going, but I only had to give a 15 then 5 minute warning. I had time to watch and use the scoring sheets. During the afternoon break, when the candidates were able to leave the building for some food and fresh air, the assessing team went to work, figuring out scores for each person. The Vancouver community provided us with a lovely lunch as we toiled. The scoring sheets worked very well. If a teacher forgot things, or misjudged the time, their other strengths kept the scores balanced. My scores were not counted in the totals, but Marlene Mawhinney asked each of the assistants for our scores and comments. This process helped me realize that my understanding and insights were very close to everyone else's. Occasionally, when my dear friends were the ones being assessed, my scores were higher than everyone else's. I could not be objective and only saw their best! This is why, as a policy, the recommending teacher's scores were also not used in the totals. I felt nothing but respect for the assessors in their efforts to be fair and the work of the Professional Development committee for building such a workable process.

As the weekend wore on, this pattern continued. I kept score, we worked through the breaks. The scoring for the last group was done. At 3:00 pm on



Marlene Miller
doing Karma Yoga



Sunday we gathered in the final closing circle to hear comments from all. Marlene Mawhinney was very skilled in eliciting a response from everyone in the room about their experience. We had many opportunities to go around one by one and give highlights of the weekend in different ways.

Sunday evening, the participants began dispersing, the assessors had the night off. I enjoyed a quiet dinner with Marlene Miller and Linda Shevloff who had flown all the way from Hong Kong to participate in this assessment! Monday morning we met for breakfast and went over everything in detail, and were all delighted that everyone had

passed. We then worked very carefully at drafting individual letters for each candidate. There were marks to put in and comments that would, hopefully, be helpful for their future development.

Marlene Miller and I left after 6:00 pm without much hope of catching the 7:00 pm ferry for Victoria. I was dreading getting home so late, and knowing I had a full busy week ahead. But luck was with us. At 7:04, when we pulled into the terminal, the ferry was still loading and we were waved aboard. For once the ferry was late when I needed it!

I want to just say thank you to the Vancouver community for hosting this event, for the nourishing food we ate during our breaks, to Khairoon, who let us take over her house, to everyone who came to be assessed for their professionalism and dedication, and for my co-assessors, who worked in true selfless service. (No one was paid to come to work 12-15 hour days!) I appreciate all of them for their commitment and the care they took to do the job thoroughly and well.

Going Through Certification

by Ann Kilbertus

I can't say it was with great excitement that I approached the certification weekend in Vancouver. My last experience of a formal evaluation process was connected with presenting a fourth year research project to finish Occupational Therapy School and I had found the stress involved to be very demanding.

Out of respect for Guruji and all my Teachers, and with the support of my colleagues in yoga, I decided to go with the wave of certification, knowing that learning comes in many ways!

To start with, a good "home base" was set up in a one bedroom suite at the Sylvia Hotel in Vancouver with three wise yoginis – Carole Miller (my first teacher in the Iyengar method), Linda Shevloff (who travelled all the way from Hong Kong!), and Leslie Hogya (my faithful travelling companion from two previous Indian Journeys). In addition, Linda Benn and Yvonne Kipp were close by in a room on the floor below us.

I arrived early with Linda Benn and was able to find some time to settle in, explore the area, and stare out my window at English Bay. The light was beautiful, twinkling through a border of trees. Their shimmering pink branches were covered in buds, ready to soon burst in to blossom.

After an early dinner with Carole Miller I realized that my mind was still filled with more



The assessors sharing a lighter moment ▲

questions than answers about the whole certification process. Later that night a group of us arrived at Cambrian Hall to do our practice. Doing the first few poses, I felt aware of the assessors, as though I was "performing" for their benefit. But, as we continued on, the yoga worked and drew my attention inside, more and more. Eventually the presence of the assessors, complete with clipboards in hand, became less of a drawing card for my mind. And then the time arrived when I was able to simply do the practice.

The assessors – Marlene Mawhinney, Shirley Daventry French, Maureen Carruthers, and Ingelise Nherlan are all compassionate individuals.

Ironically the formalized roles they had to carry out brought back



Four of the newly certified teachers. ▲

memories of piano exams I had taken in front of a panel of cool judges in halls, just like this one! How old was I? Where did this stuff in my mind come from?

The next day we were divided into small groups and given themes to work on, such as standing poses, forward bends, back bends, or poses to prepare for Pranayama. We were asked to come up with a class sequence of 16 poses with a selected focus based on the particular theme. It was a delight to work in the small group with Gioia Irwin, Yvonne Kipp, and Carole Miller. I found myself excited about doing the postures, learning and discovering variations to help us in planning the class. In exchanging information on teaching with these women I began feeling much better, and became quite positively caught up in the whole experience.

The teaching assessments then followed, that afternoon, evening, and the following morning. Going through the "fire" as it were. In this portion of the process, one selected a sequence of five poses fifteen minutes before teaching. We were then given thirty minutes to instruct. Four of the poses were taken from the earlier planning class plan that we had developed in our small group, and one was added from the Introductory Level 1 and 2 syllabus.

The students from Vancouver who volunteered their

time for this section were quietly supportive as each teacher took the stage and began. There was an awareness that "this was it." Regardless of stress and anxiety, the time had come to simply step forward and do. In this case my peers were lovingly hanging over

the balcony, and assessors and assessors in training, circled about the teacher and students. Again I felt my awareness shift from a focus on the assessors, more and more to the simple but ever so complex act of teaching. In no time my thirty minutes was done, and only then did I sense the feeling of sweet relief! Then on to watch and learn from all the others.

The teaching section, unlike any other formal evaluation I have undertaken, ended with a circle where Marlene Mahwinney pulled us together guiding us in finding images/stories/memories that would round out and complete the formal assessment.

Going through certification was a ritual, and in some ways, a rite of passage. I started out with many questions about this formalized process. In the end the whole experience pushed me to study the poses harder and consequently to find within myself a subtler and deeper meaning and clarity. Teaching is a never ending learning process. Despite the anxiety and very hard work involved in this certification, I found in the end the joy that I have always found in teaching Iyengar Yoga.



A Heart, A Cross, and A Dice

by Linda Benn

Ingelise Nherlan revealed at the end of the assessment weekend that she had worn a heart, a cross and a dice dangling from her necklace. These symbols express the experience very well; opening the heart, acting from the heart; trusting the yoga teachings, faith in the Creative Spirit; and accepting and flowing with the luck of the moment.

Yoga is described as a journey towards the Higher Self. One of the goals is to achieve balance in every aspect of one's life. The process of teacher assessment revealed much about our journey as individuals and as a community. On the surface, the intensity of the weekend did not appear to reflect the balance of the yogic way. Vicky Catchpole accurately described it as "another **** marathon yoga weekend." On the balcony where we watched and waited, the full range of emotions was expressed. Many talked about being awake for hours in the middle of the night planning how to teach the poses instead of sleeping. We each expressed our anxiety differently: nervousness, anger, tight shoulders, headaches, giggles, sadness, visits to the washroom, eating too much, not eating enough, fatigue, etc.

I was the first to teach in front of the assessors. Of course, I was not feeling well. However, this may have been good as I knew that I had to focus my energy and attention. Thirty minutes were not long to teach five poses including headstand. Choices about timing, sequence and props had to be made quickly. The small group I was in had decided to focus on leg work in standing poses and inversions. I have had this work impressed upon me ever since starting Iyengar yoga so emphasizing these actions has become second nature. However, there are so many ways of teaching, I had to

choose which actions and which words to use. I needed to show that I understand the principles and techniques of Iyengar yoga but with sensitivity to the students and what was correct for them. How to carry the leg actions from Tadasana into the following poses? During teaching I actually managed to stay focused on the students and pretty much ignored the assessors and watching teachers. This may have been to the point that I think that only the students could hear what I was saying.

The certifying letter suggested that I use a more commanding voice. My regular students will laugh because normally I am probably too commanding and vocal. Thus I survived, as we all did.

We were fortunate to be able to watch from the balcony as the rest of the candidates did their teaching.

What was striking is how our personalities were revealed as we taught. We became caricatures of ourselves as everything became exaggerated in this not 'normal' teaching situation. Yvonne mentioned later that she observed how each of us uses our personality to enhance the teaching. Linda Shevloff wrote me later that she was so full of yoga stuff that it had to come out of her somehow or she would burst. I learned a great deal from the other teachers: ways of teaching poses, structuring the class, using humour, making adjustments, observing the students. I could see what worked and what didn't.

Sitting with the other teachers I did not feel any competitiveness, only a great deal of support and sharing as we leaned over the balcony railing. Leslie said later that, "The thing that almost ripped us apart has brought us together." Getting to the point of doing certification in the Canadian Iyengar community has not been easy. Many years of work and struggle have brought us to the point of cooperation and acceptance of certification. It will continue to evolve and will be adjusted to the Canadian situation with the guidance of Mr. Iyengar and the Professional Development Committee of the C.I.Y.T.A. I thought that the weekend was very well



planned and executed. The Vancouver group were very gracious hosts, taking especially good care of the assessors.

At the closing, Marlene Mawhinney, brought the group together in a circle. This gathering, which included beautifully prepared refreshments, completed the weekend. Going around the circle each person talked about the high points and the low points. Most of us felt that the work we did in the small groups planning classes was very valuable. It was great to learn from each other and also to make friends with people we did not know well. Another high point which evoked much laughter was when Hilda Pizarro led the Invocation with much sincerity but suspect pronunciation. Val Paape (Winnipeg) added the verb 'to weasel' to the Iyengar yoga lexicon. Jo-Ann Sutherland (Saskatoon) said that she held herself together by leaving a strap done up around her hips while she continued to teach marching up and down the row of students. For Victoria and Vancouver Island people, a high point was staying at the Sylvia Hotel and we loved having Linda Shevloff there for her brief visit from Hong Kong. For Maureen Carruthers, an opportunity to visit with Gioia Irwin was special. The Vancouver students who put up with all these disparate and nervous teachers were wonderful but one who wanted to do his own thing was described as the 'Student from Hell'

The assessors had the most difficult and exhausting work to do and the low point for Marlene Mawhinney was late on Saturday when she told us to be good or else! The assessors and the observers spent innumerable hours observing, discussing, recording, making decisions and preparing the individual letters. We will long remember them circling around us, clipboards in hand. They worked hard to ensure that a high standard of teaching will be achieved in Canada. At the same time they were very careful to be fair and compassionate to each of us. I

am very grateful to Marlene Mawhinney, Ingelise Nherlan, Maureen Carruthers and Shirley Daventry French. Hilda Pizarro, Marlene Miller and Leslie Hogya assisted and we appreciated their timely guidance.

We all missed having Claudia MacDonald (Vancouver) as one of the candidates. Claudia had to be in the East to attend to family matters concerning the death of her father. We wish Claudia, and the other candidates, well at the assessment to be held in June in Toronto.

In spite of the assessment being very intense and passionate, underlying was poise, clarity and integrity. Balance is not static but the result of ever changing forces. People that practice Iyengar yoga have courage and a willingness to change. Yoga brings us face to face with ourselves, physically, mentally, and emotionally. We have all taught for over ten years and have had to learn a great deal about ourselves and how to teach yoga based on our training and experiences. Our lives are more balanced and confident than they were ten years ago. This gave us courage to take the risk of assessment and carried us through the process. Iyengar yoga teachers that I know do not take the easy way. I know that each of the sixteen newly certified teachers will go forward and accept many more risks and challenges on their personal journeys. They will also continue to contribute to the development of Iyengar yoga in Canada.



The view from the balcony



Another view from
the balcony ▲



The
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and the
Victoria YM-YWCA

Welcome you to the
Victoria Yoga Centre Society's

Friday Night Gathering
for a BIG BIG Practice

Asana Practice at 6 p.m.

Potluck dinner at 7 p.m.
in the Yoga Lounge at the Y.
(please bring your own plate/cutlery)

Date: Friday, May 22, 1998

Everyone is welcome to join us.

The Saltspring Retreat

June 5, 6 & 7

In the heart of Salt Spring Island set amongst 69 bucolic acres lies the Salt Spring Centre, a residential spiritual community run by devotees of the spiritual Master, Baba Hari Dass. Amongst their many activities



Shirley adjusting Derek French ▲

the centre operates a school, maintains a huge organic vegetable garden and orchard, and rents their space to groups of like mind for retreats. It is an ideal place for relaxation and reflection, which is why we have been holding our annual retreat there for the past fourteen years.

The restored heritage house is light and spacious with a wonderful hall for practising asana and pranayama, and a bright dining room where we enjoy outstanding vegetarian meals. Saturday evening satsang with lively bhajans led by residents of the Salt Spring Centre has become one of the highlights of our stay. Chanting is one of the devotional practices followed by the residents and their voices and musicianship are a joy to behold, inspiring us to let our voices soar along with them.

Practising asana and pranayama in a room devoted to spiritual practices is always an inspiration in itself, and the classes are intended for everyone and not restricted to the adept practitioner. Shirley Daventry French, our senior teacher and one of North America's most experienced teachers, will lead the classes aided by other local teachers allowing us to cater for all levels of students. The program is also planned to allow you time to reflect, walk, talk, rest or have a massage or another of the health treatments available at the Centre which (depending on exactly who is in residence that weekend) may include Swedan (light bodywork and steam) and reflexology. Take a sauna before retiring for a peaceful night's sleep.

The Victoria Yoga Centre was founded to provide a spiritual community in the city which supports its members in their efforts to establish yoga practices as an integral part of life. Such a goal can receive a tremendous boost from a weekend away from the demands of your everyday life in the company of others who are also working to bring spiritual values into their lives.

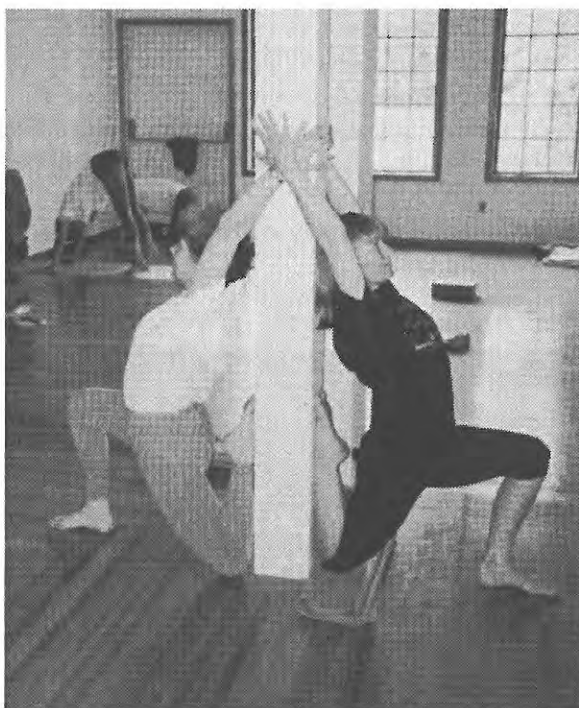


Some free time enjoyed by Saltspring retreat participants ▲

Participants at a Saltspring Retreat ▼



▲ Shirley demonstrating
Parsvakanasana



Shirley and
Linda Shevloff ►

Inspirations from India

Memories of the February 15th workshop
taught by Ann Kilbertus
by Jana Mruk

This was the first in a series of workshops with the theme "Inspirations from India." We are so lucky to have the benefit of teachings from teachers who have learned directly from Mr. Iyengar and his daughter Geeta. I was fortunate to attend the February 15th workshop taught by Ann Kilbertus and here are a few of my notes:

- Ann has wonderfully lively feet. They suit her.
- begin with the chant: centres and calms energy.
- quality to aim for in *tadasana* is receptivity (definition: readiness to take or let into the mind.).
- working legs, aligning legs in *tadasana* (thinking after 15 minutes: "I'm going to feel this tomorrow").
- working legs, opening hips in *prasarita padottanasana* with two partners with belt near top of each thigh pulling outwards.
- *Virabhadrasana II* opening hip of bent leg with self-held belt around top of thigh and maintaining back leg as in *prasarita* - strongly moving outward.
- we established a very solid base with the work on standing poses.



- two questions from Geeta:
"Is it not your duty?"
"If it is not your duty, then whose duty is it?"
- clear directions, repetition and sequencing gave a flowing rhythm to the workshop.
- *Viparita Dandasana* (on chair). Previous leg and hip work had helped to release the lower back.
- then a twist followed by forward bends.
- choice of *sirsasana* or *adho mukha svanasana* using ropes.
- *sarvangasana* on blankets, making sure neck has proper support; rolling shoulders under and clasping hands helped to bring weight onto the upper arms and shoulders once inverted.
- after *savasana*, what welcome, delicious refreshments!

Inspiration from India comes not only in quotes and remembrances, but in actions and deeds, in the energy and enthusiasm brought to the teaching, and the sparkle. The teaching is coloured by the teacher's individual experience. Thank you Ann for an inspired and inspiring workshop.

A Zen Day Hike

on
Hurrican Ridge

Sunday, July 12, 1998

Ferry to Port Angeles

Bus to 5,500 ft. level

Meditate, Paint, Take Photos

Visit Alpine Flower Meadows

Cost: \$45.00 (approx)

Call Brian London 380-1035

or

See Notice Board at Y
for full details

THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE AND THE VICTORIA YM/YWCA
ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE

Jyengar Yoga with Ramanand Patel

August 31 - September 4, 1998

Location: Victoria YM/YWCA, 880 Courtney Street, Victoria, B.C.

Part I	5:15 – 6:45pm	Introductory(Level I) and Level II students
Part II	7:00 – 9:00pm	Levels III & IV students and teachers, intermediate level
Pranayama	4:00 – 5:00pm	Sept. 1,2 & 3 For students with 2 years of Iyengar yoga
Teacher Observers:	An opportunity exists for teachers and training teachers to observe Ramanand teaching the Level I class for the 5 days. Numbers Limited.	

FEES:	Yoga Centre and Y Members	Non-members
Part I	\$100.00	\$115.00
Part II	\$140.00	\$155.00
Pranayama	\$ 42.00	\$ 50.00
Observers	\$ 35.00	

REGISTRATION:

Opens for Yoga Centre and Y Members - July 13; Non-members - July 27.

Mail cheques to Linda Benn at 698 Rockridge Place, Victoria, B.C. V9E 1H3.

Cheques are payable to the Victoria YM/YWCA. Specify the parts you are registering for.

Refunds will be made only if space can be filled, excluding a \$15.00 service charge.

Enquiries: Linda Benn (250) 478-0757; Leslie Hogya (250) 383-6301; or 386-YOGA

Ramanand Patel is a dedicated student of Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar and is one of the world's foremost teachers of Iyengar Yoga. The sensitivity, awareness and technical refinement of Ramanand's teaching come from a deep background of learning and practice. His workshops are challenging, enlightening and fun. Visits from Ramanand have become a Victoria tradition, eagerly anticipated by those who have worked with him before. If you have not yet experienced the work of this outstanding teacher, take the opportunity and register early.

Inspirations from India

March 22nd workshop taught by Vicky Catchpole
by Darlene Kellett and Lindsay Schroeder

Darlene:

Along with about 23 other people I attended the *Inspirations from India* workshop by Vicky Catchpole on Sunday, March 22nd in Victoria.

Vicky drew a lot of attention to the extending of the calf muscle towards the heel and the constant work of pulling the belly back into the spine. She also led us through standing poses, inversions, backbends and a fantastic twist at the end – all with an emphasis on opening the eyes of our ankles, wrists, inner elbows, knees and between the shoulder blades. The neat thing is that these eyes seemed to be gently attached to each other and opening one set tends to start the others opening as well. It must have made a difference because I got up in a backbend with a strap around my thighs, by myself for the first time without my usual Herculean effort. I'm looking forward to floating!

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SCHOLARSHIPS

for Yoga Centre Members

Saltspring Island Retreat, June 5-7

1 x \$150

Deadline: May 15

Teacher Training Intensive, July 20-24

1 x \$300, 2 x \$200

Application deadline: June 19

Ramanand Patel Workshop, Aug. 31- Sept. 4

Part I - \$100, Part II - \$100

Application deadline: Aug. 10

Applications in writing:

Scholarship Committee

c/o Linda Benn, 698 Rockridge Pl.

Victoria, B.C. V9E 1H3

Tel: 478-0757

Lindsay:

This past winter I have been able to attend Vicky Catchpole's yoga classes in Courtenay every Wednesday. Initially I had thought that I would attend on a drop in basis given that the drive is an hour and the weather in winter is sometimes stormy. The classes were so good that the time became irrelevant and the weather somehow never got bad enough to miss a class.

Vicky's workshop in Victoria offered more of the same quality teaching that I had experienced in the regular Wednesday night Level 2 class, but of particular interest to me as a teacher trainee was how well she handled a class of widely differing experience. The people attending ranged from someone who "had done some yoga but not Iyengar" to senior teachers who had been to India. At the beginning she acknowledged to the less experienced that some of the instruction would be beyond their experience but pragmatically admonished them to hang in there and they would still benefit. So, yes, while "opening the eyes in the ankles" might have been beyond some there was enough clear, basic instruction to allow even new students to understand and participate. For myself, as always, attending one of Vicky's classes is always worth the drive.



Iyengar Yoga Summer Classes

Term 6: July 6 - August 2, Term 7: Aug. 4 - Aug. 31

The Victoria Y offers one of the most comprehensive programs of Iyengar Yoga in North America under the direction of Shirley Daventry French and Linda Benn. Classes are held in a bright and well-equipped studio. The classes are taught by experienced and well-trained teachers, the majority of whom have studied with Mr. Iyengar and his family in India.



Level I

All students with no previous experience of the Iyengar method should register in this level.

Day	Time	Term	Instructor
Monday	10:30am-12pm	6, 7	Jo Anna Hope
Monday	7:30-9:00pm	6, 7	Jo Anna Hope
Tuesday	5:00 - 6:30pm	6	James Currie-Johnson
Wednesday	6:00-7:30pm	6	Lauren Cox
Wednesday	5:00-6:30pm	7	Caroline Sophonow
Thursday	5:30-7:00pm	6, 7	Brian London

Level II

An all levels class for students who have completed the Level I (introductory) course.

Day	Time	Term	Instructor
Tuesday	7:00-8:30pm	6	James Currie-Johnson
Wednesday	6:30-8:00pm	7	Caroline Sophonow
Thursday	10:00am-12:00	6, 7	Linda Benn
Saturday	9:00-11:00am	6, 7	Jo Anna Hope

Level III/IV

An intermediate course for students and teachers with a good understanding of the Iyengar method.

Day	Time	Term	Instructor
Monday	5:30-7:30pm	6, 7	Marlene Miller

Noon Yoga

Take time out at mid-day to stretch, recharge and relax.

Day	Time	Term	Instructor
Tuesday	12:00-1:00pm	6	Wendy Boyer

Gentle Yoga

A class for our senior yoga students and those needing a slower paced class

Wednesday	10:30am-12:00	6	Linda Benn
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Early Morning Yoga

Start the day balanced in body, mind and spirit with a led asana practice.

Day	Time	Term	Instructor
Tuesday	6:30am - 7:30	6	James Currie-Johnson

Family Yoga

One adult plus one child 6 years and up. Come and have fun doing yoga postures together. No experience necessary.

Day	Time	Term	Instructor
Wednesday	5:00-6:00pm	6	Lauren Cox

Register at the Y, 880 Courtney St., Phone: 386-7511, Visitors welcome.

Women and Spiritual Life

A Retreat at Swanick Centre

by Caroline Meggison

When I put the poster about Women and Spiritual Life up in the house, my partner Jake asked me "Why women, why can't men go too?" "Would you go?" I asked, to which he replied, "No I wouldn't." It's not that I don't think it's a good question. Why, indeed, do women need a weekend away in a tranquil setting to think about our spiritual life? Eighteen women gathered under the guidance of Shirley Daventry French and Jessica Sluymer, two very important women in yoga development. Shirley teaches Iyengar Yoga and Jessica is past director of Radha House in Victoria. I have studied for years with them both, in separate locations, in two separate ways. Radha House has been invaluable to me in my Kundalini Yoga course work, studying Swami Radha's book "Kundalini Yoga for the West." Iyengar Yoga has been very important to me too, challenging me not just on the physical level but also on a deeper plane. I went to this weekend of Women and Spiritual Life to help me bring the two together, to practice the "union" that yoga is famous for.

The weekend was a wonderful mixture of pranayama, asanas and reflection. We were asked three questions: What does being a woman mean to me? What does spiritual mean to me? And how can I express this in my life? Very good questions, don't you think? I was surprised at the number of women who identified with their roles in life rather than what a woman truly is. It goes beyond being a wife, mother, daughter and so on. We talked about "identification" (a well known word in the Kundalini system!) with a role rather than with who we really are. "Who am I?" is a simple three worded question that goes along with "What is the purpose of my life?" These questions aren't just for weekend retreats - they are good questions for daily reflection.

ANY IDEAS?

With the advent of an addition to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society's constitution to recognize Mr. Iyengar's contribution to our work and to celebrate Mr. Iyengar's birthday, the Directors thought it might be interesting to look at redesigning the Yoga Centre's logo. Do you have any ideas? Please submit your drawing to Leslie Hogya, at the Y or mail to her home, 50 Cambridge Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 4A8

Being spiritual meant different things to different women. "Spirituality" has gained enough press to be in *Time* and *Macleans* magazines but what does it really mean? This weekend retreat was about personalizing these kinds of words to bring meaning to our everyday lives. We are different as women, we do tend to be more "in touch" and more spirituality inclined. For me, I was reminded that daily practice and daily life is spiritual: there is no separateness about it.

Swanick Retreat Centre in Metchosin is a most beautiful place to contemplate such questions. Khairon cooked delightful vegetarian meals and being nurtured by her food was a highlight of the weekend. All of us women created a safe and warm environment just "to be", to be human be-ings instead of do-ings for a brief moment in our busy lives.

My heartfelt thanks to my two favorite teachers, Shirley Daventry French and Jessica Sluymer, wonderful women to be with and learn from. There were a number of women from outside the Victoria area and they all remarked on how fortunate I was to have Shirley and Jessica close by. I know it and if there is another Women and Spiritual Life Retreat, I'll be the first to sign up!

Get Over It

by Neil W McKinlay

Years ago, back when I was a competitive swimmer, my muscles often ached something fierce - like concrete had forced into their fibres and like every cell in certain parts of my body had filled near bursting.

"But I'm sore," I'd complain standing on deck.

"Swim," my coach would reply.

"But my shoulders ache."

"Swim," he would repeat.

"But it's hard."

Some days, he would give in a little to my grumbling and delay practice in order to explain that hard work had released a "bunch of junk" into my system, that some of it was still there and that the only way I was going to find any relief was by doing *at least* a moderately hard practice - one hard enough to get things moving again and to flush my system free of residual wastes.

"You have to get rid of that junk," he used to say.

Then he would point to the water.

* * * *

At first glance, I think yoga and competitive swimming appear quite distinct from one another. Where they are practised (water versus land), their intentions (competition versus personal improvement), and their general movement patterns (constant activity versus held poses) all differentiate one from the other. In spite of these differences, however, Iyengar Yoga specifically does share with swimming - and with many other athletic pursuits - the encouragement of intense activation in certain muscle groups. Granted Iyengar practice seeks to activate a wider range of muscles than most sports, aiming as it does for balanced strength as

opposed to more specific development, but the fact of intense exertion remains a shared characteristic.

Given this, it seems quite likely that the soreness in my legs today and the gnawing ache in my back tonight - a full twenty four hours after Monday evening's class - might be the result of the very same processes, the very same "bunch of junk" that haunted the body way back in my swimming days. And having come to this conclusion, one would expect my next step to be obvious.

"Swim," he use to tell me.

"But it hurts," I moaned.

* * * *

In my experience, despite the presence of knowledge that should prevent this, I choose one of three options when hurting the day after class.

Option One involves doing nothing, and in my earliest days of yoga this was definitely (as opposed to only possibly today) my most typical choice when face to face with physical aches. The day following class - and I mean any class, not just the hard ones - was, in fact, fixed in my schedule as a day away from practice. Though sometimes this was a good thing (if I was feeling a little more than sore and actually on the verge of illness), doing nothing generally did exactly this for my aches and pains - nothing! In taking the day off I was literally doing naught to rid my body of the flotsam and jetsam accumulated since class. Consequently, I should not have been surprised when I felt even worse come the next day. And nor should I have, thinking about it now, been surprised at the dullness floating over my experience like thick cloud. Nonetheless, I was - and in spite of myself still am sometimes! So much so that I often find myself slumping even two days after class, thinking, "Gosh, maybe I should take today off as well!"

Option Two uses the day after as an opportunity to do a relaxing or recuperative practice. *Yoga The Iyengar Way*

offers quite a number of these, and I have been known to select one involving a maximum amount of laying about, the maximum number of opportunities to do poses I like (ie: Viparita Karani, Savasana, etc...) and go to it! While this is at least something better than doing absolutely nothing, again the activation, the physical exertion, is minimal - typically involving few sore areas and not being anywhere near enough to get things flowing and to rinse me out. Though I am not completely certain when recuperative practices are best used, I am fairly sure they are not a great choice right after a really hard practice - not for me, anyway. In spite of the presence of at least a little activity, the result of a recuperative cycle, within the context of post-class soreness, tends to be very much like that of doing nothing - continued aches and further mental dullness and again the thought: "Perhaps another day off..."

Which leaves Option Three.

Put bluntly, the best way to overcome soreness is to go back into it, to do work that engages the areas of complaint and gets them active again. Following a class like last night's, a class that has me aching in too many places, the best thing I can do is something very similar - a practice with similar focal points and of similar intensity. The best thing I can do, in other words, is a mini-version of the class preceding it.

In good weeks, this means I commit a small portion of Tuesday afternoon or evening to review. "What did we do yesterday?" I ask, and just try to remember. With much of the class recalled, my goal then becomes doing most if not all of these poses, although I typically hold them for a shorter period, typically repeat fewer times and typically demand just little bit less of myself in terms of precision. Nonetheless, I do try to go through all the major sequences with some faithfulness, repeating their order and their variations. As a rule, I give myself something just short of half as long to get things done - so after a two hour class, I give myself forty to fifty minutes for practice. Unlike other days, however, I

try very hard to keep moving - something that is made easier by the forethought, made harder by my desire to stop.

The result of this routine is probably predictable. I almost always feel a little better immediately afterwards - there is generally some release and some relief - and considerably better the day following. And very importantly, these comments are not restricted to my physical state - mentally and emotionally I feel better too!

Funny...this used to happen in my swimming days as well.

* * * *

"Just swim."

Sometimes I wish my swim coach were still part of my life. Sometimes I find myself longing for him to tell me what to do and to make sure I do it five or six or seven days a week, eleven months out of every year. It has been many years, though, since his imposing presence stood over me, dictating actions. Many years since it was not my responsibility to ensure I did what was best, but some other's.

This, to me, is one of many challenges posed by the practice of yoga - I learn the postures, I gain an understanding of how to use them, an appreciation of the various effects they have on my life and then... And then I am left to my own devices, left to do something I know is beneficial to my health, to my overall well-being, or to ignore this knowledge and spend the afternoon munching Toritos, watching "Facts of Life" reruns and wondering why I feel so bad. It doesn't really make any difference whether I am sore or not, whether I have been through an intensely difficult class the night before or whether I've done only a few moments of home practice through the entire proceeding week. In a way the challenge is always the same - to get over it! To get over the chatter, get over the grumbling, to get over the reasons and the rationales - the *inertia* - I have for not practising, and to just do it. Just plant my bare feet firm on the floor, breathe in and, then, get going.

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

Iyengar Yoga Teacher Training

July 20 to 24 1998

with

Shirley Daventry French
Leslie Hogya
Ann Kilbertus

Asana and Pranayama
The Art and Science of Teaching

Fee: \$395.00

An opportunity for teachers and student teachers to refine their practice and teaching skills under the guidance of three experienced teachers. Shirley Daventry French is a longtime student of B.K.S. Iyengar and one of Canada's leading teachers of his method of yoga. She has been training teachers in Victoria and further afield for many years. Leslie Hogya, who has been teaching yoga for over twenty years, will draw also from her experience as a school teacher in the public school system. Ann Kilbertus combines her health care training as an occupational therapist with her extensive study of Iyengar Yoga.

For further information contact:

Victoria Yoga Centre
3918 Olympic View Drive
Victoria, B.C. V9C 4B2

Telephone enquiries:

Linda Benn (250) 478-0757
or Leslie Hogya (250) 383-6301

Beginner's Yoga Program

text by Linda Benn. Drawings by Lauren Cox

Week I

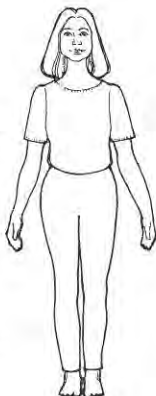
Welcome to Iyengar Yoga classes. It is important that you try and do the asanas on your own several days each week. You are building your balance, flexibility, strength, coordination and mental concentration to get into and maintain the poses. Do the poses with intelligence and let your body tell your mind what is happening. If you have questions or problems please consult your yoga teacher.

Do the poses in the sequence given.

Props: block, strap, blankets, wall

TADASANA (Mountain Pose)

Feet together, big toes touching. Stand evenly on both feet. Lift the kneecaps by contracting the front thigh muscles. Tailbone moves down. Lift the sternum and relax the shoulders. Head is level and throat and eyes passive. Keep the sense of Tadasana in all the poses. The art of standing well is an important practice to bring to our daily lives. Return to Tadasana between the standing postures.



UTTHITA TRIKONASANA (Triangle)

Start in Tadasana, move feet 4 feet apart. Note that the back foot turns in about 10 degrees. Make the legs firm, move from the hip joint, and extend the spine out in line with the leg. Keep both sides of the trunk parallel.

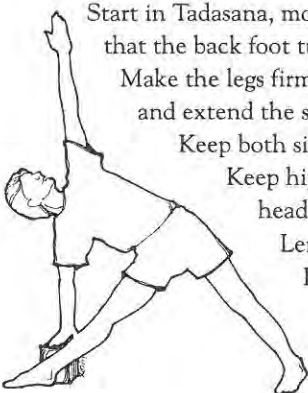
Keep hip, shoulders and back of head in the same plane.

Lengthen the back of the neck.

Beginners should place lower hand on front leg or block.

Go to the right side first and repeat to the left.

BREATHE.



VIRABHADRASANA II

(Warrior II)

From

Tadasana,

step the feet

apart and turn the feet as

for Triangle. Release

the front knee to a

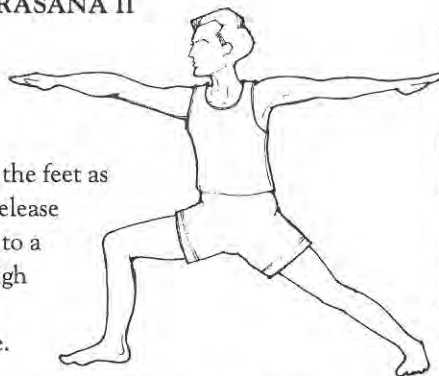
right angle, thigh

parallel with

floor if possible.

Back leg firm,

trunk centred over hips, arms stretching apart.

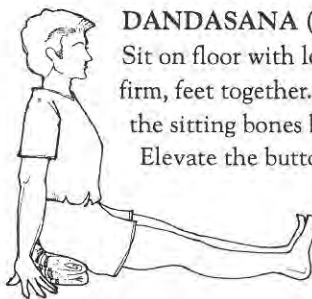


DANDASANA (Staff)

Sit on floor with legs outstretched, knees firm, feet together. Extend the spine from the sitting bones keeping the back erect.

Elevate the buttocks if the back rounds,

looping a strap around the feet. Lift sternum, roll the shoulders down.



JANU SIRASANA (Knee to head)

From Dandasana, bend one knee

bringing heel to groin and

letting knee fall to side.

Support the knee if it is

off the floor. Elevate

buttocks if back

rounds. Sit erect,

hold strap which is

around foot. Roll

top of pelvis forward.

Lift the front body

forward, keep the neck passive, eyes soft.



ASANA	DURATION	REPETITIONS	TOTAL DURATION
Tadasana	30 seconds	1	30 sec.
Utthita Trikonasana	30 seconds / side	1	1 minute
Virabhadrasana II	30 seconds / side	1	1 minute
Dandasana	30 seconds	1	30 sec.
Janu Sirsasana	30 seconds / side	1	1 minute
Shoulderstand prep.	1 1/2 minutes	1	1 1/2 minutes
Savasana	5 minutes	1	5 minutes

Total Time: 10 Minutes

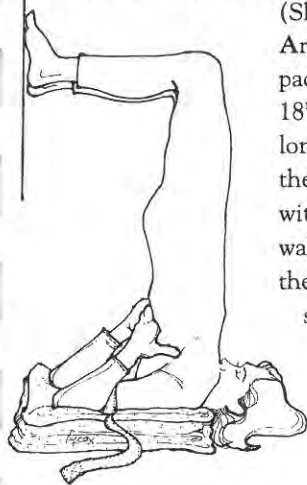
PREPARATION FOR SARVANGASANA

(Shoulderstand)

Arrange a 2 to 3 inch high pad of firm blankets (approx. 18"x28") so that the outside long edge is about 28" from the wall. Lie on the blankets with the legs going up the wall. Centre your torso on the blankets and have the shoulders about 2" from the edge with back of the head on the floor.

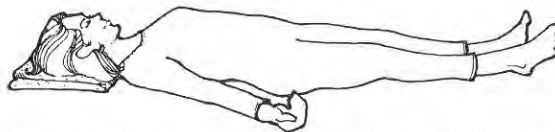
Bend the knees, press the feet on the wall and lift the hips off the

floor without letting the shoulders slip off the blanket. Bring the hands on the back lifting the back up. Firm the buttocks to open the front groins and keep the thighs parallel. Do not turn head and keep the eyes and throat soft.



SAVASANA (Corpse)

Relaxation is always done at the end of asana practice. Lie in a straight line, balancing the sides of your body. If the chin lifts higher than the forehead place a blanket under the head. Bend knees slightly, raise hips and extend the lower back towards the legs. Separate the legs 6 inches and let them drop evenly to the sides. Turn upper arms out, palms up, away from sides of body.



Gently lengthen and relax the neck. Let the back muscles relax. Abdomen soft. Close eyes and relax entire face. Do not let the mind wander or become sleepy. Keep attention on the body. Breathe easily. To come out of the pose bend knees and roll to the right side and use the arms to sit up. If lying this way causes discomfort in the back, place a bolster or rolled blanket under the knees. If necessary the shins can be placed on the seat of a chair.

Yoga Centre Fact:

Did you know that the first Victoria Yoga Centre newsletter was published in November, 1981?

Karma Yoga

by Pauline Stephen

Every Saturday afternoon a small group of people get together for a couple of hours at a house in Victoria to do various odd jobs - everything from weeding the garden and cleaning gutters to organizing papers and filing. Sometimes they work in pairs, sometimes individually, sometimes as a group. Each person chooses from a list a job they feel they would like to do and decide whether they would like to work alone or with others. There's nothing very unusual about this group. To the casual observer, it might look as if they are helping out a friend, being neighbourly, or even earning a few dollars for the odd jobs they do. In fact, none of these would be true. Ask them why they come to this house every Saturday afternoon and they will tell you that they come to practice yoga.

Karma Yoga is an ancient Eastern spiritual practice that, when combined with reflection, can raise aware-

ness about who we are, how we approach certain situations and how we behave in them. Karma Yoga is work done without any expectation of self-gratification, praise, recognition, pay or compensation. This approach to work is a departure for most Westerners. We are accustomed to thinking of work as the work we do to make ends meet, the raising of a family, housework, homework, or even volunteer work. Work as a spiritual practice does not fall into any of these categories and yet the work itself may look very similar. The key difference is the motivation behind the work.

The principles of Karma Yoga are presented in the third discourse of the Bhagavad Gita. One of the central principles is: lack of attachment to the work itself.

Therefore without attachment do thou always perform action which should be done; for, by performing action without attachment man reaches the Supreme.

—Verse 19, 3rd discourse of the Bhagavad Gita

Work done without attachment lessens the role our ego or identity usually assumes in doing the work. In North America we have a tendency to identify ourselves by the work we do or the role we fill. For example, "I am an accountant," "I am retired," "I am a student," "I am a single parent." Generally we also presume that we're entitled to some kind of compensation or perhaps gratification for the work we do - be it money, a promotion, a certain grade on a test, a pat on the back or even thanks.



Jerrilyn Wass weeding the rose bushes

In Karma Yoga, de-emphasizing the ego serves an interesting purpose by showing just how the "I" tends to creep back into the work. Sometimes it may surface in a personal preference: how "I" would do the work; or it may come out in interpersonal relationships: two people having different ideas about how to solve the same problem. Becoming aware of how the "I" comes back into the work is part of the process of developing self-knowledge through examining our motives, our preferences and our behaviour. Karma Yoga is, therefore, also known as the practice of selfless service.

A few weeks ago I decided to join the Saturday Karma Yoga group. The job I chose was to weed a pebble path that leads from the compost to the house. It seemed straightforward enough. I knelt down and began picking out the pesky weeds from the path. After about ten minutes, I could see that I had gradually moved off the path and had begun weeding the adjacent flower garden. I realized I had become sidetracked. I went back to weeding the path and a few minutes later found myself weeding the garden again. At this rate, I was never going to finish the path in the two hours I had allotted myself.

The key to the practice is to see the work on a symbolic level as well as the literal one. You see the job to be done but also ask, "What does it have to tell me about myself?" The goal of Karma Yoga, as with all yoga, is self-knowledge. Looking at the work and your approach to it is like symbolically holding up a mirror to see yourself. The work is a reflection of yourself.

Remembering that I was to look at the work and my actions on a symbolic level, I began to ask myself, "What, symbolically, are the weeds? What needs to be weeded out in my life? Negative thoughts? Old ways of seeing myself? What, symbolically, is this path I am on



▲ Pauline Stephen and Lenore Friesen with Missy

and why do I seem to get so easily sidetracked from it?" As I reflected on the symbols and the questions they raised in my mind, I began to feel as if I was calling on something within myself for the answers, calling on my own inner wisdom.

By the time the two hours were over, I had not finished weeding the relatively short path. I wanted very badly to finish the job.

In Karma Yoga the practitioner lets go of the fruits of the labours.

Finished or unfinished, the point was I had to let go. I realized how strongly connected was my idea of doing a

complete job to seeing myself as a responsible person. Not only did I have to let go of the work, I had to let go of what I thought it said about myself. At the same time I also learned to be more aware of what distracts me from the tasks at hand so that I can complete what I set out to do.

I left the partially unweeded path to join the others there that Saturday afternoon. We gathered around the kitchen table, wrote down our insights and then shared them with each other. I learned a great deal, not only from my experience but also from the experiences of others. We shared the collective wealth of our insights.

In examining the attitude we bring to the work as well as examining our motives, we gain greater awareness. One might ask, "Am I willing to do the work? Am I searching for praise? Do I have ideas about perfection? Can I be flexible in my approach to the work or do I have rigid ideas? What does it mean to do a good job?" In this way the practice of Karma Yoga and reflection bring out the inner teacher.

And although Karma Yoga is neither the work we do for a salary nor the work of raising a family, the lessons learned from Karma Yoga are easily transferable to these and every other area of our lives. This is the gift of self-knowledge.

Early in this century, the Indian sage and guru, Swami Sivananda predicted that it would become increasingly difficult in the modern world to practice meditation as the path to self-knowledge. He advised that, with the right motivation, the practice of Karma Yoga and reflection could achieve the same end. Swami Radha, who was a disciple of Swami Sivananda, brought this principle of selfless service and reflection to the West and founded Yasodhara Ashram in Kootenay Bay, British Columbia. She also established related centres across North America and Europe, called Radha House.

Pauline Stephen takes Kundalini classes at Radha House and participates in the Karma Yoga program on weekends.

Yoga: The Path to Realization (Of How Little I Know)

by Rachel French de Mejia

I happened to share a laugh the other day with my mother and she suggested I write about it for the newsletter. Always being an obedient daughter, here goes...

When I was 19 years old I knew all there was to know. I knew what the problems were and how to solve them. My knowledge covered politics, social issues, family dynamics, and relationships. You name it, I had the answer. Now, many (I won't mention how many) years later there's been a decline, a reversal of this phenomena. I'm discovering more and more that I know less and less. This trend is a bit disconcerting as if it continues I'll likely know nothing on my 65th birthday (although observing family trends it might take a LITTLE longer!).

So, what's happening? Since it's not likely to be an organic brain disorder (I hope) what's going on? Is it just me? Given all the ads one sees these days by people purporting to have all the answers, maybe it is. Unlikely however, so what gives?

To think one knows everything is outwardly arrogant. In my case it covered up my anxiety about how little I knew about myself and my potential. It was/is a cover. It's both past and present because the change from knowing it all to knowing less and less is an on going process, as yet far from complete. I attribute the change to my pursuit of yoga. Pursuing yoga has allowed me to be more comfortable with myself. As I learn more about myself (paradoxically realizing how little I know) the more confident I've become. That confidence allows me to admit I know next to nothing (at least on a good day!). Yoga allows 'not knowing' to be O.K.

So, back to what gives? Yoga does, in oh so many ways. At the rate I'm going, I'll hopefully know nothing by my 100th birthday, so I can leave this earth with minimal arrogance and maximum humility and gratitude. The process of surrender continues....

Ensnared in the Ego

by Traci Skuce

I return to my desk and just look at it, hoping it will transform, blossom. Pages and pages of words twisted like an arthritic spine, trying to convey a thought that I have been holding like a promise in the pocket of my skull.

I read the words, looking for the heart, the essence. There is none.

I have missed the deadline for the newsletter and apologized to Shirley for the prospect of an article left unfulfilled. I realize it is myself I have disappointed most.

My idea was this: to write about my practice, the practice that is squeezed into corners of time, while Seamus is distracted. In the mornings when he is busy playing, I attempt to flow through a few poses. Often, I find cars zooming up and down my back or between my legs.

Here is where the words get stuck and I find myself groping for the wisdom that I've gained - or hope I've gained - through this experience. What is the yogic path of motherhood? Or, what is mine in my motherhood.

I feel as though I am panning for gold, searching desperately for a nugget of wisdom, a shimmering light, and it's not coming.

I crumple paper and tap my nails on the desk; it doesn't help.

I lift myself up and vow to let my idea go, to send it sailing through the window and into the universe.

Something moves. A deeper, brighter energy surges through me, like seeing colour for the first time. Thoughts flow cursively from my hand and I know I feel free.

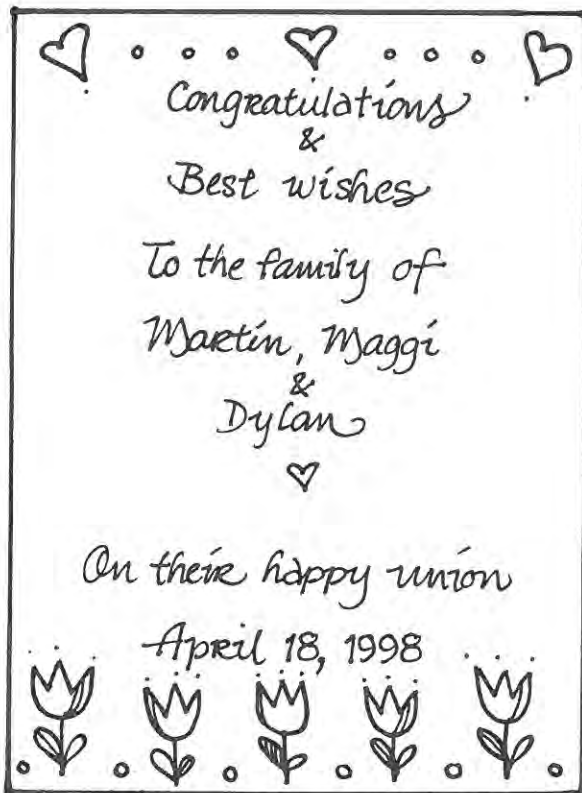
In that freedom, I see that I have been stuck. That I let my ego hold on tightly to the need to know and express the wisdom I have gained on my yogic journey as Seamus's mom. I felt caught, as though I were swirling over and over in the same eddy of thought, desperate for definition.

I remember Shirley talking about roles briefly during one of our classes. We spend so much of our lives catering to

an external identity, defined and outlined by the world that our egos get ensnared in the illusion and the quiet, real self remains lost. I see now that I was searching for an external wisdom, one that I assumed I deserved because I am a mother.

Yoga is this way, it is coming to know the wisdom that is cultivated from within. I know that when I started yoga I silently wished that my teachers would tell me that the pose was perfect (I'm a Virgo...) and that the work would come easy to me. This was my ego's need to be validated, it was a superficial understanding of what yoga is about.

I was soon humbled and have come to understand that, although it is not always easy, letting go of the ego and its expectations deepen the pose, the mind and the self. It is an ongoing journey, but one that frees us from travelling over the same tracks over and over again.



RADHA HOUSE

Welcome to Radha House.

Swami Radha founded Radha House Victoria as a yoga centre in 1984 to help people develop their own potential. Radha House presents the yogic teachings in classes and workshops. The focus is on making your own discoveries through reflection, questioning and writing. Working with other seekers brings inspiration and expands ways of enriching daily life. For more information about Radha House Victoria and Swami Radha's books, tapes and videos, call us at (250) 595-0177.



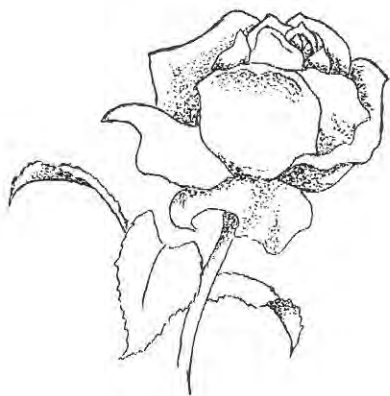
You are welcome to join us for Spring Events and Activities

Yoga of Work

Saturday, May 2, 9:30 to 4pm.

On Saturday, May 2 from 9:30 to 4pm. We will investigate and experience the teachings of Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. Krishna tells us the yoga of action – Karma Yoga – leads to "the highest bliss". We will chant and reflect, look at our own work habits, explore different ways of being, and take our insights into daily activities. Bring lunch. Beverages and cookies provided.

Fee: \$50



Sunday Morning Chanting

Sundays, 9:30 to 10:30 am

Start your Sunday at Radha House with chanting and reflection. We read a short section from Swami Radha's book, *Time to Be Holy*, then chant a mantra and write down our insights. There is something special about chanting in a group. Please join us any Sunday in May and June

No Charge

Sunday Satsang

Sundays, 7:30 to 9:00 pm

If evenings are more convenient, come to Satsang. Every Sunday we sing *nhajans* (spiritual songs) from 7:30 to 8:00 pm, followed by chanting for the prayer list and a reading or tape of Swami Radha. It's an uplifting way to start the week.

No Charge

The Rose Ceremony

Saturday, June 20 and Sunday, June 21, starts at 7:30 pm.

On the evenings of June 20 and 21, you are invited to a beautiful two-part ceremony of personal commitment to the Highest in yourself. Call Swami Durgananda for full information.

No Charge

Radha House

1500 Shasta Place, Victoria (on the corner of St. Charles St, south of Fort)
(250) 595-0177

YOGA CALENDAR

MAY 1998

- 9: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association meeting in Saskatoon.
- 22: Big, Big Practice led by Shirley Daventry French. See ad this issue
- 23: Teachers meeting

JUNE 1998

- 5-7: Annual Saltspring Retreat led by Shirley Daventry French. See ad this issue.

JULY 1998

- 20-24: Teacher Training Intensive. See ad this issue.

AUGUST 1998

- 31-Sept.4: Ramanand Patel workshop at the Y. See ad this issue.

SEPTEMBER 1998

- 19: Teachers meeting
- 27: Sunday Workshop at the Y. Details to follow.

OCTOBER 1998

- 16: Friday Night Gathering at the Y. Details to follow.
- 17: Teachers meeting
- 25: Sunday Workshop at the Y. Details to follow.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM:

Please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society, c/o Jo Anna Hope, 15 - 949 Pemberton Road, Victoria BC V8S 3R5

Membership/Subscription fee is \$25 and renewable each January

Name: _____

Address: _____

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

☐ Receipt Required.



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

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Victoria BC V8V 4Y9

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VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



July/August 1997

Please Subscribe





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



Iyengar Yoga Teacher Training Intensive



August 25 to 29, 1997

with

Shirley Daventry French • Leslie Hoga • Ann Kilbertus

- Daily Classes in Asana and Pranayama •
- Yoga Psychology and Philosophy •
- The Art and Science of Teaching •

Fee: \$375

For further information contact:

Victoria Yoga Centre, 3918 Olympic Cies Drive, Victoria BC V9C 4B2

Telephone Inquiries

Adrienne Rhodes (250) 995-0385

or Victoria Yoga Centre (250) 386-YOGA (9642)

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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: (250) 474-5630

Deadline for next issue: August 2nd, 1997.

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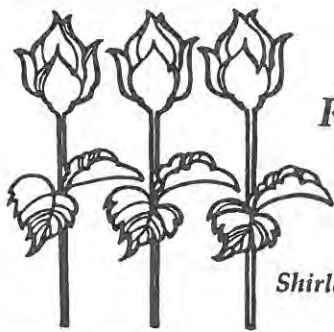
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Feature article:



A Path of Evolution and Involution

— an interview with
 Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar



Reflections

by

Shirley Daventry French



At Christmas I did not hear from my friend Clara who lives in London, and I wondered if she was alright. I need not have worried, because in the New Year she sent me this news: "Just got back from Pakistan (where I used to teach) and Pune where Guruji kindly permitted me to go every year." She added a qualifier: "... as in June I shall

be eighty five, don't know how many years I can go yet" But I smiled to myself later as I read the following sentence: "Every year I think I shall not go back to Pune, but comes December I am itching to go and do so." And she closed her letter by saying: "Maybe we'll meet in Pune next December." Clara knows that I too am always itching to go back and study at the source of Yoga in the Iyengar tradition.

What is it that keeps drawing some of us back again and again to this noisy, dirty, hot, polluted, crowded city? Why spend all this money and make a difficult journey half way round the world? Why not stay here where it's spacious, clean and comfortable and study with some of the fine teachers of Iyengar Yoga now available on this continent?

In my opinion, no matter how good these other teachers are, no matter how many times they have studied in Pune, no matter how clearly they are able to

pass on the teachings of Yoga, and no matter how much I could learn from them, none of this can compare to studying at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune. B.K.S. Iyengar is a living Master, and if it is his tradition of yoga you wish to follow, then make such a pilgrimage your goal.

Mr. Iyengar is seventy eight years old, and much of the teaching at the Institute has been taken over by his daughter Geeta and son Prashant, master teachers in their own right and true disciples of their Guru who happens to be their father. When they are teaching, Guruji's light flows through them. Fortunately Guruji himself still teaches, as in the last intensive I attended when he virtually co-taught with Geeta, and the one before that where he taught all the morning asana classes because Geeta had to attend to some family responsibilities. Over the last few years there have been some special courses taught by Guruji for senior students, but generally whether he teaches or not and how much will vary according to his disposition, a right he has well earned. However, whether he is teaching at the time you are there or not, whether he is in Pune or not, his imprint is on every class and his presence is felt during every practice. Of course, if he is there, this presence will be even more compelling.

Once when I was in Pune for an extended stay, Guruji was away for the first month. Then one day I entered the Institute to attend class and sensed a difference in the air; I knew he was back, and sure enough as I entered the main yoga hall there he was practising behind a pillar. Our class commenced with Geeta teaching, and Guruji continued his practice for a while until, seeing or hearing something which did not sit well with him, he came roaring out to correct someone and took over. There was no mistaking who was Master here! Then he returned to his practice and Geeta was our teacher once again. Throughout the rest of that particular intensive, it was the same each day with Geeta the official teacher, and Guruji adding his input to every class.

In addition to focussing my own efforts on returning to Pune, I am always encouraging students to go there if at all possible — especially those who are teachers.

How much better it is for them to receive these teachings directly instead of interpreted by me. I am therefore delighted that this summer I shall be back in Pune with a Canadian group which includes seven Victoria teachers and three others who are members of our Vancouver Island Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Group.

Geeta chose the dates of our intensive course to include a celebration called Guru Purnima (full-moon day), the birth anniversary of a great sage called Vyasa. In our November/December 1996 issue we published a lecture given by Geeta on "The Significance of Vyasa Purnima", in which she says that traditionally this is a day on which students pay their obeisance and respects to Sage Vyasa, who is considered the foremost of all Gurus, as well as to their own Guru. She explains that '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*.

This year Guru Purnima falls on July 20th, and I would like to suggest that while we are celebrating this festival at the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Pune, all of you whose lives have been enriched by the teachings of yoga in general and Mr. Iyengar's work in particular take a moment to pause and give thanks for his inspired teaching and dedicated practice. His steadfast efforts and unwillingness to settle for anything less than the Most High — in himself or any of his pupils, have fuelled the growth of Yoga throughout the world. Even if you have not had any personal contact with Mr. Iyengar and never will, if you are studying with those of us who regard him as our teacher and who continue to study with him and Geeta, you are part of an unbroken tradition going back thousands of years to sages like Vyasa and Patanjali.

Vyasa compiled the wisdom of the Vedas (ancient scriptures containing the sacred principles of Hinduism) into four parts: *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda* and *Atharvaveda*. Then he wrote *Mahabharata*, *Bhagavatam* and the *Puranas*. He is also credited with having written *Yoga-Bhasya*, the oldest extant commentary on Patanjali's yoga-sutras.

WISDOM OF THE MASTER Maxims

By Shri. B.K.S. IYENGAR

Yoga is a Darsana,
a mirror to look at ourselves from within.
Control of the mind is Yoga.
When the mind is controlled,
stilled and silenced,
what remains is the soul.
It is the quest of the soul,
the spark of divinity within us,
which is the very purpose of Yoga.

Yoga is nothing
if it is not perfect harmony of the body,
senses, mind and intellect,
reason, consciousness and self.
When all these are integrated that is true Yoga.

Yoga is like music.
The rhythm of the body,
the melody of the mind
and the harmony of the soul,
create the symphony of life.

HEALTH

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

Health is the state when the soul is given
the key of the body to roam at will.

Patanjali, widely known as the father of Yoga, lived somewhere between 500 and 200 B.C. An adept in yoga with a penchant for philosophy, he compiled and systematised Yoga into one hundred and ninety six *Yoga-sutras* or Aphorisms, preserving these teachings so they could be passed on and kept alive from generation to generation. In the preface to his book on the *Yoga-sutras*, Mr. Iyengar states that "The *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali are concise and compact. No word is superfluous. They are compiled in such a way as to cover all the various facets of life exploring each in depth."

In ancient times the spiritual teachings were passed on by word of mouth from teacher to pupil, and it was concern that these teachings were being lost or watered down which led sages like Patanjali to write them down in the first place. Books are certainly not the best means of learning yoga, but they are our only resource until we come across a true teacher or master. I have heard Mr. Iyengar say that a good book is better than a bad teacher, but if you have the good fortune to find a good teacher and even better are able to learn directly from a truly great Master, thank God for this blessing and make the most of it.

On the occasion of Gurupurnima, this issue of the newsletter is dedicated to Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar in gratitude for the light he has brought into our community. And on a personal level, not a day passes when I am not thankful for the gift of his teaching.

*Guru Brahma Guru Visnu
Gurdevo Maheshvaraha!
Guru saksat Param Brahma
tasmai Sri Guruvenamah!*

The Guru is verily Brahma the Creator
(of our spiritual aspirations),
Visnu the Protector (of our aspirations),
and Siva the Destroyer (of the evil in us).
The Guru is in fact the Brahman
(the Universal Supreme Being).
Salutations to Sri Guru.

The Executive and Members of the
Victoria Yoga Centre
wish Godspeed to the teachers
from our community
who are travelling to Pune this summer
to study with B.K.S. Iyengar
and his daughter Geeta



From Victoria:
Lauren Cox
Shirley Daventry French
Maggi Feehan
Leslie Hogya
Jo Anna Hope
Ann Kilbertus
Marlene Miller

From the Comox Valley:
Vicky Catchpole

From Cortes Island:
Yvonne Kipp

From Gabriola Island:
Doreen Fraser

A Path of Evolution and Involution

— an interview with Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar

The following interview took place in the library of the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, Pune, India, on the 16th of October 1995. In attendance from Canada were Shirley Daventry French of Victoria, and Marlene Mawhinney from Toronto; they were joined by Kay Parry of Sydney, Australia. It has been transcribed and edited by Shirley Daventry French.

Shirley Daventry French: Ten years ago, I had the privilege of interviewing you accompanied by two Australians. This time, it's two Canadians and one Australian!

Guruji: It is a good international exchange, I think!



Shirley: We have a lot in common — our countries are large, the population is small and spread out, and culturally we share a common heritage.

Guruji, it is ten years since the book *Iyengar: His Life and Work* was published. I wonder if you would comment on the direction your life and work have taken since that book was published.

Guruji: Life is a dynamic movement, and changes do take place in each individual's approach, way of living, practices, contacts and so on and so forth; but I am not going to add anything for the simple reason the world knows me now. Instances in life are such that if we speak the truth it hurts lots of people: that is why autobiography is a very difficult thing to write. To be straightforward and honest, means embarrassing many people. And that's why I don't want to add anything to my autobiography.

My pupils — people who have seen me, who have known me, who have seen the evolution, who are well acquainted with the changes taking place in me — they can certainly add more, so that the coming generation knows that it is not just a static book, once written; but thoughts of mine, how I presented this or that have been added after several years. How both evolution and involution in the field of yoga has taken me and taken my pupils also into a different dimension, across different frontiers. So it is good to add, if somebody could do constructive work and provided they are honest, not attacking for the sake of attacking purposes. There should be honesty and integrity. One should not write emotionally, particularly on biographical sketches, then it becomes biased.

Shirley: Perhaps this is something we could think about for your eightieth birthday.

Guruji: Yes, whether it's the eightieth or eighty-fifth birthday, God alone knows, but I have heard that *Iyengar: His Life and Work* may not be published again, and if it is not published, naturally it is a loss. Today, of course, most of my senior pupils will have a copy of this book, but after fifteen or twenty years, the juniors who are getting interested they would also



like to know something. If the book is not published by the publisher, I think associations all over the world can come together and bring out the book, with proper understandings between all the associations.

Shirley: That book is such an inspiration! When young people read it — well not just young people — people who have only known you since you have been successful, when they see how you struggled in your early days it encourages them to keep going.

Guruji: As the work goes on, naturally people would like to know more and more. As I told you, I never thought *Iyengar: His Life and Work* would be reproduced in India. That itself was a great achievement for me, because *Light on yoga*, *Light on Pranayama*, *Light on Yoga-sutras* have not been published in India. *Iyengar: His Life and Work* coming out

here was more amazing to me because it is not a technical book — it is nothing except the life of a man.

Shirley: The life and work of a man!

Gurujī: For the Indians, who had never brought out these classical books which have been published in many languages, to have brought out *Iyengar: His Life and Work* that is something amazing for me. It means that the coming generation will be inspired or interested to know more and more about my life. So would be a good thing if all associations, representatives compiled what they have collected: sayings of mine, my way of conducting classes, my way of advising in the classes, the guidances which I have given. It would be a still better book.

Shirley: There is so much more now.

Gurujī: Well I would be happy, if the publishers do not bring out, if others could bring out.

Kay Parry: That's a task for us!

Gurujī: I would be very happy to give the property if somebody wants to (publish). That in itself would be a great achievement. and a great respect I would give them.

Shirley: Sir, Geeta talked to us yesterday in the question and answer period about our responsibility as your students to make sure it is known that your work is spiritual yoga....

Gurujī: It is true. Even today I explained by yoga-sutras alone. How many people know that even Patanjali has not neglected these things. How much attention he has paid to each and every point. He has not thrown one thing out. If you ask me I will say "Yoga is Yoga". We have to learn not to demarcate an art. Can you tell me when music is physical, when it is spiritual? When painting is physical, when painting becomes spiritual? People are creating barriers, frontiers. Break the frontier!

In *The Art of Yoga* I have written clearly that for convenience sake the body has been divided into three parts: the gross body, the subtle body, the causal

body. And it has got five sheaths: the anatomical body, physiological body, mental body, intellectual body and spiritual body. This is for people to understand, but if you speak of man as a whole without substance, how do you understand? *Man the Unknown*, is a famous book written by a Nobel Prize winner (Alexis Carrel, who won the 1912 Nobel Prize for *Medicine & Physiology*—ED) How many of us know the body? "Man the Unknown" means body is also unknown. Yogis, knowing very well that everything is unknown, (ask) can knowledge be brought to the surface, layer after layer, removing the veils which cover the soul. Not sole, but soul. (laughter)

That is what they discuss: I have not read anywhere that this is physical yoga, this is mental yoga, this is spiritual yoga. As the intelligence went on growing they started demarcating to show their superiority complexes. But as the subject Yoga is taken into consideration, there is no division at all. Either you can start from periphery towards the core or from the core towards the periphery.

Now when you speak of *jnana* or path of knowledge, can the path of knowledge improve without *karma*, without action? The more you filter the action the better the knowledge comes. The more you filter the body the more you understand the soul. Otherwise, how do you understand the soul? Tell me? Subjective experiences are quite different from objective words. How do you subjectively experience? You have to know layer after layer. As I taught in *Trikonasana* today: when you do on the right side, the left leg should follow the involution stage, and the right leg is the expressive one. Involution and evolution: where do they meet, how do they meet, so that the intelligence of the soul flows from the bottom to top – top to bottom, without any variation in the contact, creating a sensitive contact of the energy with the intelligence and the frontiers of the body.

Body is a frame. We are not working the frame, we are working the contents which are hidden inside that frame, and that's why you cannot divide yoga into physical, mental or spiritual. The content is unknown.

The content is that energy which moves if there is a spiritual force on it, otherwise it does not work. And the medium between the two is intelligence. Intelligence connects the consciousness with the other parts of the body so that everything becomes absolute without any division, and that's why it is called absolute consciousness or a state of aloneness where there is no division between body, mind, soul or all the sheaths of the body, or all the three bodies: gross, subtle, causal. And that's what yoga teaches. As I said several times in the classes: we are expressing our inner hidden force through the expression of the body. Can a soul express without a body? Tell me.

Shirley: Well, not in this world. No.

Guruji: If there is no cross in a church, do you call it a church? The cross is there; the outer frame is also there, which is known as the building. There is a cross inside which is known as the soul, and there is a building around it which is known as the body. These two have to be inter-connected to experience the unalloyed bliss. Divisions have to be broken off, layer

after layer, just as when you eat a fruit you peel the skin and then you go inside. You have to peel from the skin deep within. So what are we doing? We are peeling the skin so that we get the real taste of the fruit. That real taste is dynamic health, dynamic movement of life force. And that is what yoga teaches! So as Geeta said: we have to announce, we have to make it known that there is tremendous misunderstanding — and these misunderstandings we have to take out.

Shirley: We were talking about this yesterday, and we all feel we have to do what we can.

Guruji: We have to do it. That is a responsibility. In the nineteen thirties, yoga was relatively unknown. My guru, Krishnacharya, did not have many pupils, but he had a few who could push this subject, otherwise he would be known nowhere to anybody. In the nineteen thirties we could count yogis in India on our fingertips, and today it is impossible (to count) because the zeal has come, and as the zeal is there, people are taking. Because people are taking, some

intellectuals are afraid that they may not be recognised; (they) attack — that is the best form of defence. And we, unfortunately, have been forced on to the defensive. But the truth is unknown. So let us speak the truth. Let us stick to the truth.

At the end of the sutras Patanjali, what does he say? Your actions will be free from afflictions. What a great man he must be — he has not said spiritual life at all, he said when afflictions disappear then there is automatically cleanliness in the intelligence, purity in the consciousness, so there is samadhi — the highest



samadhi! That means all works are done not through dependence on books or words or anything, but directly from your soul. The last but one sutra says that — in the first chapter, last but one (sutra), and in the last chapter also: time does not count because the yogi lives from moment to moment, time does not count for him so he is pure. Know these connections.

In the second sutra of the first chapter, Patanjali says: *Yoga citta vrtti nirodhah* (yoga is the cessation of movements in consciousness) — everybody quotes that, but what are the means? The 28th sutra of the second chapter says: *Yoga anganusthanasat. Anusthana* is devoted practice. What have you to do? What is the code of Yoga? The code of yoga is yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi. After seventy eight sutras he explains what would be the fate of the readers. The problem is, in ancient times, any author used to give three or four lines only: what he is teaching, where does it lead to. The goal, the instrument, the object. From the olden days, take any *darsana*, the example is there. Within three lines they finish what they are going to speak of in this sutra.

In Patanjali's yoga-sutras, what is the third sutra of the first chapter: you live in the abode of your own self. Do you mean to say you can live (in the abode of the self) so soon? Then the whole book would end with the third sutra: there is no need to go on. They knew the aim, to reach that goal of the vision of the self. So they touch the goal, they touch the means, and then in between they started explaining later in depth. And that we do not respect. We have to learn that. So that is the responsibility of you people.

As I said, (in India) few were doing, and we had to make them interested in the field of yoga, so I had to work very hard. The question arose yesterday about Patabhi (Jois) practice. You have seen my film from 1938? My practice (then) and Patabhi's teaching today: what is the difference? Why did I leave that? Because God guided me by sending me to Pune so early to face and find challenges. Problems came. Nobody was interested in this jumping, because here

all are wrestlers, all are fighters. In Pune you will find more wrestling arenas than anywhere in India. I had to open the eyes. I said, what is this they are doing. They were doing daily up and down, up and down stuff, and what you call push ups and all. So my jumpings were also a push-up, and they said why would we want yoga when we are doing it already. They opened my eyes, how to interpenetrate. Otherwise I would also have been jumping like them, like others who are teaching. That is the evolution in me. But it is not an evolution with other pupils of my guru. Pune opened my eyes, because here they never accepted these jumpings. They said, we are doing two thousand, three thousand namaskars a day. Then interpenetration I began, and that is how I started improving.

I have given you, you have to stabilise. It is still in a fluid state, so it has to be stabilised. Even if one cannot add, one can stabilise. You can maintain now. Generation is very difficult. But can we not maintain at least? So that way you can all think of it.

Shirley: Sir, the other day when we were here, in the library, you talked about students who practice very hard and they can't understand why they are still suffering and have pain. You said that their practice is vibrant not illuminative. Could you speak about the difference between vibrancy and illumination?

Guruji: I have already told you long, long ago, even in the classes I have said, that practice with discretion slows your movement. In jumpings: your body moves faster than your intelligence. Does your intelligence move so fast when you are jumping? If I take *uttanasana*, *chataranga dandasana*, *urdvha mukha svanasana*, *adho mukha svanasana*, you will just follow. But can you build up inside? And that is what is happening. They don't allow the intelligence to go in. They don't know even know how the energy moves the body. Do you know how the energy moves in the body?

Shirley: Occasionally!

Guruji: Occasionally! (laughter) No, when it is occasionally it has to come on to the surface very fast. Now stretch your hands. Both hands like Trikonasana, jump. See how the energy moves in your hands. You don't know? Eh! Did you feel it when you were stretching or afterwards?

Shirley: Afterwards.

Guruji: Now slowly stretch the hands, see the energy, when does it move? It flows inside deeper, do you feel, and they practise without observing this. Now bend your elbows slightly. What happened to the energy now? It goes forward. Slowly stretch, like paper, filter paper. Now how the energy moves. How much time is needed for the intelligence to observe these things? When your intelligence is getting introverted, when you are expressing the body, what is it called? Physical yoga, or intellectual adjustment inside? And that's why I say discrimination is not there. They do, but they do not discriminate. Now you have done it. Is the intelligence flowing evenly backwards in right and left hand? Now you understand how much time it takes for you to know that? And that is what I say: they want to

show people that they are working hard, and that is exhibitionism. Haven't you seen me doing? Each and every time when you do, (find out) what mistakes you have committed, what good things came. Your mind has to be like an object. Object penetrating the subject. And that is sattvic yoga. A demonstration is different. Do you mean to say I care how the energy is flowing inside or I have to attract people?

Shirley: Right, it's an outward form when you are performing.

Guruji: Now understood? So outer form, we use to draw people, to inspire them. That is exhibitionism. But when you practise at home, is that an exhibitionism?

Shirley: No

Guruji: Then they have to learn. You are not exhibiting in the class when you are doing alone. You have to take for yourself and work on it. Today in the class, in trikonasana I showed you the best body and the worst body, and the worst body presented better than the best body. That is known as discrimination. With

discretion we have to learn to do. We are doing yoga not for the health of the body but to make the intelligence understand the body. That is why I said "Man the Unknown". This book is read by all. But do they understand? They say it is all physical. That is all easy to say. But I go deeper than what he says. Do you know your cells? Do you know your circulation? Do you know your breathing processes? Fifteen breaths will



have fifteen different movements. Are you doing fifteen breaths per minute same way, or different ways? Do you know that even? Do the majority of people know that? Which part one breath touches, which part inhales, which part exhales. It is not the same every time. It is all different, different, different. And the yogis have studied this, and that's why they brought pranayama, saying: observe these various sensitivities of your inhalation-exhalation for one minute or two minutes: where does it touch, how is it touching? First time, where did it touch? Where did it touch second time? Where did it touch third time, fourth time? So putting all together, they were studying: oh, the fourth breath touches here, fifth touches here. They were accumulating, and then found out the way of connecting all these various movements together and called it one inhalation, one exhalation.

Similarly in the asanas, when you do it from this to that end it is like a string. If there is no foot can you do trikonasana? So it is one string, is it not? From this end of the foot to the end of the other foot, can I do it like a single string? Then I can say that the real practice has set in. Ripeness and intelligence has set in. Otherwise it is just a manual effort. Manual effort is needed. I am not saying no. You can't just sit there and say, I am going to do vrschikasana. Doing vrschikasana you have to know how should I create space within this frame. Now take the photograph of vrschikasana which I have shown you yesterday — some swamiji I saw — and people say, wonderful! But what I observe is: has he created vastness, has he created space? That requires discrimination.

(The picture was found and compared to *Light on Yoga* — ED.)

Now see, this is his vrschikasana: compare his vrschikasana to my vrschikasana. I am heavier than him,

he has no ribs even. Where is my head. See how my energy moves. His pose is flopping, but mine is flying up in the air. (In his pose) there is compression. He may say, I am perfect in yoga. I also say I am perfect in yoga. Who's perfect then? Tell me.

You have to discriminate. I have discriminative space in the body. The pose is steady. That's all I am saying! I am not priding myself. Look at his vrschikasana, look at this (*Light on Yoga*) vrschikasana. Can you see I am pulling the energy upwards? See my calf muscle, see his. See my knee, where is it? Perpendicular. Where is his? Does anybody read like that. And this is



not physical because he is a swami, and mine becomes physical? This is what I have to deal

Sometimes I allow the intelligence to be soft; sometimes I make the intelligence hard. Similarly when the intelligence is hard, I made the prana soft. When the prana is hard, I will make the intelligence soft. And I have tried both. Let me make both hard. What type of movement comes? I will never sacrifice the energy in the body. The energy has to resist for my intelligence to move. Is this not spiritual?

Take my ardhha matsyendrasana — can you see the vastness? Can you see how I am opening. It is not muscle. I am not a muscular person. Is my energy covering the frame? Like that you have to study. Intelligence has to interpenetrate, energy has to outer penetrate. You have to try both ways. With intelligence outer penetrating, what happens to the energy of the body. Reverse way, what happens. Then you strike a balance. Till then you cannot strike a balance. Your intelligence may be aggressive; your energy may be regressive. Or your energy may be very aggressive but your intelligence is regressive. So they do from their brain not knowing where the energy is, and that is why it appears as if they are struggling very hard. And repeating over and over again.

Next question?

Kay: Guruji, mostly people are introduced to chakras by intellectual means, but in Rishikesh this year you



gave practical experience of the chakras through asana

Guruji: Yes. Have I spoken again. Have I spoke about those things again?

Kay: A little bit.

Guruji: When?

Kay: You talked about movement of energy but not calling it chakras.

Guruji: Yes, yes. That's all you should know. There (Rishikesh) I had to give because of the situation. I spoke of the chakras, because all spiritual people say he was teaching physical, physical. The moment I spoke on chakras, what did they say: "We never knew". And I proved to them, that I also know all those things.

Kay: Of course, we understand the depth of your knowledge and we know that

you teach from the sole to the soul (laughter)

Guruji: Yes, but I will not take it as a base every time to explain. Because of the situation (in Rishikesh), and without criticising them, I just spoke of how chakras can be worked. It is true. And I always say, chakras are within the spine, and plexuses are outside the spine. Only you cannot give a comparative study because they are closer to each other.

Shirley: You made a very nice analogy the other day about a river — when the water is flowing in the river it twists and turns touching both banks unless there is damming or diversion, and then you talked about how we have to twist the flow of consciousness in certain areas to balance the scales of justice.

Guruji: I explained to you today also that even Patanjali says that you have to be like a farmer. You tame the river there. Here you tame your energy. That's the indication.

(Guruji asks the librarian to find a book with photographs of his Guru Krishnamacharya performing yoga-asanas)

When you speak of evolution, even from my Guruji's poses I can show you? This is trikonasana of Krishnamacharya, do I do the same way? Tell me now. So is there evolution in me or not? There is also parsvakonasana..... bakasana. See! Do I do navasana like this. At least you get an idea because you don't have a book of my Guru. The base is my Guru. In those days he was top class. Others could not do it. According to the time, he was the master in those days. We have seen so many people but not one could present like him. Then I thought, is that the end or is it the beginning? So I took it as a beginning. Understood now? Here is my janu sirsasana, and his janu sirsasana. Do I do with a back like this? See his halasana, paschimottanasana. But method is not different. We can't say we are different. We follow his line only. Do you do parsvottanasana like this? If I do like this what will you say now?

Marlene Mawhinney:
We know what you would say if we did like this! (laughter)

Guruji: So that is what I said, it is involution. I have evolved. I involuted in order to evolve the subject. Now you can see sirsasana? Do I do sirsasana like this? Many of you do, and I lose my temper, right? For some teachers it may be correct. Even

if you go to Patabhi Jois, he may say perfect. But I have to work hard. I have to train. What is right, what is wrong? Where is the balance. Ah! Scale of justice, you understand now? So I work on balancing that scale of justice.

My Guruji, thank God he showed us the way. At that time he was the Master. None was better than him. If his son says his father is doing very well, take it, I don't grudge. Thank God from him I learned. I have shown you someone else's vrschikasana., my vrschikasana. I have shown my Guruji's trikonasana and my trikonasana. That is known as evolution. And if I had not come to Pune I would not have done this at all. I would have just followed So I am grateful to those people in Pune who started criticising me; and I took advantage of that criticism. Now all wrestlers they do urdvha mukha svanasana, adho mukha svanasana, chaturanga dandasana, thousand, two thousand every day, because they want to develop bulky (muscles). They are very strong. And that's why I said, No, I have to take it off. Are we doing for muscle building, or are we doing for nerve endurance. So I changed to nerve endurance, tolerance; the body should tolerate the timings.



Shirley: And this is what we see when we see in your practice now.

Guruji: Even now. Today also I have done one and a half hours of sirsasana, sarvangasana. Even at the age of seventy eight! People say, don't do it. Nothing has happened to me, and nothing is happening to me still.

Shirley: A lot has happened! (laughter)

Guruji: So that is what I said. We have to work. Now have you understood the evolution? With any pose of my guruji you can see. I said, can I do better than what he taught us? Can I improve? I did not stagnate his subject, I dynamised his subject. And this is what I am asking you, don't stagnate but maintain the quality.

In *The Bhagavad Gita* Lord Krishna has said that what you know do well, don't worry about the criticism of others. That's what I wanted to show you.

(Guruji gives a copy of the Gita to Shirley and asks her to read out loud.)

Shirley: "In this path no effort is ever lost and no obstacle prevails. Even a little of this righteousness, dharma, saves from great fear, no step is lost, every moment is a gain, every effort in the struggle will be counted as a merit." (*Bhagavad Gita, II-40*)

Guruji: Have you understood now? What more do you want. Now you can remember, even if you are doing asana why do you bother about others, are they better than Lord Krishna. The others are yogis; he is *yogishvara*. Do you know the difference between yogi and *yogishvara*? We are all yogis, and Lord Krishna is the Lord of Yoga. So whose word has more weight? Ours or his? .

Shirley: Sir, with your Indian students, do you find the same mind-body split as in the West?

Guruji: No there is a difference. The intelligence of the Indians is mostly emotional, not intellectual. And the Western mind is less of emotion, more of intellectualism. And that's the difference.

Shirley: How does this affect their practices?

Guruji: They don't use their head, and you don't use your heart. (laughter) You use your head, they use their heart. If their heart and your head join together, then probably the practice will be quite different. They do with the feelings, but they are not very keen to use their brain. Whereas you calculate the words, but they don't: they listen. They will not be thinking of what words I should use, so intellectually they are silent but consciously they are open. But without intellectualism you cannot bring that attention which I explained to you the other day in the class. The awareness will be there, but attention will not be there. In your case you will have the attention not the awareness. So that is the scale of justice: awareness and attention should be equal everywhere.

Shirley: That's one of the things we learn from coming to Pune to study and seeing the difference in India ...

Guruji: Indians work from the back brain and you work from the front brain. Indians don't reason, they look from the back brain, and even to put into action they don't use the front brain. You put into action from the front brain and you don't use the back brain to feel what has come from your action. That is the difference.

Shirley: Well that explains another statement that was in the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* that Westerners want



to make sense of everything but Asians accept mystery as a fact. Would you say that is true?

Guruji: We don't call (it) mystery. No. It comes under metaphysics. You have to understand the way in which they frame, in which situation they speak. We don't throw away the metaphysics. We accept the spiritual life, but for you people it takes a long time to undertake the spiritual life. And secondly, we do not think there is an agent between the spiritual and the mental body, what you call 'psychic'. We don't use the word psychic, we say 'direct intelligence'. You say there is a medium who is psychic, and we don't accept that. It is a direct path for us. You think there is a medium who plays the role by calling dead bodies into life and all those things. There are very few in India.

Spiritual life is a mystic life, which you cannot deny at all. It cannot be explained and that is why it is mystic — if it is explained it is not. You can speak about soul, or you can speak of anything, you can explain even pain, you can explain pleasure— but actual experience of pain, experience of pleasure is not the same as the words you use. That is the mystery of even the word happiness. Then you understand why the word soul is mysterious, a mystery. From the practical angle you have to see. From the academic angle you can give any definitions.

Kay: Most of the students only hear from you through newsletters. Is there anything you would like to say to our communities.

Guruji: My friend - everybody asks. There is nothing for me to say for the community. Just now I quoted from the Gita: the more you do the better the understanding comes; but do with discrimination then the light will come on. Correctness is the message: correct practice, correct character approach.

Shirley: It's wonderful how, with newsletters the network had grown in the fifteen years or so since we started ours. All over the world we are sharing.

Guruji: It is growing, definitely. In Trikonasana in class today I took that lady, I took that boy, right? Did I not show the exchange: what you have to observe, why this is good, why this is not. Did anybody know the difference in the forearms, in the hands, but how much I observe? It is my job, I have to observe. Do I have the same problem? Is it in my body? I have to look. If that problem is in that body, it may be in my body. If it is not in my body, how is it that it is in that body? What is the difference? What did I do? What did she do? It is a dark hole for her. She never thought. That's why I say, it is not a disease. Then you learn, what is disease, what is not disease. This comparative study is important, because if you hit two stones the light comes, is it not? We have to think constructively, but not opposing each other. As I said in the class, this high-tech of mine is giving the pride, but nobody knows that I have got a healing touch.

Marlene: Those of us who have felt it know

Guruji: Yes, you have felt, that I know: but the world will not know. With my students – I am not speaking for others – when I have got the healing touch, do you mean to say you cannot get that healing touch in your own presentations. That's what I said: one side is missing. Now do Marichyasana III. Remain like that and move the thoracic dorsal spine to touch your sternum and feel the armpit. What happened?

Kay: It comes alive.

Guruji: So that is healing. But is there a nourishing healing touch in your practice. What you are doing; does it nourish? This comes back to your question: they do vibrantly, they repeat, but is there a nourishing healing touch in their practice? As I said the other day in the class, know thyself and you know the world, heal thyself, do we know that? Ah! So you have to get that nourishing feeling, exhilarating feeling there, then you know exactly how to heal that person. And this is what I want my pupils to learn. But not show off.

I have also shown off. I think I have given fifteen thousand demonstrations — no others have given (so

many) publicly: twelve to fifteen thousand demonstrations. If I had kept records I would have gone in the Guinness Book of Records. My Guru made us demonstrate two hours or more. And then I had to learn the solo method: one man on the platform like a concert artist. Who can do today? It came with me, and it goes with me. I don't blame for that, but today I tell people, you can give performances in groups but singularly you cannot do. You cannot give three hours performance, not one will stay. But I can keep all three hours spellbound. You have seen my performances — I wanted to give performances so that I would attract more and more people to the subject of Yoga. And I did it. So I am happy.

Marlene: It worked!

Guruji: It works. It has worked, I am happy. So I say to you people: once in a while for your own students, your own group and association, call senior students for a demonstration, and let the juniors see. Let the juniors do one day, and let the seniors observe. Inter-exchange. Then you see, when you did it what did you miss. When they did it, what is the new thing. You can catch, and that is education. There is plenty of room for education now, but there was no room in my time for education, for exchanging views. I went ahead, others remained static; my colleagues, they remained static so I could not accept them, they could not accept me. I built up cell by cell, what is right, what is wrong — what is right, what is wrong. Then I know So God bless you and your efforts.

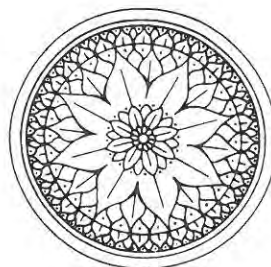
Shirley: Thank you Sir!

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Beginners Welcome!

My Guruji

by Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar



The following talk was delivered by Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar on the occasion of the one hundredth birthday of his Guru Yogacharya Sriman T.Krishnamachar. It was first published in Yoga Rahasya, Volume 3, No. 3 and it reprinted here with their permission.

It is not easy for a pupil to talk about one's own master. Guruji's one hundredth birthday is to be celebrated this November and as one of his pupils, I consider it a privilege to be a part of this great function.

The time I lived with Guruji was so short that it is impossible to sketch his lifestyle. I was hardly sixteen when I was his student and my intelligence then was not developed to understand him or taste the wisdom of his knowledge.

As a coin has two sides, each person has two facets to his personality. It is the duty of the pupil to take the advantage of the best part of the master and overlook the shortcomings. Such pupils will always stick to their masters. For my part, it is wrong to express or judge the master who acts as a friend, guide and philosopher. Secondly, it is unfair to express from one's mind the minds of others. As long as one accepts the master as a master, reverence to him supersedes the shortcomings of the master. Thirdly, Guruji is no doubt a gifted and talented personality.



It is only possible to talk about him when one is elated to his level of intelligence with an uninterrupted flow of grace from the divine.

Guruji is versatile in many fields. He is not only a yogi but also a master of Vedas, Puranas, Smritis, Shaddarshanas, a specialist in Ayurveda, Jyotishya, cooking and is also a Veena player. With all these at his command, his moods and modes were very difficult to comprehend and often unpredictable. Hence, we were always alert in his presence. He was like the great Zen masters in the art of teaching.

Birth of the Yogashala

It was in the early nineteen thirties that Guruji was lecturing on Indian heritage in the city of Mysore. The Maharaja of Mysore, the late Krishnaraja Wadiya IV, came to know of his scholarly debate and invited him for an audience. The Maharaja was attracted by his knowledge and personality and became his student in order to understand the scriptures and yoga. Soon, the Maharaja asked Guruji to teach Mimamsa and Yoga in the Sanskrita Pathashala (school) of Mysore (now an art gallery) for the benefit of the Royal family.

The Maharaja was a great patron of art music, painting and Yoga. He encouraged all to shine in their chosen fields.

In 1934, I joined the Yogashala and continued to learn there until 1936. Earlier, my elder brother was with Guruji but he did not pursue the art while my youngest sister could not continue with it after her marriage in 1940.

Though the Yogashala was meant for the Royal family, on application to the palace authorities, restricted numbers of outsiders were allowed to attend it.

Guruji had a few senior pupils assisting him when I joined. They were C.M.Bhat Srinivasarangashar, Ranganatha Desikachar, Narayan Sharma and Pandurang Rao. Sri Pattabhi was teaching at the Mysore Sanskrita Pathashala. All these members were dedicated students for whom Guruji would conduct theory classes at home. Unfortunately I was not one of them.

The classes at the Yogashala mainly taught perfection in asanas or asanas for health. The classes were held only in the evenings between 5 to 7 pm while the morning classes meant for ailing persons were between 9 to 10.30 am.

Members of the Yogashala used to hold annual gatherings where members from the Royal family and citizens of the city were the invited guests. Senior students were given a chance to show their skills in the demonstrations and the best ones were awarded prizes and certificates of merit. In 1935, I also earned this distinction.

I left Mysore in 1936 as my fate for studies was sealed. The end of my school career became the seed in my life to pursue Yoga as my career for life with my limited knowledge and immature experience. I built up courage and strength to be an independent student of Yoga, as a stage performer, practitioner and teacher.

An Anecdote from My Student Life

It may interest my colleagues in Yoga to know how demanding Guruji was of his pupils. Once Sri Late V.Srinivasa Iyengar, Judge of the Madras High Court

with his friends as guests of His Highness visited Yogashala. Naturally, Guruji wanted his pupils to present a show. Each pupil was asked to demonstrate one or two asanas. When my turn came, Guruji asked me to perform Hanumanasana. I wanted to escape with some pretext as I had not done this asana before. But Guruji did not let anyone get away so easily. I told him that the tailor's stitches on my underwear were cutting my skin and I therefore could not perform the posture. To my anguish and surprise he called one of his teachers to fetch a pair of scissors from the adjacent office and cut the underwear on either side. He then asked me to do the posture. With fear in my face, I did it for the first time and kept up with the practice as I learnt that he may catch us unaware.

Similarly it happened with Kandasana in Poona. I was not able to do it but I did it in order to save his honour in public and I continue to do it even now. This is the way of my Guru.

Before concluding, I emphasise that the credit of the success and popularity in Yoga goes to his foremost students including me who were not more than half a dozen in number. The message of Yoga imparted by Guruji was carried with sincerity, honesty and dedication by these students and a note of thanks must go to them for keeping the fire of Yoga alive even to this day.

The merit of this success from his pupils entirely belongs to Guruji who has remained as the light to us all.

Maxims by Shri. B.K.S. Iyengar

Why should you practise yoga?
To kindle the divine fire within yourself.
Everyone has a dormant spark of divinity in him
which has to be fanned into flame.

NAMASTE....

John Schumacher

In the last couple of newsletters¹ I have been writing about what it takes to be a truly fine yoga teacher. Of course most of you are not teachers. Still, I thought having some idea of the path teachers have pursued to become and excel as teachers and the problems that have confronted and continue to confront them might be of general interest. After all, some of this is stuff with which many of you are familiar anyway, teachers or not. This is particularly true since the main issue I have focused on thus far has been practice, specifically one's attitude toward it and the amount of time one gives to it.

Another aspect of practice that I think is important and relevant to both teachers and students is the intensity of one's practice. This is a somewhat different issue from whether or not one loves practicing and how much time one spends, although they may be related. I know some students and teachers who spend a couple of hours a day practicing. They enjoy their practice and do it regularly. Yet they seem to make little progress. Others whom I know spend half the time and move ahead rapidly.

Why?

There may be several reasons for lack of progress in practice aside from time and attitude. Incorrect actions in the poses and poor sequencing are two. Another is practice performed lackadaisically or carelessly. The practitioner puts in the time, but there is not much intensity to it.

In the *Yoga Sutras* Patanjali describes practitioners as being of three types, mild, medium, or intense (1:22). B.K.S. Iyengar subdivides them even further. He says that an intense practitioner may be mildly intense, moderately intense, or intensely intense and that the same subdivision exists for the other two categories.

What is meant by intensity in practice?



From a physical standpoint intensity means several things. Just plain old working hard is the most obvious. In this vein one of Mr. Iyengar's most famous quotes is "If you can do more and don't, that is unethical practice." Regarding teachers, he has said that if you ask your students to do something ten times you must do it thirty.

One must be mature in one's understanding of this, however. This is not intended to instill an ethic of macho competitiveness. (How long can *you* hold a headstand?) Injuring and exhausting yourself are the antithesis of yoga. Instead, the point is to explore one's limitations and expand one's capabilities.

This process of exploration and expansion is one of the reasons that the skillful practice of more advanced poses is more intense than practicing beginning poses. Advanced poses are more likely to take you directly to your limits. The effects of the poses are intensified as well. That's one reason for doing advanced poses. It's like the difference between trying to clean your kitchen sink with Comet cleanser as compared to using Ivory soap. They'll both do the job, but the Comet's going to do the job faster and better.

Physical intensity doesn't only mean puffing and sweating. Ask anyone who has practiced meditation

with any degree of seriousness and they will tell you that just sitting can be as intense a physical experience as doing 108 backbends. Holding poses longer - going past the initial and secondary resistances and immersing yourself more deeply in the poses - also creates intensity. Then there is more time to explore the subtle processes of the pose and to discover the openings that allow you to penetrate more thoroughly to the essence of the pose.

Working hard, doing more advanced poses and holding poses longer make for a more intense practice. They challenge one's ability to remain focused. Physical intensity in one's practice thereby creates the opportunity to develop mental intensity.

Mentally, intensity simply means bringing unswerving attention to what one is doing. I say simply because it is that uncomplicated. It is anything but easy, however. We are constantly distracted by a myriad of sensations from within and without.

In a yoga class one of the teacher's primary functions is to keep the students focused. Most students observe that they can do more in a class than they can in their practice at home. Why? One of the main reasons is that the teacher keeps them concentrated on the task at hand. This kind of mental intensity creates energy. Even though one works hard, the experience is ultimately energizing rather than depleting. This is one of the most important differences between doing exercises and practicing yoga postures.

Working intensely, both physically and mentally, deepens one's knowledge of the actions and effects of the poses. In the teacher's case, this allows a better understanding of what's going on with students. Then, when students come with questions or problems, the teacher will be more likely to have some insight into what they are experiencing since she will have been there and beyond. And because she asks the maximum of herself, she can ask the maximum of her students with confidence and integrity.

Whether you are someone who is striving to be a

truly fine teacher or a student who simply desires to improve in your practice, hard work and deep concentration are crucial. Couple these with many hours, days, weeks and years of practice and a joyful and reverential attitude, and you will develop an intensity and purposefulness that will carry you on a wave to the shore of your destination. As Mr. Iyengar says, "The goal of yoga is near or far according to one's eagerness and efforts."

John Schumacher

¹Reprinted from the Unity Woods Newsletter, Spring Session, 1997, Bethesda, MD.

John Schumacher is the founder and director of Unity Woods. He has studied with B.K.S. Iyengar in India and is a certified senior Iyengar teacher. John is also a certified teaching member of the International Yoga Teachers' Association.

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A Review of
"Glimpses of a Mystical Affair"

by Julie McKay

There have been many renowned bhakti yogis; Ramakrishna, Mirabai, Chai Tenya, Indira Devi, Ram Prasad, and Surdas, to name just a few. Their stories are remarkable. Their achievement was to know God and to experience the bliss of communion with the Divine. Yet Bhakti Yoga is perhaps the least appreciated form of yoga. **Glimpses of a Mystical Affair** is a delightful little book, by a disciple of Swami Sivananda Radha, which provides an engaging introduction to the mystery of this path to the Divine. It interweaves the ancient myths of Radha and Krishna with the story of Julie McKay's discipleship, as she lovingly explores an intriguing and hidden side of her Guru's life.

Those who know Swami Radha for her grounded and thorough exploration of the Kundalini System in "Kundalini Yoga for the West", or for her work on Hatha Yoga, where she invites us to take our practice beyond the physical to psychological and spiritual levels, may be surprised to discover this light, joyful, aspect of her experience and teaching. It is a dimension which is only hinted at in her own publications. Even when reading "Mantras; Words of Power", her classic introduction to Bhakti Yoga, or "Realities of the Dreaming Mind", where her dreams of Krishna are explored, we can only speculate about the nature of her own, most intimate, mystical experiences. We had to wait for this.

In **Glimpses** we find the personal spiritual story of a woman who was remarkable for her commitment to Yoga and to helping others. **Glimpses** also points to a universal, archetypal experience of the soul's yearning for the Divine. As Swami Radha says at one point, "No mortal man can provide what you seek." (Pa 106). This book speaks directly to the place in our hearts that knows. I recommend it to anyone interested in the path of Bhakti, and to anyone searching for more in life, whatever your spiritual or religious background.

by Jayne Boys
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Maxims by Shri. B.K.S. Iyengar

The capital we are born with,
the human body,
remains unutilised for most of us.

Yogasanas

by Prashant S. Iyengar



Asanas are one of the eight aspects of Patanjali's ASTANGA YOGA. Even a beginner can become involved in them though, at first, very much at a physical level. Physical involvement in any endeavour is a very important first step in the becoming engrossed in a subject. This highlights the role of Asanas in Yogic pursuits. Involvement in the higher, mental aspects of yoga does not require effort of will since it comes from one's innate disposition and is developed by the practitioner in the course of time.

Any pursuit is effective if it begins physically although mental disposition, intellectual capacity and emotional support make progress quicker. Yoga, in the case of all except a very rare minority, can and should begin with the asanas. This should be linked with a quick adoption of a regiment of moral and ethical principles, and forms of moderation and sensual restraint, laid down in the science of Yoga.

The asanas may seem to be body contortions, a set of physical manoeuvres. For this reason they are open to the criticism that they are merely physical, but this judgement is based on ignorance.

Just as a thing has to be seen to be believed, so too the asanas have to be done, and done with a sensitive diligence, to experience their depth. To reach this depth they have to be performed properly and thoroughly and with an understanding of their physiological import.

Asanas are not simply postures as suggested by their literal meaning. They are Yogasanas. They are not just exercises to tune the physique and anatomy or to keep the body and mind fit. They have a deeper significance. They have their archetypal form which becomes manifest through repetition.

In recent years the Yogasanas have been called psychosomatic exercises. This is meant to glorify them but, in fact, devalues them. All voluntary exercises are necessarily psychosomatic. Hence the adjective "psychosomatic" applied to the Yogasanas is meaningless.

It would be helpful at this primary stage of the explanation to call the Yogasanas "psychophysiological". They work on the mind and physiology. Through control over glandular secretions and nerve centres, the state of the mind can be changed so that it becomes serene and conducive to Yoga.

It will be useful to assess Yogasanas from the basic principle of Yoga, "mental restraint." Yoga has a strong impact on the mind. Where a number of thoughts are crowded in the brain, a process of reduction is necessary. Yoga achieves this. It rarefies mental activity and internalizes the mental forces.

Mental restraint is the outcome of cerebral cortical and neurological pacification. Yogasanas make the control of these vital physiological parts possible. Physical exercises as we know them expand or contract muscles and move joints in random way, whereas the Yogasanas do this systematically and therefore have a more beneficial effect on human physiology and psychology.

Over-activity in one part of the body leads to under-activity in another part. Yogasanas work to increase activity in the sluggish areas and to decrease over-activity in others, thus establishing balance in inner body tensions.

There are numerous Yogasanas to serve a variety of psychophysiological and neurophysiological needs. In this way Yoga brings about harmony between body and mind.

For example, chastity, "brahmacharya", is an important moral principle of Yoga. It is much coveted but difficult to attain. Although one may avoid over-indulgence, the subconscious can be throbbing in mutiny. Involuntary desires may be tainting us from within. While a framework of ethics would restrain the seeker on his or her path, the Yogasanas would reinforce moral conduct by quieting the physiology behind sex. The Yogasanas curtail the craving and excitability of the psychological and physiological mechanisms of sexual desire. The sex mechanism is controlled in the pineal and pituitary glands. Some postures, when performed with a particular breathing pattern, can have the desired calming effect on these glands and the corresponding organs.

In fact it is this bio-force (prana) that animates and operates the whole human mechanism and plays a vital role in maintaining the body in different postures. For instance, the inverted poses are not just the discoveries of perverted Yogis, but inventions of wise men with a thorough understanding of psycho-physiology and neuro-physiology. These wise men understood how to channel this bio-force (prana) in a variety of ways to quieten the system and bring about a Yogic state.

The aerodynamics of breathing changes in different postures. In forward bends the breathing is in the back body. In Sarvangasana the neck and upper thoracic is used. In Sirsasana the breathing is gastro diaphragmatic. In Setubandha Sarvangasana on a bench it is gastro pelvic. However, it takes some minutes for the pattern of breathing to change. One has to be able to hold the poses to experience the change.

Only to those who lack understanding do the Yogasanas appear to be body contortions. The postures provide access to different physiological parts of the body and extend, contract, circumduct or abduct them, working together with the interaction of the vital prana. In this way they act on the mind - for example, Sirsasana and backbends are anti-depressants.

Yoga has a unique characteristic that makes it stand apart from other forms of exercise. All forms of exercise work indirectly on the physiology through the physical body: Yogasanas operate also in the reverse way, from the physiology to the physical body. For example, in order to exercise the liver and stomach you have to jog or run a long distance and are likely to become exhausted. In Yoga you can work directly on the organs. By toning the organs the enlivening the cells the whole body improves.

Take for example, forward-bending postures. These primarily aim at slowing down the rate of activity in the sex organs and calming the adrenal glands when they are hyperactive and activating the pancreas if it is sluggish. Backbending asanas stimulate the adrenal glands.

Sarvangasana and Halasana soothe them and thereby control irritability and bad temper. Doing Yogasanas as mere physical exercises has a limited impact on glands and physiology. The postures have specific breathing patterns and these must be experienced for the required physiological effects to take place.

The asanas bring about a finer sensitivity of understanding when performed with the following acts of mind:

1. Conative acts of mind: where physical forces are used.
2. Cognitive acts of mind: where the cognitive organs are used (eyes, ears, skin)
3. Super-cognitive acts of mind: where the mind is used without the aid of external sense of organs.
4. Reflective acts of mind: where the pose is experienced through the mind perceiving what is happening in the body.
5. Super-reflective acts of mind: in some of the quiet poses practice where action is minimal; thinking is replaced by feeling.

The following three occur in postures used for Yogic meditation.

6. Concentrated states of mind:
7. Meditative states of mind:
8. Exalted states of mind:

The conative act of mind is that activity in Yogic posture where the physical and physiological forces - that is, the entire motor force of the body - is invested in the posture.

The cognitive act follows the conative: an understanding of what is happening in the body is used to improve the efficacy of the posture.

The next is super-cognitive act of mind, where the pose is perceived and understood by the mind, which is known as the "internal organ." This is done without the use of external sense organs but with heightened inner awareness.

The reflective act of mind is achieved when the final pose is performed with steadiness, comfort, and freedom from pain so that the mind can perceive what is happening in the body.

The super-reflective act of mind is experienced in some of the Yogasanas considered as meditative. These are the poses where there is minimal action, the body and mind are as firm as a mountain and the cerebro-spinal tract is held in a perfectly erect position with the awareness converged on one of the vital junctions (chakras) on that tract.

Finally, there remains concentrated states of mind, meditative states of mind, and exalted states of mind, which are the foundation states for the final three limbs of Yoga, "Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi." The mental state of Dhyana is the meditative state of mind, while the mental state of SAMPRAJNATA SAMADHI is the absorption of the mind in the infinite soul. All three states require a firm, comfortable, erect and steady posture. From the above it can be seen that there is a hierarchy of practices in Astanga Yoga and in the Yogasanas in particular. The higher states cannot be maintained without continued practice at the lower levels.

The dynamics of the postures are largely unknown to modern medical science and movement therapies.

The Yogasanas not only involve physiological action but make use of the breath (prana) to maximize their effects. Most importantly, they involve the mind. The restraint of the mind is the esoteric aspect of Yoga, and silence is its predominant characteristic. Therefore, silence is best defined by silence.

Reprinted from The Newsletter Spring 1993, published by the Iyengar Yoga Association of Greater New York with acknowledgement to "Dipika" Spring 1991.

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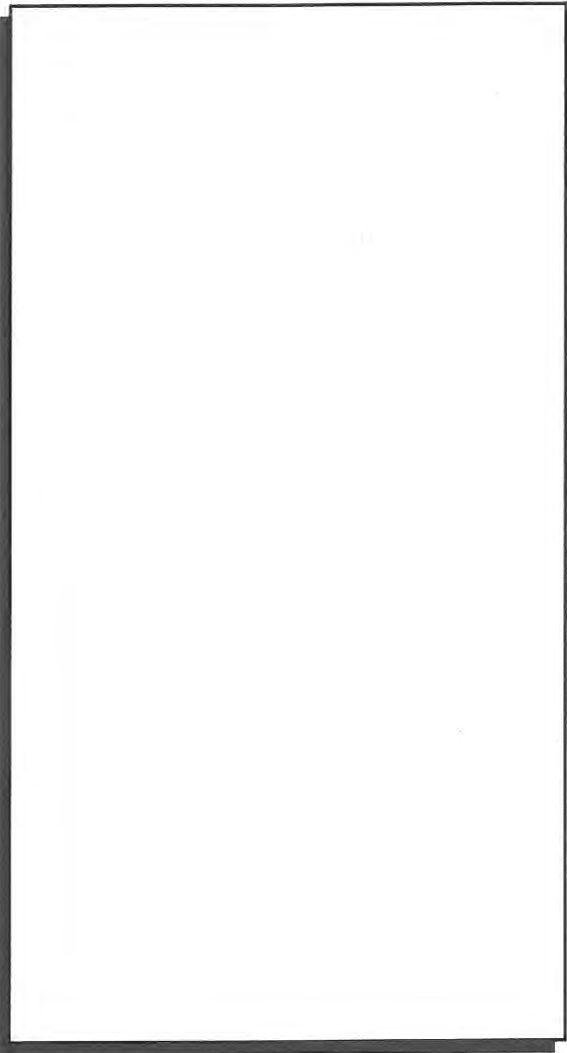
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NEWSLETTER



September/October 1997

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During the Guru Purnima celebrations: Guruji being garlanded
by Shirley Daventry French with Geetaji looking on.



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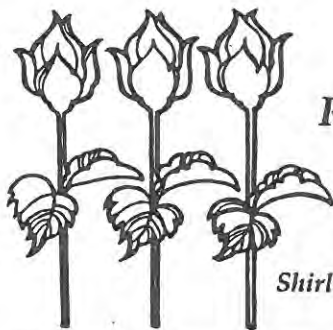
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Feature article:



1997 Canadian Intensive

Victoria teachers
 recount their
 experiences in
 Pune, India.



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

REFLECTIONS FROM PUNE

7 a.m. Saturday, July 26th



The Intensive is over. Brilliant, is the word which best describes the teaching we received. Last night, the Vancouver Island contingent, joined by an American fellow student and our colleagues and friends from Ottawa, celebrated at dinner in one of Pune's better hotels. It was a lively meal

with gales of laughter as we recalled incidents from the classes and recounted our adventures in India.

The richness of our experience was obvious. The classes were very demanding on many levels - like India itself! We were forced to live in the moment, letting go of many of the tricks and defence mechanisms we have developed to protect ourselves from disturbance, discomfort and revelation.

Many of the participants in the Intensive left yesterday to travel by air, train and taxi to Bombay and Delhi where they would board their international flights back to the West. Most of the others leave today. Catching their excitement at the thought of returning home, I felt a pang of longing to go with them. Oh to brush my teeth under running water, shower under a torrent rather than a trickle, have a toaster which pops up and

a blind which pulls down, be able to re-arrange travel plans by simply picking up a phone, eat a vegetable which crunches, use my computer instead of this laborious process of writing by hand!

Whenever I travel to India, I take the opportunity, both coming and going, to break my journey in London, the city where I was born and spent my youth, and where I still have family and friends. When I arrive in London from Victoria, it seems dirty, crowded, noisy, the roads choked with traffic and agitated and aggressive drivers either frustrated, stuck and going nowhere or, when there is an opening, proceeding at breakneck speed into a space which to a North American seems totally inadequate. When I return to London from India it seems clean, quiet, spacious, uncrowded, with traffic conducted in an orderly manner. My perspective has changed and this is one of the prime reasons for uprooting myself and making the effort to come here.

Even as part of me longs to return to the familiarity and convenience of western society, I know I made the right decision to stay on for a while after the Intensive. I am so saturated with the inspired teaching of Guruji and Geeta, and grateful to have this time to digest and, hopefully, absorb some of the wisdom they imparted. It would be so easy to distract myself with people, conversation, theatres, doing things.

As the organiser of this particular Intensive, I had a lot to do beforehand and many responsibilities during the course acting as liaison between Guruji, Geeta and the Institute staff. With so many Canadian teachers together in one place in the presence of our teacher, we took advantage of this opportunity to conduct some business on behalf of our national association. Eight of the ten members of the Professional Development Committee were here (the other two had been to Pune earlier in the year for the Women's Intensive). We held a joint meeting with the Co-ordinating, Finance and Ethics Committees who also had most of their members here. Members of the Victoria and Vancouver Iyengar Yoga communities also held an informal meeting and explored ways in which we might make the best use of our mutual resources.

The fruits of all this work, in and out of class, will hopefully ripen in the future. Here and now, I have the leisure to reflect, to contemplate the purpose and meaning of the extraordinary experience of the past few weeks, to consider what on earth I am going to do with all that I have been given, and to allow this process to unfold in its own good time as my understanding matures. At the same time, there is an urgency to shift my level of awareness and refine my practice so I can penetrate more deeply into the vastness of yoga.

Again and again, during the classes, it became abundantly clear how far both Guruji and Geeta have penetrated into this vastness; how huge a distance there is between our sensitivity and awareness and theirs; and how much they would like to see us narrow this distance and profit from their experience. Geeta often reminded us that Guruji is a pioneer who had to make his journey alone with no-one to guide him, whereas all of us including Geeta and Prashant have him to guide us if we so choose. We can learn from his mistakes as he has done, and he freely admits he has made some along the way. This is inevitable. But learn he did, and now finds it frustrating to see us repeating the same mistakes again and again.

Sometimes their impatience for us to grasp and hold on to the fineness of this work is misunderstood. I see it as compassion, seeking to free us from our predicament where the external self with all its trappings is mistaken for the Higher

Self. When intellect alone rules, or conversely we indulge in our emotions, the true self is obscured. For wholeness, head and heart must be integrated. This message was clear: practice with your head and heart acting in unison.

The teaching here at the Institute is always fresh, as Guruji, Geeta and Prashant develop and deepen their own knowledge of yoga from their own practice. Yoga is a living art and we have been fortunate to receive it from a living Master whose like - as Geeta told us at the end of yesterday's class - will not be seen again for hundreds of years. Listen to what he has to say, learn what he is telling you, do what he is asking you to do. In other words, stop wasting your time and messing around. What an opportunity we have! We have been given a spiritual gift, and it's up to us to make the most of it.

Om namah Sivaya!



▲ At a teatine gathering in Pune, teachers from Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands (including former Victoria teacher Donna Fornelli) honouring their teacher, Shirley Daventry French

Back row: Doreen Fraser, Vicky Catchpole, Shirley Daventry French, Maggi Feehan, Leslie Hogya

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B.K.S. Iyengar

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CANADIAN INTENSIVE



Eager Intensive participants pause on their way to the Intensive in Pune, India. The following articles were written with experiences fresh in their minds so that you can share the energy and excitement of the event.

Selected Notes from my Journal

This place called India strikes me as a place of inspiration for artists - literary as well as visual. Everything I see evokes thoughts, reactions and emotions. My mind is so full - it doesn't get a moment's rest. I think of my jogs and my times of emptiness at home and realize that I can't seem to empty my mind here - I am so stimulated.

Thank God Yoga is here for me to keep me centered. I'm learning how to navigate in traffic - how to avoid the thousands (feels like millions) of rickshaws, motor bikes, cars, the oldest buses in the world, cows, goats, donkeys, and suspicious looking dogs. Not to mention cow dung, dead rats (2 feet long!!) and goat droppings.

The colours - blue sapphires, golds, green emeralds, oranges, ruby red fuschia and saffron - are brilliant gems. A visual feast. My senses are constantly challenged to take in more and more.

And so it goes, throughout the day - things that repulse and things that attract. Contrast lives side by side.

Imagine a beggar walking by a Benetton store. Imagine a sari clad figure navigating a motor scooter in the thickest of traffic. Imagine a buffalo travelling alongside a 4 x 4 jeep. Imagine a urine wall right across the street from a 5-star hotel. Imagine fifty people chanting OM.

If there was only one word to sum it up for me - it would be moist. Even the newspaper becomes damp. My clothing feels moist and limp. My skin is constantly moist. Moisture escapes from within as well as enters from without.

Moist.

Maybe the moisture helps to lubricate our joints, our muscles and bones respond favourably to this combination of heat and moisture. There is no dry, brittle and



▲ B.K.S. Iyengar with students from Canadian Intensive, 1997

flaky resistance. The body and mind becomes more pliable, flexible and soft - malleable.

A willingness in this country is essential. A willingness to accept the conditions as they are, a willingness to go with the flow and so this willingness must be present in the Yoga Intensive. It goes hand in hand with the richness of this culture and the richness of the teachings.

Thank you Geetaji and Guruji.

Lauren Cox.

India July, 1997

For two years at least I have been saving and planning for this trip. I'm sitting on my balcony at the Hotel Span, listening to birds in our quiet neighborhood as the Intensive draws to a close. From this perspective, what I see is not the India of the movies. I'm at tree top level, there's the 'whoop, whoop' of the Koel bird. I can see palm trees, apartments, roof tops. Some mornings there is the lovely sound of a women's dance class. Their feet slap the floor in intricate Indian rhythms and a click of percussion instruments.

Our time is spent attending classes, eating, resting, more classes, making notes and occasional forays into the labryrinths of markets and stalls in the city.

Near our hotel is an ancient site, Patelshawara Caves, a quiet oasis in the city.

The work of the Intensive is intense in a new way. There are many probing questions. The emphasis has been to get us to answer our own questions. How can we continue the work when we can't understand simple poses and how they are working? We can't come to them and ask why our neck pains in headstand, we must learn to see, analyze, find out for ourselves.

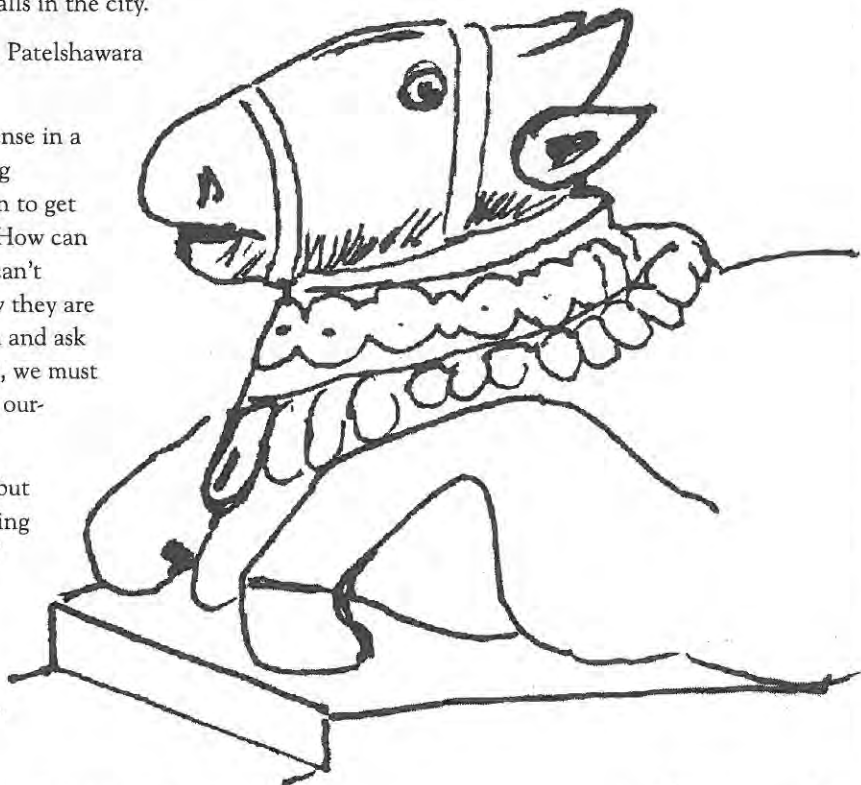
Some days we do very few poses but our heads are exhausted from trying to penetrate into deepest cells of our body.

Mr. Iyengar has been in most of the morning classes, for at least part

of the time, doing his own practice until he sees or hears something that sparks his interest. Then he takes charge, using imagery and probing questions to get us to see and feel and penetrate "like the prick of a needle."

There have been many highlights such as seeing hundreds of people pour into the Institute and honour Guruji or Guru Purnima, July 20. The day is set aside to honour the guru tradition, there were festivities everywhere in the country that day. It was so touching to see Shirley honoured as she was selected of all his students to come forward and place the garland around his neck.

Leslie Hogya



"Nandi"

Patelshawara

7/97 LH

An India Welcome: A Journal Excerpt

Mumbai airport at midnight. The first thing that hits me is the warm night air. It wraps its arms about me, welcoming me to India.

Jo Anna and I walk through a teeming crowd out into a night that does not sleep. Meeting the other teachers, who have taken a different path around the planet, we congregate, get into a bus.

I feel tumbled through the darkness, watching out the window as the shanti towns blur by; see men sleeping on pieces of cardboard by the side of the road, shacks made of corrugated tin serving as a home. Then, a huge elephant amidst the rickshaws and diesel fumes and barbed wire - the elephant a most auspicious sign.

Later, at the hotel, I step out onto the thin balcony and watch the street life of 2 a.m. unfold before me. A young man with no arms approaches a group of older men who have made their bed of cardboard beneath the shining orange light of a pedestrian overpass. The armless man lifts one foot and skillfully slides his toes beneath the sleeping bodies. He is feeling them, searching for valuables. It is robbery by feet.

Beside the hotel, an arched roof of blue plastic wavers in the breezeless night. Below, a table holds bright green melons, heaped into a pyramid, a platoon in waiting.

Then a lone boy on a bicycle with a large tin canister on the back rings his bell into the empty streets, plying chai. The men on the sidewalk snore in response; there are no takers.

I retreat into my room, close my eyes as the clock moves to 3.30 a.m. The lights are out and I feel my head swimming. Then, a cry from my room mate Katalin,

"Maggi, the Monsoon." Rain crackles onto the roofs around us. We are both up and onto the balcony. At 4 a.m. we are still watching the rain bathe the street below.

After only three hours of sleep, India wakes me. A group of us head to "the Gate of India". There we are met with hordes who all want to sell us something. We are a magnet for beggars, young girls who have the



▲ Leslie Hogya and Maggi Feehan in a rickshaw on the way to Parvati Temple, Pune

practiced eye of sadness, who put their blackened hands up to their mouths, mime eating food, muttering broken words of wanting in Hindu, or Marati, or tears.

Out of the swarms come snake charmers, who wrap their baskets up in large pieces of cloth like it is a picnic lunch. I look at the older man, his face is one I have seen before, a dozen snapshots of turf-worn old Indian men. Skin like a leather handbag, seams ripping.

The younger man has squatted before me. I ask if I may take a picture of the snakes, inquire about a fee. He assures me there is no cost, so I snap away as the basket lids are lifted and two cobras and a python rise to the hypnotic movement of the flutes. Once the snakes are again ensconced in their baskets, "gone to sleep" I am told, the young man fixes me with a pathological stare and demands 200 rupees. I shake my head, say no, remind him of our previous conversation, but he tells me "snake business very risky in city, not with law".

There is a scene as we debate over money. The young man stares into my eyes, then reaches into the basket to extract a snake. "Maybe you want necklace, miss". Suddenly I am a rat, quivering. My old snake phobia is instantly reborn. I reach into my money belt, pull out 50 rupees. They have me. The young man points to his elder, "My friend". I watch the old man's dreadlocks on his head bob up and down, think of what a cobra would feel like around my neck. I give him 50 rupees too.

We all laugh at this scene later, in the second class compartment on the train that lifts us up into the hills toward Pune. I have already figured out that 5 rupees would have been enough for them, but my learning has just begun.

Yoga awaits at the end of the train and India, relentless, has offered to teach me as fast as I can learn.

Maggi Feehan

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The Intensity of the Moment

This was my fourth visit to the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute and a Canadian Intensive. I looked forward to going in anticipation of receiving excellent teaching and learning from the source. My desire and hope was that I would be able to hear and see in order to “really” absorb the teachings. This was a new place for me. In previous Intensives I was mostly filled with fears: of not being able to do what was asked, not being prepared, would I get in trouble for being wrong. And my biggest challenge was dealing with old behaviour patterns of fear of



▲ Marlene Linda Miller honouring Guruji and Geeta.

authority figures. It was a pleasure this time to have a new perspective of excitement and anticipation of “what I would learn”.

The trip and time in India went very well. There were no problems with transportation or reservations and, fortunately, no health problems. I had a sense of magic and being blessed throughout the days. Yvonne Kipp and myself had the good fortune to stay with Mrs. Suti Lakhori, an 87 year old woman. Suti, or “Mummy” as she fondly became known to us, was a most gracious host. She welcomed us into her home, cooked wonder-

ful meals, and made the most incredible chapatis and pakoras; we called her the “Chapati Queen”! And we were privileged to hear about her life and work. She is a wise woman!

Each day we rose at sunrise to the sound of the song birds. We would have tea while listening and watching the day come alive. Then Yvonne and I took the opportunity of reduced activity from our daily lives to do a joint reading and reflection on the Sutras. This was followed by preparation for, and going to class. While walking to class I was filled with anticipation about what would be the content of the day's class.

The classes started with the Invocation to Patanjali. Geeta led us in drawing inward to observe the silence and the Lord within. Then she would start introducing the poses. However, not long into the class, Mr. Iyengar would come from his practice, call upon someone for demonstration and embellish on and add to the points Geeta was making. During these times Guruji interwove the teachings and philosophy of Patanjali. Often times I felt as if I was listening to a lecture. Eventually, we would all do the pose being demonstrated and Geeta resumed the session.

This Intensive was different from others I have attended. We were asked to do more than just observe and be attentive to demonstration of asana, or to follow points given, or to do. The basics and form of the poses were known. We were asked to penetrate the asana, what was happening, where the action originated, how was the skin moving, did it feel thick or thin, where was the weakness - find out! We were not told. Geeta gave clues and asked questions, letting us discover. She had incredible patience and continually encouraged us to keep searching. Eventually, our explorations would uncover the correct and natural action. Sometimes this was to great relief, as all of us worked together in the poses till we knew!

We spent much time watching demonstrations along this theme. Someone would be in a pose and questions were asked that lead to the unfolding of the pose. We all crowded around to watch, I constantly attempted to find out if I could see what Guruji or Geeta were seeing. The result of actions were often seen, but seeing what to do to create the action became the challenge. This will take practice and time to learn well, the clues of how to "find out" have been given.

If you read my notes you will see only a few asana. However, when we did the asana, they were done with the utmost attention and concentration focusing on what was being asked thus bringing tangibly alive meditation in action. It was truly the "Intensive of the Moment". Upon returning home I looked forward to doing my practices. As I started my first practice at home I was delighted to see and note the effect of working with such intensity - my feet were opening and grounding, legs were firm and alive which reflected completely up through my whole body and being. Also, I noted my usual problem areas were not at all bothersome. Knees did not hurt, hips even felt to be in better balance. Now, another challenge, to continue to practice with this intensity relying on my own authority!

I thoroughly enjoyed the pranayama classes which were held in the afternoons three times a week. The focus began from the external structure progressing to the internal softness. Learning to direct the breath without tension or hardness, finding out where the breath touches first, and from where does the breath first leave, were only a couple of points explored.

At the start of the last Wednesday afternoon pranayama class, I was thrilled to be informed by Marlene Mawhinney, Shirley Daventry French (my primary teacher in Canada) and Ingelise Nherlan that Guruji had granted me certification as an "Iyengar Teacher". I was overwhelmed with this news and the support I received from the other teachers attending the Canadian Intensive. This is truly a moment I will cherish with the deepest of gratitude.

My time in India was very rich and full: staying with Suti, who gave myself and Yvonne a home in India, the companionship of Yvonne as we practiced Yoga, studied the Sutras, reflecting on how to apply the teachings in our daily lives, and our tour of the shops of Pune, and, the purpose of the trip, the Intensive, led by Geeta, with the generous input of Guruji, renewed my joy and enthusiasm for Yoga. Both Geeta and Guruji are passionate about Yoga. I believe they know the Knower, and it is their desire that we, too, discover this knowing and be unshaken on our path to align with the Divine Seer.

Suti, Yvonne, Geeta and Guruji, please accept my deepest gratitude for this time with you that enabled me to learn from you. May I be worthy of your teachings.

And thank you to Shirley Daventry French and Donna Fornelli for your organization of yet another Canadian Intensive.

Namaste

Marlene Miller

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One Man Made the Difference

The following article was written for a special edition of "Yoga Rahasya", published on the occasion of Guru Purnima, in honour of B.K.S. Iyengar. It contains articles by longtime students of his from twelve different countries, describing how the light of Iyengar yoga was ignited in their part of the world. The countries represented were the United Kingdom, Netherlands, South Africa, Italy, United States, New Zealand, Australia, France, Canada, Japan, Israel Spain, plus a contribution from India itself. Diverse in culture, language and geography, these lands are active members of a worldwide Iyengar yoga community of more than 40 countries.

The distance between St. John's, Newfoundland on Canada's Atlantic coast and Victoria, British Columbia on the Pacific is 7314 kms - two and a half times the distance between the northern and the southern tip of India. These two cities have several things in common. They are the capital cities of their respective Provinces; island communities, living in close proximity to the sea and the elements. They are connected by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, two National airlines, the Trans-Canada Highway and huge ferries which ply the waters between them and mainland Canada. They



▲ Geeta conducting asana class at the Institute

also share a mystical union with India, a country which could not be more different from their own, and a city called Pune, home of a consummate yoga master called B.K.S. Iyengar.

In the mid-1970's, Iyengar Yoga burst upon the Canadian scene in a synchronistic fashion, coming to us from all directions. From England it travelled over the North Pole to the West Coast and the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, and made a separate journey across the North Atlantic to arrive in Ontario and the Great Lakes. From the United States there was also a two-pronged penetration to the East Coast and the Prairies. Between 1974 and 1977 the work took root, and as it grew, it spread to many other Canadian communities, large and small.

Yoga, which in its early days in the west had been studied largely by eccentrics and aesthetes, became more widely known during the 1960's. Most of the pioneers of Iyengar Yoga in Canada had begun to explore eastern philosophy and psychology. Searching for meaning and purpose in life, and trying to mend the mind-body split which characterised and diminished so much of western society, we began to turn to the east. Here in Canada was a fertile ground for the seeds of Iyengar Yoga to sprout and grow, and grow they did with great vigour, which is not surprising - they are robust seeds. Another dimension had entered our lives: the spiritual dimension!

Carl Jung coined the term 'synchronicity' to explain phenomena of the psychology of the unconscious which could not be explained by cause and effect. For instance, in Jung's words, "The simultaneous occurrence of identical thoughts, symbols, or psychic states." Was the arrival of Iyengar Yoga in Canada a response to an unconscious longing expressed in the minds of many students of yoga for an unparalleled teacher to guide them on this journey?

In his book 'The Hundredth Monkey', Ken Keyes describes an interesting phenomenon. A group of monkeys living on a Japanese island liked to eat sweet

potatoes which were thrown into the sand by a group of scientists observing their behaviour. But the monkeys would not touch the dirty potatoes. One day, a young female monkey washed a potato in a nearby stream, then taught this trick to her mother and to her playmates, who in turn taught their mothers. The skill was passed on one to one, until a certain number of monkeys had learned it; then, overnight a quantum leap took place. Next morning, not only were all the monkeys on this island washing their potatoes before eating them, but all the monkeys on neighbouring islands and on the mainland.

There is a point when if just one more person tunes in to a new awareness - this awareness may be communicated from mind to mind. Ken Keyes uses one hundred as the critical number but the number that is really important in this parable is the number one. One person can make a difference.

It is obvious that one man, B.K.S. Iyengar, has made a tremendous difference to yoga in Canada. His energy created a wave which circumnavigated the world. It is also clear that in the tradition of 'The Hundredth Monkey', the efforts of many individuals, in many communities, isolated and urban, combined to raise general awareness to the level where we were able to receive this energy. The next step was to strengthen this field so that this awareness could be directed to many, many others.

The geography of Canada, does not make it easy to come together. In addition to the vast distances between communities, we have to contend with harsh weather and expensive internal air fares. However, in the 23 years since the emergence of Iyengar Yoga in our country, we have come a long way in transcending these impediments. Many of us who are now actively working within our national association first met in Pune. What better foundation could there be on which to build an association honouring Guruji and his work?

Canadian groups have been travelling to Pune since 1976, and in 1984 we prevailed upon Guruji to come

and visit which he did after the San Francisco convention. When his flight landed in Vancouver he stood up and announced that he is a true Canadian because his native tongue is called Kanada. His visit encompassed three cities: Vancouver, Victoria and Edmonton, where he observed classes taught by Canadian teachers and blessed us with master classes from himself. Another highlight of this visit was the journey by private yacht from Vancouver to Victoria where Guruji stood erect in the bow of the boat in the pouring rain, wind and waves reveling in the scenic passage between many small islands undismayed by the deluge which, coming after weeks of beautiful weather, was distressing most of us. He also conducted an impromptu yoga class for about ten people in a space which the owners thought too small for one person to practise yoga.

Guruji has returned twice to Canada. In 1990 he was the guest of honour at the first Canadian Iyengar Yoga Conference in Edmonton, and in 1993 graced us with his presence at the Second Convention in Toronto. This latter visit provided an opportunity for Guruji to visit the Niagara Falls where his enthusiasm for what he called "one of the wonders of the world", and his delight in the sparkling air full of negative ions, made this a very special outing.

One of Canada's most prominent features is a lot of space. It is a vast country three times the size of India with a population of 29 million compared to India's 913 million. The isolation of many communities along with an inclement climate has bred a spirit of self-sufficiency, quiet independence and the ability to get on with things without fuss or fanfare. Canadians necessarily have a healthy respect for nature and the elements, which they have learnt to live with in ingenious ways. Canada is a humanitarian nation better known on the international scene as a peacekeeper than an aggressor.

Once the spark of Iyengar Yoga was ignited in Canada, communities at first developed in isolation from each other. The Canadian groups which travelled to Pune in

the 1970's were from Western Canada although some students from Eastern Canada made this journey on their own or with American groups. A Canadian Intensive in October 1985 was the first one with representatives all over the country, coast to coast, beginning a national connection which has grown steadily into the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association.

In 1987, Canadians who were attending the North American Convention in Boston met with Guruji to discuss our future direction, and he gave his blessing to the formation of our association. Despite the distances and the expense of travel, since that time we have come together every summer as Guruji requested in various parts of the country: Montreal, Edmonton, Ottawa, Vancouver, Toronto, Winnipeg, Victoria, and this year in Halifax. All of these cities are active centres of Iyengar Yoga which is practised in each of our 10 Provinces, in all of Canada's major cities and many, many small ones. At a rough estimate there are currently 200 teachers, 540 classes and 9,000 students, and reports coming in from all parts of the country tell us that interest is growing and growing.

Why have Canadians taken to Iyengar Yoga? Perhaps the answer can be found in our national anthem, 'Oh Canada'. There is one phrase which is repeated several times: *Oh Canada, we stand on guard for thee*. Standing guard requires vigilance, stamina, alertness, perseverance, concentration, the ability to see even in the dark, and on occasions, quick thinking, decisiveness and courage - all qualities essential to practising Yoga in the Iyengar tradition!

Shirley Daventry French

"Yoga Rahasya" is a quarterly magazine published by Light On Yoga Research Trust in Mumbai (Bombay). Subscriptions are US \$20.00 per year, to be sent by demand draft in the name of "Yoga Rahasya" to Sam N. Motivala, 622 Lady Jehangir Road, Dadar, Mumbai 400 014, India.

A Profusion of Confusion. Pune, July 26, 1997

In London, I first began to notice it - the confusion, that is.

Although it was printed quite clearly on the pavement before me, LOOK RIGHT, and then, halfway across the street, again, clearly presented LOOK LEFT, I continued to look left and then right before crossing. I'm Canadian, you see, and we drive on the opposite side of the road from the Brits. (They have their reasons, I'm not sure we do).

I learned what "Mind the Gap" meant on the London tube, and I learned that one cannot make a long distance call from just any old phone booth on the street. I did not, however, learn how to cross the street safely.

I was not to learn this in Pune either.

The streets here are a seething mass of "goods carriers" (transport trucks), buses, cars, auto-rickshaws, motorcycles, bicycles, people, cows and dogs. The only part

of this that I figured out is that cows are at the top of the list - perfectly safe, standing or lying in the middle of up to four lanes of traffic at rush hour - and I am at the bottom of the list.

There has been much to learn in India. some of which I have mastered. Much, however, remains a mystery. I learned that ginger ale is not available, but Canada Dry is. I learned that I could tell the rickshaw driver that my hotel was in Shivaji Nagar or in Revenue



Can you find the following Vancouver Island teachers? Jo Anna Hope, Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hogya, Vicky Catchpole, Maggi Feehan, Yvonne Kipp, Shirley Daventry French, Doreen Fraser, Lauren Cox

Colony, but I never did learn how a Colony differed from a Nagar or what either really meant. I learned the difference between M.G. Road and J.M. Road, but never did learn exactly how to get to either. I learned that tears do work to open "closed" wickets at the post office. I learned that tea means chai and "pot tea" means tea as I know it.

I have learned many things about how to move around this foreign land with foreign customs and practices in reasonable comfort and with reasonable confidence and I have learned to be patient with my own process of learning.

In the Yoga, too, I must exercise this patience with myself. The teachings have been so dense in this "last" Intensive, that this second year teacher has been overwhelmed by the depth and breadth of it all. I shall be years in taking it all in, making it manageable for this mind and body. Fortunately, there are senior

teachers in my community who will be able to process the Intensive more quickly and more effectively than I. Fortunately, they are prepared, even compelled, to share their work with the novices, the rookies. For those teachers, I am deeply grateful and I eagerly anticipate working with them over the coming year.

In the meantime, I remain,

Yours in confusion.

Jo Anna Hope

Reflections on the 3-week Yoga Intensive in Pune, India

India is intense - by sheer numbers of people; sounds, sights, smells and tastes. Even the sensations on the skin are intense - beggars touching, sweat forming, breezes cooling, dirt gathering.

Pune is intense - the huge, soft, brown eyes; the sea of bodies; the roar of traffic - buses, trucks, scooters, auto-rickshaws, HORNS; the smells, varying from scrumptious to horrific with car exhaust being too pervasive.

We walk to class; past the hibiscus, palm and various flowering trees; past the open cafe; past the little stand where at least four men sit cross-legged all day stringing marigolds, roses and fragrant white flowers into garlands. Around the corner is a popular shady shop that seems to cater to men - paan, coffee, treats and conversation. Then it's straight going for a while with our skirts blowing in the merciful breeze - past an apartment compound where blankets, clothes and people hang over the balconies; past the college with endless numbers of scooters and bicycles parked in front - handsome young men and beautiful young women carrying books. The vegetable sellers set up on the sidewalk. Then we pass a section of cubby hole

businesses - sandals, snacks, chai, tailors, and the old woman who sits in cobbler pose repairing shoes. Rounding the corner we watch carefully this way and that. A scooter skims inches past the ankles; a rickshaw just misses the hips. Oh-la-la! the smell of exhaust.....we hold the breath for several yards. Past the over-packed Petrol Station; and across the street are the trucks - goods carriers - parked in a row with men inside sleeping or playing cards.

We round the next corner on to a quieter street. Ah, past the fruit sellers and soon we're on the road through the park. The park is a haven - a canopy of trees (filled with flocks of screeching birds after class). Women sweep the path with their specially tied palm fronds, men watch children on the swings, lovers sit conservatively on benches. Then a short walk up a tree-lined street and we're at the Yoga Institute.

Now the intensity really begins. Is my posture correct? Are my fibres aligned? my cells alert? Is my ego serving me or am I serving it? Is my aggression understood? my greed subdued? my ignorance dispelled? Has my mind penetrated my body? Guruji has x-ray eyes not only for the physique but for the workings of the mind. I am exposed and through my physical and mental efforts gradually guide the ego to serve its master - the soul. A big order and a relentless process. The ego is stubborn causing some pain.

CANADIAN IYENGAR YOGA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

During the 1997 Canadian Intensive in Pune, two events took place of significance to the Canadian Iyengar Yoga community.

Honorary President

As agreed at this year's Annual General Meeting in Halifax, Guruji B.K.S. Iyengar was asked if he would do us the honour of becoming Honorary President of our national association. Laughing, he replied that, as this involved no extra work, he would be happy to accept. To commemorate the occasion, Guruji was presented with a special document beautifully inscribed by Lauren Cox, and a lovely stained glass picture of a loon created by Donna Fornelli's daughter, Jennifer.

National Certification

Guruji gave his blessing to the start of Iyengar Yoga Teacher Certification in Canada by awarding certificates to some of his longtime students as follows :-

Senior Intermediate

Bruce Carruthers (Galiano Island)
Maureen Carruthers (Galiano Island)
Shirley Daventry French (Victoria)
Marlene Mawhinney (Toronto)
Marie-Andrée Morin (Montréal)
Ingelise Nherlan (Vancouver)

Junior Intermediate

Sheri Berkowitz (Salt Spring Island)
Leslie Hogya (Victoria)
Margot Kitchen (Calgary)
Hilda Pizarro (Vancouver)
Marlene Miller (Victoria)

*Congratulations to all of these teachers,
as they embark on the work of
implementing certification across the country!*

Guruji never tires of demanding more. I feel gratitude for his ceaseless efforts to prick my consciousness. Pricking so I'll sharpen my own perceptions, cut out my own ignorance. Then Guruji guffaws and twinkles his eyes.

He works harder than I do. How can I not continue to go deeper? He expects more of himself than he does of me. He encourages me to do what it takes to know the Self. Guruji has cleared the path, removed debris and shown direction but I have to do the walking. He's doing his own walking but always makes sure we have seen him turn the next corner. With great effort we can keep his shirt-tails in sight!

There's Geeta giving endless clues and demanding that we demand more of ourselves. She admonishes: "What am I to do? Who has to do the work?!"

Vicky Catchpole

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Reflections on a Journey to India

Which of a myriad of experiences can I even begin to articulate to capture some sense of what transpired during this recent visit (Canadian Yoga Intensive, Pune, July, 1997).

A book I'm reading now by Rohinton Mistry, (Such a Long Journey), begins with a quote from Rabindranath Tagore's "Gitanjali". This strikes me as a good starting place:

*"And when the old word
dies out on the tongue,
new melodies break forth
from the heart;
and where the old tracks are lost,
new country is revealed
with its wonders".*



▲ Guruji and Geeta receiving well wishes from students, here is Ann Kilbertus.

Geeta and Guruji worked so hard to shift our awareness with questions that never seemed to end:

- What is the imprint of your right heel?
Left heel?
- What do you feel in this area?
- Where is the skin thick? Where is it thin?
- How will you bring awareness into that area?
- Who is going to do the work?
- Where is the little toe facing? The big toe?
- Are the sides of the neck even?

Simple questions on the surface but so much subtlety in awareness and reeling required to search for the answers. The work was demanding, not in the number of poses, but in the refinement required to "search yourself" as Geeta so frequently reiterated.

God, I think to myself, this will take lifetimes. It is continually humbling work but always with glimmers of more possibility than I know, drawing me on.

Pranayama with Geeta is always an inspiration. I wonder at her ability to clarify and reach us with the subtlety of this art.

A highlight occurred for me during the last class when she had four students on stage, each one with a different challenge preventing full chest expansion. Like the conductor of an orchestra she gracefully moved each student to become just a little more. To feel "new country" in their body. By the end she had conducted each person to do different work and achieve the same fullness of chest opening as they sat in front of us on the stage. The teaching was attentive and direct and I leave feeling like the learning will never end. What will I ever teach when I return home?

Ann Kilbertus

The Influence and Imprints of Yoga Outside India



▲ B.K.S. Iyengar

I have been regularly visiting the west for the last 40 years. On these visits I have met many eminent personalities, as well as common people, and the question that I am often asked is, "Why is interest in yoga increasing day by day in the west?"

India is a land enriched by its ancient, ever-fresh and flourishing culture. We have not lost our ground or our culture although we were ruled for a long time by foreigners and were in the clutches of poverty. Our strong faith in our culture, its philosophical thoughts and in the inner self have always protected us from all sorts of disasters. We have understood the meaning and the depth of life by facing the calamities of life. Even the Hindu religion has not remained within limited boundaries. Hindu religion is not meant only for

Indians but it is a universal religion (*Vishva Dharma*); for its truth has remained not only for a selected few, or for any particular caste, creed, or class. This has contributed much for the betterment of humanity.

Yoga was evolved centuries ago; it is an ancient and perfect art, science and philosophy which takes one towards the innermost truth. Yoga means union. It means evenness of attitude in our day-to-day life. It is also a skill which arises by itself in our action or meditation. To achieve union and evenness one has to still the mind. One has to cross the frontier which separates the stillness in one's mind from one's thoughts and emotions. Actions that are coloured by thoughts and emotions are not pure. Pure action is that by which skill comes into being, serenity, morality and

creativity. That is true Yoga. Thus Yoga brings purity in action, clarity in thought, and stability in mind. Yoga is India's gift to the world. The world has realised that there is a fundamental need to introduce Yoga into their way of life.

I sowed the seed of Yoga when I was introduced to the west by Yehudi Menuhin in 1954 and today I am proud to say that these seeds have grown into a gigantic tree. I see enthusiasm growing. Hundreds of westerners have worked hard and have learnt well. Not only did they derive the benefit of my work, but they also started conducting classes in different centres of Europe, America, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Mauritius, as well as other places, often on a purely humanitarian basis. Thus more and more people are being introduced to Yoga.

Western people have always been interested in Indian philosophy. Not only are they keen to know the Indian way of life but are also keen to adopt it. They could never grasp that yoga is actually impeded by all their theoretical knowledge of the subject. In 1954, I was looked upon as a "miracle man". When I arrived at the London airport, I was asked whether I, being a practitioner of Yoga, could chew glass, drink acid, or walk on fire. When I denied all such demonstrations, the audience was very surprised and inquired what kind of yogi I was. I immediately realised that some gross misconceptions about Yoga existed in the west and I felt there was a lot of work for me to do to make people understand what Yoga is. It was then a kind of challenge for me to dispel so many misconceived notions.

The west has progressed very rapidly in technical and scientific knowledge. The growth of materialism has created a great spiritual void. Discipline has become a mechanical format in a barren existence. Bored with materialism, the people in the west are searching for something which will give them peace of mind. The lack of any spiritual touch in human life and relationship has led many frustrated people to turn to the east for solace and inspiration. They realise that happiness and peace elude them. The art of living has been

drained from their lives. A hectic life has eclipsed their peace of mind; the soft and sophisticated material comforts have robbed them of life's simple happiness; an externally imposed discipline has kidnapped their inner freedom.

Now westerners are realising that yoga can keep their minds out of bondage. Though physically able to sustain the pace of modern life, they are often unable to bear its mental pressures. Artificiality has hurt the core of their consciousness. A lopsided and pampered existence has not protected them from enormous mental tensions generated by so many hectic claims on their lives. People have not been able to bring peace to their inner selves though divorce, remarriage, free sex and independent living flourish in the permissive west. On the contrary, this so called liberty has produced innumerable mental and psychological worries and problems. People are cut off from the core of their inner well-spring. They talk a lot intellectually, but their hearts are empty and sterile. This has separated them from spirituality, and because of all this they are drawn to yoga to regain some inner balance.

Why did the world take to Yoga?

While explaining why the west has taken to Yoga, I cannot refrain from saying that we Indians have neglected yoga, a legacy which has come to us from our ancient sages. We Indians are trying to imitate the western way of life while the west wants to adopt the Indian way of life which was known for its simplicity and straightforwardness. We have not only neglected the art but are forgetting it. We talk a great deal about our philosophy, but we do not convert it into action. We are merely glorifying the past. We do not live according to what is morally important; we live on ideals. We are humble and simple; belief has a very strong hold on us. We are very slow and even slovenly in action.

The western mind is intellectually well-trained. In India we believe that one cannot improve society unless one is evolved mentally and spiritually. As the westerners are people of action, they go all out to improve society. Both

types of approach are partially correct and productive. No doubt, we Indians are proud of our civilization and culture, and of our great yogis and rishis but that feeling is not going to lift us from our lethargy. We must work, steadfastly and purposefully, as did our great masters in the past. We have to act in our chosen paths earnestly, and not merely casually and intellectually. Only action with understanding and a desire to learn with humility will bring us once again to our past glory. We are patient, tolerant, simple and humble, but we lack keenness and interest and the drive to get results.

Westerners, being of just the opposite frame of mind, once they set their minds on something, will persevere with it. Once they take to yogic practice, they do not

treat it casually but try to project it. Yoga has gone to every nook and corner of the world, whereas in India, we think that it is in our blood and we neglect the real art.

The west is eager to know about our philosophical approach to life. The western mind is in search of peace, but peace cannot come from outside; it has to come from within. Unless people learn to distinguish essentials, and non-essentials, peace will always elude them. The west thought that the soul could be realised through intelligence. Now India must teach them that the head can only take us so far and no further; we must instead hitch the wagon to our hearts. There should be co-ordination of head and heart. The proper mental approach and the firm moral background are essential factors, without them a



▲ B.K.S. Iyengar

spiritual approach is impossible. The west seems to have realised that yoga is the only path which is universal in its nature, and which can bring about a fundamental change in their way of life.

When I came in contact with westerners, the first thing they told me was that they are tired of lectures on Indian philosophy and

weary of so much endless theoretical knowledge; they wanted something practical and tangible, of which they were ignorant. We do not distinguish between the body and the mind.

There must be an integrated approach. I then had to teach *yogasanas* and *pranayama* with this wholesome approach. At every step I had to insist and make them understand how the body and the mind work in coordination, how each *asana* and each breath is treated with a kindred spirit. Their bodies being very supple and elastic, could

perform the movement, but I had to make them aware that the mind has also to be kept alert, living all the time in the present, and how the current of spiritual awareness has to flow in each movement, in each action.

The family structure in the west, their habits, customs, and social living, are all opposite in nature to the yogic way. Smoking, drinking and free sex have never been regarded as unacceptable behaviour. Their idea of morality is such that they never considered it necessary for spiritual life. Yet after beginning the regular practice of yoga, many of them stopped smoking and drinking

and even attending social parties.

Yoga is an excellent solution for mental and psychological problems, and therefore it is becoming very popular. It is, of course, true that popularity can sometimes damage the real and original nature of a subject; and it is here that I have found the second stage of my work. In the fifties and sixties I worked hard to popularise Yoga. In the seventies, I worked to correct the distortions that have appeared since that popularisation. On television and especially in physical fitness classes Yoga is



▲ Geeta S. Iyengar on Gurupurnima Day.

being presented, not in its true form, but in a westernized version that is more like any other form of physical exercise. Whenever I appeared on western television, it became part of my duty to point out the discrepancies between these adapted versions and the true original yoga, and to emphasize that yoga is not done merely to

"keep fit". Health will be an inevitable byproduct if one practises well.

Today I am happy to say there are hundreds of teachers trained by me, who are teaching in educational institutions, sports centres, colleges, prisons and universities in America and all over the globe.

The scientific western mind is also greatly interested in the medical effects and applications of yoga. While we in India only make claims that yoga is beneficial in the treatment and curing of such diseases as heart trouble, high and low blood pressure, diabetes and so on, in the west, doctors are actually testing these claims in hospitals, with the result that they have concluded that yoga can and does help to a great extent to cure many physiological and psychosomatic illnesses. In America, Britain, and other places, I have several doctors as pupils and they have made observations and experiments during classes to assist them in their research into the effects of yoga. Their research has led them to conclude that asanas and pranayama done merely in the name of yoga do not help, and only that which is practised in the correct manner can have a beneficial effect. I fear that one day these doctors may proclaim to the world that it is they who are the pioneers of new advances in medical science, whereas actually it is the ancient science of yoga which is responsible for such an "advancement".

To conclude I would state that westerners are enthusiastic, courageous, sincere and hard working. They are always awaiting guidance from the east with humility. I think that their scientific and technical knowledge, coupled with our spiritual understanding and maturity, could perhaps work hand in hand together to bring human beings once again to the "Vishva Shanti Dharma", the religion meant for universal peace which was founded by our ancient masters.

The people of the west are now discovering the LIGHT OF YOGA. I hope that a day does not come when it will be they who will bring back yoga to our

country. The east is the origin of Yoga, and I pray that it will always remain so and will continue to preserve this great art.

B.K.S. Iyengar

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▲ Felicity Green

Welcome to Felicity Green

The Victoria Yoga Centre is pleased to announce that Felicity Green will be coming to Victoria, November 21-23, for a variety of workshops. (see ads this issue). Friday, November 21, at noon there will be a class for Introductory and Level 1 students, with the opportunity for teachers and teachers in training to observe. Friday evening and Saturday is an all levels workshops (for students with at least one year's study of Iyengar yoga). Sunday there will be a focus on pranayama and the shoulder stand cycle for teachers and those in training. Sunday at 1:30 at the conclusion of the workshop, participants are invited to bring their lunch and questions for an informal discussion period focusing on the workshop.

Felicity is a senior teacher and long time student of B.K.S. Iyengar. She travels often to study with the Iyengars and attended the conference in Colorado and the Women's Intensive in Pune last January (1997). Felicity trains teachers in the United States and helps with their certification process. she is currently living on Lopez Island in Washington State, but travels extensively from South Africa, New Zealand to Hawaii leading workshops.

Felicity brings clarity, humour and commitment to her teaching. It is enriched by a background in nursing and her work at Yasodhara Ashram. We are delighted to welcome Felicity back to Victoria.



▲ Felicity Green and Wendy Boyer

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Monday, 7.30 - 9.00pm	<i>Ann Kilbertus</i>
Tuesday, 7.00 - 8.30pm	<i>Adrienne Rhodes</i>
Wednesday, 9 - 10.30am	<i>Lauren Cox</i>
Wednesday, 6.00 - 7.30pm	<i>James Currie-Johnson</i>
Thursday, 8.30 - 10.00am	<i>Linda Benn</i>
Thursday, 4.30 - 6.00pm	<i>Maggi Feehan</i>

Gentle Yoga

Tuesday, 10.30 - 12.00pm	<i>Linda Benn</i>
Thursday, 1.15 - 2.45pm	<i>Leslie Hogya</i>

Special Needs Yoga

Wednesday, 4.30 - 6.00pm	<i>Shirley Daventry French & Ann Kilbertus</i>
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Noon Yoga

Tuesday, 12.00 - 1.30pm	<i>Wendy Boyer</i>
Thursday, 12.00 - 1.00pm	<i>Lauren Cox</i>

Early Morning Yoga

Tuesday, 6.30 - 7.30am	<i>James Currie-Johnson</i>
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Yoga – Level I

Monday, 10.30 - 12.00pm	<i>Lauren Cox</i>
Tuesday, 5.30 - 7.00pm	<i>Leslie Hogya</i>
Wednesday, 7.30 - 9.00pm	<i>James Currie-Johnson</i>
Friday, 9.00 - 10.30am	<i>Linda Benn</i>
Saturday, 9.00 - 11.00am	<i>Celia Ward</i>

Yoga – Level II

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Thursday, 6.00 - 8.00pm	<i>Ann Kilbertus & Leslie Hogya</i>

Yoga – Level III

Monday, 5.30 - 7.30pm	<i>Shirley Daventry French</i>
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YOGA CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- 8: Y Fall Yoga Programme begins
- 19: Yoga Centre Gathering at the Y
- 20: Teachers' Meeting

OCTOBER

- 3-5: Father Joe Pereira, see ad this issue
- 18: Teachers' Meeting
- 24-25: Fall Retreat at Swanwick Centre with Shirley Daventry French, see ad this issue

NOVEMBER

- 7: Yoga Centre Gathering at the Y
- 9: Family Yoga Workshop with Lauren Cox at the Y
- 15: Teachers' Meeting
- 20-23: Felicity Green, see ad this issue

DECEMBER

- 14: Light on Yoga Workshop with Shirly Daventry French at the Y
- 21: A Solstice Practice and Chanting 5-7pm

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VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



November/December 1997

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Association is to cement people,
and not meant for friction.

— B.K.S. Iyengar

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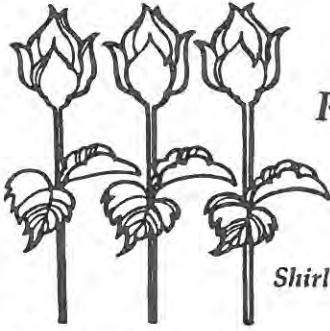
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Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French



Amidst the outpouring of emotion surrounding the death of Princess Diana, one letter in *Time* magazine put the whole thing into clear perspective for me. The writer was questioning the values of a society which adulates celebrities and entertainers rather than those who work hard for the public good every

day in unglamorous settings. He cited Mother Teresa and pointed out that the Nobel Prize awarded to her for her life's work amounted to \$192,000, less money than the value of the diamond ring which Princess Diana received from Dodi Fayed!

Despite my English birth and upbringing, I have never had much time for the British monarchy, and little regard for either this institution or the aristocracy which surrounds it. It has bred and sustained a class-ridden society that my husband and I were happy to leave behind when we emigrated to Canada. At the time of the Queen's coronation, we went in the opposite direction from most of the crowds, leaving London to go sailing on the Essex coast (an outing which ended in shipwreck and adventure – but that is another story). Nevertheless, despite my cynicism, along with millions of others I was strangely intrigued by Diana's death and tearfully watched her funeral on

TV. Yet my tears were not really for her; I didn't know her and knew nothing about her other than what I had read in press releases and most of that was probably fiction. Some of my emotion was triggered by the pageantry and ritual borne of a proud and dignified heritage, my heritage. And who would not be moved by the bowed heads of her two young sons? The manner of Diana's death was like a Shakespearean or Greek tragedy, and her funeral offered us a fitting last act.

But what lasting legacy will there be from her life? How many of the people emoting copiously at the time of her death will significantly change their own lives because of this experience?

Another letter in the same issue of *Time* contrasted Diana's legacy of a \$65 million estate with Mother Teresa's legacy of decades of service to the poor and an organisation capable of carrying on her tradition. Someone else speculated that perhaps Mother Teresa chose this time to die knowing that the limelight was focused elsewhere enabling her to have the quiet departure she sought. *Time* featured Diana on its cover two weeks' running with a small article on Mother Teresa's death appearing on Page 66. Canada's *MacLean's* magazine had followed suit with two covers of Diana, one of which had a tiny one inch portrait of Mother Teresa in her simple sari inset in the top right hand corner above a full-page portrait of Diana resplendent in diamond and pearl tiara and earrings and a bejeweled gown.

What do we value? What do we worship? The first time I met Swami Radha she asked these two questions. At that time I did not follow any devotional practices, so I thought to myself, I don't worship anything – only to discover later that I certainly did!

Following on the deaths of these two women I had an interesting personal experience involving celebrity in the field of yoga. Last year Derek and I gave a course at a growth centre on one of the Canadian Gulf islands which was well received but apparently did not generate the kind of money they like to make on such endeavor.

ours. This has been their experience with all yoga courses taught there by Canadian teachers: a small enthusiastic group of students who value the work but no huge following. One of the program directors approached me to consider some ideas. She had been speaking to her counterpart at Feathered Pipe Ranch in the U.S. where they have run successful yoga programs for many years. She wondered whether I was open to the idea of trying another kind of yoga course where I would offer Iyengar Yoga teacher training along with an American teacher who would draw from that large and lucrative market. She was honest: she likes to support and promote the work of Canadian teachers, but to survive their centre has to make a considerable amount of money. Even spiritual centres have to meet the bottom line.

It is a common experience of Canadians in all areas of The Arts that their work is undervalued on the North American continent: ignored in the United States and overwhelmed in their own country by a wave of promotion and self-interest fueled by a population ten times as big as ours. Saddened to be reminded of this fact, at the same time I thought of some American colleagues, longtime students of B.K.S. Iyengar, mature teachers and personal friends with whom it would be a pleasure to work. But the program director was putting forward some other names she had been given by the woman at Feathered Pipe Ranch including some young men who have become well-known from yoga videos and publicity in the *American Yoga Journal*. They may be good teachers, but I realised that this idea did not sit well with me at all, and I said I would prefer to teach by myself or together with an experienced Canadian teacher.

Later, I explored this possibility with Marlene Mawhinney of Toronto, who expressed interest provided it did not interfere with her work at the Toronto yoga centre. And I fully support her because this is the heart of yoga – the work we do in our community week in week out. In doing this work we have to have a business-like approach, but must also

remember that yoga is not a business, it is a spiritual practice which involves selfless service: a difficult concept for most of us to grasp and even more difficult to sustain.

In India this summer there was a constant refrain from Geetaji. She would give us an instruction, insist that it was carried out, and follow up with the rhetorical question: "*Is it not your duty?*" Then, to remove any element of doubt she would say: "*Then whose duty is it?*" Duty is always at the forefront of the work in Pune, not just when it suits them but all of the time.

When I travel to another community to teach yoga, it is my duty to remember that I am Guruji's representative and it is his work and not my personality which should kept at the forefront. I am there to foster the growth of Iyengar Yoga in that community. Ideally a workshop will not be set up to make a lot of money for the teacher, although a seasoned teacher will have spent a great deal of time and money on their own training and should expect to receive fair remuneration. As Guruji himself says: you have to charge but make sure you give more than you receive. Ideally any profit after expenses will be ploughed back into the work being carried on locally. Visiting teachers deserve to be treated with respect but not raised to celebrity status. Within the Iyengar family we are all students of Guruji.

In doing our duty it is important to lend whatever talents we have to the work. For some this will mean going out into the community at large which will naturally make them better known, and for others it will mean teaching closer to home. I know some very fine Iyengar Yoga teachers prominent on the workshop circuit with a wealth of experience from which to draw, who honour Mr. Iyengar as their teacher, who support the local community and whom I would recommend to anyone, anywhere. At the same time I also know many others with a comparable level of talent, ability, experience, dedication and depth of knowledge who quietly go about their work in small centres week in

week out, unheralded and unsung — most of whom prefer it that way.

There is, of course, a place for charismatic teachers in propagating the work. Mr. Iyengar himself is such a teacher who has given birth to a forceful yoga movement throughout the world. But his name and fame (which were not of his seeking) came only after many years of practising alone and unknown, after suffering many hardships. His sense of purpose and trust in Divine providence enabled him to keep going and convert the information he gained from his practice into knowledge and that knowledge into wisdom. This takes time and maturity, dedication and devotion.

Contrast this with the instant experts and self-proclaimed gurus prevalent in North America where you can become a certified yoga teacher in one month and a pundit in next to no time. I am appalled at the self-promotional grandiose claims which appear in so many advertisements and brochures. Sadly, the truth is often distorted to serve the self with a small 's'. Yes, I know that according to yoga all souls come into this life with different levels of spiritual development and there will be some who at an early age exhibit maturity and knowledge way beyond their years because of past lives. Perhaps it is a limitation in my perception, but this is not what I detect from most of this advertising.

One afternoon in Pune, I was reading in the library of the Iyengar Yoga Institute sitting opposite two yoga teachers from France and Spain who were also studying at the Institute. They were leafing through the latest issue of *Yoga Journal*, and shaking their heads they suddenly asked me: "Have you seen this? It's so commercial!" And in that unpretentious setting surrounded by shelves of spiritual texts in many languages, with Mr. Iyengar sitting at his desk at one end of the library and his students reading, writing and studying at the various tables, this magazine certainly seemed somewhat removed from the spirit of yoga.

I don't read much of *Yoga Journal* any more, so why do I keep subscribing? I get far more valuable information about yoga from many newsletters I receive from around the world. One of the reasons is that I like to know what is going on. In the same way, it is the general public's desire for information about celebrities and their lives that has allowed the paparazzi and the publications that publish their stuff to flourish. If we didn't buy them, they would disappear leaving time and space to appreciate and nurture, as Mother Teresa did, the good and the Godliness in ourselves and others who inhabit our world in the flesh and not on paper.

It is our deeds that will stand as our legacy.



▲ Pune – July, 1997

Letter from B.K.S. Iyengar on Astanga Vinyasa Yoga

Brigid Philip, of the North East London Iyengar Yoga Institute, NELIYI, wrote to Mr. Iyengar about Astanga Vinyasa Yoga. Her explanation, and his reply, from 1996, are set out. Brigid wrote: Some of my students have begun to ask about Astanga Vinyasa Yoga and I, as an arthritic, am particularly interested in this because of my concerns about healthy practice for all, to allow all to benefit as I have done. So after discussing this with other NELIYI teachers, I wrote to Mr. Iyengar to ask if he would care to give his view. — Brigid Philip — His reply is exactly as follows :

Dear Brigid,

Thanks a lot for your letter intimating me how the NELIYI is progressing. It is good that experienced teachers are obliging the centre with their knowledge for the good of the suffering students. I am really sorry for your doubts. Yoga is Astanga. I, being a student of my Guru learnt the way with my colleagues like Pattabhi and other teachers. This type of jumpings from position to position was taught in 1934 up to 1942 or 43. Then my Gurujī also left off these jumpings. In my case I was in Pune in 1937 and I had to work on my own for three years in Pune.

I was teaching this Vinyasa Yoga in schools and colleges as they wanted power, strength and endurance. When students were about 28 they started learning from me in 1944's they were getting not only exhausted but branded as pure physical exercise.

In those days Pune was a temple of physical activities and it was the mother place for bringing out Wrestlers and Mallkhambis. Having the tone of the body they were unhappy to do yoga with the vinyasa as it was working on their peripheral body and not penetrating the inner body. It was a challenge for me at that age and I had to fight myself in search of penetrating the feelings of the poses in depth. Secondly, people with

diabetes, blood pressure, back aches, restlessness nervous breakdown, flashness and hotness in their eyes and ears felt while doing vinyasa. I thought that yoga may not flourish at all. So I stopped introducing the vinyasa so that they are not tired or breathless.

Then, instead of the vinyasa movements I started explaining working on myself to reach the unknown inner body which gathered momentum for yoga and gaining respect. In the early days, even in performances all over the world I was doing with vinyasa to show the external expressions and dynamism. It did not attract the viewers. When I explained the inner action people loved it and started showing interest more and more as the mind, intelligence and consciousness started percolating throughout the body.

This introduction in my teaching brought respect to this art. So my view is that the jumpings in asanas end only on the physical level; whereas vinyasa means sequence to reach the ultimate in the pose. Whoever do jumpings they get stuck there only because their mind will be on jumping and not for alignment. For me alignment is enlightenment.

This is my way of thinking and I request you to circularise this letter in newsletters of all IYI'S so that the doubt is removed. If the practice of yoga is satisfied in gross level by scratching the external body and not penetrating, that yoga is of pleasure (Bhoga yoga). What I teach and practice is auspicious yoga (yoga yoga or shreyo yoga).

Do publish and let all students in UK know this. We all learnt this method from our Guru and there is no division. The former method is for youngsters to build up their vanity and the second is the art of sublimating the ego. All these should be noted. With all my good wishes.

Yours sincerely,
B.K.S. Iyengar

*Reprinted from the Summer 1997 Newsletter of the
B.K.S. Iyengar National Association of the United States*

“Genius does what it must, and Talent does what it can.”

— Owen Meredith (*Edward Robert Bulwer, Earl of Lytton*)

“Convert talent into genius by hard work and uninterrupted sadhana.”

— B.K.S. Iyengar

At the San Francisco convention, as part of his presentation at the Medical Forum, Dr. Derek French used the first of the above quotations saying that: “It has been Mr. Iyengar’s genius to show the way in which impeccable use of the body is connected with impeccable use of the mind, whereby asana becomes prayer leading to the unity which is yoga. It behooves those of us who follow to use our talents as best we can.”

There is no doubt about it: Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar is a genius who does what he must to raise the consciousness of his students and put them in touch with the Light within. As his daughter and foremost disciple Geetaji told us this summer in Pune: “Listen carefully to what Guruji has to say, because you will not see his like again for many generations.” Her statement echoed that made by Swami Radha in Victoria in 1984 when she welcomed Guruji to Canada: “Don’t listen only with your ears — listen with your intuition. You might never hear this much wisdom with so much concern and so much compassion again.”

Once Geetaji was asked how it felt to be teaching in the shadow of her famous father, and she answered without a moment’s hesitation that she did not teach in his shadow but in his Light.

Those of us who have received his guidance in person are especially fortunate, but whether directly or indirectly, Guruji’s genius has touched and enriched our community in many, many ways. We have been inspired by his example to persevere in the face of difficulties. His intensity of purpose has encouraged us to intensify our practice and remove the obstacles which obscure the Light.

Sunday, December 14th is Guruji’s seventy-ninth birthday. I invite you to honour Guruji and express

your gratitude for the Light of Yoga by joining myself and your teachers in a special celebration and benefit workshop at the Victoria Y (see advertisement this issue). Nothing gives Guruji greater pleasure than knowing his pupils are practising in the fellowship of yoga, but if you absolutely cannot be with us on that day you can still make a contribution by sending a donation which will be put to good use in the propagation of Mr. Iyengar’s work.

Shirley Daventry French



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Victoria Yoga Centre
Presents

In the Light of Yoga

*A special benefit workshop in celebration of
the 79th birthday of Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14TH, 1997

10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

at the Victoria YM-YWCA

with

Shirley Daventry French

\$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
- scholarships
- monthly newsletter
- monthly gatherings
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- retreats
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Freedom from Stress Through Yoga of Action

B.K.S. Iyengar

We live in a tension torn world. Life is getting stressful and painful. Science and technology have given us a lot of physical comforts but have also triggered a fast life. We continue to move mindlessly from one endeavor to another believing that movement and speed is what life is all about. There is no time to pause, to think to ponder, to contemplate or introspect on the proceedings of life. The result is our alienation from our near and dear ones and from society. We have no time to even recharge our energy batteries.

Insecurity and fear haunt and daunt people. The blanket of unhappiness spread over humanity crosses the barriers of religion, history, geography, language, race and ethnic considerations.

Why is there such fear, insecurity and distrust of each other? I tried to ponder and analyze the cause for this universal sorrow and misery. Humanity has lost control over life instead of leading a life on the basis of human values.

As you shall sow, so shall you reap. Violence, ill health, disease, hunger, malnutrition, starvation, strife, discord and fighting exists in the affluent, advanced nations as well as the poorer, third world countries. Are we not aware of the havoc we are playing with our environment and depleting the mother earth.

Suffering (klesha) is an inevitable component of life and has to be borne. Pain or suffering is of three kinds, *adhyatmika*, self inflicted and invited. It is up to us to reduce or eliminate it by maintaining a balance in the working of the body, mind and soul. *Adidaivika* (affliction) disease (*roga*) is caused by genetic factors over which we have no control. We can neither restrain or cure it. *Adhibhautika roga* arises due to the disturbances in the ratio of the elements in the body. Pain, sorrow, harassment, agony, misery, distress, discomfort, torments, grief, worry, vexation, disease, torture and annoyance are afflictions. The source of all afflictions is *avidya* (igno-

rance), *asmita* (egoism), *raga* (attachment), *dvesa* (aversion) and *abhinivesa* (self benediction or too much caring for life and self). We ourselves have invited suffering. We have saturated the mother earth with all kinds of toxins. We have polluted the natural resources, the water we drink; our factories and industries belch out smoke releasing tonnes of poisonous and toxic gases in the air. Are these the needs of mankind or are they the greeds of man to have more and more of material comforts. Though our lives have become easier have they brought us any mental peace? Many people now have time for leisure and get bored. They do not know how to use their leisure time to attend to and strengthen the body, mind and nurture the soul.

Many of the world capitals have become insecure and unsafe where you cannot enjoy normal outdoor life. Even living in the confines of the house is insecure. The situation is the same in the poor as well as the rich countries. In Japan, the world's industrial and economic giant, the rate of suicide has crossed the danger mark. The youth and the middle aged people often wonder why and what one lives for. The old and the aged are dying uncared for in homes for the aged. They survive as vegetables without zest or feeling for life raising their hands in despair to the heavens to lift them from this world, a "living mortuary".

The Kathopanishad epitomizes the present world scenario stating "Fools dwell in darkness; wise in their own conceit and puffed up with vain knowledge; go round and round, staggering to and from, like blind men led by the blind". We tend to take trifles too seriously but only at the level of thinking and brooding and we fail to take adequate action. The human body is a playground of *Jeevatma* as the world is the playground of the Lord. The body, the mind and the soul all come into play with the five *Jnanendriyas* and five *karmendriyas* with the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether) and their qualities sound, touch, shape, taste and smell. The mind is the coach and the intelligence is the arbiter. The playground should be proper and the player must be fit to play the game. For the human being, the game of life is to live it fully with all vitality.

Sage Patanjali charted out the game plan for us. He described the qualities needed by the player to play the game with vigor, energy, optimism and wit. A balance needs to be struck between the body, mind, emotions and the soul. They should work in consort, with each one doing their bit within the set limits and not exceeding the jurisdiction of the border line of the body, mind and spirit. This is the key to the game. The vital difference with the games and sports that we normally participate in is that though we compete and play; it is not for the victory or triumph. We go on playing till our last breath or as long as the almighty wishes.

Lord Patanjali with his immense prowess over Yoga and language codified the entire yoga darsana in 196 sutras. The majority of the world is virtually going berserk in the pursuit of bhoga (enjoyment) at the expense of the spirit. Some who have completed a circle in pursuit of material and mundane pleasures are now turning back to Yoga for health, mental calmness and emotional poise.

Yoga can be practiced by all irrespective of caste, creed, age or sex. It is the best acquisition. Whether it is practiced in pursuit of duty (dharma) or to earn a livelihood (artha) or for the enjoyment of life and worldly pleasures (kama) or for liberation and emancipation (moksha). It is a MUST. The Upanishads proclaim that a weakling cannot enjoy the pleasures of life (bhoga) or liberation (moksha). "Dharma artha kama mokshanam arogyam mulamuttanam."

Man is a triune of body, mind and soul. According to the Bhagvad Gita, the body is called the kshetra or the field and the dweller in the body is called kshetrajna. Our sages have divided body into three tiers. Karanasharira (core of the body), sukshmarsharira (mental body) and sthulasharira (gross body). In these three tiers are encased the five layers or sheaths. They are annamaya kosha (anatomical body), pranamaya kosha (physiological body), manomaya kosha (mental body), vijnanmaya kosha (intellectual body) and anandamaya kosha (spiritual body).

The three tiers as well as the five koshas interpenetrate from the skin to the self as well as outer penetrate from the self to the skin as one single unit. The five organs of

action, the five senses of perception, the tamasic body, rajasic body and sattvik body, illuminative quality of the soul and modulations and fluctuations of the mind carry on the play of the jivatman. The goal and the end is with the purusha and prakriti merging together, i.e. the union of the seeker with the seer.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras provide the seed for the total evolution of the human being. The aim is to culture the body, mind emotions and intelligence in order to reach the superconscious state. Yoga is essentially a "spiritual science" and gain of physical or mental health are only the side benefits.

The four pillars or padas of yoga are samadhi pada, sadhana pada, vibhuti pada, and kaivalya pada. These are meant to attain respectively the goals of dharma, artha, kama and moksha. Samadhi pada discusses the ways and means for purifying the mind and cultivating the citta. Sadhana pada offers methods and means to enrich the citta by removing our lack of understanding. Vibhuti pada signifies the gift of yoga with a caution on how the excessive use of the powers (siddhis) can backfire and any temptation to use these powers could bring about the downfall of the yogi. Kaivalya pada leads the sadhaka to the state of liberation.

The eight limbs of yoga are yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dhyana, dharana and samadhi. Yama is moral and mental restraint, niyama physical and mental observance, asana is a posture, pranayama is regulation of prana - the dynamic principle of life, pratyahara is control of senses, dharana is concentration, dhyana is meditation and samadhi is merging of the individual soul with the universal soul.

The essence of yoga is anushasanam wherein the ethical, physical, mental and intellectual disciplines emphasize on the right means of character building. Yama and niyama are rules of moral values and codes of behaviour relating to oneself and the society, as an individual as well as a social discipline. The growth of civilization is marked by culturing of the mind while yoga is culturing the body, mind and the consciousness.

The yamas and niyamas are universal commandments which are not limited by geographic, regional or ethnic considerations. Non violence or ahimsa of Patanjali connects us to the root of love. Satya or truthfulness deals with the culture of the mental body. Brahamacharya is for moderation. Accumulation or hoarding far beyond one's needs and means is irreligious in yoga.

"These yogic commandments are the rules of morality for society and the individual, which if not obeyed bring chaos, violence, untruth, stealing, dissipation and covetousness."

Yoga is meant for us in this world - here and now. These are not just matters of superconsciousness or spirituality. Mind, intelligence and consciousness cover the different aspects of the human being. When mind dominates the entire brain, the intelligence and consciousness are compressed, at times the intelligence swamps the brain when the mind and consciousness are compressed. You must have realized that when one is totally involved and absorbed in something, a ray of illuminating light of the consciousness appears shining from the soul or superconscious.

Citta vritti or the fluctuations in consciousness sprout from the self. Vrittis are direct thought waves (pramana) which disturb one's state of mind. In viparyaya, the sense perception deceives us and in vikalpa (misconception), the senses work correctly but the mind cannot conceive correctly.

In India, where the Vedic religion thrived and flowered, the philosophy of abnegation of self and self denial led the masses into looking inwards while poverty called for action. Vivekananda advised the Youth to play football instead of reading the Bhagvad Gita. He wanted to ensure that the masses did not turn into a life of recluse. He stirred the people into action by his call, "Arise. Awake" as spirituality cannot flourish in midst of needs to attain material well being and satiate mundane needs. The body cannot be fed by spiritual practice alone. The west had too much of material prosperity and propensity to acquire more while the spirit was languishing so his message at the first Parliament of Religion at Chicago in 1883 was totally different.

It might be intriguing why Swami Vivekananda then asked the Indian youth to play football rather than reading Bhagvad Gita, a descent from the high platform of immorality of the soul to the low reach of striking reality. He wanted to create a militant action and the fighting spirit rather than give the sermons on philosophy.

He desired to fire the imagination of the inert masses into action. The message of saints and philosophers of "Jaganamitya" (the world is an illusion or maya) or the negative message of Neti Neti - not this, not that - spread despair and gloom in the masses. At the turn of 2000, over a hundred years after the Chicago address the world and particularly India needs the message of "arise and awake" to arouse the masses into action. To "play the game" and "engage in the battle".

Human life should be imbibed in spiritual discipline like the message of Lord Krishna in Bhagvad Gita to Arjuna "Fight On" (*Tato yudhyaya yujyasva; sukha dukhe same kritva labhalabhau jayajayau*) "Engage yourself in the battle".

"*Hato va praptsyad svargam jitva va bhokshe mahim*" Lord Krishna said, "If you are slain, you will go to svarga. If victorious in this battle, you will enjoy the sovereignty of the earth, the pleasures of the world."

Man must shed his unworthy weakness. The brave do not get faint hearted. The world is in turmoil. But take heart, resolve to fight, "*Tato yudhyaya yujasva*". Engage yourself in the battle which is going on between the kshetra, the field and the ksetrajna the fielder. The solace is in the yoga of Patanjali because yama and niyama is meant for guna vritti nirodhana, asana is for snayuvritti norodha, pranayama for pranavritti nirodha, pratyahara for controlling the senses of perception, dharana for culturing the mind, dhyana for ahamkara vritti nirodha.

When ahamkara is subdued the light eternal to the soul surfaces. This is the essence of life or samadhi and this is what Patanjali wants man to progress from worldly pleasures towards emancipation and liberation.

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The Art of Relaxation

B.K.S. Iyengar

The pace of modern life is such that its maintenance makes taking sedatives imperative for most people. As the giddy pace increases, tension builds up in our systems; our nerves get frayed and haggard remnants of humanity are left to seek solace in some form of drugged sleep. This is strange for man now has all the leisure time at their disposal. Machines have taken the drudgery out of life and the forty hour week gives man enough time to relax. The art of relaxation, however, eludes him and it seems to be something of the past, beyond recall. Relaxation is necessary for it is recuperative. The drain of energy has to be counteracted in some way.

The yogic art of relaxation known as Savasana precisely describes how relaxation and recuperation take place. Sava means a corpse or a dead body. Asana means a posture. Savasana is thus the posture of emulating the dead and out of death comes life. Savasana is not simply lying on one's back with a vacant gaze or flopping on a rubber foam mattress. Savasana should not end in snoring. It is by far the most difficult of Yogic asanas but it is also by far the most rewarding and refreshing one. It is a very precise method of disciplining both the body and the mind.

Art of Lying Down for Savasana

Savasana begins with placing the body accurately on the floor. The place for this should be even, clean and free of insects, loud noises and noxious smells. Spread a blanket or a rug on the floor so that the body can lie full length on it. These precautions are necessary because a cold or unclean floor can disturb the depth of relaxation.

Then, lie on the blanket with the knees drawn up and feet together so that a line can be drawn from the place where the big toes meet, the inner knees meet, through the anus, the navel, the sternum (breast bone), the

throat, the chin, the bridge of the nose and the centre of the forehead. Gradually stretch one leg forward and then the other so that both the legs lie in a straight line in the median plane. Both the buttocks should rest on the floor evenly on either side of the anus. If one buttock feels broader, place the hands on the floor on either side of the hips and lift the buttocks off the floor and adjust them. Slide backwards to rest on the elbows with the palms on either side of the hips. In this position, adjust the buttocks again so that they lie evenly on either side of the coccyx and the anus. Then, make the spine convex and lower the body, vertebra by vertebra, to the floor so that the entire spine rests on the floor equally and does not tilt to one side or the other. The bottom points of the shoulder blades like the buttocks and the hips should rest evenly on the floor on either side of the spine.

Once the spine is placed on the floor, bend the arms and touch the shoulders with the fingers. In this position gently extend the back of the upper arm towards the elbow so that it is evenly elongated on the floor. Then lower the hands to the floor with the palms facing upward, the median plane of the wrists resting on the floor. The arms and hands should form angles of not more than 15 degrees with the sides of the body.

Unlike the rest of the body which is adjusted from the back, the head should be adjusted from the front. Babies usually sleep with the head tilted towards one side. The back of the head in most people is misshapen and its centre is out of alignment because of the sleeping habits formed when they were babies. Hence the head should be adjusted from the face. The chin should be perpendicular to the ceiling and the floor while the bridge of the nose should be parallel to the floor. The eyes should be kept shut and equidistant from the bridge of the nose. They should be directed away from the centre of the forehead. A squint and a puckered forehead are always signs of mental tension.

Consider each pore of the skin as a 'conscious' eye. Delicately adjust and balance the body from within with the help of these conscious eyes as it is difficult for the

normal eyes to observe and rectify the body position. Briefly, the entire body should be placed with precision on the floor so that the two halves of the body lie evenly on either side of the spine. Attention to detail and precision in the body position lead to mastery of the art of relaxation. Very often the body tilts to one side and this side tilt is experienced on the stronger side of the body. It varies from person to person. In some people the right side of the body is stronger, in others the left side of the body is stronger. The tilt is experienced as a sort of a great magnetic pull to the floor. Thus, the tilt is obviated. If the tilt occurs, there is a drain of energy in the direction of the tilt. Recuperation is quick when the right and left halves of the body are evenly held in equilibrium and the energy is locked within the body.

Art of Controlling the Senses in Savasana

The next step in Savasana is the control of the senses stilling their outward movement towards the objects of desire. Savasana is the descent of the body and the mind as a unit within itself toward the source of energy within oneself. Savasana is not a rigid state of stillness. Savasana when properly performed brings on a silent state of stillness which is divine. It is the surrender of one's ego and the receptive awareness of the divinity locked within oneself. For the achievement of this state, the brain cells have to descend passively. The brain cells will not experience this descending movement if the senses are not controlled and have not learned to withdraw within themselves. Most of our organs of senses are located in the head. The entire struggle for control takes place on the face from the throat upward where the impressions gathered by the senses are experienced. Savasana is said to be complete if the breath, the eyes, the eardrums and the root of the tongue are all under control and relaxed. The beginner will observe that the eyelids will flicker and the eye balls will move upwards. These are sure signs that the eyes are tense and that the brain is being disturbed by thought waves. The appearance of the saliva in the mouth and constant desire to swallow is an indication of tension in the tongue. Tension in the

eardrums can also be experienced as tension around the ears. The beginner should consciously search out these tensions, for knowing where they exist makes it possible to relax them.

Then descend and relax the senses. First, elongate the back of the neck towards the crown of the head so that there is an upward movement of energy almost invisible to the naked eye. This flow of energy is then directed downward from the top of the nose, so that the bridge is parallel to the ceiling and the floor. In elongating the back of the neck and descending the bridge of the nose, care should be taken that a tense chin lock does not result. To offset a tense chin lock where the chin would dig into the top of the breast bone, the beginner must learn to lift the chin gently upward, so that the chin makes a right angle to the floor or ceiling. This ascending movement of the chin must balance the descending movement of the bridge of the nose. Then a sense of lightness is felt on the forehead (the Lalata chakra). The head and brain will feel light and the throat will be relaxed when the bridge of the nose and the chin are held in equilibrium.

In Savasana the energy flows in a circular motion over the back of the head, down the nose toward the toes, and then back to the crown of the head. In this way the flow of energy is kept within the body and the dissipation of energy and consequent exhaustion are avoided. This leads to faster recuperation and refreshment of body and spirit. The pupils of the eyes must be made to descend passively toward the bottom of the breast bone (the Manas Chakra, which is the centre of emotions) and above the solar plexus once the flow of energy is correctly directed. The eyeballs should shrink pleasantly inside the sockets. A shrunken eye ball is a relaxed eye ball while a bulging eye reveals tension. The optical nerve must be drawn toward the centre of emotions, the Manas Chakra, so that the single 'eye of awareness' of the soul, the physical eyes lose their identity. The 'eye of awareness' of the soul is found in the Manas Chakra.

The eardrum should be kept relaxed and the throbbing of the nerves at the temples must also cease. The

auricular auditory nerves and the skin of the temples must be drawn towards the centre of emotions. This joint movement of the eyes and the ears is felt as a quiet and cool movement downward, which is definitely relaxing but at the same time the loosely hanging folds of the facial skin seems to separate itself from the flesh below it. The two sides of the palate at the uvula should also passively come together. Relaxation is experienced when there is shrinkage and dryness in the mouth especially at the uvula and the tongue.

Art of Breathing in Savasana

Control of the breath is necessary for good relaxation. Rhythmic breathing at the beginning helps one to relax. Inhalation should not be deep but should be of normal duration. Exhalation, however, should be longer in duration than inhalation. During inhalation as well as exhalation, the brain cells should be made to descend towards the centre of the emotions. This downward movement is more difficult than in exhalation. For about three fourths of the duration of inhalation, one can experience the descent of the brain cells, but for the last one fourth of the period of inhalation there is a slight upward movement of the brain cells. This upward movement should be avoided. Inhalation reflects the dominance of the ego, exhalation denotes the surrender of one's ego to the divinity surrounding us. Exhalation empties the brain of the ego. The surrender of the ego in exhalation is accelerated when after a period of slow and smooth exhalation, there occurs what might be described as 'echo exhalation'. This is a fine and subtle exhalation which may be likened to the exquisitely pure and delicate notes of a string instrument in the heads of the master musician which seem to echo gently from nowhere. This 'echo exhalation' empties the brain completely of the ego and results in withdrawal of the nerves and senses within oneself.

Conscious and deliberate surrender of the ego is hard to achieve. This is why the Yoga texts recommend

thinking upon the name of the Lord while practicing Pranayama. The practitioner then feels that the source of all energy is entering within him with each breath, while he is surrendering to the Lord his very life breath, his very ego when he is exhaling. The self is pure consciousness, free from thoughts, feelings and desires. The mind is the vehicle of consciousness. When the brain - the intellectual centre - is active, the mind reveals itself as intelligence. The mind appears as the Self in the centre of the emotions when the brain is perfectly quiet and the intellectual centre is stilled. Here, one is gathered up and yet suspended, empty yet perfectly satisfied, serenely balanced, neither free nor bound. There is stillness in pure awareness. The awareness of the "I" is transmuted into awareness of the Creator. There is emotional stability and mental humility.

Signs of a Good Savasana

There are several signs of a well performed Savasana. A few indications might help the beginner to test the depth of his relaxation. Yoga is not an intellectual game. It is a sharing of real experience. In a good Savasana there is a feeling of shrinkage of the skin and muscles, for Savasana is, after all, movement of inward withdrawal. There is at the same time a feeling of elongation of the limbs and body. Sometimes this elongation is experienced through the whole body but especially in the upper arms just above the elbows and in the calves just below the knees. At these four places, one can experience the pulse beats and the balance of the body can be tested by watching the evenness of the pulse beat at these places. Dryness is felt in the bones and the joints. A feeling of being suspended on a thin line of awareness is also present. The best sign of good Savasana is a feeling of deep mental peace and pure bliss.

Savasana is alert surrender of the ego.
One discovers oneself in forgetting oneself!

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Moving Beyond: A Workshop with Shirley Daventry French in Port Alberni, September 27, 1997

The yoga community in Port Alberni is so new that Shirley Daventry French's workshop was literally the first many of the 19 participants had ever taken. For both the students and their teachers, Pip Van Nispen and Kelly Murphy, it was about moving beyond the expectations we set up of ourselves and others.

How is it that Shirley can, in a day of work, move so many beyond where they had been before? There are a number of possible responses to that. First, she kept a steady pace and encouraged those who were sometimes fearful because they were having new sensations in their bodies which they immediately identified as harmful. "I am feeling it here," one would say as though that is something to be treated or avoided. "Good," Shirley responded. And carried on. There was no move to coddle or withdraw from the work. We moved on.

Another wished to avoid a deep release in the hip as we moved into Virabhadrasana. "I am protecting an ankle" she said. "No need," Shirley replied, "It has nothing to do with that, it is a hip release." She moved on.

Some were struggling with physical problems; a neck and shoulder which had robbed sleep and made movement very difficult; hyperextension in joints which, coupled with injury, was potentially even more injurious and an elbow injury which was beginning to heal. Those students were moved with precision, tenderness and skill into places of release and balance.

Shirley tells a story of Mr. Iyengar saying that one should not come out of a pose until every cell is demanding it. Resist the seductive voice that pampers and sabotages movement.

After an hour and a half, we had done only four poses but we had moved inward qualitatively further than ever before.

In the afternoon, Shirley invited questions while we digested our light lunches. The students had been observing the places in their bodies which deviate from the median line. They were validated in their observations and various means were suggested in order to bring bones into alignment. Then we worked toward sarvangasana and halasana. The students held virasana and the shoulder balances longer than they had known possible and much longer than ever before. Moving beyond. Moving inward, and creating lightness, freedom and space.

Shirley's yoga demands full control of consciousness. Instincts, habits, desires have to surrender to concentration without growing tired or distracted. How are we to unite with the Divine unless we can unite the various parts of the body together with the consciousness? What distinguishes Iyengar yoga is the dynamic or developmental nature of the ordered routines. First, we must address the ethical preparation in the yamas and niyamas, then the physical preparation in the asanas. Unless we are willing to work, "any amount" and "to our maximum" we shall not make progress to the stillness within.

On Saturday, in Port Alberni, we made qualitatively greater movement than ever before. We were in the present continuously, rotating, lifting, broadening, extending, opening to ourselves, within our own skins and into new places.

Thank you, Shirley.

From the Editor

At the risk of being repetitious, the next issue of the newsletter (January/February) will be the last one that identifies me as editor. I'll still be working at typing and other newsletter jobs but I will have less responsibility for its production. Again, repeating myself, the group producing the newsletter has worked together for a long time and some new commitment is needed. We have a new group who will be stapling and mailing, combining these jobs is possible now that the newsletter doesn't need collating. What is always needed is articles, the previous issue was so exciting as it published the actual experiences of teachers in India. To hear how people practice Mr. Iyengar's teachings is inspirational and energizing. We'd like to hear from you.

Jennifer Rischmiller

1998

Summer Intensive

An Iyengar Yoga
Teacher Training Intensive
with

Shirley Daventry French
Leslie Hogg
& Ann Kilbertus

will be held from

July 20th to 24th
at the Victoria Y



The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE and the Victoria YM-YWCA

Welcome you to a



Friday Night Gathering



Asana Practice at 6 p.m.

Potluck dinner at 7 p.m.
in the Yoga Lounge at the Y.
(please bring your own plate/cutlery)

followed by slides from
teachers' trip to India

Date: Friday, Nov. 7, 1997

Everyone is welcome to join us.

Yoga and Men

Part Three - Making It Safe

by Neil W McKinlay

This is the third instalment in what has become an ongoing series exploring men's relationship with the practice of yoga.

Part One addressed some of my personal feelings around this issue. In Part Two, I entered into a conversation with another student and, over the course of an afternoon, shared ideas, experiences, feelings. For Part Three, I wanted to talk with a teacher – with someone whose practice was deeper than my own, with someone who had led men students and had given thought to their – and his own – experience. What follows is the fruit of that desire. It is culled from a conversation conducted over a hot pot of tea and thick slices of my mother-in-law's banana bread.

Jim Rischmiller tells a story from his third trip to India. It was October 1991, and he had been practising for about a decade, teaching for half that long. He had, by this time, worried for "years about the use of props," thinking their aid "kind of less holy." As a result, left on his own he "would strive to do whatever was to be done," not using "props very much unless absolutely forced to."

Mr. Iyengar was teaching this particular intensive. One day, Jim, along with all the other participants, was asked to do halasana. For "the first time ever, (the pose) was really painful." Lying there, with his feet over his head, his whole back was "on fire." Seeing this, Mr Iyengar approached and instructed Jim to use a block. "I did. And that stopped the pain in my back. And I thought, this is a clue."

But a clue to what?

Where did this lead him?

Jim continues: "What I saw was compassion out there. Mr Iyengar saw the struggle I was having and he said,

ease the struggle. I don't require that you do a perfect halasana like the lady next door who happens to be totally flexible. Do what you can do, that was his message. Do this and you will find your way. He was saying, here's this block, use it and then it will work. And it did!"

Somewhere near the heart of compassion, lie two acts. First there is a recognition of an other's condition. This recognition might be apparent to all, though it can sometimes be a deeper and more truthful understanding than that held even by the person himself. Second there is an offering. More precisely, there is an offering which makes it safer, easier for that other to be. A nurse recognising a patient's unendurable pain and offering appropriate medication, embodies compassion. So, too, does a parent giving nurture to a distressed child.

In Jim's case, Mr. Iyengar saw the discomfort his student was experiencing and gave instruction to lessen that ill ease. Obviously, this made it easier for Jim to be as it relieved him of pain. But also, this act allowed him to let go. To let go of not just the fire in his back, but also of struggle and distraction and difficulty and of the very real possibility his practice might have had to, very shortly, come to an end. This is crucial as, in Jim's own words, "hatha yoga is not so much about stretching as it is about letting go."

"Such a small gesture," I say.

He laughs. "There are no small gestures. Only big ones."

I am talking with Jim Rischmiller because between 1989 and 1995 he offered a series of yoga workshops for men - and I want to know why.

"Men are different," he begins. And then, perhaps hearing the humour in that statement, he starts again.

"Men are, actually, *fascinating* creatures. I have a number of male students and the physical issues men face are quite (unique), we hold ourselves much differently in the world than women do, and our stuff is different."

Most immediately, Jim sees the male body as fairly tight overall. As a result, many men struggle while practising certain poses. Forward bends, for instance, sometimes prove incredibly difficult. Rather than feeling release or quietening when doing these at the end of a class, men can frequently experience discomfort or strong emotion because the poses "mean letting go the hamstrings in a way that is often quite difficult for us."

Contributing to this tendency toward tightness is the fact that men "are frequently quite heavily muscled." Built-up musculature can resist the direction of the asanas and, as a result, requires more time to release. "All muscles take time," he emphasises, "but the bigger the muscle, the greater the time. So any practice for men must be slower and apparently deeper in that particular sense, because you must take the time to let the muscles go."

Emotionally, too, men often share a distinct quality of experience while practising. Again, at the heart of this experience is yoga's tendency toward letting go. "If you're doing shoulder work for instance, you're forced to let go of tension. This is simply measurable. The work gets the blood moving up in that area and into your chest and into your heart. So yoga is a way of getting stuff out and moving things around." This 'stuff,' when men are concerned, frequently involves anger. "There's a lot of angry men out there," Jim notes, "and sometimes, when there are big issues involved, explosive emotional issues like anger, they feel inhibited at the possibility of breaking down in front of others, especially (in a mixed gender setting)."

Is a men's workshop sometimes a safer place to explore this sort of experience?

"Sometimes. Yes."

Is this the main intent of such a workshop, perhaps, to simply provide a safe place for participants to be?

"That's how I conceive of it," Jim answers. "At least in part."

He pauses a moment.

"I think yoga and men is a concrete expression of the search. More, it is a way of doing that search. It's a way of doing something that is more than head, that is more than rational thought. It's a way of moving into those places of emotion and feelings in a way that is, hopefully, safe. Whenever I've done a workshop, that's how things are set up - to work through or work with the sorts of issues that I've seen in my own practice and in my own experience. (And the results) have been angry and happy and joyful and open - all those things, which is great."

From another perspective though, "workshops are just another tool in the toolbox of dealing with this person who is you." And this toolbox includes classes and retreats and intensives and all sorts of study. Men's workshops exist as only one in a wide range of possibilities. "But as a tool, (they can) allow us to be in a place where we might go a little deeper, learn a little more. Where we might let whoever we are, be. They can," Jim says, smiling, "give us a block."

**Volunteers
Needed for
Yoga phone line
386-YOGA**

On Why I Write

by Neil W McKinlay

The flu hit hard this week.

It came on like a storm late one afternoon, blew me into bed by evening, and more or less kept me there, huddled through the last several days. I haven't, really, been able to work or go out. Reading is difficult because my cloudy head won't allow a clear view of the words on the page before me - and whenever I do get a glimpse, I never seem able to fully recall what the last line was about anyway. Music is pretty much the same. It seems weeks since I last heard my wife talk, or, to be more precise, since I last really connected with what she was saying. And my hamstrings are sore, seem to get tighter with each cough, every sneeze, every wheeze. I haven't done any yoga since Monday. It's now Friday afternoon.

Poor me.

I will admit that I do, at a certain point, like to complain when ill. It is an embarrassing characteristic - one born of boredom (What *else* can I do?) and self-pity (I'm *so* sick!) and more than a little self-importance (*Nobody* suffers as I!) - but also a revealing one. My moans are not arbitrary. They concern themselves with what has been removed from or restricted in my life by poor health. More exactly, they concern themselves with what of *value* has been removed or restricted by poor health. A quick re-read of the paragraph above reveals some of these: work, walks, reading, music, conversations with my wife, loose hamstrings, yoga. All of these are valued in my life. All of these are important to me. All of these I miss.

Though sometimes, this last, yoga, is surprising.

I did not get into yoga to - well - get into it. But, then, I suppose very few ever do. One day, Linda Benn is lining everyone up around the peripheries of the room, asking why we have come to Introductory

Yoga at the Y. And though everybody has a definite reason for being there, no one says, "I'm here because I really want to get into this thing! I want yoga to become important to me, something I yearn for if I don't do it at least regularly!" Me, I just want better posture, more flexibility. The next thing I know Shirley Daventry-French is laughing through our Thursday morning class, saying if we've come this far, Level Two, we're hooked for life!

I just don't know how this happened.

And it surprises me.

One of the things I most value about writing for this newsletter is the meetings. They happen once every couple months, last perhaps an hour, maybe a little more. Shirley is always there, as is Jennifer Rischmiller and Lauren Cox. I go semi-regularly, though I'm not terribly certain what my role is at these things - I sit, mention what I've written, listen to suggestions, sit some more. When the gathering adjourns, Jennifer always offers a heartfelt thanks for my coming out. I always offer a polite smile and some internal confusion. Why are you thanking me? *You* do all the work!

Between the beginning and the end of these events, the three regulars inevitably wander. Sometimes these wanderings drift back to the past, sometimes they step out toward the future, occasionally they consider an issue of immediate importance. They've talked about constitutions and teacher training and Annual General Meetings and visits to India, about Friday Night Gatherings and coming workshops and past retreats and new directions, about Lauren's chickens and Leslie Hogya's time with Father Joe...

I rarely understand everything mentioned in the course of these meetings and, as a result, I rarely offer commentary or opinion. Instead, I sit and I listen.

And I learn. For over course of these minutes and hours, there are stories told and efforts revealed and histories shared that I cannot imagine hearing otherwise. Sometimes I find myself on the edge of my seat, afraid to breathe lest anyone realise my presence, as Jennifer explains how the newsletter was first put together, as Shirley bursts forth with an impassioned lecture on why Iyengar Yoga, done deeply enough, can answer all our spiritual yearnings, as Lauren hands around yet more pictures of Mr. Iyengar, of Geeta, of Father Joe and his dog...

I covet these moments, greedy as a child. I hold them close to my chest, in cupped palms, like something precious. Like a firefly. I feel them there, glowing, reaching out, reaching into. And I feel them again when next I practice. They are in the soles of my feet, connecting with the earth, deepening in ways I can't understand.

I think of leaving these meetings, of Jennifer offering thanks.

I think - no, thank you.

The flu hit hard this week.

It came on like a storm late one afternoon, blew me into bed by evening, and more or less kept me there, huddled through the last several days. I haven't, really, been able to work or go out. Reading is difficult because my cloudy head won't allow a clear view of the words on the page before me - and whenever I do get a glimpse, I never seem able to fully recall what the last line was about anyway. Music is pretty much the same. It seems weeks since I last heard my wife talk, or, to be more precise, since I last really connected with what she was saying. And my hamstrings are sore, seem to get tighter with each cough, every sneeze, every wheeze. I haven't done any yoga since Monday.

It's now Friday afternoon, and I am thinking of one story, of one meeting. A tale shared by Shirley and Jennifer, a story told by both. Of a night not so long ago when the question came out of tired mouths, "Should we end this thing? Disband this Society?" The energy, the time, the commitment had apparently grown so enormous that the few carrying the greatest load were feeling the burden enough to consider this possibility.

Though the answer reached is obvious, the question shook me there, listening. That it might be seriously asked still resonates somewhere inside. I wonder, had that small group decided otherwise...

There is a deadline looming a few days ahead, for which I have promised a short piece on why I write for this newsletter. I have considered, several times, writing the following note:

"Dear Shirley, unfortunately I was ill last week and was unable to finish the article we'd agreed upon. If you're still interested, please let me know and I'll try and have something together for next time. So sorry. Neil."

I know, given the circumstances, everyone would understand. I know, too, something would be found to assume the space put aside for this piece.

At the same time, however, I know from sitting so long in those meetings, how much it takes to keep this newsletter, this community, functioning as it does. And how, in spite of the enormous effort expended by a few, even the smallest contribution on my part makes a difference, is appreciated. And I know I am not so sick that I cannot sit up a few hours and put something together to meet my commitment to our common cause, our common practice.

In the absence of any other, let this be my yoga today.

More Reflections on the Visit of Lama Tashi Namgyal

It is not usually possible for me to put aside household-er's duties to attend Friday night gatherings, but by happy chance, a night of freedom coincided with the visit of Lama Tashi Namgyal in January. Carefully, I chose a place on the floor directly across the room, carefully arranged my feet so as not to offend, and carefully ate the treasures I had chosen from the buffet table. Geshela, honoured teacher, began to speak:

"We are all searching for happiness," he begins kindly, drawing us together onto common ground before he issues the challenge; "some for the temporary kind and others for the satisfying permanent kind. "With enthusiasm and effort we can get both," he continues, "We don't have to choose."

"Those of material mind follow their desires with great passion," he reminds us, by way of encouraging us that the challenge is not beyond our capacity for effort. "That is alright", he says, " but the problem is, one car is very useful and necessary, so maybe you need two or maybe three." "Maybe you need a hundred cars," he concludes slyly. The audience is obviously enjoying contemplating the spectacle of some teachers as well as seekers who get caught on the karmic wheel of materialism.

Still, "Few desires; know satisfaction", as they say in Tibet. Geshela is laughing as he realizes that the translator is helping out some confused listeners who thought they had been told "NO satisfaction."

"To have happiness it is very important to have an open mind, in order to be able to find what is good, to experience what good can happen. When we are too intense there is no room for satisfaction to come in! So it is very important to keep an open mind." Geshela pauses, smiles, and very softly says, "... and if you add a little meditation, that is even better." We are all

laughing again, savouring the little morsel of happiness that has managed to sneak into our usually too busy minds.

"In our three parts: body, speech, and mind; we need to move toward a positive goal of happiness, but better also to point our actions to the satisfaction of others, best toward the whole world, all sentient beings. This is compassion. To live in community, we need compassion not to be intense hostile, angry."

Questions. There are to be questions now, so that the teacher's humility is not offended by too much reliance on his thoughts at the expense of those of the listeners. Doubtless he is aware that most questions will have less to do with seeking information than expressing opinion and being noticed. This part of the evening is a particular challenge to the translator, who repeatedly attempts to arrange some sort of meeting of minds across fairly broad conceptual chasms.

This situation, I decide, requires a question of great simplicity, and I am sure I can provide it. "Geshela, you have spoken convincingly of compassion. Is courage also important?" A flurry of translation and retranslation ensues. It is obvious from his expression that the Lama does not share my enthusiasm for this line of inquiry. My plan to forge a direct connection with the teacher has fallen apart and lies tangled in a dense mess of unreceived English and Tibetan signals.

Finally, my discomfort is relieved by his answer. "Yes", he says, with a faint twinkle of amusement, "You must be very courageously compassionate." A very good little answer, perfectly graded to the scale of the question, no more nor less than it deserved.

Thank you, Victoria Yoga Centre, for such a good opportunity to experience happiness in the midst of busyness. Evidently an example of happiness of the longer lasting sort as it is still fresh after six months.

Namaste,
Alayne Hamilton

What Does the Victoria Yoga Centre Society Mean to Me?

by Caren Liedtke

At a recent meeting, the Board of Directors discussed the constitution of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society. It is twenty years old and they wondered if it reflects the focus and the work of the current membership. The Board wants the membership to discuss this issue at an upcoming general meeting and decide whether the community should continue with the current constitution or go through the work-intensive process of dissolving the Society and writing a new one. In the meantime, the Newsletter Committee requested that I, a somewhat newer member to the scene, reflect on what the Yoga Centre means to me to (hopefully) add to this larger discussion.

"A newer member to the scene." I wonder how long I can hold on to this title. When I think back and do the math to figure out how long I have been involved, the answer always comes with a feeling of surprise (if not shock). I took my first yoga class in the fall of 1989, eight years ago. (Has it really been that long?! Has my Virabhadrasana II improved so little?!) I came to yoga for a number of reasons, none of them very clear to me at the time. I was looking for relief from physical and spiritual discomfort, my spiritual discomfort probably being the stronger of the two. I felt bad and confused, if not lost, and it was in this state that I lucked upon yoga.

I took my first class with Celia Ward in a big, smelly, dusty gymnasium at UVic. For at least three years of intermittent classes I had no idea a larger community existed (or even that there was such a thing as a yoga prop). I suppose I knew that Celia hadn't invented yoga. She often brought the Mehta's book to class (*Yoga: The Iyengar Way*), and she mentioned Mr. Iyengar's name from time to time. However, despite

Celia's good efforts, I remained pretty clueless about the yoga world that extended beyond the gymnasium door. At that time, downward dog was about all I could handle (Ow! My hamstrings are burning up! Please say inhale and come down!); I needed a little more work on my downward dog.

I went to Father Joe's workshop two weekends ago. During the last session, he talked about how the work we had done together during the weekend would benefit other people - our partners and those close to us would be affected. Father Joe spoke about how consciousness is a-local; it is not confined to a time or a space or a body. It is a fluid whole and what affects one part affects the whole. Way back when, while I was feeling the sweet bite of my hamstrings in Adho Mukha Svanasana for the first time, I was being affected by the Victoria Yoga Society. Many people were hard at work for me. I was making good use of the fruits of their labours, and I didn't have a clue. From The Source to Patanjali through the teachings and teachers to Mr. Iyengar to Shirley to Celia Ward to me. The good fortune of it astounds me. How can people not believe in the grace of God?

Slowly, glacially, my hamstrings loosened, and my awareness grew. I made it out of Gordon Head and down to the Y and the larger community came into view. I read the Newsletter and became a member of the Society. I heard about people like Shirley and Derek, Jim and Jennifer, Leslie and Linda. I went to workshops and over time the names were attached to faces. I also met many of the more low-profile members of the community, my fellow practioners. We came in all shapes and sizes and stages of development, and we had something in common, a shared dialogue and purpose: the practice of Iyengar Yoga. I think this is one of the things I have come to value most about our community - this shared dialogue, which for me is a spiritual dialogue. I find it hard to bring up and discuss spirituality in my daily life. It is just not something you do in polite, secular society. (So, what is your practice

of choice? You don't believe? Oh.) I often feel this absence of spiritual discussion, this inability to relate other matters to the spiritual realm. It was with relief and comfort that I began to realise that our tradition is a spiritual tradition, our practice, a spiritual practice. It may not be so for all our members, but it is for some and I have come to be sustained by the shared pursuit.

Before I started yoga, I took an Eastern Philosophy class at university. During the section on Buddhism, I learned about sangha, or spiritual community. I learned that the sangha is necessary for an individual practitioner's spiritual development; it is a critical ingredient to success on the Eightfold Path. Through the sangha, the practitioner has exposure to people who are further along the path. This shows the practitioner what is possible and infuses him or her with energy and courage, much needed on the difficult road to spiritual realisation. Since that time, the yoga community has given me an experiential understanding of what I learned at university. I wouldn't be where I am today without the community both small (in Victoria) and large (extending back to Patanjali). Their gift to me has been and continues to be enormous. The example of other practitioners is certainly inspiring and from them I have taken much energy, guidance, insight and knowledge.

Over the years, I have learned that it is not correct practice just to take, which I did do for some time. I have learned that running a thing as great and lofty as a spiritual community requires a lot of mundane work: there are props to be washed, meetings to be attended, workshops to be organised, newsletters to be collated. I can never repay what has been given me, but it is important for me to try. The practitioner needs the sangha, but the sangha also needs the practitioner. I know this has been written about before (I am not that new to the community). I guess it is like lifting your kneecaps. It constantly needs to be done, and it helps to be reminded. Over and over throughout the weekend, Father Joe told us, "Beware of the bending knee!

Remove the deceptiveness from behind the knee. Straighten the knee." There is always work that needs doing, and the community could always use someone to do it.

One of the reasons the Board wants the membership to re-consider the constitution is that there is a clause that states that if the Society dissolves, any leftover money would go to Yasodhara Ashram. Some people feel that it would be better if the money went towards the Iyengar programs the community has worked so hard to develop. Personally, I agree. I know that Swami Radha and her teachings were important to the founding members and were an integral part of the Society at the time of its inception. However, since I became a member, the Society's work has been being largely, if not wholly Iyengar Yoga. I see we have room for other teachers and teachings, (I thoroughly enjoyed the visit from and talk by Lama Tashi Namgyal). But focus is important in a spiritual practice and we seem to have one - Iyengar Yoga. I think I would like to see that reflected in the constitution. Will I go to the meeting? If it fits in with my work schedule. Will I help if there is work to do? Good question.

One last thing. At our last Newsletter meeting, Jennifer talked about wanting to step down as the editor. I want to make a plug for this job to anyone out there who might be remotely interested. Working on the Newsletter Committee must be, I think, one of the most rewarding and enjoyable ways to contribute to the community. We meet once every two months, often over great food. The people are fabulously interesting. We talk, read, write, and type about yoga. For me, it's an excuse and a motivation to spend some time on a more contemplative aspect of my practice I might otherwise neglect. Jennifer will still be around, though not in the capacity of editor, and her sense of humour is not to be missed. This kind of opportunity does not come around often.

From the President

During the past couple of years, the Directors have been considering whether the Yoga Centre is moving in a direction consistent with its constitution and with the wishes of its members. About 200 people every year pay for a membership so we, the Directors, thought it was time we heard from some of them. We have arranged a Friday night gathering on November 28 at the Y so that YOU can talk about what the Yoga Centre means to you. The Directors had circulated some questions to help them think about some of the issues and these questions will help us focus the meeting. You can begin to think about your answers as the questions are published in the advertisement for this meeting. Of course, we hope the discussion will cover all the questions that people have concerning the Yoga Centre so please come along and talk about what the Yoga Centre means to you.

The Yoga Centre has meant a great deal to me over the years. It's the tool I've used to pass on the teachings of Mr. Iyengar by helping the teachers at the Y. I've helped raise money and awareness in the company of dedicated and committed people. I've been part of the executive for several years and I will not be standing for office next year. I hope still to be a Director and continue with the work that needs doing.

The Yoga Centre is in need of people to help plan programs, organize events, prepare the newsletter. The people who consistently serve on the Board of Directors have been there for many years and we would welcome new Directors who could help with some of the tasks I've mentioned. There is the opportunity to be part of the beginning of the new program of teacher certification, for students to work more closely with teachers at a physical centre - these are a couple of ideas that have been discussed at meetings. Please come along to the Friday night gathering on November 28th to find out about the Yoga Centre.

Please note that the Annual General Meeting of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society will be held on Friday, February 13, 1998, starting at 6.00 p.m. with a practice



The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE and the Victoria YM-YWCA

Welcome you to a

Friday Night Gathering

Asana Practice at 6 p.m.
Led by Shirley Daventry French

Potluck dinner at 7 p.m.
in the Yoga Lounge at the Y.
(please bring your own plate/cutlery)

followed by discussion about the Yoga Centre:

- What is the Yoga Centre?
- What are the goals of the Yoga Centre?
- What are the functions of the Yoga Centre?
- What is your commitment to yoga?
- What is your commitment to the Yoga Centre?
- What direction would you like to see for the Yoga Centre?

Date: Friday, Nov. 28, 1997

Everyone is welcome to join us.

Structure and Purpose of the Victoria Yoga Centre

The constitution of the Victoria Yoga Centre does not reflect the work we are doing and have been doing for many years. Initially it was founded by a group of people studying at Yasodhara Ashram who wished to establish a centre which would sustain their sadhana when they returned to the city. Of the founding members, three continue to serve on the board of directors: Derek French, Shirley Daventry French and Marlene Miller. Shirley and Marlene are past-presidents, and Derek served as vice-president for many years. Leslie Hogya has also served on the board since the early days, and other longtime members are Jennifer Rischmiller (president and newsletter editor), Jim Rischmiller (past-president and former treasurer) and Linda Benn.

These people are not only aware of the divergence between our constitution and the work we do: they have been instrumental in steering the centre in the direction of becoming an Iyengar Yoga centre. For many years this is the work we have been doing. How did this happen?

For the last meeting of the yoga centre executive, the directors were asked to complete a questionnaire about the yoga centre, Shirley Daventry French presented a historical perspective of the yoga centre for those who were not acquainted with its evolution. It is presented in the newsletter to give all of our members an understanding of how this discrepancy arose between our constitution and the work we do.

Should we amend the constitution? Which Canadian wants to hear these words? Most active members of the board think it would be appropriate and desirable to work under a constitution which clearly sets out our mandate as students of B.K.S. Iyengar. This will take a lot of work. The whole framework of the centre would need to be disassembled and restructured. Some of the clauses in our current constitution are unchangeable. Our choices are :-

(1) Do nothing, put the constitution back in the filing cabinet, and get on with the work which we have done quite successfully for over twenty years.

(2) Add some new clauses to the constitution.

(3) Dissolve the old society and begin again with a constitution that clearly defines the work we are doing and wish to continue.

Knowing that constitutional reform is an anathema to most Canadians, if that is the way we decide to go we wonder: who will do the work? Criticism abounds about "the Old Guard" who run the yoga centre. The reality is that it is the Old Guard who regularly attend executive and committee meetings (sometimes only the Old Guard) and continue to do the work year in year out with an occasional infusion of energy such as the contribution of Jerrilyn Wass who has served as our Treasurer for the past several years and done an exceptional job.

While most of the Old Guard of the yoga centre would like to see changes made, they are also unwilling to embark on this work without the practical support of the members. In other words, this would require people with the knowledge, energy and willingness to do the paperwork, legwork and research involved — people who have established a foundation in Iyengar Yoga who wish to give something back in return for what they have been given.

We are therefore inviting members of the Victoria Yoga Centre to attend a special meeting on Friday, November 28th at the Victoria Y to discuss these matters. The meeting will start with a practice to put us in an appropriate state of mind which will be led by Shirley Daventry French. This will be followed by a pot luck dinner and discussion. Please take time to reflect on the value of the yoga centre to you and its relevance to your sadhana. Answer the questions. Prepare a written brief for consideration at the meeting. Consider how much effort you are prepared to put into making any changes you would like to see happen.

We know you are busy. So are we.

Om namah Sivaya,
The Old Guard

Historical Perspective on the Yoga Centre

Following is an excerpt from Shirley Daventry French's response to the Directors' Questionnaire which included some historical perspective on the yoga centre. In answer to question (2): *What are the goals of the Yoga Centre*, Shirley wrote:

To promote the growth of yoga

- originally with close ties to Swami Radha and Yasodhara Ashram (an outdated concept, see Historical Note below)
- currently through the teachings of B.K.S. and Geeta Iyengar

Historical Note: The yoga centre was the original sponsor of Swami Radha's workshops in Victoria until this work was taken over by Radha House Victoria (formerly Shambhala House which opened in February 1984). In addition, for many years Yasodhara Ashram promoted Mr. Iyengar's work and held special workshops at the Ashram in Iyengar Yoga as part of their regular program. Iyengar Yoga was also taught as the Hatha Yoga component of the Ashram's teacher training program. Derek and I taught Iyengar Yoga at the Ashram for many years with Swami Radha's encouragement as did Hilda Pezarro, Norma Hodge and Felicity Green. *Light on Yoga* was one of the required books on their certification book list. This sat well with executive members of the VYC who respected both Swami Radha's and Mr. Iyengar's work. When Mr. Iyengar came to Victoria in 1984, Swami Radha asked to be included in the celebrations honouring him which she did very graciously by hosting a luncheon for him at Radha House and making a warm welcoming speech at the evening banquet. She even sent several of her Swamis including Swami Padmananda to Pune to study with Mr. Iyengar.

However, in 1987, on the publication of her book *Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga*, Swami Radha decreed that no more Iyengar Yoga would be taught or practised

at Yasodhara Ashram and their Hatha Yoga program went in a completely different direction. By this time most active members of the yoga centre were deeply involved in Mr. Iyengar's work having studied with him in India and chose to continue in this direction while attempting to maintain goodwill with the Ashram and Radha House. The Ashram and Radha Houses have made it perfectly clear that their work is only to be done under their direction by people who have completed and been certified in their programs. While we can continue to respect their work and maintain good will, I think it is time our constitution reflected the work we do now in Iyengar Yoga, and not the work we have done in the past. I feel it is inappropriate to have Swami Radha's name in our constitution and to continue to publish the statement: "The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha....." in each of our newsletters. Those who have personally benefited from her teaching can continue to acknowledge this in a personal way.

Pranayama audio tapes

from the 1997 Canadian Intensive are now available. The cost is \$35 for Canada and the U.S. including postage.
(Other countries \$40.00)

Notes from the Teacher's Exchange at Estes Park, Colorado with Dr. Geeta S. Iyengar - \$8.00
(Other countries \$10.00)

To order the audio tapes or the notes, send a cheque or money order in Canadian funds made payable to the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association and mail to:

235 des Bourgeons Avenue
Aylmer PQ J9J 1R8

Father Joe and Elephants in Mumbai

Leslie Hogya

Regular readers know many of us from Victoria attended a yoga Intensive last July at the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Pune. After the Intensive many people scattered to travel, others headed directly home. After a week in and around Pune, I boarded a train and headed to Mumbai (formerly Bombay), to meet up with Maggie Feehan and Jo Anna Hope. They had spent a bit of time travelling to Goa along the western, monsoon-splashed coast of India. The plan was to meet at Mt. Carmel Church in Mumbai on Saturday, August 2nd. Meeting up with anyone in India is always a bit of a gamble, but having the name of Father Joe Periera's church and several phone numbers for Kripa, his de-addiction centres, I was hopeful. When I got down from my hour cab ride across Mumbai, a tall friendly man waved to me enthusiastically from Kripa's doorway. "Are you Leslie?" I was delighted to be expected, and was soon whisked away to the small apartment Father Joe had arranged for Maggie, Jo Anna and I to stay in near the church, and there they were; two familiar, friendly, Victoria friends waiting for me!

Father Joe is an active Catholic priest, yoga teacher and disciple of B.K.S. Iyengar's, plus he is very involved with Kripa. Kripa is the name of the residential centres for which he is managing trustee; they offer a total program for recovering alcoholics and drug users. The

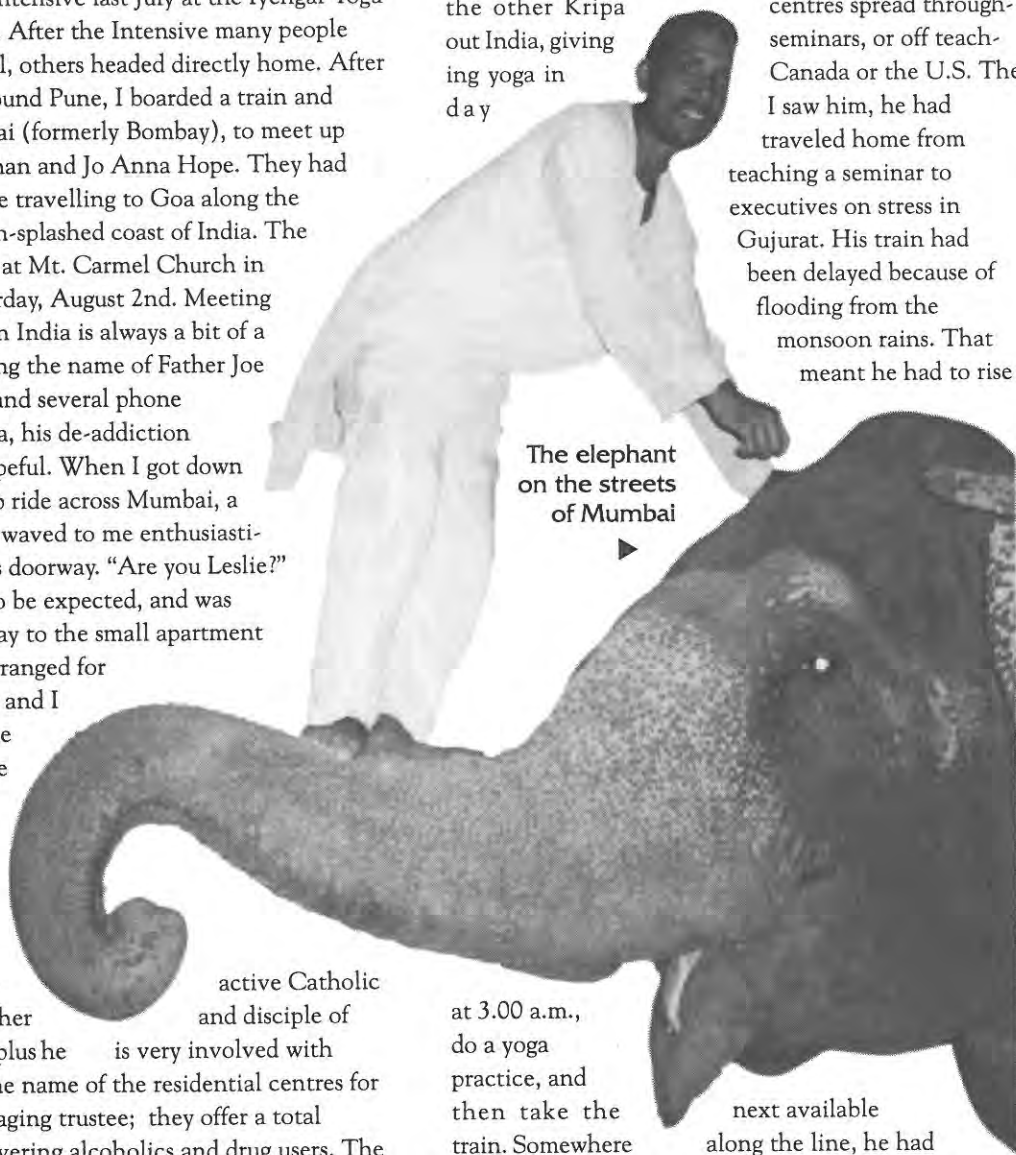
principles of Alcoholics Anonymous are used plus they are well staffed with all kinds of support workers and counselors. There is a full program of activities scheduled each day including yoga classes, which Father Joe teaches at the Bandra Centre when he is in Mumbai.

Father Joe is constantly on the move: visiting some of the other Kripa centres spread throughout India, giving seminars, or off teaching yoga in Canada or the U.S. The day I saw him, he had traveled home from teaching a seminar to executives on stress in Gujarat. His train had been delayed because of flooding from the monsoon rains. That meant he had to rise

The elephant on the streets of Mumbai

at 3.00 a.m., do a yoga practice, and then take the train. Somewhere

next available along the line, he had





▲ Around the lunch table — from the left, Leslie, Sushma, cook for the day, Maggie, Kripa worker, Father Joe

been pickpocketed, and arrived without money or identification! Even so, he still took time to meet with us at the Kripa Centre for Women at Andheri (in Mumbai) for lunch where we were teaching the women residents a yoga class.

Shushma, Father Joe's tireless assistant, accompanied us to the Women's Centre which is in a rather run down abandoned hospital in the heart of the city. We took the creaking elevator to the top floor and rang a bell to be let into the locked ward. I'm still not sure if the residents were being locked in or outsiders were being locked out.

The seven or eight women in residence were in their room, spartan iron bed frames lined the wall. They came willingly to our spontaneous class, as there are few planned activities on a Sunday morning. We held our class in the dining room/lounge/library. Over the sink on one wall was a hand painted sign warning to keep the sink covered to discourage the crows. We had to make do with no props except the plaid, woolen blankets from their beds and the furniture in the room. Some of the women were weak, and in poor health, so we did the very simplest and most gentle poses. A few spoke excellent English and helped us pass along directions to those who only spoke in Marathi or Hindi. However, yoga seemed to work its magic and

the women were smiling and seemingly relaxed by the end of savasana.

Father Joe arrived in time to have a feast that one of his Kripa support workers prepared for us on his day off while we were teaching. It was also Sushma's day off! I think people who work for Kripa have an extra abundance of warmth and hospitality that takes precedence over a day off. Sushma, whose energy and enthusiasm for Kripa's work is boundless, had been taking us everywhere. Saturday, she took us to an al-anon meeting. to see the aids hospice, Father Joe's office, and helped us find bottled water, snacks, and henna for Jo Anna's hair. She was so wonderfully hospitable and helpful to us, plus being full of life and fun.

After lunch, Father Joe, intending to rest before he was scheduled to perform a mass at 6.00 p.m., left us. We retired to our little apartment, and spent at least an hour horizontal. It's amazing to me how exhausting everything seems to be in India. Later, we arrived for mass, we learned that he had been beset with calls and messengers the entire afternoon and was still going strong, with no rest. We found the large, modern church filling up rapidly. Father Joe's sermon resonated through the church with his inspiring words of comfort for a bereaved family. He spent a little time with us after the mass and then went off with the family for whom the mass had been performed.



▲ Bed's in women's de-addiction facility



▲ Women's Yoga Class

We went out into the streets of Mumbai in search of dinner. From our auto rickshaw a large elephant with two riders loomed out of the darkened streets. We got out to take photos and soon Maggie and Jo Anna were asking for a ride! Anything is possible with the help of a few rupees, and with glee they were soon lumbering down the busy streets of Mumbai on the back of this very large elephant!

The next morning Maggie and Jo Anna departed early for the airport and Veranasi. Since I still had about nine hours before my flight, I went back to the Kripa Centre for Women. I taught the women again and a few more people joined the class. I was amazed at how much more they were able to do the second day. I am sorry that there is no one there to carry on yoga classes for women, although they do get tai chi classes. Father Joe has a centre for men outside Mumbai in the country in a small town, Vasai. He wants to

raise the funds necessary to build a facility for women on the property Kripa owns there, where there are animals, fresh air, gardens. The women could be outdoors instead of locked away on the top of an abandoned hospital.

This work in India is very inspiring and gives people with addictions a place to go. India is a country where there are few public social services and where alcoholism and drug addiction is a hidden problem. Integrating yoga into the program helps in approaching the whole person, which is Father Joe's goal. In a recent Kripa newsletter, one of the participants wrote an article on how important yoga has become for him. At first he scoffed at the idea of doing yoga, but Father Joe convinced him to try it. He says, "Yoga is a remedy for all my internal turmoil. And I should say, it is a way of accepting my powerlessness and allowing God to take control of my life. For me, Yoga is a part of my recovery program."



▲ Father Joe with his dog

The government of India recently recognized Father Joe and gave him an important award. Kripa is the largest NGO (non-government agency) in India. By attending Father Joe's workshops, you all help make Kripa continue. For even more help you can donate directly to their work. By sending the money through the foundation in Canada, you can even get a tax receipt.

Kripa Foundation, Mr. Carmel Church, 81/A Chapel Road, Bandra, Mumbai 400 050
In Canada: Kripa West Charity, 388 Point McKay Garden N.W., Calgary, Alberta, T3B 4V8

CANADIAN IYENGAR YOGA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Plans are being finalised for implementing certification in 1998. Teachers with ten or more years teaching experience will have the opportunity to attend the following assessments in 1998:

Assessments

- March 13, 14 & 15 in Vancouver
- June 19, 20 & 21 in Toronto

In addition, two professional development workshops have been scheduled to prepare teachers for assessment. Teachers taking the 1998 assessments will be given priority, but these workshops will be open to all teachers and student teachers working toward Iyengar Yoga certification in the future. The dates are as follows :-

Professional Development Workshops

- January 30, 31 & Feb. 1 in Victoria with Shirley Daventry French & Ingelise Nherlan
- April 17, 18 & 19 in Montréal with Marlene Mawhinney & Marie-Andrée Morin

Details regarding registration and costs will be circulated shortly. Meanwhile any enquiries should be directed to Marlene Mawhinney, Chairperson of the CIYTA Professional Development Committee at Yoga Centre Toronto (416) 482-1334



The
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and the
Victoria YM-YWCA

Welcome you to the
Victoria Yoga Centre Society's



Annual General Meeting



Asana Practice at 6 p.m.

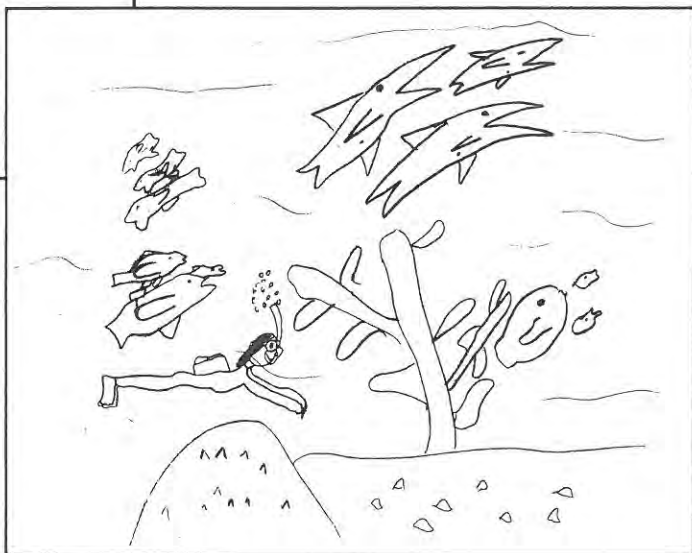
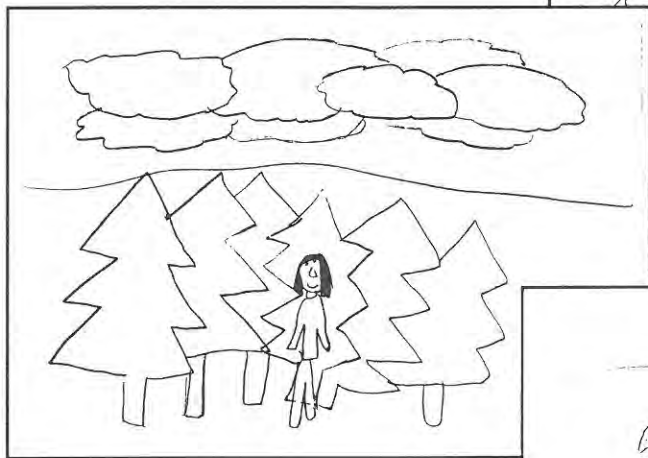
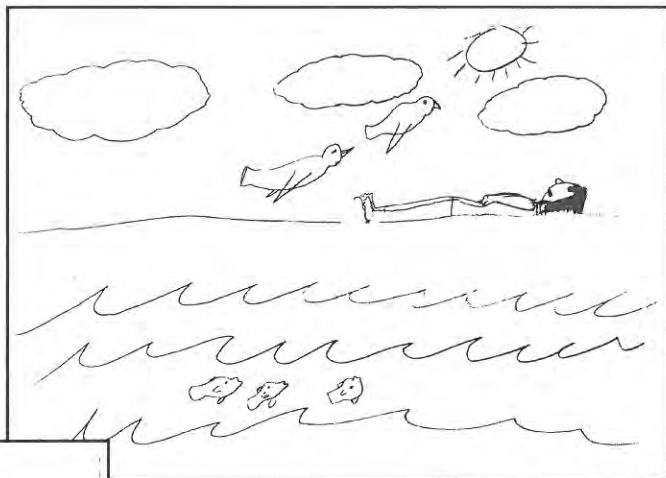
Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Potluck dinner at 8 p.m.
in the Yoga Lounge at the Y.
(please bring your own plate/cutlery)

Date: Friday, Feb. 13, 1997

Everyone is welcome to join us.

3 Things To from
 Visolis To Aunt Marie
 Relaxation



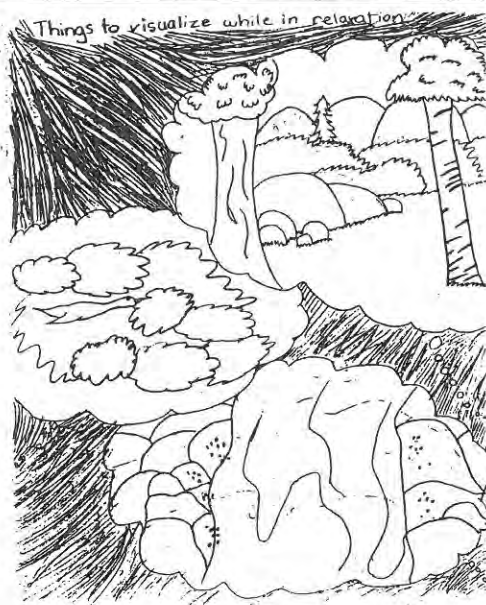
the Victoria Yoga
Centre
presents
Family Yoga
with
Lauren Cox

sunday, November 9, 1997

Ym-Ywca YOGA LOUNGE

10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

♥ refreshments to follow ♥



This workshop will introduce some basic poses. Emphasis will be on having fun. So bring, borrow or beg a child to join (minimum age: 5 years. maximum age: 105 years!) You.

Things to visualize while in relaxation

- 1) Pretend you're in a forest, listen to the birds chirping and the wind rustling the leaves of bushes and trees.
- 2) Pretend you're floating like a cloud and let the clouds take your thoughts away.
- 3) Pretend you're lying by a waterfall, let the waterfall take your thoughts away and let them flow with the water.

By: Anna Cox

Yoga Centre members: \$25.00

Non members : \$30.00

= one adult
+
one child

To register phone Lauren:
382-3287

or Victoria Yoga Centre :
386-YOGA (9642)

Namaste

by John Schumacher

Excerpts from two articles written for Unity Woods Newsletters, Spring and Winter, 1997

Another aspect of practice that I think is important and relevant to both teachers and students is the intensity of one's practice. This is a somewhat different issue from whether or not one loves practicing and how much time one spends, although they may be related. I know some students and teachers who spend a couple of hours a day practicing. They enjoy their practice and do it regularly. Yet they seem to make little progress. Others whom I know spend half the time and move ahead rapidly.

Why?

There may be several reasons for lack of progress in practice aside from time and attitude. Incorrect actions in the poses and poor sequencing are two. Another is practice performed lackadaisically or carelessly. The practitioner puts in the time, but there is not much intensity to it.

In the Yoga Sutras Patanjali describes practitioners as being of three types; mild, medium, or intense (I,22). B.K.S. Iyengar subdivides them further. He says that an intense practitioner may be mildly intense, moderately intense, or intensely intense and that the same subdivision exists for the other two categories.

What is meant by intensity in practice?

From a physical standpoint intensity means several things. Just plain old working hard is the most obvious. In this vein one of Mr. Iyengar's more famous quotes is: "If you can do more and don't, that is unethical practice." Regarding teachers, he has said that if you ask your students to do something ten times you must do it thirty.

One must be mature in one's understanding of this, however. This is not intended to instill an ethic of

macho competitiveness. (How long can you hold a headstand?) Injuring and exhausting yourself are the antithesis of yoga. Instead, the point is to explore one's limitations and expand one's capabilities.

This progress of exploration and expansion is one of the reasons that the skillful practice of more advanced poses is more intense than practicing beginning poses. Advanced poses are more likely to take you directly to your limits. The effects of the poses are intensified as well. That's one reason for doing advanced poses. It's like the difference between trying to clean up your kitchen sink with Comet cleanser as compared to using Ivory soap. They'll both do the job, but the Comet's going to do the job faster and better.

Physical intensity doesn't only mean puffing and sweating. Ask anyone who has practiced meditation with any degree of seriousness and they will tell you that just sitting can be as intense a physical experience as doing 108 backbends. Holding poses longer - going past the initial and secondary resistances and immersing yourself more deeply in the poses - also creates intensity. Then there is more time to explore the subtle processes of the pose and to discover the opening that allow you to penetrate more thoroughly to the essence of the pose.

Working hard, doing more advanced poses and holding poses longer make for a more intense practice. They challenge one's ability to remain focused. Physical intensity in one's practice thereby creates the opportunity to develop mental intensity.

Mentally, intensity simply means bringing unswerving attention to what one is doing. I say simply because it is that uncomplicated. It is anything but easy, however. We are constantly distracted by a myriad of sensations from within and without.

In a yoga class one of the teacher's primary functions is to keep the students focused. Most students observe that they can do more in a class than they can in their practice at home. Why? One of the main reasons is

that the teacher keeps them concentrated on the task at hand. This kind of mental intensity creates energy. Even though one works hard, the experience is ultimately energizing rather than depleting. This is one of the most important differences between doing exercises and practicing yoga postures.

Working intensely, both physically and mentally, deepens one's knowledge of the actions and effects of the poses. In the teacher's case, this allows a better understanding of what's going on with students. Then, when students come with questions or problems, the teacher will be more likely to have some insight into what they are experiencing since she will have been there and beyond. And because she asks the maximum of herself, she can ask the maximum of her students with confidence and integrity.

Whether you are someone who is striving to be a truly fine teacher or a student who simply desires to improve in your practice, hard work and deep concentration are crucial. Couple these with many hours, days, weeks and years of practice and a joyful and reverential attitude, and you will develop an intensity and purposefulness that will carry you on a wave to the shore of your destination. As Mr. Iyengar says, "The goal of yoga is near or far according to one's eagerness and one's efforts."

Time is an issue for almost everyone I know. It's gotten so that people have to look at their calendars to schedule bathroom time. Well, not quite that bad maybe, but everywhere you look people are trying to figure out how to find more time in their lives. When I look out at a class of new beginners, I know that their biggest challenge isn't going to be how to touch their kneecaps; it's going to be how to find time to add a yoga practice to their already busy lives.

How ironic. Here folks are, coming to yoga class to quiet down and reduce stress and the first things they're presented with are decisions about rearranging their schedules and practicing. Still, they've made time

to come to class, so there is some desire, some willingness to change. The first step has been taken. Now comes the teacher's most difficult job; to stimulate and encourage that desire, that curiosity and to guide the student to nurture it in themselves. And the most effective way to nurture it is through practice. So the teacher has to find a way to help the student build the habit of practicing.

Of course teachers should have developed a regular practice for themselves some time ago. And to be a truly fine teacher, practice time requirements are considerable. The teacher must have her own practice, devoted to challenging her limitations, exploring and working with her weaknesses and building on her strengths. I don't mean by this that the teacher must constantly do more and more advanced poses, although that may very well be a part of it. I mean, rather, that the intensity, the subtlety of the practice must move from the known to the unknown.

The teacher must also practice with teaching in mind and this is a very different practice from his practice for himself. In this practice he must consider problems that may not be his own, how to work with them, ways to articulate the movements, actions and insights he wants the student to experience in their practice, and a host of other issues.

Furthermore, part of the teacher's practice almost always requires further study with other teachers. This may range from practicing with colleagues occasionally, to taking a workshop with a more senior teacher, to travelling great distances to study with a master.

To be a truly fine yoga teacher involves a tremendous time commitment. Add to this a full-time teaching schedule, or part-time teaching and a job or caring for a family, or any of dozens of other things we all have to deal with, and you can see why time is as much or more an issue for yoga teachers as for anyone else.

John Schumacher is the Director of Unity Woods Yoga Centre, Bethesda, Maryland.

India

India is to be experienced to be believed. People are everywhere. One becomes aware of how one moves in the world. Organic life is close at hand, in the flesh, through the careful placement of feet, alert eyes, heart open, head up. Pune is a small city compared with Mumbai, plus or minus eight million people. Mumbai, the landing place for us to regroup, newly fresh from Vancouver, London, Singapore. Next leg by train through the lush, sparsely populated, rolling countryside climbing to Pune. Anticipating the monsoon, malaria, realities of the third world.

Marlene and I were so fortunate to rent a room from Madame Sati of Hari Krishna Mandir Road. She is Kali, she is many thousand skulls. She is every taste. She is the Mother of India. She feeds us with the delights of Indian cuisine at its finest. Sati, 87 years of age, worked closely with Gandhi during the "Quit India" troublesome years of the last of the Raj. As house guests we were part of the family, the community and the politics.

So open, so free of fear, passion all. I live on a remote island off the east coast of Vancouver Island. Here on Cortes we are capable of experiencing the blast of the south east hurricane storms up the lagoon to the south east corner of my house. This experience of the power of nature has been great training for me towards the meeting with the power of Guruji. In this Canadian Intensive I witnessed great teaching, the bringing of consciousness, the mind, to every cell with Tapah, Savadhyaya, and Isvarapranidhanani.

Meanwhile, the tyranny of elders and now of the daily maids is in full swing on Hari Krishna Mandir Road. With the fruit and vegetable whallahs outside the window calling up their wares in their various vocal keys, the maid would arrive sometimes promptly but mostly late. And the fun would begin. We all agreed that when the maid filled the drinking water copper container with water from the tap (dangerous to your health) instead of walking to the well in the grounds of the neighbouring holy house, that action was pushing trust too far. In mercy, Madame gave her a second

chance. The Indian, Hindu, philosophy allows for great diversity of approach to life because ultimately they believe that we are all on the same path to union, Yoga.

There was stone throwing in Pune, there were days when the rain really came down. Breakfasts at The Sunshine Cafe, daily Sutra readings and the opportunity to be in the living, breathing presence of a Master.

I know that I am home again, there is the usual tidal wave of impediments. Somehow I know

without being able to clearly speak of the experience I know that after that time spent at the Institute with Geetaji, with the unparalleled guidance of Guruji, that there has been a deep change in how I am with myself and how I see and walk in the world. These teachings will unfold from the rest of this life and more to come.

Thank you to all who made this journey possible.

Yvonne Kathleen Kipp.



▲ Taking tea at Madama Sati's

Back row: Marlene Miller, Donna Fornelli, Doreen Fraser, Maggi Feehan, Leslie Hogya
Middle: Vicky Catchpole, Shirley Daventry French, Lauren Cox, Ann Kilbertus
Front row: Yvonne Kipp, JoAnna Hope, Katalin Szalkar

On Not Doing Yoga

by Traci Skuce

On this morning I am awake before my son - this is rare. My body has been complaining to me lately, about the absence of yoga from my life. It is tired of hearing my excuse; not enough time.

My body feels like an over-crowded city block, buildings jammed together as they are in Manhattan, with little space between them. The relentless exposure to pavement and exhaust leaves my spine feeling like an agitated cab driver, working overtime. The flow of oxygen through my body feels like road construction - obstructed. I have felt like this for days, maybe weeks; my impatience and fatigue wearing me thin.

This morning, even if it is five minutes, I must take the time for yoga, for my sanity.

I roll out my mat as the sounds of early morning traffic whiz by my window. Hands together in namaste, I sit, giving a silent thanks for yoga. My gentle twists release me from a long night's routine of sleeping, waking, nursing, sleeping... I take my body into downward dog. Hamstrings screaming, I persist; my spine releases in a grateful song as the space between each vertebrae opens to drink in the blood and oxygen that they have been deprived of while living a crammed existence.

I continue on through a few standing poses, forward bends and twists, releasing the daily pressures of my life as I do: the demands of my two year old, the never ending pile of dishes, the constant tidying of toys - everything melts away as I re-introduce myself to my body.

I read in Jon Kabat-Zinn's *Wherever You Go There You Are* that even when we do not practice yoga, when we take "breaks" from it, we still learn from it. Remembering this, I try not to reprimand myself but to open myself to the lessons my long hiatus has to teach me.

Turning into my body as I move through the asanas, I begin to think of yoga as a vehicle that transforms my being: it carries my senses into a vibrant forest - releasing and giving life simultaneously. No longer do I stand in the shackles of sirens and sidewalks but, beneath the cedar in a gentle rain. Yoga reminds me I am of the living.

Namaste.

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WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

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- Sunday, November 30, 7:30 – 9:00pm
Come and honour Swami Radha at a special Satsang to mark the second anniversary of her passing to the Light. The prayer room will be open for reflection all day, with a group reflection from 9 to 10am.

A Celebration of the Light

- Sunday, December 7, 5:00 pm
Radha House's annual Christmas open house, carol singing and potluck dinner. Celebrate the Light in yourself and others.

Satsang every Sunday

- From 7:30 – 9:00 pm.
Sing, chant, hear Swami Radha's words from books and on tape.

Next Terms Classes

In Hidden Language Hatha Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, Dream Yoga, as well as workshops and special events. The new schedule will be ready early in January. Call for information

For Further information, please call 595-0177

YOGA CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 1997

- 7: Yoga Centre Gathering at the Y
- 9: Family Yoga Workshop with Lauren Cox at the Y
- 15: Teachers' Meeting
- 20-23: Felicity Green, see ad this issue

DECEMBER 1997

- 14: Light on Yoga Workshop with Shirly Daventry French at the Y
- 21: A Solstice Practice and Chanting 5-7pm

JANUARY 1998

- 30-Feb1: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association Professional Development Workshop at the Victoria Y with Shirley Daventry French and Ingelise Segato

FEBRUARY 1998

- 8: Victoria Yoga Centre Sunday Workshop at the Y
- 13: VYC Annual General Meeting, practice and potluck supper at the Y
- 21: Teachers' Meeting (am)
- 21: Teachers Workshop with Marlene Miller (pm) at the Y

MARCH 1998

- 27-29: Women & Spiritual Life weekend retreat at Swanwick Study Centre in Metchosin with Jessica Sluymer and Shirley Daventry French

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