

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



January/February 1998

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Victoria Yoga
Centre Society
presents

NEW YEAR YOGA

JANUARY 1, 1998

with

James Currie-Johnson

Yoga Lounge, Victoria YM/YWCA

1:00 - 3:00pm

Refreshments to follow

Fee: Yoga Centre members \$18.00

Non-members \$25.00

Information and registration

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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 News-letter may contact the editor, Jennifer Rischmiller:

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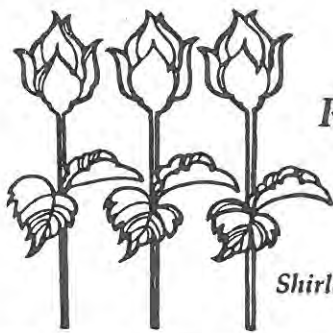
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Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French



On Friday we had a meeting to discuss the direction of the yoga centre and what, if any, changes were required. Was it a good meeting? Waste of time? Too unfocused? Too directed? That all depends on your perception. For me: it was a good meeting! In turns, I was interested, stimulated, frus-

trated, encouraged and disturbed. Just like in any family gathering. My sleep that night was fitful, my dreams loaded with symbolism, and I awakened with a veritable torrent of thoughts and ideas.

During the meeting I found myself sitting on a bench between Carole Miller and Marlene Miller (no relation), two founder members of the yoga society. Next to Marlene was Derek, another founder member. I had written a letter to all teachers and student teachers asking them to attend this meeting if at all possible and Carole laughingly informed me that having received this letter she did not dare not to come. Had I intimidated her? It did not look like it; what she emanated was warmth and affection. While eating dinner before the meeting, all four of us on this bench had engaged in lively conversations about the trials and tribulations of our journey in yoga reminiscing about the past and comparing notes about the present. Our work together

for so many years has formed a firm and sustaining friendship based on a common purpose.

Carole and I met nearly thirty years ago in the changing room of the Victoria Y where I was teaching swimming and she had just begun to take yoga – a new offering at the Y. There had been an explosion of interest throughout North America in esoteric eastern teachings and the Y, taking a leap of faith, scheduled classes in both Tai Chi and Yoga! Strange, now that yoga is so widely accepted, to remember that some Y members complained that its presence exposed them to pagan rituals and betrayed the Y's Christian heritage. Fortunately the leaders of the Y had a broader perspective. Listening to Carole, I liked what she told me about her yoga class and decided to join.

We were fortunate in that shortly after this Swami Radha came to Victoria to give a series of talks on yoga which illustrated the breadth of this subject and how it encompassed all aspects of life. Although I had read no eastern philosophy and at that time had no interest whatsoever in going to India, my predominant reaction was: *yes, this makes so much sense!* The law of karma was so just, and what Swami Radha was saying about accepting responsibility for the conduct of our personal life and the choices we make echoed what I had been slowly coming to terms with from attending various personal growth groups

Shortly after these lectures, our yoga teacher organised a special workshop where Swami Radha would do some individual work with those of us who were interested in becoming yoga teachers. Yoga in Victoria had continued to grow and there was a need for more teachers so the first yoga teacher training course was underway at the Y. Carole and I were taking this training and with the encouragement of our teacher went off in all innocence to attend a *Straightwalk* at Queenswood House of Peace. "All you have to do," we were told, "is walk to and from a table loaded with objects taking four different directions and then make a list." What could be more simple, I said to myself, just

concentrate and make sure you remember as many objects as possible, so your list is one of the longer ones! What happened was that like most other participants only my first four or five objects were actually read out, but under Swami Radha's questioning it was astonishing how much this revealed about the workings of my mind! Most of the other participants ran as far away from Swami Radha as possible after this, but Carole and I returned for many more workshops with her and some of her disciples.

My path eventually led me to Yasodhara Ashram to study with Swami Venketesananda in 1974, and I returned two years later to take the Yoga Teachers' Course accompanied this time by my husband, Derek. Here, we studied texts such as *Bhagavad Gita* and *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras* and, significantly, *Light on Yoga*. We were encouraged to examine how our minds interpreted the teachings contained in these books and explore what relevance they might have in our lives. The study of eastern philosophy and psychology was interspersed with personal growth workshops where Swami Radha zeroed in on the obstacles which were standing in the way of our spiritual growth. The futility of blaming and making excuses was reinforced constantly; there is no room in yoga for either. I am fully responsible for my choices, and there are always choices although I am not always able to see them at first.

The 1976 Yoga Teachers' Course was the last course in which Swami Radha played an active teaching role throughout. Lucky for us, because looking back I can see we were, as she herself put it, "tough nuts to crack".

This course was auspicious for me in another way in that during that time a visiting teacher, Hilda Pezarro, taught me my first classes in Iyengar Yoga and the book I was studying, *Light on Yoga*, was brought to life.

During those three months we had practices to follow and papers to write morning, noon and night. We were given two days off: on the first (early in the course) I went skiing and on the second (much later) caught up with some of my work which had fallen

behind. If you had not written a paper, or had written one but not given it your best effort, and offered the excuse "I didn't have time", Swami Radha would point out you always had a variety of options around uses of time. Most of us were already going to bed late and getting up early, but despite this Swami Radha often suggested giving up some more sleep and, before we could protest, would follow this up by asking how strong was our desire to make progress on the spiritual path. How much are you prepared to give up for divine union, infinite peace and liberation?

It became increasingly obvious that when our minds were focused we could accomplish much and when they were scattered and distracted—often because of emotional issues—we accomplished very little. Swami Radha described yoga as a pearl of great price and enquired if we were willing to pay that price which invariably would demand giving up some cherished beliefs and entrenched patterns of behaviour. This priceless pearl will be unattainable unless we are prepared to make a supreme effort; an effort which involves refining body, mind, senses and speech.

Swami Radha started this teachers' course in 1970 because of the demand for teachers, and her observation that many of those who were teaching had only a superficial knowledge at best of the ancient body of wisdom which formed the basis of yoga. In an attempt to make yoga palatable and appealing, its fundamental principles were being watered down. She set up an intensive three-month residential course to introduce teachers and would-be teachers to the fundamentals of yoga practice, philosophy and psychology along with the spiritual tools to sustain body and mind on this journey. What Swami Radha discovered, however, was that many of those coming for courses at the Ashram were not ready to receive yoga, because their ability to see and hear clearly was obscured by emotions, greed, laziness, fear, ignorance, egoism, pride, likes, dislikes and general reluctance to change—all the afflictions so clearly delineated by Patanjali in his *yoga sutras*, afflictions which stand in the way of practising yoga. It became

clear to her that students must first identify when and where these obstacles manifest in their lives, accept full responsibility for this, and then initiate various practices which would help to remove these obstacles. Only when this work is well in progress is the student ready to receive the gift of the teachings, and it will be the work of a lifetime to sustain progress because these afflictions which in sanskrit are known as *klesas* are deep rooted and new sprouts are popping up all the time.

Marlene, my other neighbour at the yoga centre meeting, and I met at Yasodhara Ashram in 1979 when she was taking the teachers' course and Derek and I were there to teach a Hatha Yoga intensive on Iyengar Yoga as part of the curriculum. Marlene was living in Calgary where she taught yoga and where she was studying Iyengar Yoga with Hilda Pezarro. Interested in making some changes in her life, Marlene decided to move to Victoria where there was an established yoga community in contact with the Ashram and also practising Iyengar Yoga.

In 1979 Derek and I were the first students from Victoria to travel to Pune to study with Mr. Iyengar, but three years later I returned with a contingent of eight other Victoria teachers which included Marlene and Carole.

We have shared a great deal, gone through a great deal, learned a great deal —side by side in workshops under close scrutiny by Swami Radha, and working together in class under the eagle eye of B.K.S. Iyengar. We don't have too many secrets from each other.

One of the highlights of my association with these two exceptional women was at the 1987 North American Convention in Boston where we were all teaching with the possibility that Mr. Iyengar might walk into the room at any time and observe us (which he did). I had attended a previous convention in San Francisco and Derek had assisted me when I was teaching. With a class of forty students this was most helpful, so I suggested to Carole and Marlene that we did the same in Boston if our schedules allowed. When one of us was

teaching, the other two acted as assistants, and afterwards we all agreed that both the practical help and the emotional support were invaluable enabling us to do our very best in a highly charged situation.

Carole, Marlene, Derek, I and many of the other longtime members of the board of directors of the yoga centre have been privileged to learn from two very exacting spiritual teachers — teachers who have directed all their energy towards the goal of divine union and who ask no less of their pupils. Great teachers generate a great deal of light which illuminates but also creates shadows, and you cannot make progress on the spiritual path until you have dealt with these shadows otherwise much of your energy will be absorbed by the darkness.

One of the problems many yoga students encounter is in trying to understand yoga in Western psychological terms. For instance, and here is the crux of a lot of dissatisfaction: one of the basic tenets of yoga is respect for yourself and others, but it is respect for the Higher Self or soul and support for its evolutionary journey in this body, in this lifetime. This is seen as a threat by the ego self which will fight with all its wiles any strategy which will diminish its power over you — and it never gives up! Read the life stories of various saints and masters: even Jesus Christ faced temptation up until the moment of his death.

In the Western democratic model: the individual is supreme and everyone has to have their say. Alas, what is said often comes out as complaining fed by insecurity, fear and anxiety, and anxiety creates a personality which is defensive. On the path of yoga, if we are lucky we will find teachers who can penetrate these defenses and reveal what lies behind them: our true self, our essence, our spark of divinity, our soul, the light within. (Don't get hung up on any of these words; if they don't fit for you find your own words.) Having had a glimpse of what truly lies within gives us courage to proceed with the dismantling of these defenses, and this always necessitates, as Patanjali tells us in the

twelfth sutra of the first chapter, practice and non-attachment. The practice puts us in touch with our internal strength and support enabling us to let go of those things which weaken us and keep us tied to the wheel of karma. Until we get in touch with that source of strength we will continue to hold on to fear and resentment.

With any great Master of Yoga, unless you are a very close disciple, they will see you only occasionally, as in the case of Mr. Iyengar perhaps for three weeks or a month now and then and maybe only once in a lifetime. A true Master will take advantage of any window of opportunity to eradicate that which stands in the way of your enlightenment. This is their duty. The concentration of light they direct is like a laser, its intensity and ability to penetrate is unsettling and disturbing, and this is its purpose. It frequently generates fear, and rather than facing and dealing with that fear, it is easier to find problems with the teaching or the teacher. This has nothing to do with me, and I do not have to listen, so I can stay in the same comfortable place. The trouble is that comfortable place will not continue to be comfortable. We are not here to be comfortable; that illusion is a complete waste of time.

Derek and I were listening to some tapes recently lent to us by another longtime member of the yoga centre, Jim Rischmiller. On one of them Caroline Myss (author of the book *Anatomy of the Spirit*) is speaking about angels. According to her we all have one who acts as a guide and part of their duty is to arrange for us to have the lessons we need for our evolution — need but might not want! The lesson has to be faced, like it not; the only choice is how to deal with it. For instance, if your karma involves changing jobs your angel may say to you: are you going to resign or shall I arrange to have you fired?

According to yoga how we deal with the vicissitudes which come our way will determine future lifetimes. While ultimately we have to confront our challenges alone and no-one else can do it for us, it is

nevertheless encouraging and inspiring to have the companionship of others from-time-to-time who are making their own spiritual journey. People who will stand back and not interfere with what you have to do for yourself, but not turn their back on you.

Last weekend's meeting was an attempt on the part of the directors to have a discussion with members on the direction of the yoga centre. One of my wishes for its future is that it will continue to be a community which fosters divine friendship such as I have experienced.

Yoga

In Metcoshin

with
Shirley Daventry French

Daytime and Evening Classes

1998 classes commence January 27th

*Private Lessons are also
available by appointment.*



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

Information:
478-3775

Letters

Dear Friends,

The Victoria Yoga Centre has been a source of camaraderie, inspiration and support. I have benefited from the generosity of its scholarships, been given access to some of the finest teachers in the world and am an alumnus of the best teacher training program in the country. I have had the good fortune to be part of a large pocket of energy promoting the growth of Iyengar Yoga in Canada. The Victoria Yoga Centre is seen as the Canadian Connection for the rest of the world. A look at its international mailing list bears this out. The newsletter is a forum for Mr. Iyengar's work, the longest continuously published one in the country with this focus. Nowhere else in Canada is there a Yoga Centre that has a faculty of well-trained, widely experienced group of teachers.

As a current member, founding member and former director, the Victoria Yoga Centre has given me the experience and foundation that I have needed to start Iyengar Yoga communities in other parts of the land where God has sent me to live.

From time to time (and after twenty years, it's time!) the constitution of any organization should be reviewed. A constitutional change that I feel is necessary is changing the beneficiary of our assets upon dissolution. Perhaps they could be equally distributed among other pockets of energy that whole-heartedly promote Mr. Iyengar's work in Canada. (I presume we cannot make the Pune Institute a beneficiary because the beneficiary has to be in Canada). Some method of identifying such groups would have to be devised.

A telephone call to the provincial branch of the Societies Act department should provide the information regarding a constitutional change. Following that, an extraordinary general meeting would have to be called to ratify the change, since the AGM is in February this year (which is actually next year....is this legal?)

From what I understand a constitutional change would not be necessary to remove Swami Radha's name from the acknowledgment. After all, if memory serves, we added the 'owes inspiration' part at one of our monthly meetings (in Trish Graham's living room) after our constitution was formed. To remove it would require a majority vote at the next AGM. What exactly does the constitution say about how this is done? Does the proposal have to be circulated among the membership two or three months prior to the meeting? Or will having it as an agenda item suffice?

The statement of purpose that appears in quotes is the only part that the Societies Act requires.

Would there be a mail vote for us ex-patriots? How can I help?

I will be thinking of you in the light this Friday.

Love Donna.

Donna Fornelli is an Iyengar Yoga teacher who trained with Shirley Davenport French. After teaching in Victoria for many years, Donna moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia and introduced Iyengar Yoga to Canada's East coast. She presently lives in Aylmer, Quebec and has established a thriving Iyengar Yoga community in the Ottawa/Hull area.

Wanted:

Billets for out-of-town teachers.

The weekend of January 30–February 1, 1998.

If you are willing to offer a room in your home, you will receive \$35.

**If interested, please call
Ann Kilbertus, 598-0976**

From the President

I was very happy that so many people attended the Friday night gathering to discuss the direction of the Yoga Centre. Thank you all for coming and for offering your opinions.

I heard that some people at the gathering had no affiliation with Swami Radha, while others formed the Yoga Centre because of her influence. Everyone in the room was there because of the influence of Mr. Iyengar, who presently is not mentioned in the Yoga Centre's constitution.

Letters, Cont'd

RE: Recent Historical Note in Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter

While I agree it may be time to re-evaluate the constitution, and probably appropriate to remove Swami Radha's name from the constitution, I don't think it is appropriate to remove the statement: "The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Radha". Is it not as a result of Swami Radha's encouragement the Society came into being in the first place? Did not her connection with the work of B.K.S. Iyengar lead to the Society's connection? It is my belief that it is the combination of following the works of both these two great masters that gives the Victoria Yoga Centre Society, and surrounding community, its uniqueness and cohesiveness and that to fail to acknowledge this connection would be very un-yogic. The lack of such gratitude in other communities has made me aware of how important it is to pay attention to the work of both masters and to not forget, even if the connection for many is in the past.

Sincerely,
Rachel French de Mejia
Vancouver

There didn't seem to be much support for dissolution and reconstitution of the Centre. Rather, most seemed to be in favour of additional clauses to the constitution when necessary. During the ponderings as to the direction of the Centre it was mentioned that yoga is like an umbrella. All aspects can be encompassed and someone cautioned against being too narrow in our thinking. A comment was made that teachings will grow, evolve and change over time.

I heard suggestions that the Yoga Centre make a physical space for itself in a building and comments regarding the amount of time and energy this project would take.

I heard support for the present activities of the Centre. I also heard support for the hardworking directors. Many directors have served for twenty years or more, some are founder members and have been nicknamed 'the old guard'. This label caused some comment and has perhaps created a perception that there is a division of membership, and that maybe the pleas of the 'old guard' were considered admonishment, not encouragement. However, everyone agreed the Centre is in need of some more help and there was appreciation for the hard work and perserverance of the long serving board members.

There was a general consensus that the directors propose an addition to the constitution to acknowledge the influence of Mr. Iyengar on the Centre. We hope to bring the addition to the Annual General Meeting for the membership to review. At that time we will discuss how to arrange the vote and keep in mind the questions that Donna Fornelli has asked. Keep reading your newsletter for further details.

I left the meeting with a positive attitude and a hope that there will be other meetings on a similar topic. It was a helpful process for me as a director and a useful, necessary check as to what direction to choose on behalf of the Yoga Centre members. We always appreciate hearing from members so please let us know what you are thinking.

Jennifer Rischmiller

End of November, 1997

by Leslie Hogg

We gathered together recently to consider the future of the Yoga Centre. Our constitution was written when the members of the society were working closely with Swami Radha and the Yasodhara Ashram in the Kootenays. There was no place in Victoria for people to gather and talk about her work and reflect on their spiritual goals and ideals. With Swami Radha's blessing Shirley and Derek French offered their home as a meeting place to gather together and explore ideas. Mr. Iyengar's work was just beginning to spread and be known in Canada.

Eventually Radha House (formerly Shambala House) opened here in Victoria and Padmananda, one of Swami Radha's teachers moved in and all Ashram work was then done at the house on Shasta Place. I remember when Radha House opened. I had the idea that the Yoga Centre would move in with Swami Padmananda and our work would somehow be consolidated, but that isn't what happened. Still, many of us involved in the Yoga Centre then, in the mid eighties, had spent time at the Ashram or taken Ashram workshops when they were available. After Radha House opened, I took Kundalini classes and attended workshops. I still go for satsang and special events.

Now many of Yoga Centre members know little about Swami Radha's work, as the teachers are trained in Iyengar's method and our focus is more towards Pune. Yet for me, both of these great teachers continue to influence my life.

Recently in India, I was fortunate to be able to watch and listen to Mr. Iyengar. He has passionate enthusiasm for the subject of yoga. He knows the sutras of Patanjali so thoroughly, he quoted them to us daily in Sanskrit in the midst of our classes with Geeta. On the second day, Guruji talked eloquently about asana being like a river flowing between two banks, one side being yama, the other niyama. If we have violence in one part

or one bank we move to the other, to niyama and contentment. The asanas are the circulation between the two.

In medical classes, Guruji is like a whirlwind. He helps people in every corner of the room with every type of problem. One minute he is helping a patient who has had a stroke, the next, a woman with extreme back pain. There was a boy with cerebral palsy who couldn't walk; Iyengar worked with him. He filled the boy with courage to meet difficult challenges, such as pushing an iron bar over his head. This is true compassion, as I watched the boy gain strength in just the three weeks I was there.

But the person I am today is also largely shaped by the kinds of questions asked by Swami Radha. Such as her famous question, "what is the purpose of your life." Every time I hear that question, I have a different answer.

Sunday, November 30th (two days after the Yoga Centre gathering) was the second anniversary of Swami Radha's death. Radha House was filled with flowers and candles, as many disciples gathered to honour her memory. Each person got a chance to speak about what Swami Radha had meant to them. Many people talked about her compassion, about how she brought out their potential, their best; how she expected us to practice awareness, acceptance and non attachment. She developed numerous tools to sharpen our awareness and wake us up from a state of sleep-walking. For me, she came into my life when I was a young mother. She helped give me a blue print on which to build my life that was not based on society's views, but higher truths and principles.

Chanting at this gathering was accompanied by harmonium, drum, guitar and bells. The voices blended and lifted together in memory of a great soul, a profound teacher.

Radha and Iyengar are giants in the world of yoga teachers. Geeta admonished us that no one as great as Iyengar will be in the world again for five hundred

years. I think the same can be said for Swami Radha. Their methods may individually be different, but the goals are the same. The universal truths of yoga resonate and ring true for me.

To step onto their paths requires courage, dedication, practice and surrender. Mr. Iyengar demands courage of us just as he did for the boy with the iron bar. Swami Radha asks us to examine our most cherished beliefs. They demand we practice and that we surrender to the teachings. They are/were both full of integrity, having practiced on themselves whatever they teach. They met and respected one another. Mr. Iyengar's biography was published by Radha's Timeless Books. He wrote the foreword for her book on The Hidden Language.

I know I am fortunate to have had contact with them both. Since Swami Radha was the inspiration for

the formation of the Yoga Centre, and now B.K.S. Iyengar's method is the one being taught by the teachers in the Yoga Centre, I think we came to the best solution for now. Leave the basic constitution the way it is, and add a clause recognizing the influence of the Iyengar.

There were lots of feelings and views expressed Friday. Just as there were on Sunday. At Radha House, however, there was a vehicle and an order to the expression, some of which would have helped us Friday. Like the native tradition of passing a talking stick promotes the order, passing a votive light around the group at Radha House gave everyone the opportunity, and their own time, to speak.

At 9.15 when it was time for our meeting to end on Friday night, the group was just getting warmed up. In some ways the dialogue was just beginning. As a member of the board, I thank you all for coming. And

also as a board member, I wish we had planned how to manage this meeting a little better. I appreciate everyone who keeps the Yoga Centre going. Thank you especially to Jennifer Rischmiller for her work as President and Editor of the newsletter. And also and always to Shirley whose dedication and passion inspire me.



▲ Leslie greeting B.K.S. Iyengar on Gurupoonima, July, 1997.

Talking with Ty Chandler

by Caren Liedtke

When I started taking yoga classes, I found them socially similar to university classes. You go to class a couple of minutes early (or you rush in a couple of minutes late depending on your temperament, time management skills, or the kind of day you are having). Before, during a lull, or at the end of class, you turn to your neighbour. Interactions usually begin with a polite smile and from there they progress to a "Hi" and a "See you tomorrow/next week." One day, you start up a conversation; you chat casually about class or the weather, your paper or the midterm. Weeks pass. You begin to find it awkward saying "Hello" because you want to tack on the person's name ("Hi, Susan" or "Hi, John"). The problem is, you don't know their name, and after so many conversations, it is just too embarrassing to ask. Without knowing their name and without much time to talk, the intimacy doesn't develop; the relationship doesn't progress. You find yourself wishing you knew a bit more about that interesting person sitting (or posing) next to you.

Neil and I have passed many a post-yoga-class lunch pondering the names and real life circumstances of our classmates. What kind of job do you think she has? How old do you think he is? Do you think she has kids? Whatever happened to that woman in the black tights? You know, the one who always takes a spot by the door/window/mirror.

Ty has been one of those people for me - an interesting classmate that I found myself wanting to know more about. True to the description above, our relationship has developed glacially over many years. We

were both in Lauren's much loved Monday morning class for about two years (it's a testament to Lauren that you could love anything that takes place on Monday morning). I don't know if we got much past the "Hi" and "See you next class" stage that whole time. I did manage to learn a few things, but they only

added to Ty's mystique: she drove a motorcycle, she did Thai massage, she worked at Pluto's restaurant, she had been to India.

Things picked up about a year ago, when we did a day of yoga together at Shirley's house. Then I discovered I was working with a friend of Ty's; she told me about the Women's Collective and I made my way down to one of Ty's practices. The more I got to know Ty, the more my initial impression was validated: she is an interesting person, worth knowing. And that's what is so great about working on the newsletter - it's the perfect excuse for Neil and I to go about answering those nagging lunch-time questions. It's the perfect way for us to get to know our classmates a little better (and to let you in on it). So, without further prologue, heeerrrrre's Ty.

What made you want to get involved in teaching? What made you want to teach?

I used to teach tennis at UBC for about five or six years. It was mostly seasonal; my last two years were full-time. I was teaching private, semi-private, groups - I'm talking about groups of thirty people per class, three classes a night, five days a week. There were all these different personalities and people, and we used to have everyone's name memorised by the Wednesday of the week. So I was always trying to correlate how someone hit a forehand or their hairdo with their name - you can only remember Mary so many different ways. I was teaching anywhere from five year olds to seventy-five year olds. We had it all. And it was great. I got to experience a lot of people in different stages of life,





The Victoria Yoga Centre Presents:

"Inspirations from India"

An All-Levels Workshop
with
Ann Kilbertus

Sunday, February 15th, 1998, 10am – 1pm
at the Victoria YM-YWCA.

Cost: \$30

Refreshments will follow the workshop



Ann Kilbertus is a Yoga teacher and occupational therapist who has recently returned from her second trip to India to study with Mr. Iyengar and his daughter, Geeta. This workshop will focus on the teachings presented during the India intensive.

To Register

Phone Ann Kilbertus, 598-0976



and, of course, physical abilities and skills. There was a lot of communicating and teaching. I had a lot of practice there, of putting across what I knew myself through my own training and experience in competition.

From that part of my life into yoga – when you meet teachers like Shirley and Lauren, who have been my primary teachers here, when you meet people like that, and when you try something like yoga that changes your life – I couldn't help but want to go into that direction. For a long time whenever I had the thought (about becoming a teacher), I would keep pushing it down because I thought, "Oh God, what responsibility! What a massive, vastness of knowledge there is." I felt like such a baby in that whole world. I thought, just don't bother, just have it as practice or a personal path. But the idea of teaching kept coming up. Shirley mentioned it to me once or twice, and then I thought, okay, I'll try the Teachers' Intensive and see how that goes. Also, some friends of mine at the Women's Collective were encouraging me to share with them. There are a few women there who practise yoga. We practise together and I help organise the structure and the sequencing of the class. I've had really good encouragement from them.

What's involved in becoming a teacher?

In this community? There's a three page sheet, have you seen it? (No.) It's a good three year commitment, and could take longer. It depends how you're absorbing the information. You need to attend so many level 2 or 3 classes, do so many workshops a year, and there is required reading.

I've been working on my application the last couple weeks because I want to get it in before the next session, and begin observing a teacher. You have to write about why you want to be a teacher. And there's also a fee.

What do you see your strengths being in teaching?

I think where my awareness seems to be at at this point in time, if I see a problem or where somebody is stuck and having trouble moving through something, I just place myself into my own practice and experience the same thing. Everybody has a place where they're right, a part of their body that they don't know yet or haven't tapped into. I would like to encourage students to go in there, check it out and stay with the pose. Stay with it so that they can get the opening. That's one of the things about Iyengar Yoga that I like, holding the pose, waiting for the body to let you in and readjust and go in further. The investigation that happens in something that's so static. And trying to encourage people to stay there that long because most people will want to fly out. Shirley said once, where you're feeling that pain, you can either view that as, "Ouch, I want to get out," or you can view it as what it feels like when change is happening.

What about your weaknesses?

Consistency in my own practice. Because my schedule is sporadic with work and playing music and doing massage. It's funny, the yoga classes are the steadiest thing I have in my life. My work schedule is quite often all over the place with filling in for people. I would love to be able to practise at the same time every day, but my schedule just doesn't work that way. I went to James Currie-Johnson's early morning class this week and I just loved it. I came out and I had done yoga for the day; whereas, I usually do yoga either at 10:00 in the mornings here, or if I do it at home, I'm later in the afternoon or evening. But to do it in the morning and have your practice done for the day – your body is open, you're calm, you're going into the day. And it was a full gorgeous day that day.

Do you practice every day?

Pretty much. If it's looking like I'm not going to be able to do a full practice, then I chose three or four poses and focus on them.

I'm thinking of other people who might want to be a teacher, what level do you think your practice has to be to become a teacher?

I think it's more if you are absorbing the information, if you are really understanding alignment and are understanding the principles, like all the leg work. I wouldn't really know how to answer that. I wondered up until this past summer. I wanted to phone up Shirley and ask, "How does one decide when to become a yoga teacher? How does that happen? When do you know?" I think also a teacher will tell you. They will probably see it way before you.

So, Shirley saying that to you made you think, "Well then I must be ready if she's suggesting it to me"?

Yes. And Lauren mentioned it to me once or twice. I had thought in that direction, but as I was saying earlier, I put it on the back burner. And with those comments I started to chew it over in my mind.

What about the spiritual side of yoga, yoga being more than just physical?

Yoga was a spiritual path for me before I realised the physical benefits of it. When I was down in California four years ago and I was going to school there, they had a big yoga program. The teacher was a senior student of Mr. Iyengar, but she was away in Mexico. So some of her senior students were teaching at the school, but everybody was into (Patthabi Jois') Astanga. I tried some classes. The school I had gone to was a combination of different spiritual paths. They had everything from Buddhists, Zen, Native American Church . . .

What's the name of the school?

It's called Hartwood Institute. It's basically a bodywork institute. I went there to do a work exchange program.

Massage?

I wasn't in the massage program, per se. I worked four days a week and then I was allowed to take so many classes on the different things that were being offered. Massage was the core part of the school, but they had lots of different kinds of therapies, conflict resolution, etc. . . . people were coming up from San Francisco and L.A. and doing workshops. It was really a pretty immaculate place in the hills of northern California. The program I was in, all the movement classes were free.



So when you say that yoga was initially spiritual for you . . .

Yes, because I had gone to the school to pursue my spiritual practice although I didn't know what it was I was doing at the time . . . I was getting more into meditating and had gone to India because I was interested in Hinduism and Buddhism. It's funny, I ended up going to India and not finding a master that was in any of those traditions. Papaji (Sri H.W.L. Poonja) was Hindu, but he didn't speak in reference to Krishna or Shiva, he spoke in terms of the here and now. That was my pursuit. Karma yoga was big. I cleaned toilets when I was there (at Hartwood Institute). Every job at the school was considered helpful, an important, valid part of making the school run. I would be cleaning toilets in our dorms and some students would come in and go, "Hey, thanks. You're doing a great job." When I was doing my own toilet at home, I'd be thinking why am I doing this again. Then I got into it. There was a

fundamental shift there and yoga was part of the program. When I started doing the postures, I had gone into it from a spiritual angle, but the Astanga wasn't for me. I didn't understand the importance of knowing the structure of a pose before doing jumpings.

Why did you end up focusing on Iyengar Yoga? Is that your main focus in your spiritual practice now?

Yes, it is.

With all those choices, why Iyengar Yoga?

Well, there it is. I am so lucky to be here in Victoria now and to have found this community. The teachers here and the level that they . . . it's a very, very lucky place to be at this point in time. I really do feel that way. I get a little overwhelmed. When I talk to my friends who aren't really into it I might appear a little giddy about yoga.

I feel that too - about being here in Victoria - especially when I talk to my friends about travelling. I'm like, no way, here's where it's at.

I have done so much travelling over the years, and since I've been here - I've been to Hawaii for a week and I go up to Hornby and Vancouver, I don't have the same need to get away. It's so full here. And to have one of the best teachers in the world.

As far as your spiritual practice, does it consist of - I hate to say "just" - the poses, or is there some other practice. Do you meditate, or . . . ?

Yes, I meditate and this summer I started to focus more on pranayama. I get a little intimidated by it. I feel at a loose end when I'm doing pranayama without someone talking me through it. Who knows, maybe my mind has built up this huge thing around pranayama. This whole lack in my practice could be just in my head. I mean, look at *Light on Pranayama*.. When I first saw it I thought: it's almost the same size as *Light on Yoga* and it's just about the breath!

What difference do you notice from when you practice the poses, the asanas, and when you do pranayama?

I find that if I'm doing pranayama as a practice, there's less resistance in my asana practice. It is more even.

Would you like to see more offerings in the community other than the asanas?

I would love that myself.

What would you like?

One time at a Friday Night Gathering, Shirley did a dharma talk. I was just sitting there thinking she should tape it, that quality of speaking. And when she speaks in savasana - that's when I'm most ready to hear those words. I would love to see more of that on Friday nights.

Regular talks, or something like that.

Yes.

Tell me about your music. How did you get involved in music?

Five or six years ago. Just sitting around after a hard day of (tree) planting, Gwyneth, my old planting buddy and I would play guitar. We started playing open stages in Vancouver. We just kept playing and performing. It totally thrusts you into a different dimension of music. It's all about the hype. Doing it is great, but the atmosphere is just not where it's at for me. And you don't make a lot of money at it. You can only play so many coffee houses. I think the thing to do would be to get on a festival tour.

Where do you see yourself ten years from now?

I don't know. I couldn't imagine myself not pursuing yoga. It's growing more than anything else in my life. It seems to be the one thing that's really taking off. It even effects the way I fold my tea towels and my washcloths.

My drawers have never looked so neat before in my life. Just organisation priority. I'm dusting regularly and vacuuming. So ten years from now I will have an extremely clean apartment. (Both laugh).

That makes me think of something I read by, I think it's Vanda Scaravelli. She says that in the beginning you need discipline and willpower to get yourself to practice yoga, and then, after awhile, yoga will bring you to the mat. You won't be able to not do yoga. I feel that way, now. I can't imagine my life without yoga. It's too late; there's no turning back.

That's it. Once you become aware of those things, there's no going back to living any other life. I think people try. They fight it.

Don't start!

Yes. Stop yoga now! (laughing).

Jyengar Yoga Workshop

with

Ramanand Patel

at the Victoria YM-YWCA

August 31 – September 4, 1998

Details in next issue,
or phone Linda Benn at 478-0757
for more information.



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.

The Quiet President

I feel I can't let this issue of the newsletter go to publication without a tribute to our President, Jennifer Rischmiller. Jennifer also serves as newsletter editor and will be relinquishing this position as well. She has decided unequivocally that it is time for her to focus more on her personal practice of yoga, although she has agreed to remain on the board of directors and the newsletter committee to ensure a smooth transition. She says she likes the work — *in moderation!*

I can't remember a time in the yoga centre's life when Jennifer was not doing one job or another, and more often many jobs. She was one of the first members to come forth to help on the newsletter when we decided to upgrade from a few typewritten sheets to a decent looking journal, acting as one of the paste-up crew when this literally involved paste and paper and not pressing a key on your computer. There has rarely been an issue in those sixteen years that she has not done some if not most of the typing and many other jobs such as pickup and delivery, collating, mailing. Whenever the system broke down Jennifer was always there, willing and able to take up the slack and – most important – doing it without complaining.

Jennifer has served as our president for the past three years, before that she was secretary, and before

that a director at large. Things have run very smoothly under her guidance, so smoothly that I doubt that most of our members, especially local ones, have any idea how much work she has done to the advantage of all of us. The other day Derek and I were talking about Jennifer and wondering who is going to come forward and take up her mantle. I mentioned the possibility of writing about her and he said any article should have the title "The Quiet President".



I have heard Jennifer say many times that one reason she has done all of this work is to relieve teachers of some business responsibilities so that they can put their time and talents into teaching, because she believes this is the best way to disseminate the teachings of yoga. Personally I have experienced her support again and again, practically and emotionally. I have come to depend on Jennifer for many things and, as the philosophy of yoga explains quite clearly, when you develop a dependency the divine committee will find a way to interfere with that attachment. So, in

yogic terms, Jennifer's resignation is for my benefit. It could also be for yours, because it gives someone else or possibly several others the opportunity to learn the lessons she has learned, gain the experience she has gained, serve others the way she has served — in the true spirit of karma yoga.

In the words of Swami Vivekananda: "Karma Yoga is a system of ethics and religion intended to attain freedom through unselfishness and by good works."

Jennifer has done a great deal of good work on our behalf and has earned freedom from some of her duties so she can focus her energies on the next stretch of her journey. Jennifer, like me, is English by birth. In England there is a saying that a gentleman is "someone who exemplifies grace under pressure". By that definition and by reason of her sex, Jennifer can truly be called a lady, and one whose quiet presence, skill in diplomacy and endurance have served all of us well.

Jennifer's appreciation of those of us officially known as teachers has been unstinting, but I doubt if she is aware how much teaching she herself has done. Without consciously assuming the role of teacher, she has taught us through her example and there is no better way.

I am writing this article in my role as assistant editor and surreptitiously handing it to the production team without going through the usual channels because I know that Jennifer in her role as editor is likely to intercept it and put it aside. Jennifer Rischmiller does not seek or relish publicity, but as we approach our annual general meeting on Friday, February 13th (an auspicious date if ever there was one), it is important on behalf of all of us to say thank you Jennifer and many blessings.

Shirley Daventry French

**A new supply of cotton
blankets has just arrived
from India.**

**Phone 478-3775 for
more information**

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

Women and Spiritual Life

by Shirley Daventry French

Once, a young woman came to one of my private classes in Metchosin. It was the start of a new session, and at the end of the class the rest of the students took a moment to pay the course fee. This woman did not pay and as she left she said she would phone me later, which she did. She told me she would not be returning to my class because she was looking for something more spiritual. I asked her what she meant by spiritual, and she replied she did not know but was sure it not what I was offering. Well, I said, it does not always become clear the first class. However, I gave her the name of some other teachers, wished her well in her search, and said that if she changed her mind and wanted to come back and try my class again, she was welcome.

It took courage to phone me. In such a situation, most people simply disappear without a word. It was honest of her to admit she did not know what spiritual meant. Obviously a longing was there; something was missing from her life and she had begun to search. I hope she found what she was looking for.

It is rare not to experience difficulty finding your spiritual path. Sometimes it is a very long time before the way becomes clear. *Neti. Neti.* Not this, not that. More often there is a process of trial and elimination before the way is clear and inevitably it will continue to become fogged over from time to time. Coming together with others on the spiritual path can be very helpful in avoiding some of the pitfalls and cul-de-sacs which delay our journey, and many of the articles we publish in this newsletter testify to that fact.

At the same time as I began to take a yogic path in life, I also joined what was grandly called a Women's Consciousness Raising Group. Wasn't I raising my consciousness through yoga? I hope so! But at that time I was also in the midst of raising three young children, often feeling swamped by their needs not to mention



▲ Shirley Daventry French and Jessica Sluymmer

those of my husband who ran a single-handed general practice which spilled over into our home on a daily basis. I had attended a conference at the university called "Children are People Too!" and my children quickly picked up this refrain, so in self-defence I retaliated: Mothers are people too! But who am I? Being a mother, whilst one of life's great blessings, is only a part of what I am, one of many roles in my life.

Who am I? This question lies at the heart of yoga. Know thyself and be free. The women's group helped me to free myself from much bondage some cultural and some self-inflicted. I began to redefine what being a woman meant to me. It was helpful to be with others struggling in a similar way who offered support, humour and counsel which helped me gain a different perspective on my struggles. Some of these women had a clear sense of their own spirituality, others were still in the dark, but we kept the spiritual dimension in mind in most of our discussions. This group complemented and facilitated the work I was doing in yoga.

Spiritual life is not a separate compartment, and a spiritual experience will change your life. If everything goes on exactly as before, however moving, entertaining or spectacular, it was not a spiritual experience. Sometimes it seems to be one step forward and two steps back, and in difficult times this is where your

practice will pay dividends. It is essential to put time aside regularly for formal spiritual practices without which you are not going to make much progress. Nevertheless, yoga is not your asana practice, nor your pranayama practice, prayer or meditation, although they may be an essential part of your Yoga. Yoga is your journey through life, what you make of this life, every moment. Some stretches of this journey must be made alone, while for others - if you are lucky - you will have companions of like mind to ease the way.

For some reason I am making this life's journey in a woman's body. Why is this? What does it mean to be a woman? Yoga is a path of liberation. In the yogic sense, what does it mean to be a liberated woman? What does it mean to be spiritual? These and other questions will be raised at the *Women and Spiritual Life* retreat at Swanwick Study Centre in Metchosin on the weekend of March 27th to 29th, and possibly answered — who knows! We do know that to sustain body, mind and soul there will be time to practise asana and pranayama; time for quiet reflection, talking, walking, sitting on the beach, discussion, reading, writing, chanting. Delicious vegetarian meals will be served, and there will be time to be alone and time to commune with other women in a beautiful serene setting.

WHERE TO GET THOSE YOGA PROPS AND BOOKS:

Purple Sticky Mats:

Caroline Sophonow 598-3122

Blue Mats, blocks, blankets, straps:

Shirley Daventry French 478-3775

Bolsters:

Linda Benn 478-0757

New Books:

Ann Kilbertus 598-976

Women and Spiritual Life

**A weekend retreat
with
Jessica Sluymmer and
Shirley Daventry French**

**March 27 – 29
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: \$255.00

Registration and Information:

**Khairoon Quadir 604-737-4762 or
Shirley Daventry French 250-478-3775**

Notes From A Busy Week

by Neil W McKinlay

Monday night, Shirley made comments regarding the cancellation of pranayama class at the Y, the teaching of only introductory techniques at local workshops, and - probably most to the point - the level of student commitment to this activity. These first two, she was saying, were direct results of this last.

"People here are soft!" she exclaimed.

At home, later that evening, I started a letter.

"In my opinion," I wrote, "that people are not signing up for pranayama class, are not integrating this activity into personal practice, does not so much reflect lacking commitment as it reflects an incomplete understanding of yoga.

"There are Eight Limbs of yogic practice. Yoga class at the Y emphasises one of these, asana, to the near exclusion of all others. As a result, there is an understandable misconception among participants that asana practice is yoga practice, or is at least the most important aspect of yoga practice. This misconception, not student commitment, lay at the root of the situation raised by Shirley, and is what keeps people from signing up for offerings in pranayama, sutra teachings and so on. Such opportunities are thought of as peripheral to asana, as extras - and as extras they are placed very low on most lists of priorities."

I followed with a number of ideas that might address this situation.

First, I suggested teachers, literature and advertising be vigilant in distinguishing between the practice of asana, specifically, and the practice of yoga in general. "(In consistently promoting) asana class as yoga class we perpetuate the mistaken impression that yoga is wholly asana, and that asana is the whole of yoga. Using right speech in ads and in classes themselves, will begin to correct this mistake."

Second, I argued for a broadening of current class structure. "If, in an eight week cycle, one or two classes touch on pranayama, explaining its place in practice and offering the chance to do at least a little of this activity, students will have a hard time maintaining the belief yoga is only asana. As participants' familiarity with pranayama increases, so will their interest, and as this happens enrolment in more focused offerings will inevitably rise."

Finally, I offered a reminder. "We all know the lifting of ignorance takes time and work. I remind you that sometimes such lifting takes, more than anything else, extreme quantities of patience."

Thursday afternoon, in the Y Cafe, I gave this letter to Shirley.

* * *

What is the responsibility of the teacher?

I kept raising this question writing the words above.

How far should teachers go to ensure students have the opportunity to understand? How accommodating need they be? How patient? There was, after all, a pranayama class offered - a class I assume introductory, a class I know was cancelled because not a body signed up.

"Sometimes I think we've made things too easy for people here," Shirley said to me, convinced access to the teachings should not be a given, but that "you should have to work for them."

One day this week I was racing around downtown. I was in a hurry, had things to do and, though I knew I was bent forward, my body bowed at the waist, chin six inches ahead of my feet, weight all on my toes, I didn't really care. I was in a rush.

Impatient at a stoplight, I recognised a face on the other side of the street.



The Victoria Yoga Centre Presents:

"Inspirations from India"

An All-Levels Workshop
with
Vicky Catchpole

Sunday, March 22nd, 1998, 10am – 1pm
at the Victoria YM-YWCA.
Cost: \$30

Refreshments will follow the workshop



Vicky Catchpole has been teaching Yoga for over 10 years in the Comox Valley area. She is responsible for establishing and maintaining the Thriving Yoga community in the Comox Valley and the neighbouring Gulf Islands. Since her return from the 1997 Pune intensive Vicky has opened her own Yoga studio in Courtenay. We are lucky to have her share her learnings from the Intensive

To Register

Phone Lauren Cox, 382-3287



I decided to jog over when the signal changed and say hello.

And as I began to cross, something happened.

I noticed my posture changing. Alignment became more upright, my chest became more open, balance became more solid, and by the time I stepped back on the curb, I felt a little less hurried, a little less consumed by the activity of my mind.

I approached the figure in the navy blue overcoat.

It wasn't Shirley at all.

One block later, I was hunching, hurrying, certain everything in the world depended upon me getting this next task completed as soon as possible. My only thoughts of Shirley were that her not being where I thought she was had wasted several seconds of precious time.

What is the responsibility of the teacher?

It seems to me there comes a point when my alignment, when my awareness, should no longer be fully dependent upon my teacher's presence. It seems to me there comes a point when I should not always need Shirley to remind me to raise my kneecaps, to roll my thighs.

In Monday night's class, she pressed and lifted my kidneys during a forward bend, helped me move the area in and up. It was a tremendous difference and, when she released and moved away, I suggested she could stay if she wished.

"Am I your servant?" she bellowed.

I jokingly suggested that would be fine if she were willing - but isn't there a time when I take on some responsibility? Some responsibility activating areas I know to be lifeless? Some responsibility exploring teachings I know exist but essentially ignore?

I began asking what is the responsibility of the teacher?

I end asking what is the responsibility of the student?

I end asking what is my responsibility?

* * *

My sister called as I was writing this article, asked what I was doing.

"You're writing for the Newsletter? Why don't you let them do that?"

I thought for a second.

"Trina, I *am* them."

Two years ago, Shirley asked if I would write more regularly for this publication. I said yes because I enjoy writing, because this is our publication, my publication, and because I feel some responsibility toward its content and its continuance.

Thursday afternoon, immediately after the Cafe gathering, there was a Newsletter meeting at which Jennifer Rischmiller reaffirmed her decision to step down as Editor, let us know that no other candidate had yet come forth.

Lauren looked at me and smiled.

Shirley cried, "That would be perfect!"

I shook my head - "No."

But to the suggestion the post rotate between existing Committee members, I had to accede.

We all do the work that must be done in our own way and to our own degree, I suppose. Faced with the easy willingness these two women offered the idea of overseeing one edition per year, faced with the knowledge of what they already do, I felt I had to increase my role, however slightly.

As a student and as a member of this community, it seemed my responsibility.

* * *

Just as it seemed my responsibility to attend Friday Night's Gathering.

I had had enough, to tell the truth. With class and the letter and the meeting, with this article and with getting ready for the evening - not to mention my own practice - I had had enough of yoga for the week. So when Caren jokingly suggested we skip the Gathering and take in a movie, I did give it a moment's consideration.

But the topic for the evening was 'What Does The Victoria Yoga Centre Society Mean To Me?', and I knew people like Jennifer, our President, were sincere in their desire to hear people's thoughts.

I felt I had to be there.

During the practice, during Vrksasana, Shirley said it was interesting to notice when one could and couldn't balance in the pose and ask why. I knew why I couldn't hold the pose, knew why the entire practice had been difficult - the same feelings that had me earlier considering the possibility of a 7 pm *Flubber*, and then, maybe, the 9:15 showing of *Bean*, remained strong as ever.

I tried hard not to show I was overwhelmed.

Tried hard not to let on I was having a difficult time.

I tried hard to stay with the pose, to eat one mouthful at a time, to actually hear each speaker's words during the open floor that evolved after dinner.

And great many words were said.

"What exactly is the Victoria Yoga Centre?" "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" "We need a separate space." "Where is the next generation?" "We are focussed - if not in word or in our constitution, at least in action." "It is important we have respect for our beginnings, and respect for the inspiration that brought us here." "We are envied all over the world."

A great many words were shared.

And this, really, is what the evening felt like to me - sharing. People spoke up and said, "This is what I think," or "This is what I want to know."

And out of this came two points of overt consensus.

First, there is no more Old Guard in this community.

"It is a toxic phrase," someone offered. "Divisive."

"We didn't want it," a member of this no longer existent group replied. "It was given to us!"

People like Shirley Daventry-French, Derek French, Marlene Miller and Leslie Hogya brought life to this community of which we, twenty some odd years later, all belong. We are here, among other reasons, because of their energy and their vision. When someone suggested that though there is occasional disagreement with and fear of this group, there is, even more, respect and thankfulness, the room applauded for the first time in the evening.

So there is no more Old Guard in this community, no more "Them" - only us.

Second, the Board of Directors were directed to add a phrase acknowledging the teaching and inspiration of BKS Iyengar to our Constitution. For a variety of reasons, this had never been done. With his blessing, it will be now.

These agreements, by themselves, are significant.

Add these to the atmosphere of sharing already described, and the evening had a strange sort of resonance. As someone said to me a little while later, "I don't really know what happened last night, but it feels like something did."

And there was more.

Somewhere toward the end of the evening, Carole Miller said something interesting. There had, as noted, been a lot of comments made, covering a wide range of

beliefs and possibilities. She said, "The issue is not the space we use, or the name we have, or even our constitution. The issue is the work we do, and the quality of that work."

I had never met Carole Miller before, though I understand she is one of the founders of this Society. Hearing her speak, I was thankful for the continued involvement of people like herself - for her opinion and her wisdom and her depth of experience. Out of these, I felt she had said something that captured the core of the evening, the core of the Society, of the group that had gathered that night and of every class, every Newsletter, every meeting and idea that makes this community whatever it is. Though the Gathering continued a few minutes more, I felt she had wrapped everything up, brought the evening - and the week - to a close, by returning us to our source.

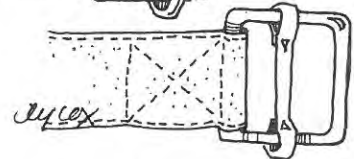
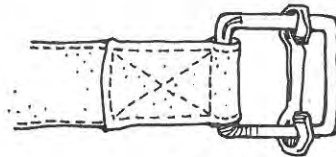
Riding home, I felt a little bit better for this.



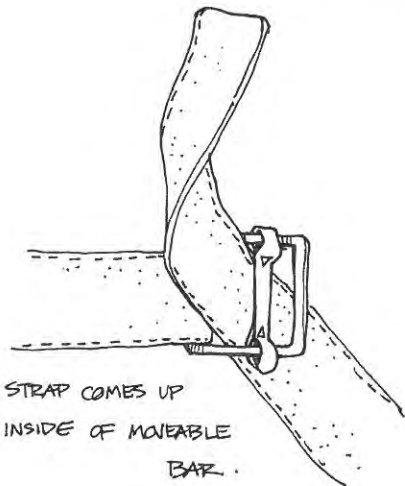
▲ Photo from the Family Yoga class. See more photos on pages 28-29.

How to Secure a Strap

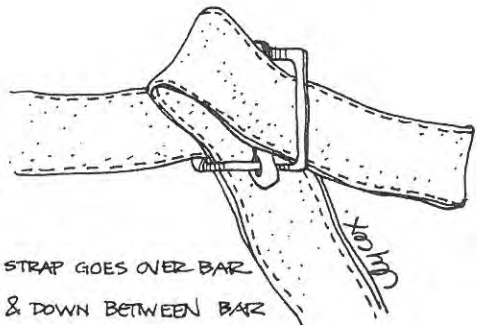
ROUGH SIDE OF MOVEABLE BAR



SMOOTH SIDE OF MOVEABLE BAR



STRAP COMES UP
INSIDE OF MOVEABLE
BAR



STRAP GOES OVER BAR
& DOWN BETWEEN BAR
& OUTSIDE BUCKLE

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:

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

Yoga Workshop

With unparalleled anticipation, I looked forward to attending the Yoga Workshop facilitated by Shirley Daventry French. As a matter of fact, I'd often entertained the possibility that such an event might occur. I have been studying Iyengar Yoga since September 1996 with Kelly Murphy and Pip Van Nispen.

As with some other experiences in my life, I intuitively knew from my first lesson that Iyengar Yoga was right for me. I cherished and treasured such a wonderful experience. Privately, I questioned why I had such a strong yearning to attend a workshop with Shirley. Perhaps my desired was fueled by Kelly and Pip's great admiration for her, or possibly reading Shirley's articles in the Victoria Yoga Centre newsletter piqued my interest and curiosity.

Then the eagerly anticipated day arrived, Saturday, October 1, 1997. The previous week had been somewhat trying for me because I had been experiencing quite a bit of neck and shoulder discomfort. Thursday and Friday night proved extremely difficult. Discomfort escalated to pain, making sleep and even the simple position of laying down difficult. Sleep eluded me for sure. I called a chiropractor on Saturday morning at 9.00 a.m. sharp. Fortunately, he could see me at 12.00 noon that day.

Off I went to the yoga workshop. Wild horses could not keep me away. After introductions, Shirley proceeded with her yoga instruction. Her voice was clear, distinct, calm and sure. My ears, as well as every receptive cell in my body, responded to her instruction. Her words imparted wisdom, insight, understanding and trust in oneself. Energy flowed from Shirley to our ears, eyes and to our bodies, which then manifested as a roomful of asanas.

My trip to the chiropractor eased the intense pain, but I was still experiencing a high degree of discomfort.

The advice of the chiropractor, "not to do any more yoga for a few days" left Shirley completely undaunted. Throughout the second half of our class Shirley provided me with several modified postures. All in all, I am certain that the continued yoga of that day contributed to my quick recovery.

I wish to express my gratitude to Shirley. She is a teacher in the true sense of the word. Her words, her actions and her very presence provided a glimpse of such resounding truth, a gift for all to experience. I no longer question why I anticipated this workshop with such vigor. Suffice to say, that what is, is. While writing this, I diligently tried to avoid sounding unbelievably enthusiastic or as though I were too much in awe. However, I believe that some experiences are just meant to be shared. Thank You.

Michaelene Shannon
Port Alberni

Coming June 5-7, 1998

Saltspring Retreat

with senior teacher

Shirley Daventry French

Expert yoga instruction
Beautiful, serene, setting
Great organic meals
Pranayama, relaxation, chanting

Look for ad next issue
Join the Yoga Centre
for priority in registering
and discount price



The Victoria Yoga Centre Presents:

"Inspirations from India"

An All-Levels Workshop
with
Leslie Hogya

Sunday, April 26th, 1998, 10am – 1pm
at the Victoria YM-YWCA.
Cost: \$30

Refreshments will follow the workshop

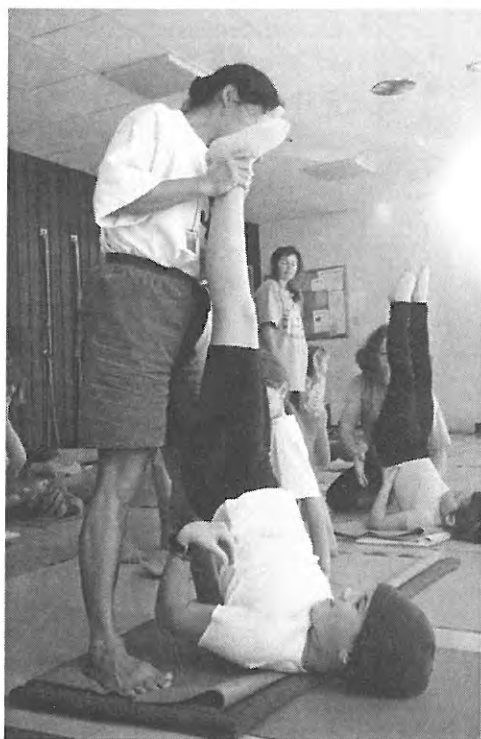


Leslie Hogya is one of our senior teachers who received her certification from Mr. Iyengar at the 1997 intensive in Pune. This workshop will also focus on the teachings presented during the India Intensive.

To Register
Phone Leslie Hogya, 383-6301



Photos from the November Family Yoga





From the sole to the Soul

A Yogic Odyssey
with
Shirley Daventry French

May 18 to 23

at Hollyhock,
Canada's Leading
Holistic Learning Centre
on Cortés Island, B.C.

Yoga is a path of self-knowledge, self-discipline and surrender. Yoga in the Iyengar tradition is firmly grounded in ancient yogic texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and Yoga-sutras, and is a powerful spiritual practice which unites head and heart in the search for the self. This course is suitable for people with some previous experience of yoga who would like to develop asana, pranayama and reflection as spiritual tools to open up a pathway to the Higher Self.

Tuition: \$395.00 (meals/acc.extra)

For brochure or information
1-800-935-6339
or (250) 935-6773

Victoria Yoga Centre Publications for sale

Books

- YOGA, THE IYENGAR WAY** - Mira Silva and Shyam Mehta (1990) - \$30
THE RUNNER'S YOGA BOOK - Jean Couch (1990) - \$27
BACK CARE BASICS - Mary Pullig Schatz (1992) - \$26
YOGA, A GEM FOR WOMEN - Geeta S. Iyengar (1983) - \$25
RELAX AND RENEW - Judith Lasater (1995) - \$28
LIGHT ON YOGA - B.K.S. Iyengar - \$28
LIGHT ON PRANAYAMA - B.K.S. Iyengar - \$30
YOGA VRKSA, THE TREE OF YOGA - B.K.S. Iyengar (1988) - \$17
LIGHT ON THE YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI - B.K.S. Iyengar (1993) - \$21
IYENGAR, HIS LIFE AND WORK - Autobiographical writings and contributions from many Iyengar students - \$25
70 GLORIOUS YEARS OF YOGACHARYA B.K.S. IYENGAR - Commemoration Volume - \$25
ANATOMY OF MOVEMENT - B. Calais-Germain - \$38
PROPS AND AILMENTS - Illustrated by Bobby Clennel - \$25
IYENGAR YOGA GLOSSARY - Bobby Clennel - \$6.50
YOGA FOR PREGNANCY - Sandra Jordan - \$23
YOGA FOR CHILDREN - Swati and Rajiv Chanchani - \$34

Audio Cassettes

- SILENCE OF THE SPIRIT** - Relaxation and Meditation by Father Joe Pereira - \$10

Video

- LIVING WITH AIDS THROUGH YOGA AND MEDITATION** - Father Joe Pereira - \$25
YOGA, ALIGNMENT AND FORM - A Home Practice Session with John Friend - \$35 **NEW**
YOGA KIDS - Marsha Wenig - \$16 **NEW**

TO ORDER

Speak with your Yoga teacher or phone
Ann Kilbertus at 598-0976
Prices include GST



YOGA

PROGRAM OF CLASSES IN THE IYENGAR APPROACH TO YOGA



YOGA - LEVEL I

Monday, 9:00 - 10:30am
Lauren Cox
Monday, 4:00 - 5:30pm
Jo Anna Hope
Monday, 7:30 - 9:00pm
Ann Kilbertus
Tuesday, 7:00 - 8:30pm
Adrienne Rhodes
Wednesday, 9:00 - 10:30am
Lauren Cox
Wednesday, 6:00 - 7:30pm
James Currie-Johnson
Thursday, 8:30-10:00am
Linda Benn
Thursday, 4:30 - 6:00pm
Leslie Hogya

GENTLE YOGA

Tuesday, 10:30 - 12:00pm
Linda Benn
Thursday, 1:15-2:45pm
Leslie Hogya

SPECIAL NEEDS YOGA

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

NOON YOGA

Tuesday, 12:00 - 1:30pm - Wendy Boyer
Thursday, 12:00 - 1:00pm - Lauren Cox

EARLY MORNING YOGA

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

Note that Introductory classes are Level I

YOGA - LEVEL II

Monday, 10:30 - 12:00pm
Lauren Cox
Tuesday, 5:30-7:00pm
Leslie Hogya
Wed.. 7:30 - 9:00pm
James Currie-Johnson
Friday, 9:00 - 10:30am
Linda Benn
Saturday, 9:00 - 11:00am
Marlene Miller

YOGA - LEVEL III

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

YOGA - LEVEL IV

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

PRANAYAMA YOGA

Tuesday, 4:30-5:30pm
Leslie Hogya

SIXTY & BETTER

Wed., 10:30am - 12:00pm
Shirley Daventry French
Friday, 10:30am - 12:00pm
Linda Benn

Term I: Jan. 5-Mar.1 Term II: Mar. 2-Apr. 26 Term III : Apr. 27-June 21

REGISTRATION: Victoria YM/YWCA, 880 Courtney St, Victoria, B.C. V8W IC4

'Y' Telephone, 386-7511 or Linda Benn, 478-0757

RADHA HOUSE



WINTER 1998

Classes

The Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga®, Kundalini Yoga, Dream Yoga. Classes begin the week of January 12, 1998.

Free Kundalini Overview

- Thursday, January 8th, 7 – 9pm

For newcomers and those joining our 1st Cakra class, a look at the Kundalini system.

Guru Puja

- Sunday, February 1st, 7:30 – 9pm

Swami Radha's Guru, Swami Sivananda, initiated her as a Swami in February, 1956. We honour the anniversary with a special Satsang — singing, chanting, and an offering of flowers.

Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga Workshop

- Saturday, February 28th, 9:30am – 1pm

A morning with Trikonasana — an intensive examination of the practice and reflection on the symbolism of the Triangle pose.

Satsang every Sunday

- Sundays, 7:30 – 9pm.

Singing and chanting are combined with readings from Swami Radha's many inspirational books and excerpts from her tapes. All welcome.

For Further information, please call 595-0177

Why Should You Join the Victoria Yoga Centre Society?

10 reasons why you should cut out the membership form at the back of this issue and join the Yoga Centre:

1. Your support pays for the newsletter costs
2. You can become a member of the Yoga Centre executive
3. You will have priority in registering for some of our popular events
4. You will support the local teachers
5. You will be supporting the scholarship fund
6. You can register three weeks earlier than non-members for the Saltspring Retreat
7. You will pay less for Sunday workshops
8. You will pay \$25 less for the Saltspring Retreat
9. You will feel better
10. We'll feel better

Yoga Centre Facts:

- Did you know that the Yoga Centre is a registered, non-profit society? If you make a donation we can issue you an official tax receipt?
- Did you know your membership expires every year on December 31st?
Did you renew? Fill out the form at the back of this issue now!!
- Did you know we have some of the best trained, most senior teachers in Canada in our local group?

YOGA CALENDAR

JANUARY 1998

- 1: Workshop at the Y led by James Currie Johnson. See ad this issue.
- 17: Teachers' meeting
- 30-Feb 1: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association Professional Development Workshop at the Victoria Y with Shirley Daventry French and Ingelise Segato

FEBRUARY 1998

- 13: VYC Annual General Meeting, practice and potluck supper at the Y
- 15: Inspiration from India with Ann Kilbertus. See ad this issue.
- 21: Teachers' Meeting, followed by a teachers workshop led by Marlene Miller

MARCH 1998

- 13-15: CIYTA Teachers' assessment in Vancouver
- 21: Teachers' meeting
- 22: Inspiration from India workshop with Vicky Catchpole. See ad this issue.
- 27-29: Women & Spiritual Life weekend retreat. See ad this issue.

APRIL 1998

- 17: Friday Night Gathering. Jessica Sluymer will lead a discussion on spiritual practice in your life.
- 18: Teachers meeting followed by teacher training workshop led by Shirley Daventry French
- 22: ICA training in Vancouver
- 26: Inspiration from India workshop with Vicky Catchpole. See ad this issue.

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: _____

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 V9C 4B2

WINTER 1998

171	Teacher Training Certificate (1800)
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VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



March/April 1998

Please Subscribe





The Victoria Yoga Centre Presents:

"Inspirations from India"

An All-Levels Workshop
with
Vicky Catchpole

Sunday, March 22nd, 1998, 10am – 1pm
at the Victoria YM-YWCA.

Cost: \$30 for members, \$35 for non-members

Refreshments will follow the workshop



Vicky Catchpole has been teaching Yoga for over 10 years in the Comox Valley area. She is responsible for establishing and maintaining the Thriving Yoga community in the Comox Valley and the neighbouring Gulf Islands. Since her return from the 1997 Pune intensive Vicky has opened her own Yoga studio in Courtenay. We are lucky to have her share her learnings from the Intensive

To Register: Phone Lauren Cox, 382-3287
or 386-YOGA (9642)



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Assistant Editor: Shirley Daventry French
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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, Lauren Cox:

1174 May St.
 Victoria BC V8V 2S5
 Telephone: (250) 382-3287

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

Deadline for next issue: April 2, 1998.

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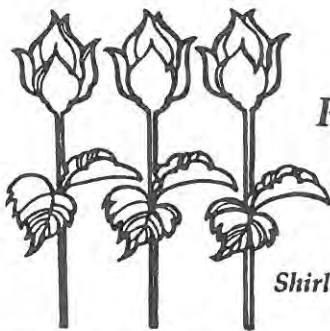
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Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French



I went to church yesterday in Vancouver, taken there by my daughter, Rachel. This in itself is remarkable, but even more astonishing is that the minister of this church is a woman — a woman who studies yoga!

It was a family service, and the minister first took time to talk to the children. She invited

them to come to the front of the church and then sat down with them on the floor before the altar. *Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. (St. Luke 18-16)*

The Minister was wearing a white cassock and an emerald green stole. Why did she wear this costume, she asked? What was its significance? She took off her stole and showed it around. What was special about it? One boy remembered that they came in different colours for different seasons, and others were fetched out: bright blue, yellow, red. The cassock and stole, she told them, conveyed a message that she was the minister conducting this morning's service. Was she so very different from them? Could they possibly be ministers too. The children were not quite sure about this, but she assured them that they could indeed — even before they were grown up. Christians can all

pass on the message of Jesus Christ: love and respect others, be kind and helpful. All Christians can do this in their own way according to their age and understanding. The only difference between her and them was that as an ordained priest she can consecrate the bread and wine for holy communion, and celebrate this and other sacramental rites. Apart from that she is no different from them. To add emphasis to her words, she took the four stoles and draped each of them around a group of children until all the children were included. Now you are all ministers just like me! Different sizes and ages from about three to ten, they stood there very straight and still as they considered these words and actions.

What else does a Minister do? Serve others, take care of the sick and the elderly, be kind to others. Can you do that, she asked them? This time a few heads nodded. Yes, perhaps they could.

Wrapped in the gaily coloured stoles the children sat down and listened as she told them stories about Jesus' first disciples, Simon Peter and Andrew: ordinary fisherman, eking out a meagre existence, with nothing further from their minds than that they would be called to follow a spiritual leader. When Jesus came along they were sceptical that he was such a leader but he managed to convince them: instead of coming up empty as they had been for some time, suddenly their nets began to fill to overflowing with a multitude of fish. *Follow me, Jesus said, and I will make you fishers of men. (St. Matthew, 4-19)* Something out of the ordinary was going on here!

Yes, Jesus was extraordinary, but what about the disciples? Could you be a disciple, she asked the children? Yes, you could. The disciples were ordinary people just like you and me. The only difference was that they had a calling, just as she had a calling to become a Minister and serve in this way. An excellent storyteller, she delivered her homily in a warm informal way capturing and keeping the children's attention (and mine) for quite a while. She did not patronise

them for one second. Her eyes sparkled as she spoke, her word and actions were congruent, her message plain and simple. It was clear that she had indeed found her calling.

This session ended with the singing of a lively song, and then the children were invited (but not forced) to go off to another room where, among other things, they made coloured paper fishes. One of my grandchildren left her fish in my car, so it stays with me as a reminder. If the children did not want to leave the main church hall they did not have to. In this church the words of Jesus have been heard and children are included not excluded. It reminded me of the temples in India where children naturally worship alongside their parents and the idea that they should be seen but not heard does not arise. In fact, again and again during this service I saw parallels with my experiences in India and the teachings of yoga.

This Anglican church service was in stark contrast to others I have visited in Canada which were sombre, joyless places and to my eyes sadly lacking in spirit. In my youth, of my own volition, because my parents followed no particular faith, I joined the Church of England. Perhaps I had a call, although I did not think of it in that way but rather as curiosity. I went to all the churches of all denominations in the vicinity of my home from Roman Catholic to Salvation Army. I eventually decided to become a member of the congregation of a beautiful old Norman church whose entrance was a curfew tower built by the the Romans. Full of history and symbolism, this church was built on the site of an ancient Abbey and close by its ruins. The Vicar was a fiery passionate Irishman whose sermons ignited all sorts of emotions. He certainly held my attention. So often he seemed to speak directly to me and my particular challenges in life just as many years later I would have the same experience with Swami Radha and B.K.S. Iyengar.

For many years I attended this High Anglican Church where the services were conducted with pageantry and

symbolism, sung or chanted and included frequent ceremonial processions when the choir and clergy dressed in their finest robes and preceded by a huge cross walked up and down the various aisles with banners unfurled and voices uplifted. Full of life, I loved it! But alas this Vicar was promoted to Bishop and replaced by a pale, aesthetic Englishman who took all the colour, music, joy and spirit out of the church. We sat still, intoned dully, and fidgeted until his sermons were over. Lively hymns were replaced by dirges, everything was monotonous. I drifted away from spiritual life until years later, thousands of miles away in Canada when having fulfilled many of my material desires I began to sense something was lacking, and embarked on another search which led me to yoga and India.

When asked what led me to yoga in the first place, there are the easy and quick answers such as "the time of my ballet class changed", but now I see that the longing for a spiritual dimension in my life which I followed in my youth had not disappeared but merely been submerged for a couple of decades as I pursued other goals.

In his career, my father had travelled all over the world and growing up one of my ambitions was to follow in his footsteps. Strangely, neither Canada nor India stood high on my list of priorities. It was primarily my husband's idea to come to Canada, and I went to India solely to study with B.K.S. Iyengar and not because of a great desire to see that country. What is it then that takes me back there again and again and again. Primarily the teaching of course, from Guruji, Geeta and Prashant, but India also teaches me so much every time I am there? The constant presence and pressure of life and death; the curbside shrines with their little bunches of flowers where people, many of whom live impoverished material lives, pause to worship on their way to work. The temples, full of families with children running around: children who have learned from their parents' example to revere these sacred places where

their presence is welcome and celebrated. In India when they worship, people are themselves, not acting a pious role.

Last year, I had some correspondence with my friend Dhan Palkhivala in Bombay about aging, death and dying. At that time my husband's mother was dying, and watching her lack of spiritual resources as death stared her in the face was distressing. She had made no preparation for this inevitability, and seeing her predicament encouraged me to do something I had been thinking about for some time. With a colleague of my own age, I started a group for women over sixty who wished to discuss their feelings and attitude to growing old and explore what the yogic teachings had to say about this. It was not hugely popular. There is a conspiracy of silence, fear and denial in our culture about aging and dying. When I announced the group to my over sixty yoga class (all possible candidates), one woman told me she would consider joining when there was a group about growing young. In a letter to Dhan I had written that it is not so easy to deny death in India because it is more visible there. In her reply she agreed with me: "Death is certainly more visible in our culture. Shirley my dear, that is because God is more visible too. When God is so close, so much one with us, where is the fear, or running away from his Doing?"

One of my purposes in starting the yoga centre was to establish a community where God would be visible: a spiritual community here in the city where we live and work, which would encourage us to make yoga part of our everyday lives and not something limited to classes, workshops or our home practice. I was having my own struggle at the time to maintain my ideals and commitment to yoga while fulfilling family responsibilities. I had little problem expressing my spiritual side while away on retreats, but experienced great difficulty in holding on to that when I returned home. Being a member of the Victoria Yoga Centre has certainly helped me to keep my focus and listen to my personal

call. Even my children, who suffered through my struggles now admit it was worthwhile not only for me but for them too. And now my oldest daughter, who herself has been studying yoga for many years, leads me back to my roots in the Christian church.

After last week's church service I had time to speak with the Minister. We found much in common in our paths. She had studied Iyengar Yoga in Calgary, attended workshops there with Swami Radha, and visited Yasodhara Ashram. This was before she responded to her call to become ordained as an Anglican minister, but yoga had seen her through a period of great turmoil in her life and was one of the tools which helped her in making this decision. She continues to study yoga to this day integrating its teachings with that of her Christian faith. When I spoke of my excitement in finding such a bright manifestation of the spirit in her church, she said that in her diocese they were fortunate in having an open-minded Bishop. It is said that first-class leaders choose first-class subordinates!

It is too early to say where my meeting with this inspiring Christian woman and my brief return to the church will lead me, but I have been reading the Bible this week to refresh my memory about certain of Christ's teachings. What a great yoga teacher he was!

SWANWICK STUDY CENTRE

538 Swanwick Road, RR#1, Victoria

For information contact Khairoun – 737-4762

September 11-13, 1998

GIOIA IRWIN

Gioia Irwin is a very dedicated and respected member of the Vancouver Iyengar community, with her teaching experience well over ten years. Gioia has studied the Iyengar style of yoga extensively with many senior teachers, including B.K.S. Iyengar and Geeta Iyengar, during her visit to India in 1985.



The Victoria Yoga Centre Presents:

"Inspirations from India"

An All-Levels Workshop
with
Leslie Hogya

Sunday, April 26th, 1998, 10am – 1pm
at the Victoria YM-YWCA.

Cost: \$30 for members, \$35 for non-members

Refreshments will follow the workshop



Leslie Hogya is one of our senior teachers who received her certification from Mr. Iyengar at the 1997 intensive in Pune. This workshop will also focus on the teachings presented during the India Intensive.

To Register

Phone Leslie Hogya, 383-6301
or 386-YOGA (9642)



NOTICE TO ALL STUDENTS OF YOGACHARYA SRI B.K.S. IYENGAR

*The Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association has received the following message from India.
Those eligible to attend are Members of CIYTA and their students.*

Iyengar Yoga Festival 1998 Pune *1st December, 1998 to 14th December, 1998*

Iyengar Yoga Festival

1998—Pune is planned to celebrate Guruji Yogacharya Shri B.K.S. Iyengar's 80th Birthday. You are invited to join hundreds of Iyengar Yoga enthusiasts who shall participate in this event to felicitate the Master. The highlight of the festival shall be seven days of Asana and Pranayama Mega Classes to be conducted by Guruji, during which he shall uncover the essence of his practice of over 65 years for the benefit of his students. This is a unique opportunity for you to study under the Master himself!



Departure will be on the 15th of December.

The Main Venue of the Festival is The National Games Complex at Balewadi, 15 Kms from Pune. The nearest international Airport is Mumbai (earlier known as Bombay). Pune is around 160 kms. from Mumbai and is well connected by Air, Train, Coaches and Taxis. Foreign visitors must bear in mind that December is a busy tourist month and Air sectors to India get booked far in advance.

Who should attend?

On this occasion, members of the Iyengar Yoga community across the world shall be converging. As many physically fit applicants as can be logistically handled will be permitted to attend the festival as participants. There will be no therapeutic attention in the classes. Those who are unwell, old or infirm will be permitted to watch the classes as Observers.

When & Where?

The Festival will commence on the 1st of December, 1998 with registration in the evening. The Festival will conclude on the 14th of December, 1998.

What about accommodation?

The organizers shall make best efforts to provide same sex Dormitory accommodation in the complex to as many residential applicants as possible. Delegates will also have the option of choosing to make their own staying arrangements in Pune. The organizers can assist in making hotel reservation. Foreign delegates may bear in mind that hotels in India provide immediate access to rooms on arrival even at odd hours. All expenses for stay will be paid for separately by the non residential delegates. Travel between the hotel and the venue can be arranged with the hotel management.

What are the costs?

The full package for participants & observers includes tuitions, stay, catering, picnic, kit bag with props, transportation between venues and passes for cultural events. The package without accommodation includes all above with the exception of stay and transportation between place of stay & Balevadi. Non Participants package excludes tuition & kit bags.

What about food and other arrangements?

All meals shall be provided by the organizers at the Festival Venues. There will also be social functions, cultural programs and a Picnic.

Can my family accompany me?

Yes, they can register as associates and participate in all activities and functions except the classes. If you want to spend some time sight-seeing in India before or after the festival our authorized travel agent can help you both in planning and making arrangements.

Can I stay back to attend general classes at the institute after the festival?

No, the institute shall be closed during the month of December 1998 .

How do I come to the venue from the Airport?

Airport pickup & drop can be arranged on chargeable basis by our authorized travel agents.

Do I have to bring my Yoga Kit?

The organizers shall provide a Yoga Kit consisting of props required during the classes. You are not required to bring your own kitbag.

How do I apply?

Duly filled registration form along with 3 passport size coloured photographs and the registration fee shall have to reach the main Iyengar Yoga

Category	With accommodation	Without accommodation
Participants	US \$ 750/-	US \$ 675/-
Observers	US \$ 750/-	US \$ 675/-
Non Participating Companions	US \$ 500/-	US \$ 425/-

Association in your country before 30th April, 1998. Please get in touch with your association for modalities of payment and amount payable in your local currency. Shortlisting of the applications, if necessary, would be completed by 15th June, 1998. Based on the shortlist, you shall be informed by post as well as through the association about your participation. In case you are not shortlisted for participation your registration fee shall be returned immediately by your association. Applications received after 30th of April, 1998 will be considered, subject to availability of place.

What if I have to cancel?

Once shortlisted, if you have to cancel, your request in writing should reach us before the 31st of October, 1998 for refund of 50% of the registration fees. No refunds will be permitted after 30th October, 1998. There is no provision for a substitute delegate.

Applications in Canada to be sent to:

Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association
c/o Donna Fornelli
235 des Bourgeons Avenue
Aylmer, Quebec, Canada J9J 1R8

Tel No: 819-685-0491

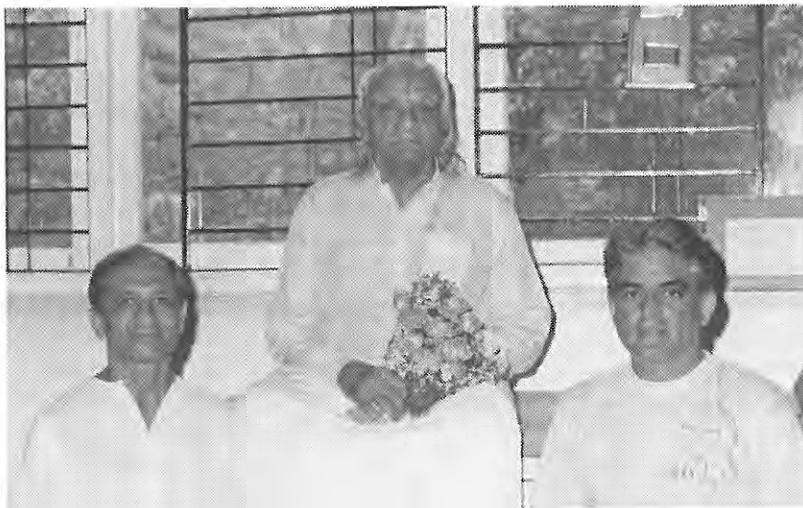
Fax No: 819-685-1535

E-Mail: fornelli@capitalnet.com

Registration Cheques to be drawn in favour of
Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association.

Healing the body and Soul

The following article and photograph were originally published in the Pune Times on July 18, 1997



Soni Studios, Pune

Iyengar's ardent devotees on why yoga and life are synonymous.

He is the leader and they the followers, and the end result of this game is the precious gift of life, health and the accompanying feeling of all's right with the world. A living legend with millions of disciples all over the world, B.K.S. Iyengar's name will probably be written in golden letters in the annals of Indian gurus. And ready with eager ink right now are Pandurang Rao (44), secretary of the Iyengar Yoga institute and his disciple for the past twenty seven years, and Ratanlal Shah (60) who has been following in the guru's *asanas* for three decades now.

"He is the only man on the earth who can remove the ailments of both body and soul," eulogises Shah who assists the 79-year-old Yogacharya in his teaching and classes at the institute. "He is innovative, creative and a perfect master. I always had this childhood fascination for yoga and decided to join the institute after reading a book by Yogacharya. At that time I was undergoing immense physical and mental strain and it wasn't long before my life took a complete turn."



Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar with Ratanlal Shah (left) and Pandurang Rao (right)

According to Shah there is a tendency amongst people to see the guru as what he portrays externally – a man quick to temper and wont to harsh words. "But he is really like a jackfruit, hard from outside and totally soft and sweet from inside." Shad views the unique guru-shishya relationship in three dimensions. "On the physical level he is Mr. Iyengar and I am Mr. Shah, on the spiritual level he is the guru and I the disciple, and on the highest level we are both the same with one soul."

To Pandurang Rao, B.K.S. Iyengar is the embodiment of a father figure and he has, like an ideal son, devoted his life to looking after the institute and surrendering himself to yoga as taught by his revered teacher. "The love between a guru and shishya is the most pure one and gratifying one. And since I have taken my guru to be my father I love him totally and probably even more when he is angry," smiles the disciple with unmitigated devotion.

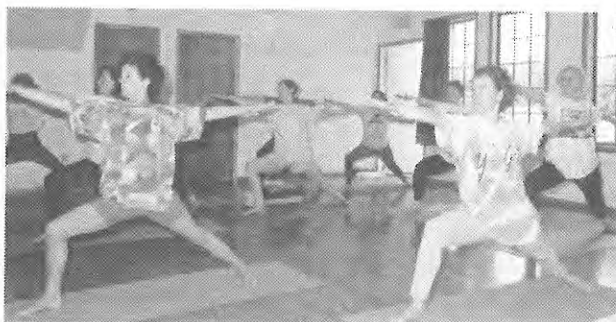
The Victoria Yoga Centre is pleased to present:



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

begins April 1st for Yoga Centre Members.

Fee: \$275.00

April 15th for non-members.

Fee: \$300.00

Camping: As above, less \$25

Commuters: As above, less \$80

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

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

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

Joining the National Organization.

by Leslie Hogya

Little did I know that when I became a member of the the CIYTA (Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association) I would get to travel across Canada, or that it would improve my yoga practice.

In 1993, our teacher B.K.S. Iyengar, traveled to Toronto to teach at our national convention. I didn't think I would go because I had just been to India nine months before and felt I couldn't afford it. However, it became clear that it was important to go and welcome him to our country. It was awe inspiring to watch him teach the entire convention in the banquet hall. He gave of himself unstintingly.

After, Mr. Iyengar's visit, I got more involved in the organization. Two years ago at our local Saturday teacher's meeting, we were told Victoria needed to fill a spot on the newly organized Coordinating Committee of the CIYTA. I thought it didn't sound too

difficult. It had nothing to do with balancing budgets, for example, so I agreed to represent British Columbia on the committee.

In June of 1996, our committee actually met for the first time on Salt Spring Island when Victoria hosted the AGM. Our newly formed coordinating committee hadn't really sorted out its duties, at least I hadn't thought much about it. It only occurred to me as Genia, Edith and I sat there together that one of us would have to be the chair. (JoAnn Sutherland was unable to attend the meeting) It was going to be up to one of us to actually oversee the whole organization, (you know like a president). I was a little daunted at the prospect, and was greatly relieved when Edith Layne of Toronto was willing to assume this role.

In the first few months, we made lots of phone calls trying to find an agreeable time for a conference call. Genia Sussex lives in Newfoundland, four and a half time zones away from Victoria. We thought of Sundays because the phone charges would be cheaper, but it seemed to never be the right weekend for all. Finally we discovered Friday mornings were a better time, even though more expensive. We also learned quickly that it was good that Edith had taken on the job of chairing our committee. She is able to organize both meetings and paper.

Our committee has a conference call every other month. I jump out of bed, head for the shower, and plug in the kettle, to get a cup of tea going so I can be awake enough to talk at 6:30 in the morning, Pacific time. You realize, we have to start then because by the time we are finished, an hour later, Genia's kids need their lunch! Meanwhile in Victoria during the winter, I am waiting for the sun to appear.

One Friday, we were all on the line waiting, and no Genia. We were wondering if she forgot, when there she was on the line suddenly, all breathless. Her dog



Marlene Miller Photo



Marie-Andrée, Shirley, Leslie & Marlene in Halifax, 1997



▲ Genia, Leslie, Jo-Ann & Edith
at AGM 1997

had eaten an entire chocolate Easter bunny from one of her children's bedrooms.

All that first year, we seemed to mainly worry about what we would do at the next AGM, which was scheduled for Halifax. Our committee worked hard in

Halifax behind the scenes to keep everything going throughout our four days together. We were in a beautiful setting right on the coast. A few times, I actually ran out doors and looked at the ocean for a minute. In May there it is early spring and we watched the garden come to life as we ran between the out-house and the meeting room. I think I had about a half hour total over four days when I wasn't in a meeting or sleeping. (We met during most meal times)

One exciting thing about having last year's meeting in Halifax was actually meeting all those teachers from the Maritimes, who up to then had mostly been names in the directory. The Maritime teachers came together for the first time at that meeting. There was 100% attendance. It was great to know that they sat down and met together, and hopefully built some networks for future communication.

Last Year's group at the
CIYTA AGM in Halifax ▼



While in Halifax, Genia resigned from the committee and her place was taken by Bob Powers from New Brunswick. Before we left each other's company we set up our phone conference schedule, I figure making this plan saved our committee about \$50.00 in long distance charges. With Bob on the committee, we can actually start a half hour later, as New Brunswick is only four hours ahead of us not four and a half.

This year, we have worked at improving procedures to help make the organization run more smoothly, and again a lot of our time is spent planning the next AGM which in 1998 will be in Saskatoon. I have never been to Saskatoon. Neither had I been to Halifax before, nor Winnipeg where the 1995 meeting was held.

When I began doing yoga, it certainly didn't occur to me that I would have to learn about filing, or giving speeches, or organizing an Annual General Meeting for people from every region of Canada. I don't particularly like meetings, I never did much public speaking, my usual method of filing before last year was a pile on my desk for this month, a pile on my book shelf for things to be saved or filed, maybe a few things get into my filing cabinet. But is it under Yoga Program, or Workshops?

I have learned a lot in the past few years, I have learned a lot about myself, about my yoga practice, about organizations. How does working on a committee, phone conferences, filing have to do with my yoga practice? Yoga is a way of life, of integrating body mind and spirit. One of the niyamas is self knowledge. By doing this work, I clear up some of the clutter in my life, which clears it up in my head. When my mind is clear, I can focus on my asana practice. Every part of us is reflected in every other part.

I'm looking forward to seeing old and new friends in Saskatchewan. I am curious to see if we can run this meeting more smoothly, with more time for relaxing together, learning together. There will be time to share what we learned in India with those who did not travel to Pune. It's always an intense few days, but hopefully rich and rewarding for all.

Women and Spiritual Life

**A weekend retreat
with
Jessica Sluymer and
Shirley Daventry French**

**March 27 - 29
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: \$255.00

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

Centre: Englise Nherlan and Shirley Daventry French, teachers at the recent Professional Development Workshop with Leslie Hogya (l) and Marlene Miller (r)



A Weekend in Toronto

An inside look at the Professional Development committee of the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association by Shirley Daventry French

In January, I cut short a holiday in Hawaii to fly to Toronto leaving my husband relaxing in the warmth for a few more days. Am I crazy? No, I don't think so! One day I was on a balcony looking out over a swimming pool and the blue South Pacific ocean. When I awakened the next day, I opened the curtains of my hotel room and was astonished to see people skating ... outside!

To be perfectly honest, I did not really shorten my holiday to go to Toronto. This holiday was planned some time after I had made a commitment to attend a January meeting of the Professional Development Committee of the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association or CIYTA. It would be our last meeting before we actually begin our certification and assessment process. It is not an easy task to find a date which suits ten busy people, and this one was set last spring. I made a commitment to attend and booked my flight. Then my husband decided he needed a break, we agreed we needed to spend some time together, and

the time after Christmas was a good time for both of us (apart from the meeting). So we made reservations and, since Derek did not have to be back at work until after my Toronto meeting, he decided to stay on after I left.

Professional Development is the largest of the three committees of the CIYTA with ten members from across the country. We are large because we have had an enormous amount of work to do implementing certification and assessment. We have also organised Professional Development workshops to facilitate the certification process, and the first of these was held in Victoria at the end of January and led by Ingelise Nherlan of Vancouver and myself. Twenty four teachers attended from Saskatchewan and points west including several of the teachers whom B.K.S. Iyengar certified last summer. Teachers with ten or more years' teaching experience are eligible to be assessed this year, teachers with five or more years' experience next year, and after that all others.

This is a new era in Iyengar Yoga in Canada and all of us involved, assessors and assesseees, are learning how to work within the international model which has Mr. Iyengar's approval. Two assessments are being held this year: the first in Vancouver in March and the second

in Toronto in June. Another Professional Development workshop will be held in Montréal in April.

Our work at this January meeting was to finalise plans for the 1998 workshops and assessments, and put in place the framework for future assessments together with guidelines for assessors and teacher training. There are an unbelievable number of details to take care of. Iyengar Yoga has been established in Canada for about twenty five years and until this summer the only people with Iyengar Yoga certificates were those who lived in other countries where certification was already in place.

Last summer, to begin the process, B.K.S. Iyengar issued certificates to some of his most experienced Canadian pupils. The teachers sitting the 1998 assessments are themselves very experienced, so the first assessors have been selected from those with Senior Intermediate certificates: Maureen Carruthers (Galiano Island), Shirley Daventry French (Victoria), Marlene Mawhinney (Toronto), Marie-Andrée Morin (Montréal) and Ingelise Nherlan (Vancouver). Bruce Carruthers (Galiano Island) also received a Senior Intermediate certificate, and Guruji awarded Junior Intermediate certificates to: Sheri Berkowitz

(Saltspring Island), Lucie Guindon (Montréal), Leslie Hogya (Victoria), Margot Kitchen (Calgary), Marlene Miller (Victoria) and Hilda Pezarro (Vancouver). Barbara Yates also has a Junior Intermediate certificate earned in the United States.

Iyengar Yoga Certificates earned in other countries recognised by Guruji will be honoured in Canada, but Guruji has told us that when they come up for renewal they must be renewed in Canada.

There are so many details to be given consideration; so much to think about.

Personally, it was difficult to make an instant transition from holiday to business mode and bring my full attention to all the matters requiring attention. One of the things which helped enormously was the fine organisational skill of our Chairperson, Marlene Mawhinney, who since the formation of this committee has done a fantastic job in pulling everything together. Marlene has a large home about an hour's drive from Toronto where she housed most of us, with two people staying at a nearby hotel. We were sustained by wonderful meals prepared by her daughter; and her husband, Gerry helped out in the kitchen



amiably and with good humour despite the invasion of his privacy.

There was a moment for me during one of our discussions when I suddenly felt it was a great privilege to be on this committee, and realised how much I respected my fellow committee members for the intelligence and integrity they brought to the work. All of them had completed the tasks assigned to them in a most professional way. Alas, there was no representative from the Prairies as their member had resigned too late for a replacement to be found. The committee members present beside Marlene Mawhinney and myself were: Beverley Winsor (St. John's), Elizabeth Kingsland (Halifax), Marie-Andrée Morin (Montréal), Marilyn Prange (Waterloo), Judy Mirus (Edmonton), Ingelise Nherlan (Vancouver) and Ann Kilbertus (Victoria). Donna Fornelli of Ottawa, the Chair of the Finance Committee was present to guide and restrain us in financial matters, her feet firmly planted on the ground — sometimes our vision goes beyond our ability to pay for it, a constant dilemma in a huge country with a small population. Also invaluable to our work was the presence of Suzanne Fisher (Toronto) who worked incessantly on the computer.

Inevitably, there are sometimes widely differing ideas how to proceed. This meeting was no exception, but our Chairperson made sure all views were well aired so that no-one went home feeling that their viewpoint had not been heard. In my experience, it is usually a seemingly small item which generates some emotion and becomes a sticking place. Marlene had had the foresight to see that this might be the case, tabled the item so we could think about it overnight, and put aside sufficient time to allow us to come to a majority decision.

There are the sticking points, and there is the laughter — a great deal of it, in and out of the meeting. On Saturday, having worked hard all day and beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel, we all let down during a sumptuous evening meal revealing some personal history, and recounting stories and anecdotes about our work with Mr. Iyengar and our travels to India (and everyone who travels to India has much to tell). We laughed and laughed and went to bed tired and happy.

On Sunday morning we tied up loose ends, set time-lines for the next phase of the work, and early in the afternoon departed for points east and west. Those going to Newfoundland and Nova Scotia would get home late at night or early Monday morning. The Québec/Ottawa contingent did not have so far to go but had to contend with the aftermath of the ice storm. Those of us travelling west experienced a very long day, and I arrived back in Victoria at 9 pm (midnight Toronto time). Where else in the world could you have a national committee consisting of people living in six different times zones? Where else in the world would snow and ice play such a significant role in arrivals and departures? Only in Russia!



Some of the yoga teachers at the Professional Development Workshop in Victoria



Marlene Miller Photo

Struggles of a Soft One

by Bill Wilson

I wrote a piece for the newsletter a while ago, but never did finish it or submit it – I felt there must be more enlightening or interesting things for people to read about than the travail of an experienced introductory student.

This was about the same time I took out the *Bhagavad Gita* from the library, thinking I would have plenty of time to read from it over Christmas with no yoga classes. It sat unopened for the longest time and was soon a foot or so under “the pile” of literature that looms beside a favourite chair. Many respected guests have been welcomed into “the pile” – even Mr. Iyengar has visited more than once – but many leave disappointed that I do not give them my continued attention.

I wonder why that is? Why, when it was so necessary to read or do something yesterday, why is it we have to read or do something entirely different today? Is it something happening in our sleep; is it the monkey mind as Lauren calls it; or .. stretch ... could we say it is a good thing and that we are simply living in the present?

Deferring action ... being dilatory giving cause to delay ... we all know the depressing word that is best suited, a word I'd rather not use. I much prefer the code phrase used by Shirley quoted in the last issue: “People here are soft!” – kinder words, why it's even easier to say than procrastination!

And so it was the struggles of one particular soft one I had written about:

I'm not sure why I started yoga, but I still remember an odd impression I had of “yoga people” at the Y . I was a regular Y user, coming to the Y and parking at the bike racks, I would always pass the yoga room. Sometimes the doors were open and I would get a glimpse of younger, healthy looking people inside but mostly I always seemed to arrive and leave when there was a lot of older

people waiting outside the door. I would see them rush in and younger looking people filtering out. For all I knew this transformation went on all day – definitely something to check out.

I'd rather not look it up but I think it will soon be three years that I've lurked in the depths of intro classes with only the occasional “harder” class.

My reason for remaining attached to the intros aside from the obvious financial advantage and scheduling options, was that I could not consider myself anything more than a neophyte until yoga (the asanas that is) was incorporated into a daily practice. A ritual. Now it has, and I can now reflect on that journey.

As most probably are, I am eternally grateful for being introduced to yoga by my first teacher, Penny, and her Thursday 4:30 - 6 pm class that I took for many, many terms and through a succession of no less than four teachers. It was the only practice I would do all week and it brought many new sensations and an awareness into my body. Still it never really occurred to me that I needed anything more than this once a week ritual, it just seemed to go so perfectly with everything else I was doing at the time.

When Penny left to travel, I continued on with Linda and at this point realized how each teacher has a unique awareness and passes on something different. I would take more classes, not to do more yoga but to be exposed to more teachers.

And so I started taking more than one class a week with different teachers, but it quickly expanded after I discovered Lauren. Lauren provided the security and familiarity to venture into a higher level of class, since she was teaching both introductory and Level One classes. Lauren also provided the means to bring yoga into a family context with her family yoga workshops. Having the support of your family is essential.

By this time I was doing three classes a week and observed that unlike many other physical endeavours,

one could not seem to do too much yoga. I recall being very perplexed by this, considering the amount of effort put in – how could it not have an effect the next day? It wasn't until later that I was to learn what effort was – Rosie was beamed in for that purpose.

I felt I was advancing rapidly and signed up for one of Celia's early morning pranayama classes, Celia had subbed a couple of our classes. I believe it was the term just before the winter solstice: there would be this spectacular sunrise every morning on the way to class and it felt immensely good. But by the end of the term the sun didn't rise and it was those dark, cold, wet bike rides to the Y that would leave the impression that pranayama was not for me.

The next quantum leap was a weekend retreat with Shirley at Saltspring Centre, a gift from my family. Herein I recognized the source of all my teachers' refrains, and the source beyond Shirley must be Mr. Iyengar and beyond him?? There was so much more to yoga than the asanas, an ocean to cross. It was also there that I learned of Baba Hari Dass, and what the Saltspring yoga community was all about.

Not long after that I got my very own purple sticky mat, I had great expectations at the time. By luck I had also just picked up a copy of *Light on Yoga* for twenty five cents at the South Park School book sale -nothing would stop home yoga now! (Note to teachers: the previous owner of the book is not one of the many South Park parents you now have). The enthusiasm quickly faded though, I still needed the refrains and motivation of the teachers, the lines on the floor for standing work, the other props.

By this time my interest in Saltspring Centre had grown and our family went to the community yoga retreat that summer. A week of discovery and all the other things yoga is, really a story unto itself. I left feeling enlightened and a powerful sense of finding good, and that this was the right path.

Still, I wasn't motivated enough to begin a regular practice of the asanas. Instead, I opted for the next best

thing, I signed up for a yoga class every day of the week. No matter that most were intro level classes, it was the regularity I was trying to establish. Things went smoothly and after several weeks of this, I began to feel something absent on the weekends when there were no classes. I still needed to do it at home.

More failed attempts, by this time my sticky mat was acquiring a permanent bunched shape with disuse and defied gravity when it was spread out. But, in what would probably be a recognizable trait of an Iyengar student – the attention to and need for correct alignment, I had an idea for the mat. I drew one foot grids on it (starting from the centre of course). It worked – standing, even sitting and lying positions can be replicated as precisely as they are in class where we have lines.

And just when I needed it, and I believe a first for the Yoga Centre from the time I've been there, Linda came out with a weekly hand-out for home practice. Such simple actions can accomplish so much, and it was at this point that I began a regular practice at home.

One of the arcane precepts that I have begun to realize with yoga, and life in general- is that things are provided when they are needed. Seek and you shall find.

SWANWICK STUDY CENTRE

538 Swanwick Road, RR#1, Victoria

For information contact Khairon – 737-4762

June 11 – 17, 1998

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, and people with AIDS.

Why I Want To Teach Yoga

A Teacher Training Essay by Louine Niwa,
September 12, 1997

As part of my training as an Iyengar Yoga teacher in Victoria, Canada, I have been asked to describe, "Why I Want To Teach Yoga." The main reason is that the practice of yoga has a real, positive effect on all aspects of life, including physical, intellectual, social, moral and spiritual. A marked improvement and increased capacity for the entire health of the living organism is noticeable in the regular yoga practitioner. In wanting to teach yoga, compassionate efforts are made to allow others to achieve a full state of aliveness. Such striving is worthwhile in my estimation. Some of the reasons for wanting to teach described below are drawn from personal practice, and others from observation in classes during my first year of teacher training.

A. Reasons drawn from Personal Practice.

The primary reason I want to teach yoga is because doing yoga makes me feel vibrantly alive and whole, and I want to share this energy for living with other people. This becomes quickly noticeable with a regular, established personal yoga practice. Benefits available to the committed practitioner include.

a. *A healthy, strong, reliable physical body.* For example, through regular yoga practice I have loosened up tight shoulders gained through years of hunching over a drafting board. Such simple physical benefits can relieve tensions, and are a good reason for wanting to teach yoga, as they are available to everyone.

b. *Improved clarity of the intellect and emotions.* The personal challenges faced in practicing yoga encourage a non-judgmental, calm state of mental being. Yoga also requires questioning of assumed limitations, and stretching efforts to the fullest. This extends through to intellectual and emotional life: through regular yoga practice I see more clearly with less attachment to

outcomes, causes, reasons, etc. I accept life as it unfolds, and am thus able to participate more fully. So far in my personal yoga journey, the changes in my intellectual and emotional attitudes have been dramatic. The possibility that other people can enjoy such benefits makes me want to teach yoga.

c. *Capacity for spiritual belief.* Regular practice of yoga has increased my capacity for spiritual depth for which I am very thankful. The more involved my practice is, the more I am at one with myself and the world. Over time, I achieve a real sense of peace and contentment which I would like to share with others. This is a compassionate reason for wanting to teach yoga.

The benefits noticed in individual personal practice motivate me to teach yoga as I would love other people to have the opportunity to develop in their own ways as they study yoga. I believe each individual faces unique challenges along the path of yoga which may be very different to mine. In wanting to teach, I wish to encourage the development of others by simply assisting in "setting the stage" for personal growth, which comes about as an integral part of the art and science of yoga.

An area of remarkable growth in my own life due to regular practice of yoga is an increased capacity to bear life's troubles with strength, equanimity and hope. Personally I have sustained a number of significant deaths and family stresses over the past three years, and yoga has given me the physical stamina to endure and be available to help others, the psychological maturity to be stable, and the courage to maintain personal faith. In particular I have found regular practice of pranayama invaluable in this regard. During simple practice, I have obtained a release of emotion previously impossible to achieve. Once I release those strong emotions, I let them go. Through practice of pranayama, I find myself open to acceptance of life's events. This experience of a sense of real freedom is one I would like to share, in particular with more worldly-bound individuals, as awareness of such unlimited freedom maximizes the options for real choices in life.

The reasons for wanting to teach yoga which are drawn from personal practice are derived primarily from specific personal challenges faced in my own practice. Doing yoga regularly has resulted in on-going improvements to my personal life which are significant and provide motivation for wanting to teach yoga. The interest in teaching is further enhanced when similar changes are observed in other yoga practitioners.

B. Reasons drawn from observation.

In my first year of teacher training, I have noticed that other people benefit from the practice of yoga, which motivates me to want to teach. Many of the benefits of yoga found in my own personal practice can be observed in others, such as increased physical stamina, intellectual and emotional clarity, and spiritual intensity.

The main observation which makes me want to teach yoga is the joy and goodness the practice of yoga seems to bring to people's lives, of all types and ages. Even at the beginner's level, it is easy to see a rapid increase in physical flexibility and strength. Along with this comes an obvious acceptance and enjoyment of the body which may not have previously occurred. Seeing these benefits from an outside perspective encourages me to want to teach yoga; as it draws individuals towards self-knowledge in a natural and positive way. In this regard I believe teaching yoga is a worthwhile expression of compassion towards all others.

Secondly, I observe that regular practitioners of yoga become more confident and apparently happy in their overall lives, especially people who practice pranayama. The openness of the chest in pranayama indicates great courage, fortitude and emotional honesty; while a closed chest indicates withholding, stress or even fear. Western women in particular are observed to lack openness in the chest. This may be due to societal mores; exacerbated by the extraordinary pressures on women who work full-time in addition to fulfilling the traditional role of childbearing. Eventually I would hope to be able to teach pranayama to help others

benefit as I have from the physiological and psychological opening which can be gained through regular pranayama practice.

Finally, I want to teach yoga because of experiences I have had with children in recent years. Children seem to take naturally to many of the simpler yoga postures, including the relaxation and simple breathing. While they do not have the attention for prolonged holdings, nonetheless kids really seem to enjoy doing yoga. For example, I recently showed a crawling, flat-footed one year old how to activate her arches in a "baby" version of Baddha Konasana. She immediately began flexing her arches with great abandon, and one week later she was well enough balanced to undertake her life long journey of walking. It seems there is a niche for the teaching of yoga to children, and I am very interested in learning all I can in this regard.

Conclusion:

My reasons for wanting to teach yoga are complex and varied. Personal practice is the source of much inspiration, as well as general observations made of others who do and do not practice yoga regularly. B.K.S. Iyengar writes that, "Yoga brings purity in action, clarity in thought, and stability in mind."* Certainly the system of ancient knowledge which is yoga has benefited me personally in these ways. I believe that the fundamental truths encountered in the study of yoga are universal so that others who study yoga will benefit too. I would be honoured to be blessed with the skill, talent and sensitivity to introduce others to a personal journey into themselves through yoga. Besides, I have done a lot of work on learning about teaching yoga since that significant day several years ago after a yoga workshop at the YWCA in Victoria when Leslie Hogya asked me, "So, Louine....when are you going to start teaching?"

Notes

*B.K.S. Iyengar, "The Influence and Imprints of Yoga Outside India."

Source: Yoga Rahasya Vol. 4, No. #.

Uprising Master In Victoria

by Neil W McKinlay

In January, the local Iyengar Yoga Program replaced its familiar Beginner to Level Three structure with a more easily understood Level One through Four format. While this change has not affected the content of any particular class, many students found themselves inexplicably 'moved up' after Christmas when they returned, for example, to their usual Level One class and discovered it had been renamed Level Two. For myself, having made a 'real' shift from Level Two to Level Three last fall, this format change meant with the New Year, I suddenly was a Level Four student! Laughing over this during a Newsletter meeting, someone suggested an amusing article might come of this experience; not much later, the following appeared.

* * * *

Across the landscape of spiritual life, progress is slow. Over the geography of years, over the terrain of a lifetime - the terrain of many lifetimes - movement comes only step by step, only with carefully executed and diligently sustained effort. It is rare in our world to find one capable of making great strides in this territory, rarer still to find one who has actually made the enormous leap to a mountaintop, where he stands high aloft and looks out over the tremendous vista that is our lives.

People travel the globe searching for such individuals, paying untold sums and

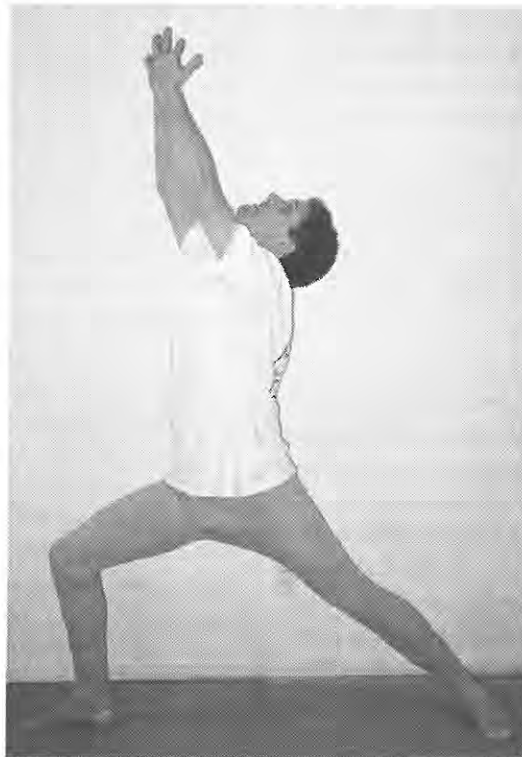
expending unknown quantities of time and energy on this quest. Always the journey is elsewhere - to India, to Tibet, to Duluth... Always, until now. For today, the Map of Wisdom has another destination marked on its surface, today seekers must consider cashing in hard won Frequent Flyer points to reach the unlikely locale of Victoria, British Columbia.

Known more for its gardens than its religious offerings, more for its quaint English facades than its stores of True Knowledge, Victoria is a sleepy city on Canada's west coast, on the south-most tip of Vancouver Island. Ringed by ocean and by the jagged Olympic mountains, this mostly urban gathering of over a quarter million

souls is home to loggers and fishers, to civil servants and shopkeepers, to miscellaneous tourists and a sizable student body and to a wide range of spiritual travellers, pilgrims seeking peace and alternative lifestyles in the land known as Canada's California.

A yoga community has existed here for almost thirty years. In this time, people have grown and developed, been challenged and challenged again through the long, hard practice of this ancient art. Never though, has this group seen one of its numbers undergo the dramatic transformation that has been recently witnessed in one particular person.

Little is known about the previous life of the man



followers are calling Uprising Master, or UM. He himself claims little interest in such information - "Like a pair of tights that are now loose," he says, "such talk serves no purpose!" - and people within the community are vague regarding details.

It is certain that he had, until very recently, been practising for several years at the local Z, practising under the direction of any number of teachers. His progress was apparently unexceptional, and attracted little attention. "Yes, UM was in my class for quite some time," confirms instructor Wauren Socks. "He was a regular enough student, diligent, friendly. But I am surprised at all that's happened recently. His hamstrings used to be so very tight. His forward bends - well, they had to be seen to be believed!"

For the past two years, he was regular at a Thursday morning class, a class designated Level Two. In October of 1997, however, he made the move to Level Three. "He seemed ready," continues Socks. "He had a pretty good sense of what was going on most times, and had learned how to fold blankets, knew how to secure a strap."

Sources within Monday night's Level Three class report UM was hardly phased by this shift, and when a Level Four was offered, he moved again. "That's really when I started taking note," says Melinda Bend, Program Coordinator for yoga at the Z. "For any person to move from Two to Four in so short a span, there really has to be something extraordinary there."

Indeed, Bend was not the only one whose head was turning. According to Tie Sandler, a student on Monday nights, people throughout the class were beginning to watch the progress UM was making. "We were all coming out of our poses early," she says, "just to take a look at what he was doing. We all knew he'd come a long way really quickly and we didn't want to miss anything."

Unsurprisingly, this development led to some disruption. "It did get a little awkward at times," confirms

Sandler. In fact, sources within the tight knit community claim class instructor and de facto leader, Curley Lavender-Fence, was more than a little awkward with UM's alarming rise. "Curley's been at the forefront of this group for a very, very, very long time," one woman pointed out, "of course she's a little uneasy."

When contacted for a comment in regards to this, Lavender-Fence said only, "I think it's a ridiculous name for a spiritual leader, really. UM! What kind of inspiration is that supposed to offer?" Our telephone exchange then ended with an abrupt click at the other end.

Whatever his relations with Lavender-Fence, Uprising Master left the Z shortly after beginning the Level Four class, taking with him a number of students and more than a few sticky mats. He is currently teaching out of a private home in Smallwood, a tiny, backward community just outside the greater city. There he attracts more and more followers, and greater media attention, with each passing day.

Late last week, after being turned down several times, the *Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter* was finally granted the opportunity of a brief interview. UM suggested this reporter come watch an afternoon's teachings, and then enter into a short conversation.

This is what happened.

While sitting quietly to one side of a large room, twenty or thirty students were observed as they moved through a ninety minute class lead by the physically impressive UM. After spending several moments in prayer, the group began a lengthy period of chanting. As initially hesitant voices filled the space - "Poppa oom mow mow, poppa oom mow mow, po-poppa oom mow mow" - the air began to shake with the sound of a deeply spiritual resonance. When UM suddenly halted the proceedings with a sharp wave of his hands, the silence was profound.

It was time for the practice of poses to begin.

While students followed a prepared video, UM wandered amongst them, offering words of encouragement and wisdom. "Don't strain if you wish to gain!" "Hold your

breath if you feel near death!" "If there's any doubt, just stop and come out!" On many occasions he bent over behind a particular practioner, slapping their bare thighs. "Do not straighten these legs!" he implored. "Keep them springy, like a cobra! Like the sponge on the forest floor!"

After more than an hour of seemingly impossible contortions, and after a short and refreshing nap in something called "Dead Dog Pose," we talked.

"I want to take the teachings to the masses," he said over tea. "I want yoga to become accessible, and this drives everything we do - from our chants, to the music we use (selections from Celine Dion, Yanni and John Tesh dominate) and the scents that float in the air (Pine-Sol). I want people to feel yoga is and always has been an integral part of their lives. For too many yoga is foreign, difficult. This only gets in the way. I make it familiar and easy because this what people want, what people find attractive. *Because this is what brings them in!*"

To further his goal, UM announced he will be leaving Victoria shortly, in order to spread the word and increase his profile.

"I have been asked to lead *People* magazine's Hollywood Yoga- Thon later this month in Los Angeles. After that, I will be meeting with Kevin Costner. He wants to talk about developing something based on my life. A film or a musical - or maybe a video game. I'm willing to cooperate as long as the project serves Higher Truth, which, with his track record, I'm certain it will."

And after that?

"After that?" UM becomes very suddenly serene for moment, looks at me across the rim of his teacup, his eyes at once those of one who has travelled many miles, at once those of one whose only concern is this present moment. "After that," he offers wisely, "no one really knows, do they?"

Facilitation Training

Are you interested in learning the tools to be a group facilitator? There is a group called The Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) who specialize in this training. They are a 'not for profit' organization specializing in promoting a culture of participation within society. Their courses teach how to facilitate groups, encourage everyone to express their point of view, help make meetings more productive. I want to take this two day training course in Vancouver in April. The fees will be about \$380 but if two or more people are interested in taking this training, we will get a reduction of the tuition.

Any of you who attended the CIYTA meetings the past two years, the ability of the chairs who had this training helped make these meetings successful, namely Val Paape, Sheri Berkowitz and Marlene Mawhinney. If you are interested, let me know, or call ICA at 416-691-2491 and get an information package mailed to you.

Leslie Hogya. 383-6301.

Where to get those yoga props and books:

Purple sticky mats:

Caroline Sophonow, 598-3122

Blue Mats, blocks, straps:

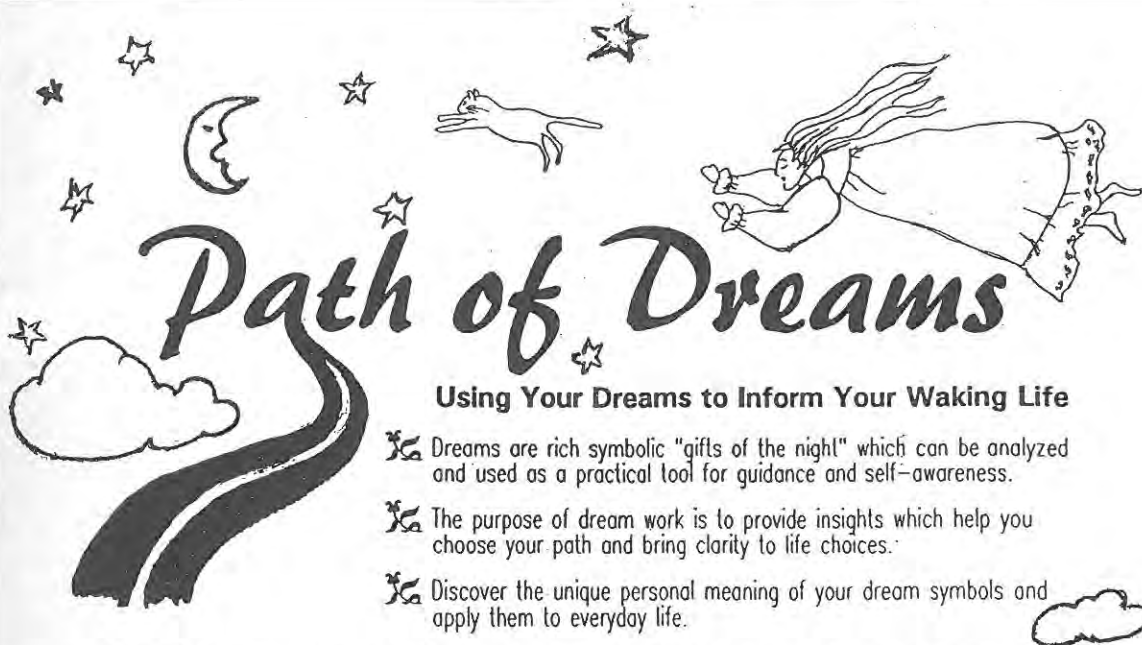
Shirley Daventry French, 478-3775

Bolsters:

Linda Benn, 478-0757

New Books:

Ann Kilbertus, 598-0976



Using Your Dreams to Inform Your Waking Life

- ✂ Dreams are rich symbolic "gifts of the night" which can be analyzed and used as a practical tool for guidance and self-awareness.
- ✂ The purpose of dream work is to provide insights which help you choose your path and bring clarity to life choices.
- ✂ Discover the unique personal meaning of your dream symbols and apply them to everyday life.

Eight week dream group offered by **Susan-Rose Slatkoff, M.A., R.C.C.**, psychotherapist in private practice in Victoria since 1984; over twenty years experience working with dreams.
 Wednesday evenings, 7:30-9:30, beginning March 25th. Cost \$295. For more details call 477-8385.

Apologies and corrections

A few people apparently showed up for the Solstice practice Dec. 21 at 5:00 pm at the Y. There had been one small announcement in the calendar at the back of the newsletter without any details, no place, no person to contact.

A problem arose when we discovered that the Y closes at 5 p.m. on Sundays, when the proposed event was to take place. As no one was able or willing to find an alternative location, it had to be cancelled. Since so few details had been published, no flyers or announcements were ever made, I hoped people would realize there was nothing happening. However, some of you did show up. My apologies!

Also there were apparently people who showed up for

a Friday night gathering in September that did not exist! This was also my mistake. I listed this gathering, and did nothing about finding a teacher before I went to India. By the time I got back and got around to asking, no one was available, and I was going away that weekend.

One good thing has come out of this. Now the editors know that people do really read our newsletter! We appreciate all your support and enthusiasm. If you want to help out with these gatherings, so these kinds of errors or cancellations do not happen in future, please call Leslie Hogya 383-6301.

When in doubt, you can always call the Yoga Centre information line 386-YOGA (9642) to get more information.

Leslie Hogya

Annual General Meeting of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society

Held at the YM/YWCA on Friday, February 13, 1998 at 7:00 p.m.

The reports from the directors are published here in the Newsletter and the following people were acclaimed as Directors for 1998:

Linda Benn, Ann Cameron, Shirley Daventry French, Derek French, Leslie Hogya, Paul Lescarmure, Corrine Lowen, Marlene Miller, Jennifer Rischmiller, James Rischmiller, Caroline Sophonow, Jerrilyn Wass, Wendy Winbush.

After a short meeting of the directors, the following people were elected to the executive:

President: Leslie Hogya

Vice President: Corrine Lowen

Treasurer: Jerrilyn Wass

(Caroline Sophonow as Treasurer in training)

Secretary: Ann Cameron

President's Report, 1997

The Directors of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society met three times during 1997.

Jennifer Rischmiller served as President, Leslie Hogya and Paul Lescarmure served as Vice Presidents, Jerrilyn Wass served as Treasurer, Ann Cameron served as Secretary, Marlene Miller was teachers liaison, Leslie Hogya and Corinne Lowen worked on planning the program, Renate Grinfeldt kept track of memberships, Linda Benn, Marlene Miller and Maggi Feehan awarded scholarships.

We spent time discussing the constitution and possible changes. These meetings culminated in a Friday night gathering discussion at which it was decided to add a clause to the constitution recognising the influence of B.K.S. Iyengar in the functioning

of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society. The clause will be phrased during the next couple of months and sent to Mr. Iyengar for his approval before it comes before the membership for a vote. We also decided to purchase Directors Liability Insurance. Further investigation has been ongoing with regard to a physical space for the Yoga Centre. The information will be passed on to the new Board.

It has been my privilege to serve as president of the Yoga Centre for three years. I would like to thank the Directors for their support and all the members who contribute to the continuing function of the Yoga Centre and its activities.

I wish the incoming Board of Directors the very best for the coming year.

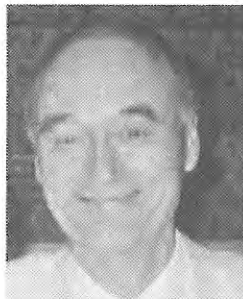
Jennifer Rischmiller.



Linda Benn



Ann Cameron



Derek French



Shirley Daventry French



Leslie Hogya



Paul Lescarmure



Corrine Lowen



Marlene Linda Miller



Jennifer Rischmiller



Jim Rischmiller



Caroline Sophonow



Jerrilyn Wass



Wendy Winbush

Victoria Yoga Centre Society Directors

Program Report, 1997

A lot of our focus went this year to teacher training, which was added to a full list of workshops and programs we offer from year to year.

Friday Gatherings:

- we began with a wonderful evening last January with a special guest from the Buddhist Dharma Centre, Lama Tashi Namgyal who spoke about the four noble truths, through a translator.
- other months we welcomed the Salt Spring Centre residents for an evening of chanting, and this fall we filled the room with people eager to see slides from the teachers' trip to India.
- we also had a special meeting to discuss the future of the yoga centre.

These evenings combine yoga practice, sharing food and a topic of interest. They are generally well attended but, unfortunately, because the teachers are all so busy, we haven't offered them quite as often in the past few months.

Major Workshops:

- we invited several wonderful teachers to Victoria from around the world in 1997. Many of these workshops filled on the day registration opened. We had Aadil Palkhivala in February, Father Joe Periera in October, Felicity Green in November.
- we also offered our usual Salt Spring Retreat in late May and a week-long summer Teacher Training Intensive in conjunction with the YM/YWCA in August, shortly after we returned from India.

Yoga Centre Fact:

Did you know that the Yoga Centre is a registered, non-profit society? If you make a donation we can issue you an official tax receipt?

Shorter Workshops:

- included two for the family with Lauren Cox, New Year's Day with James Currie-Johnson - people walked to the Y after the big blizzard for this!
- a smorgasbord of topics and teachers as a fund raiser in March.
- Barbara Yates came to share with teachers what she learned at the Womens Intensive.
- in December Shirley Daventry French donated a Sunday morning workshop to honour our teacher, B.K.S. Iyengar on his 79th birthday.

Leslie Hogya.

Membership Report, 1997

Members:

Renewals to date for 1998 152

For comparison

Number of paid members at end of 1997 287

Number of paid members at end of 1996 271

Membership Categories:

Full Member 91

Honorary 21

Exchange 21

Complimentary 3

Teachers 16

Members receive the newsletter in the following way:

By Mail 120

Pick Up 32

Victoria and Vancouver Island Iyengar Yoga Teachers Group Report, 1997

The past year was very eventful. We have continued to hold regular monthly practices and meetings. The focus of the practices has been peer teaching. The experience and feedback given to the individual teachers has given them increased confidence and poise, which is of great value to those who will be applying for certification by the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association in 1998. In addition to having the opportunity to improve one's teaching techniques, we are continuing to clarify and expand our understanding of Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar's yoga.

The main focus, particularly in the first part of the year, was that of finalizing a working document for teacher training for the Victoria and Vancouver Island region. And, of course, as all of us learn and discover how to improve the process the guidelines will be amended accordingly. Thank you to Linda Benn for all her work on our guidelines, and thank you to all the teachers, including the apprentice/student teachers, who provided valuable input.

The 1997 Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association was held at Akala Point, Nova Scotia. Shirley Daventry French, member of the Professional Development Committee, Leslie Hogya, member of the Coordinating Committee and Marlene Miller, member of the Membership and Finance Committee attended the meeting. At the meeting the certification document for the national association was finalized in readiness for approval by Mr. Iyengar. Thank you to the Victoria Yoga Centre for the financial assistance given the teachers to attend.

In July ten Victoria and region teachers traveled to Pune, India, to receive the teachings from Mr. Iyengar and Geeta Iyengar. This was a return visit for six of the teachers, along with first time visits for the other four

teachers. Upon return from India, there have been teaching practices in which we have sought to clarify and understand further what was given.

In 1997 there were 19 teachers and 17 teacher trainee members in our group. Several first year teacher trainees have continued into the second year of their training and have begun to teach their own Introductory or Level 1 classes.

Victoria's reputation for providing quality Iyengar Yoga teacher training continues to grow as was seen in a very successful teacher training Intensive held in Victoria at the YM-YWCA in August. Participants came from northern areas of British Columbia and other parts of Canada. It is noteworthy that the teachers, Shirley Daventry French, Ann Kilbertus and Leslie Hogya are all of Victoria.

Finally, on behalf of the teachers of the Victoria Yoga Centre I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to Shirley Daventry French. It is the dedication to the teaching and her enthusiasm for Yoga, along with her mentoring that continues to inspire us; thus we live in the environment of a very lively and viable teaching community. We are very fortunate to have her in our midst.

And one last note of appreciation and gratitude to: the Victoria YM-YWCA, the facility and the staff - administration, reception, locker room and maintenance, the support received by the Victoria and region Iyengar Yoga Teachers, classes and programs has continued and we enjoy a mutual and harmonious relationship, and thanks to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society executive and members for its support. Thank You.

Marlene Linda Miller

Yoga Centre Fact:

Did you know we have some of the best trained, most senior teachers in Canada in our local group?

Treasurer's Report, 1997

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDING OCTOBER 31,1997

Assets:

Cash in bank	\$5423.35
Term Deposit	\$7603.12
Investment	\$5835.92
Inventory	\$3519.57
Accounts Receivable	<u>\$1683.60</u>
Total Assets:	<u>\$24065.56</u>

Liabilities and Accumulated Surplus:

Liabilities:

Accounts Payable	\$2472.76
Social Services Tax	\$ 47.40
Teachers fund in trust	\$ 267.53
Total liabilities	<u>\$ 2787.69</u>
Accumulated surplus	<u>\$21277.87</u>

Compiled by Jerrilyn Wass

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING OCTOBER 31,1997

Revenue:

Workshops	\$24000.42
Membership Dues	\$ 6283.91
Books/Mats/Tapes/	
T-Shirts/Videos	\$ 7786.87
Donations	\$ 772.39
Newsletters/ Gatherings/	
Miscellaneous	\$ 1349.33
Interest	<u>\$ 851.74</u>
Total Revenue	<u>\$41044.66</u>

Expenses:

CIYTA Meeting	\$ 1002.27
Workshops	\$16512.26
Books/Mats/Tapes/	
T-Shirts/Videos	\$ 6737.55
Newsletters	\$ 6341.51
Insurance	\$ 604.50
Library	\$ 412.01
Office Expenses/Bank	
Charges/Gatherings/	
Miscellaneous	\$ 2530.50
Professional Development	\$ 1400.00
Scholarships	<u>\$ 1108.00</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$36648.60</u>

Surplus **\$ 4396.06**



Yoga Centre Fact:

Did you know your membership expires every year on December 31st? Did you renew?
Fill out the form at the back of this issue now!!

Newsletter Report, 1997

The newsletter committee members were: Lauren Cox, Shirley Daventry French, Caren Liedtke, Neil McKinlay, Louine Niwa and Jennifer Rischmiller. We were assisted by: Jill Roberts, who mailed the newsletter, Carole Miller who took care of the billing for the ads, Renate Grinfelds who kept the membership list current and printed the labels for mailing, Dave Rocklyn who prepared the index and Gord Hooker of Techstyle Industries who computed the whole thing ready for printing.

The committee met before each issue to plan content and organize production. We produced six issues in 1997. Although the issues come out bi-monthly, they contain nearly twice the number of pages of the monthly issues.

The cost of production has increased although 50% of the cost of computer production is donated by Techstyle Industries.

The method has changed again although not quite so drastically as the previous change. We now have the newsletter laser printed from a disc and it gets collated at the same time. Karen de Lisle and her team have taken over the task of stapling, folding and mailing from Jill Roberts and Renate Grinfelds. I would like to extend thanks from the newsletter committee to Jill and Renate for the work they have done over the previous years.

Memberships are the way we cover costs, so we ask that all those people who take newsletters regularly from the Y take out a subscriptions to the Yoga Centre.

Starting with the next issue, March/April, the job of editor will be rotated among the newsletter committee members, so Lauren Cox will be the editor for the March/April issue. Each member of the committee, including myself, will edit an issue during the coming year.

I thank all the hardworking newsletter volunteers, it has been a pleasure working with you in 1997.

Jennifer Rischmiller



The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE and the Victoria YM-YWCA

Welcome you to the
Victoria Yoga Centre Society's



Friday Night Gathering



Asana Practice at 6 p.m.

Jessica Sluymer will lead a discussion
on spiritual practice in daily life

Potluck dinner at 8 p.m.
in the Yoga Lounge at the Y.
(please bring your own plate/cutlery)

Date: Friday, April 17, 1997

Everyone is welcome to join us.

Scholarship Committee Report, 1997

Scholarship Committee Members: Linda Benn, Maggi Feehan, Marlene Miller

The policy for scholarships was formulated and accepted in 1996. We have been following its stipulations since then.

The fiscal year is from November 1st to October 31st. The Yoga Centre Executive allocated \$1200 to be used for scholarships in the 1996/97 fiscal year.

The Scholarship Committee.

Scholarships allocated:

Julie Gudmestad	Nov 22-24	Keith Lundmark	\$100.00
		Melanie Jollymore	43.00
Aadial Palkhivala	Feb 21-23	Traci Skuce	\$100.00
Barbara Yates	April 26	Lauren Cox	\$ 50.00
Saltspring Retreat	June 6-8	Wendy Winbush	\$100.00
Intensive	Aug 25-29	Caroline Sophonow	\$300.00
		Kelly Murphy	\$150.00
		Badge Boucier	\$150.00
Father Joe Pereira	Oct 3-5	Jerrilyn Wass	\$100.00
Swanwick Retreat	Cancelled		
Total			\$1093.00

Note: This total does not include the sums that we give for professional development, i.e. funds that support those working for the development of Iyengar Yoga on the national committees and those given for teachers attending important conferences nationally and internationally.

Why Should You Join the Victoria Yoga Centre Society?

10 reasons why you should cut out the membership form at the back of this issue and join the Yoga Centre:

1. Your support pays for the newsletter costs
2. You can become a member of the Yoga Centre executive
3. You will have priority in registering for some of our popular events
4. You will support the local teachers
5. You will be supporting the scholarship fund
6. You can register three weeks earlier than non-members for the Saltspring Retreat
7. You will pay less for Sunday workshops
8. You will pay \$25 less for the Saltspring Retreat
9. You will feel better
10. We'll feel better

Jyengar Yoga Workshop

with

Ramanand Patel

**at the Victoria YM-YWCA
August 31 – September 4, 1998**

Introductory/Level I & II

5.15 - 6.45 p.m.

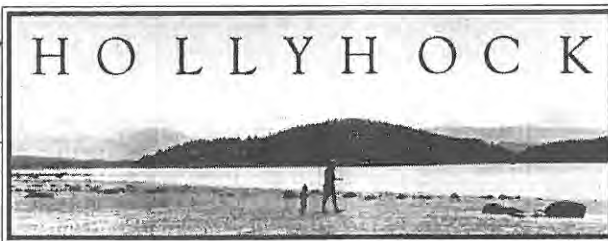
Intermediate Teachers

7.00 - 9.00 p.m.

Pranayama (3 days)

4.00 - 5.00 p.m.

Information: Linda Benn (250_ 478-0757)
Details in next newsletter



From Sole to Soul: A Yogic Odyssey

May 18 ~ 23

Shirley Daventry French & Yvonne Kipp

Yoga is a path of self-knowledge, self-discipline, and surrender. Yoga in the Iyengar tradition is firmly grounded in ancient texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and Yoga-Sutras and is a powerful spiritual practice which unites head and heart in the search for the self. This course is suitable for people with some previous yoga experience who would like to develop asana, pranayama, and reflection as spiritual tools to open up a pathway to the Higher Self.

Shirley Daventry French brings a wealth of experience to her teaching with 30 years of practice and learning including many trips to India to study with Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar, most recently in July and August 1997. One of the pioneers of Iyengar Yoga in North America, she lives in Victoria, B.C., and teaches internationally. Her rich and extensive training, combined with a lively humour and articulate style is a powerful catalyst for those seeking inspiration for the next step on their journey. Yvonne Kipp, who will be assisting, has been practicing yoga in the Iyengar tradition for 22 years. She has worked with many of the senior teachers in this method including the Iyengar family in India. Yvonne has been teaching yoga at Hollyhock for many years and works on staff as a bodywork practitioner.

Tuition: \$395 (meals & acc. extra) 5 nights

Hollyhock holistic learning centre offers workshops, retreats, and study programs in the practical, creative, and healing arts. A magnificent setting on British Columbia's wilderness coast and dedicated staff support powerful experiential learning for participants. Cozy accommodations in handcrafted wooden buildings and gourmet vegetarian cuisine are featured. Sailing, kayaking, bodywork and massage are available to enhance your experience. Complimentary events include yoga classes, meditation sittings, tide pool tours, and guided nature walks.

(note: all prices in Canadian dollars.)



<http://www.hollyhock.bc.ca> • Box 127, Manson's Landing, Cortes Island, B.C. V0P 1K0 Canada • Info/Register: (800) 933-6339

Seven Days in Oak Bay:

Caren and Neil's Winter Retreat

by Caren Liedtke

Neil and I decided to take advantage of a slate of free time over the holidays by doing a home-based seven day spiritual retreat starting Boxing Day and ending New Year's Day. After some discussion, we decided Day One would involve 2 x 30 minutes of meditation, 90 minutes of yoga, and 60 minutes of study. Day Two would involve 2 x 30 minutes of yoga, 60 minutes of meditation, 60 minutes of study, and we would alternate days. What follows is portions of my journal written during those Seven Days in Oak Bay.

Day 1, Boxing Day.

All of it can wait. But, because I am supposed to practice, it nags at me. The laundry, the ironing, the box of assorted Christmas presents I brought home with me yesterday. The bathroom, the office, the dishes. They all beckon to be cleaned and tidied. The litany of excuses and distractions surprises me. They surprise me only because I know I don't have to do any of it. Normally, in day to day life, these distractions would be seen as things that needed to be done. Normally, they would be viewed as legitimate reasons not to practice. Because today I don't have to do any of it and I clearly know that, I can see the dynamic for what it is. I am surprised and depressed by the ease with which I can (normally) tease myself away from practicing.

Still, I can not usually let things sit for a week. In my real life, I have an eight-hour workday. There are a finite number of hours in a day and I can only do so many things. How can I go about building a stronger, more regular practice? What can I let go of? I hope to gain some clarity, discipline and commitment in the coming week. I think seeing how easily I am distracted and how quickly I legitimize these distractions is a good start.

Day 2

I'm crabby. I don't want to study. I didn't want to do yoga this morning and I didn't want to meditate this afternoon. At every turn I thought, "Whose stupid idea was this anyway?" Resistance, I have seen your irritating face. I read a column in Monday Magazine once where the author wrote about a period of time spent looking after his three young children. He wrote about how his three year old daughter says, "I'm getting annoying!" when she means, "I'm getting annoyed!" The author liked the double meaning of his daughter's mixed pronouncement, because when she was annoyed she was usually pretty annoying too. I can relate. I was getting annoying today. I guess that one point of practice is to slow down outside busyness so that you can glimpse the rush hour traffic that is your thought processes. A half hour of practice at the end of a busy day is a nice change. It's relaxing. It feels like, "Ahh." Three and a half hours of practice dispersed throughout a slow day at home is annoying. It feels like, "Whose stupid idea was this anyway?" Thank god Neil and I committed to this together. If I were left to my own devices, if I were doing this alone - I wouldn't. Plain and simple.

Day 3

Neil and I had to cut our yoga a bit short today as we were running behind and dinner guests were coming over. I felt guilty. Any other day it would be okay, if not welcome, but today I felt like I was cheating on my commitment. This afternoon, an hour and a half of yoga went relatively smoothly, whereas yesterday I was moaning and groaning my way through half an hour like it was five. My crabbiness seems to have loosened its grip a bit. I seem to be sinking into the practice as the days progress. Then again, maybe that is just a false generalization. Each moment is different and will continue to be different. Maybe I should not try and impose some intellectualization onto what is happening in order to grasp it, make sense of it, say something about it.

Day 4

Crabby again. Neil and I did a half hour morning yoga practice. I felt stiff and sore, like I hadn't done yoga in a week. Neil was leading the practice. I was vocal about the poses I didn't want to do (every pose Neil had planned on doing) and it made me more crabby. I found myself wishing I would just shut up. (I'm sure Neil did too.) I was irritated and frustrated to the verge of tears. Why do I struggle so with a simple morning practice and some physical discomfort? Expectations. I expect to be able to jump out of bed and see some improvement in my practice. I deserve it. I've worked hard! (Not.) I don't expect this creaky morning stiffness. I don't want it and I fight to accept it. I am still so tight in each moment, bringing so much "baggage" to it, for lack of a better word. I have a hard time being open to what arises, dealing with what is. There's a lifetime of practice there, I know, and I'm afraid that I'm not up to the task. I'm afraid I won't practice enough and that I don't have the proper earnest effort, the burning desire. I'm afraid I'll wake up two Mondays from now and roll over and go back to sleep because I'm tired and the bed feels warm and comfortable and who wants to open to their crabby first thing in the morning before a hard day at the office. And that all sounds so lame. It's hard and I'm afraid and I feel the tears come again. I try to stay open and let them come even though I'm thinking, "Why are you crying?"

Day 5

Could it be day five already? Time flies (except when you're meditating). I went to work today to get myself and my classroom organized to teach on Monday. For the past four days I have been mainly hanging around the house doing chores and reading when I haven't been practicing. Being out in the work-a-day world sure had an impact on my state of mind. As the Buddhists say, "Thinking." And then some!! I could hardly believe the increase in mental activity, even before I left the house. Apparently, if you are going to work, it is important to do a lot of thinking about it before hand.

When I got home and was chatting with Neil he said, "You seem different." Maybe it was that glazed look in my eyes and the cloud around my head. That's how I felt. I found it hard to connect to Neil. I had to keep reminding myself to really look at him and to try and keep an empty mind as I listened to what he had to say. I kept having the urge to blurt out these totally unrelated sound bites of thought that gurgled up as my mind played back the day. I did blurt out a few here and there as we practiced yoga. Not surprisingly, they cut through any stillness or focus we had achieved. It got us talking, which we like to do and under other circumstances is a cornerstone of our relationship. But, sometimes (like when you are practicing yoga) it is better to shut up. Sometimes it is better to let the thoughts dissipate without being manifest into sound. It's hard. The need to keep quiet seems to be in direct inverse relation to the urge to speak.

Day 6

All this practice takes time. Time, time, in the words of Scotty (the Star Trek engineer), "Damn it, Captain, I need more time!" I'm a person who likes to diddle and doddle and sit around doing nothing in particular except stare out the window. Now I'm taking time to sit and stare at the carpet. Funny how two outwardly similar activities could be so fundamentally different. I think of something Jon Kabat-Zinn wrote in *Full Catastrophe Living*, "Instead of relaxing by 'spacing out,' relax by tuning in." I haven't found tuning in particularly relaxing, but I do agree with the idea that my spacing out time might be better spent. Each moment is worth living, worth being present for. No moment is better, more worthy, than any other moment. I repeated this to myself as I scrubbed the bathtub today.

Day 7

The last day. I'm tired, and it's not over yet. I still have an hour of study and a half hour of meditation. Neil and I went to James Currie-Johnson's New Year's Day

Yoga Workshop today. What a treat to have a teacher tell me what to do. Resistance came up from time to time, but I found it much easier to let go of it with someone else's instructions to focus on. This just served to reinforce the value of a personal practice. At home on my own, I get closer to my own stuff. It comes on louder and faster, is more annoying and likes to hang around longer. "The Mind Stuff That Wouldn't Leave." At home, I am forced to wrangle with it on my own. And so, of course, the potential for learning (and irritation) is greater.

Home practice seems to be my repeating issue. It has been on my mind and in my journal in one form or another for most of the week. My practice has grown slowly over the past eight years so that now, in a good week, I practice five to six times, and in a bad week, I practice one or two times. That makes about three to four times a week, on average. It's been that way for a while. A good long while. And it is starting to feel lame, because I know I can do better. That is one thing I have learned this week - I *can* do better. I have learned that time isn't the problem, my commitment is. So I have decided to commit to at least thirty minutes of home practice seven days a week. Writing that down is a big deal for me as my resistance and fear of failure are huge. After seven days, I guess my awareness that I don't have any good excuses is bigger, as is my awareness that there is no choice, no argument, no contest - me and my life are better off when I practice.

I have been re-reading *Full Catastrophe Living* this week. I think the central message of this book is the power and importance of a daily spiritual practice. The book keeps emphasizing the "daily" part (at least to me it did - you read what you need to learn):

The most important part of the work of mindfulness is to keep your practice alive. The way you do that is to do it. It needs to become part of your life, in the same way that eating is or working is. We keep the practice alive by making time for being, for nonddoing, no matter how

much rearranging it takes. Making a time for formal practice every day is like feeding yourself every day. It is that important.

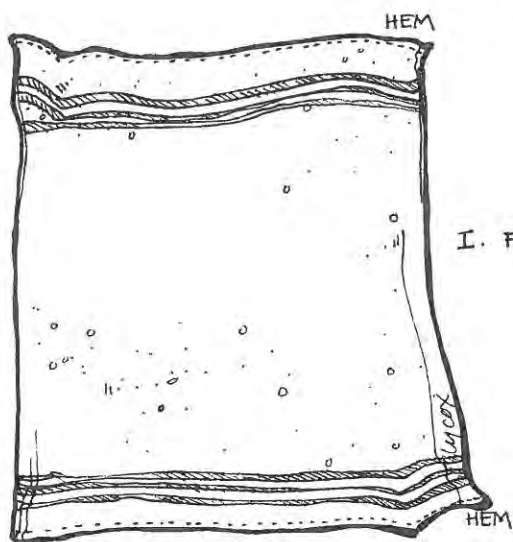
I am proud of what I have accomplished this week. And a little bit amazed too. I kind of can't believe we did it. But, I also know that to have been worthwhile this week needs to be the beginning, a helpful transition to an increased level of practice. I had Neil to practice with this week and our shared commitment made the week a lot easier. Starting Monday our schedules change and I am on my own. I am afraid of failing, but also a bit excited to try and move forward.



Does yoga make you **this** happy?

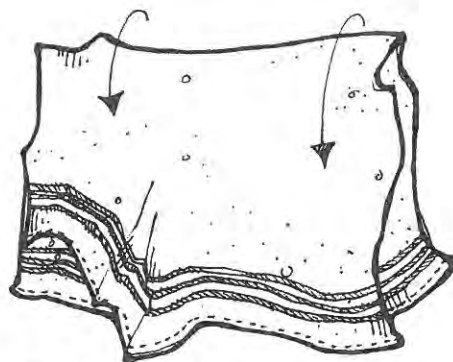
How to Fold a Blanket

by Lauren Cox



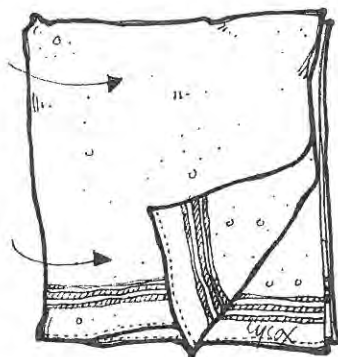
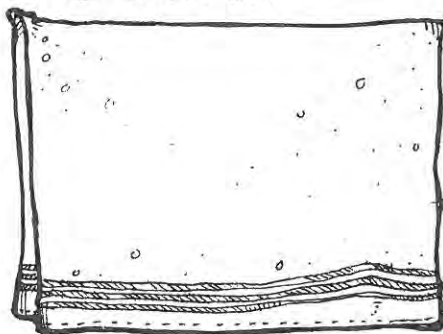
(A) OPEN BLANKET

I. FOR SHOULDERSTAND PURPOSES

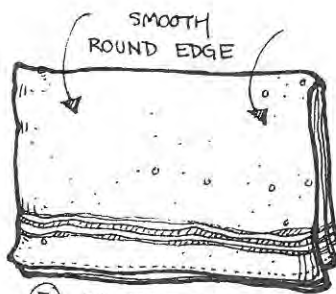


(B) FOLD IN HALF - HEM TO HEM

(C) SMOOTH OUT



(D) FOLD IN HALF

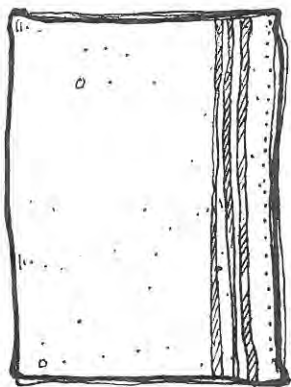


(E) IN HALF AGAIN

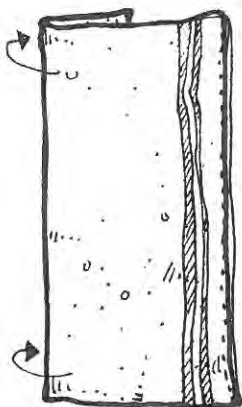
How to Fold a Blanket

by Lauren Cox

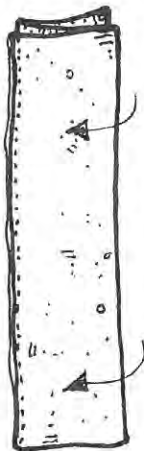
II. HOW TO DO A 3-FOLD BLANKET FOR SIRSASANA OR PRANAYAMA USE.



(A) TURN AROUND SO
NARROWER END TOWARDS
YOU. SMOOTH OUT.



(B) FOLD UNDER
 $\frac{1}{3}$ OF BLANKET



(C) TAKE RIGHT
EDGE OF BLANKET
TO MEET LEFT
EDGE.

RADHA HOUSE



WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

Exploring the Triangle Pose

- Saturday February 28, 9.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

The triangle is an ancient universal symbol that has many meanings for you to discover. Join us for an in-depth exploration of the many levels of Trikonasana using Swami Radha's gentle approach. Bring a sandwich and join us for lunch and conversation after class.

Fee \$25

The Joy of Dance

- Friday, April 3, 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. and
Saturday, April 4, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Dancing and reflecting on your own connection to the Divine feminine within us is a way to bring joy into your life. Join us as Yasoda, with her many years of teaching, leads us to the heart of prayer dance. No experience necessary.

Fee \$65

Satsang every Sunday

Join us Sunday evenings at 8 p.m. to chant for those on our prayer list and to hear Swami Radha's words of wisdom.

For further information about activities and weekly classes contact us at: 1500 Shasta Place
(250) 595-0177

YOGA CALENDAR

MARCH 1998

- 14: Assessment for Iyengar Yoga teachers' certification - Vancouver.
- 21: Teachers meeting
- 22: Inspirations from India workshop with Vicky Catchpole.
- 27-29: Women and Spiritual Life (see ad this issue)

APRIL 1998

- 17: Friday night gathering (see ad this issue)
- 18: Teachers meeting followed by teachers training workshop led by Shirley Daventry French.
- 22: ICA training in Vancouver.
- 26: Inspirations from India workshop led by Leslie Hogya.

MAY 1998

- 9: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association meeting in Saskatoon.
- 22: Big, Big Practice.
- 23: Teachers meeting in Nanoose Bay.

JUNE 1998

- 5-7: Annual Saltspring Retreat led by Shirley Daventry French.

JULY 1998

- 20-24: Teacher Training Intensive.
See Brochure included with this issue.

AUGUST 1998

- 31-Sept.4: Ramanand Patel workshop at the Y.
Watch the newsletter for details.

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

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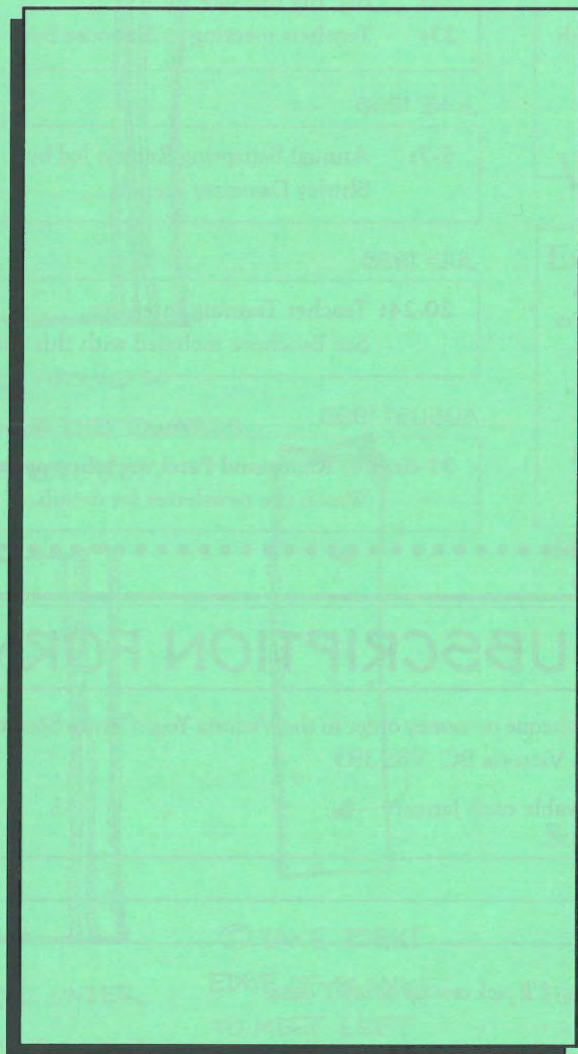
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☐ Do not mail me my newsletter during sessions, I'll pick one up at my Y class.

☐ Receipt Required.



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY
3918 Olympic View Drive, RR #4
Victoria BC V9C 4B2



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

begins April 1st for Yoga Centre Members.

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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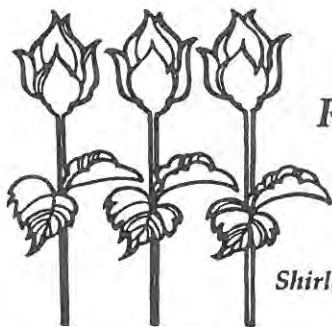
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Reflections

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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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 Liliás 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.

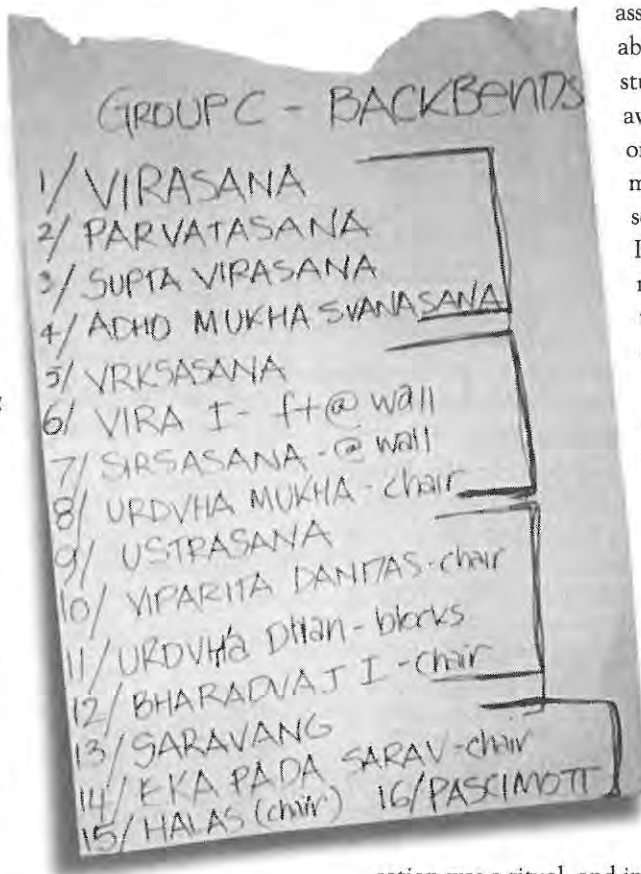
The students from Vancouver who volunteered their

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.

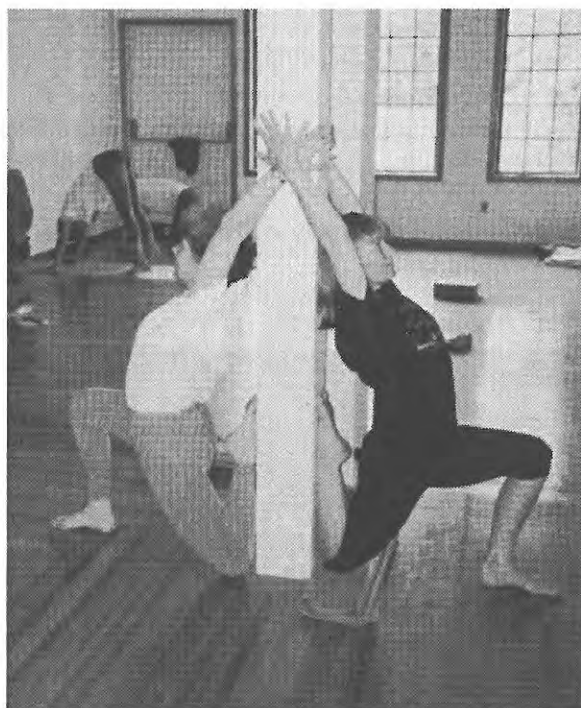


Some free time enjoyed by Saltspring retreat participants ▲

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
Hurricane 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 preceding 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

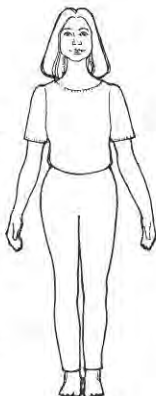
Welcome to Iyengar Yoga classes. It is important that you try and do the asanas on your own several days each week. You are building your balance, flexibility, strength, coordination and mental concentration to get into and maintain the poses. Do the poses with intelligence and let your body tell your 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.

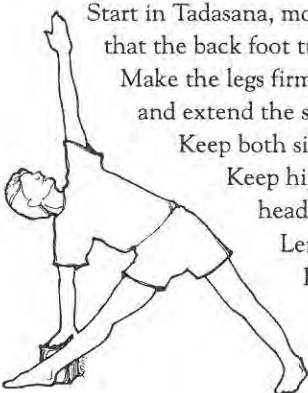
Keep hip, shoulders and back of head in the same plane.

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

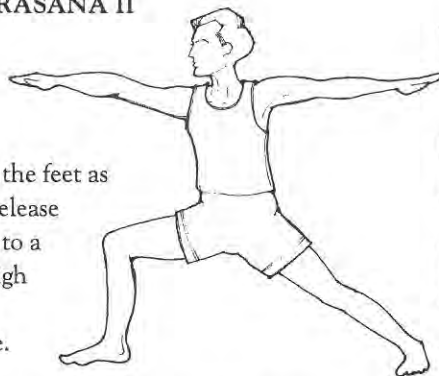
right angle, thigh

parallel with

floor if possible.

Back leg firm,

trunk centred over hips, arms stretching apart.

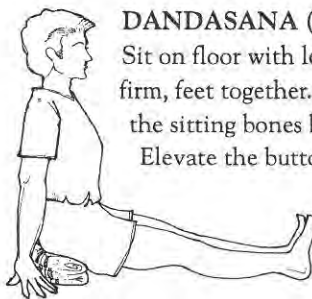


DANDASANA (Staff)

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

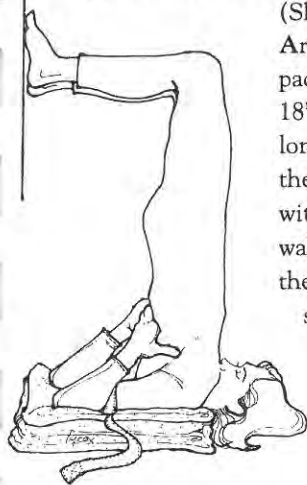
PREPARATION FOR SARVANGASANA

(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.

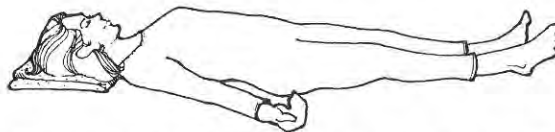
Bend the knees, press the feet on the wall and lift the hips off the

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.

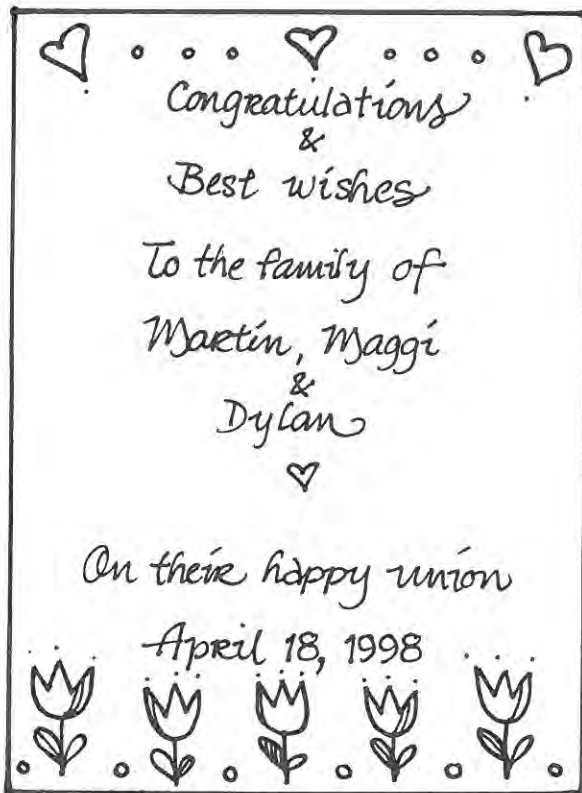
In that freedom, I see that I have been stuck. That I let my ego hold on tightly to the need to know and express the wisdom I have gained on my yogic journey as Seamus's mom. I felt caught, as though I were swirling over and over in the same eddy of thought, desperate for definition.

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.



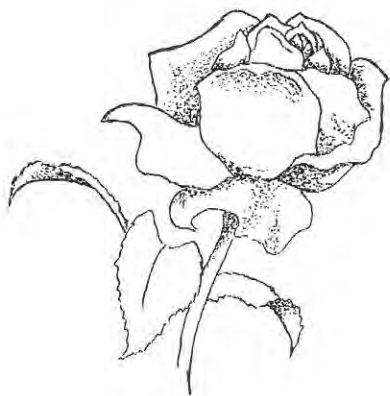
You are welcome to join us for Spring Events and Activities

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

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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:

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

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

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VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

Unit 592, 185 - 911 Yates St.

Victoria BC V8V 4Y9

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OCCUPATION: _____

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REMARKS: _____

Laurie Cox

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



July/August 1998

Please Subscribe



Leslie Hogya – 1998 Victoria Yoga Centre Society President

Souvenir Newsletter

Fall 1998

To celebrate Mr. Iyengar's 80th birthday, the November/December edition of the Victoria Yoga Centre newsletter will be a special tribute honouring this great teacher, and expressing gratitude for his teaching which has enriched so many of our lives. All students of Iyengar Yoga — from the most beginning to the most experienced — are invited to contribute articles, anecdotes, photographs, poetry, drawings, quotations. Please take time to think about how you can best express your personal appreciation of his work.

Even if you have never had and are unlikely to have any personal contact with Mr. Iyengar, whenever you take classes with a trained Iyengar Yoga teacher you have a direct link to B.K.S. Iyengar and through him to the vast and ancient body of knowledge known as Yoga.



Guruji at his 79th birthday
celebrations, 1997 ▲

**Don't just read
this and forget
about it.**

In the spirit of Yoga

- deal with your sloth,
- dust off your talents
- contribute something.

Contact Shirley Daventry French, editor of this special issue,
phone (250) 478-3775, fax (250) 478-3710, e-mail: dfrench@coastnet.com

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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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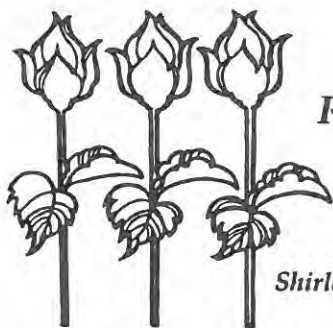
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Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French



"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"

— John, I.1

In the late 60's, searching for a way to change my life, I obtained a mantra from the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi organisation better known as Transcendental Meditation. I paid my fee, and was initiated

by the renowned flautist Paul Horn. For a while I conscientiously meditated for twenty minutes twice daily repeating the mantra he had given me. I had also started Tai Chi with a wonderful Chinese master who, unable to pronounce my first name, referred to me as 'flench.' I liked Tai Chi better than TM which fell by the wayside, but the changes I sought were still elusive so I attended some encounter groups that a friend assured me would help me resolve my unresolved issues. Listening to others, it seemed that these issues were all concerned with difficult mothers, fathers, husbands or wives. Strangely, the issue I found myself wrestling with was myself and taking responsibility for my own life.

It would be a few more years before I attended a formal yoga class, but I regard this as the period in my life when I took my first steps on the yogic path. Under the firm guidance of very strong group leader, I learned

about the power of words, spoken and unspoken, to influence the world I live in. A dynamic personality who matched all my shows of strength and self will with his own, this man brought me face to face with aspects of myself that were hard to acknowledge; but he also opened up many options. With hindsight, I consider him to be my first yoga teacher, although he would never have given himself that title. At the time I felt unfairly chastised and my gratitude was muted at best. It was only later, after studying yoga for some time that I saw how my interactions with him and the honesty he demanded of me were training for the spiritual journey.

Shortly after I started yoga classes at the Y, I had the opportunity to take a workshop with Swami

Radha. About twelve of us had completed an exercise called a Straightwalk, written about our experience, and were reading our papers out loud one by one. Swami Radha then asked some pertinent questions and invited comments from the rest of the group. Having had all this experience of encounter groups, I felt quite at home. I was eager to read my paper, but the Divine had other ideas and forced me to be patient and wait until last. Meanwhile I was quite ready with helpful comments on other people's predicaments. Several members of the group, often at a loss for words themselves, expressed admiration. "Oh, you're so articulate!"

Eventually it was my turn. After I had read my paper, there was a long silence while Swami Radha looked me straight in the eyes — and she had very piercing brown eyes. Then she asked me a question, to which I speedily replied. Another silence. This time she was looking down, shuffling some papers which included a copy of my paper. Then she looked up at me with another penetrating gaze, and said in her strong German accent: "You're very quick with words!" Without a shadow of a doubt I knew this was not meant as a compliment.

Swami Radha called speech "mankind's greatest achievement" warning us that at the same time it was often our greatest obstacle. She taught the importance of refining our speech, and frequently spoke of the trinity of body, mind and speech, rather

than the more commonly

used body, mind and spirit. I learned how emotions colour our speech, internal and external, and thereby influence our actions. Later, having seen the emotional roller-coaster on which I lived my life and the lost to myself and to others, I followed Swami Radha's recommendation to practise chanting a mantra as a means of calming my emotions.

By this time I was attending a three-month teacher training course at her ashram, and had been introduced to many different mantras at the nightly satsang. Those of us taking the course were encouraged to choose one which appealed to us and stay with it for a time. There were mantras invoking the whole pantheon of Hindu deities: Vishnu, Siva, Rama and Krishna in various manifestations, and Divine Mother also in many manifestations. There were Christian chants for those whose convictions leaned in that

direction. We were shown how to use a harmonium to accompany our chanting, which had the added benefit of keeping the hands busy and, since I am no musician, took a lot of concentration. It also necessitated the choice of a relatively simple mantra. I was drawn to Siva, one of a triad of major Hindu Gods which also includes Brahma the creator and Vishnu the preserver and sustainer.

Siva is the destroyer, which sounds ominous; but he is the destroyer of our obstacles and this appealed to me. I was also drawn to the energy conveyed by the dancing Siva also known as Nataraj, Lord of the Dance portrayed in this guise in statues and pictures throughout the ashram. In *Light on Yoga*, when writing on the beautiful asana *Natarajasana*, Mr. Iyengar describes Siva as the fountain and source of Yoga. Lord Siva dances

the *Tandava*, the dance of death but he also dances the dance of creation. He is the Destroyer and the Regenerator. In her book *Mantra Yoga*, Swami Radha writes: "Siva is called 'The Compassionate One' removing such obstacles as selfishness and jealousy which impede our development. Lord Siva's destruction is really a blessing."

Having chosen a mantra, in addition to chanting it aloud we were also urged to practise silent and constant repetition of this mantra as a means of interrupting the *vrittis* or fluctuations of the mind. In the second sutra of the first chapter, Patanjali says that "Yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind." For the first time I began to see the potential of mantra as a valuable spiritual tool to facilitate this gargantuan task,

Chanting a mantra is known as *Mantra Yoga*, while all other forms are called *Japa Yoga*.

Speaking the mantra aloud becomes *Vaikhari Japa*, when whispered or hummed it is known as *Upamsu Japa*.

Mental repetition is called *Manasika Japa* and writing the mantra is *Likhita Japa*.

Once, I attended a retreat with Swami Venketesananda who, like Swami Radha, was a disciple of the great Yoga Master Swami Sivananda of Risikesh. He was teaching about mantra, and someone asked him: "Why do we have to repeat the mantra?" Like many Indians, Swamiji had a mischievous sense of humour, and he quickly replied: "You don't, if it works first time!"

For me, it did not work first time. I needed to practise. For several years I did a daily chanting practice, and also silently repeated the mantra

(whenever I could remember) while going about the business of everyday living. I do not chant regularly any more, but the years of sung and silent repetition of the mantra have helped it to become an almost constant companion which has seen me through many difficult times. It does work, it's just that it takes practice and patience before it will be there at those times you need it most such as in the face of fear, dealing with loss, out of control imagination or emotions, for all stressful situations.

Mantra has become an integral part of my life. It has sustained me in many challenging times, allowing me to ignore the weakening and whining voice that undermines my resolve, directing me instead towards strength, stamina and courage.

The practice of *Likhita Japa* or writing the mantra, has proved its value for me on many occasions. If I had

not learned
this practice, I
would have

had a much more difficult

time at some of the meetings of our

national Iyengar Yoga association
(CIYTA) which followed Mr. Iyengar's
directive to implement certification.

Writing the mantra helped me to remain
centered amidst considerable emotional
upheaval. Rather than becoming distracted

by the act of writing, this action focuses the
mind very clearly on what is going on. You are

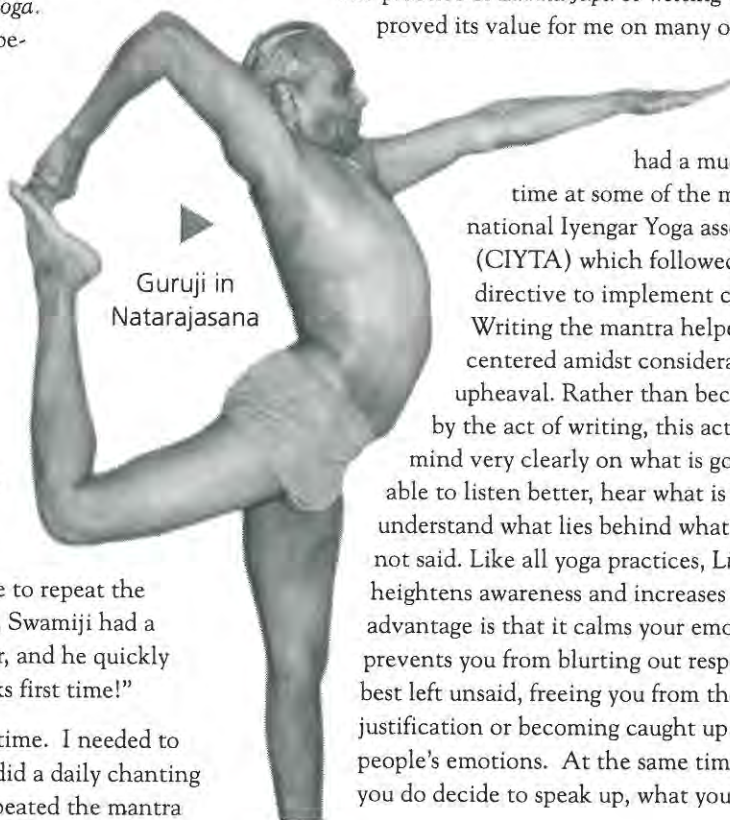
able to listen better, hear what is being said, and
understand what lies behind what is being said or

not said. Like all yoga practices, *Likhita Japa*

heightens awareness and increases clarity. Another
advantage is that it calms your emotions and

prevents you from blurting out responses that are
best left unsaid, freeing you from the need for self-
justification or becoming caught up in other

people's emotions. At the same time, if and when
you do decide to speak up, what you say is usually



Guruji in
Natarajasana



The Dancing Siva ▲

clear and to the point. On occasions, when struggling to retain composure, I have resorted to writing with my left hand – for me an act of extreme concentration.

When others observe you writing while they are speaking, they wonder what on earth you are doing. Making notes on what they are saying? Preparing your rebuttal? Bored and doing something more interesting? In fact what you are doing is focusing your mind and refining your ability to listen. I strongly recommend this practice for anyone who has to sit through long and difficult meetings, although it might be a problem explaining to your boss why you have a page full of *om namah sivaya*'s instead of facts and figures.

The mantra can be written plainly, phrase after phrase, line after line, but sometimes practitioners of *Likhita*

Japa make quite elaborate patterns. The written pages contain the power of the mantra and should not be disposed of casually, but treated with respect. Ideally keep your notebooks in a special place in your home or store loose pages in a special box. The presence of these pages of mantra creates favourable vibrations for your *sadhana*.

A few years ago, at one CIYTA meeting where things were not going well and emotions were running high, a colleague, who had seen me writing many pages of mantra, turned to me and said: "Perhaps you should try another mantra — that one doesn't seem to be working!" In Saskatoon at this year's meeting, the same woman observed that she had not noticed me writing the mantra this year. It was true! I had done very little. There was not such a need. This was the most productive and pleasant meeting we have had since we began holding these meetings in 1988. It is nice to know, however, that the spiritual tool of *Likhita Japa* is there for me whenever I need it, along with the mantra in all of its forms.

Om namah Sivaya.

NEW MAILING ADDRESS FOR VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE:

Unit 592
185 – 911 Yates Street
Victoria BC V8V 4Y9

Greetings Yoga Mentors!!

In the external world — my external world — I spend most of my time in the past or in the future. Doing, doing, doing and worrying about it! (Must end should have power (? LB)) What is it like....to listen to my inner voice? I had forgotten.

At the Krishnamurti Centre, at the Women and Spiritual Life retreat, I found my internal world again. The distractions were gone, the responsibilities were gone, the stress was gone - there was love and beauty and friendship and sharing and me, instead. ...the me that just is.

I found myself feeling the stretch at my limit, bathing in the love that surrounded me, and nourishing my body with regular healthy meals. I slept well. The setting was peaceful and beautiful - sea and birds and trees and flowers and frogs. The frogs were so important. The chorus of what sounded like thousands of frogs lulled me to sleep each night. The first night it was a pleasant surprise... a comfort. The next night I drifted off amongst them....a chorus of frogs and me... in harmony. They represented expression of self in community...all of us together as one.

Early in the morning, much earlier than I am accustomed to, I breathed my way into the joy of living with pranayama before breakfast. First there was the breath. I am alive. I know it with every cell....and I am grateful.

I remember who I am. I remember what feeds my soul. My mind is clearer. I am grateful. Thank you Jessica. Thank you Shirley. Namaste.

Thank you to the Yoga Centre Executive for helping me to take this journey. Namaste.

Love, Helen

In Response To . . .

by Lauren Cox

In the last issue (May/June) of the newsletter, Shirley shared a couple of excerpts from letters written by Shoba Setty of Udupi, India. In the letter dated March 1998, she wished that someone would write about their experiences in "family yoga," so . . .

Dear Shoba,

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Lauren Cox and I have had the pleasure of teaching Family Yoga workshops as well as weekly Family Yoga classes during one of the summer months. This year it will be Wednesday evening in July from 5 – 6 pm.



The classes usually have a theme. Children enjoy doing animal poses, ropework, balancing poses, ropework, upside down poses, ropework, and of course, more ropework. They have a lot of energy and the pace is pretty fast. So when I have a group ranging in age from five to sixty-five, I gently prepare the parents/ grandparents for a speedier version of Level II!

I often get the adults and children to adjust or support each other. There is usually a lot of laughter and verbal exchange as the partners help each other in ledge stretch, downward dog, balancing poses and inversions.

The children are creative and playful. Even when there are no instructions to help or interact, the children find a way to fit under, over or in between some body parts of their mom or dad. They approach the poses in a way only a young child could because they have few inhibitions. They have a fresh outlook and rarely approach a challenge with a "I can't do that" attitude.



I've had "mature" four year olds attend and lose interest only to regain it by playing with the props. Some may "sit out" until the possibility of hanging from the ropes catches their attention. Then there are the preteen boys whose expressions seem to register "Do I have to do



that?" to finally discover that lying in savasana actually feels good.

There is no pressure to perform or join in. Sometimes just "being" may plant a seed in the youths as they watch and absorb.



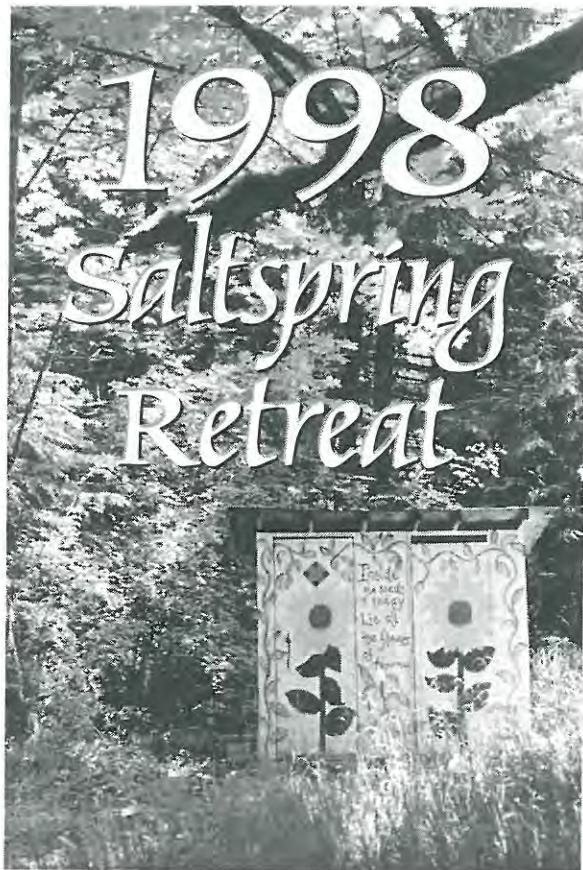
Parents look forward to the annual event and I get enquiries as soon as summer appears in sight. It's always a pleasure to see young people return with their "keen" parents.

If the month of July doesn't work for some of the local families, watch out for a Sunday morning workshop for families coming up in late September.

Hope this answered some of your questions, Shoba.

Perhaps in a future issue, we'll have some comments from the participants themselves. Until then!





Her Teacher's Voice

by Glenda Hingley

Waiting in line for dinner at 6pm at the Saltspring Centre, I heard my yoga teacher's voice in my head, "Oh DO go to Saltspring, Glenda, the food is incredible!" If the smells wafting from the kitchen weren't enough to confirm her statement, the delectable vegetarian dinner that followed those first enticing whiffs certainly did. Little did I know that the next 36 hours would bring many more echoes of Marlene Miller's friendly voice inside my head.

Whenever I attend workshops given by other teachers, I always hear Marlene telling us about Mr. Iyengar correcting a student by demanding, "Who is your teacher?" Therefore I am particularly careful about alignment and try my hardest to perform "Blanket Folding 101" according to Marlene's precise standards when away from my "home" class.

As we began pranayama, I felt some trepidation, since I have only been attending yoga classes for eight months and had only done a few preparatory breath awareness practices so far. "Relax, you'll do fine, you're working well." Marlene's voice again - reassuring and positive. Pranayama at 7 am wasn't the easiest part of the weekend retreat, but she was right - I was fine.

Working through the first set of asanas - a vigorous beginning of standing poses, I began to regret the warm, sunny weather and my full-length tights. I really wanted to complain about the heat to the equally perspiring student beside me, but wait - what is that I heard? A little voice? "In India it is extremely hot and it can be very uncomfortable to do a strenuous practice. The benefit is that your muscles become very pliable and we find we can extend our postures far beyond what we can do in our own climate." Of course, it is Marlene, almost as though she were standing beside me, inspiring me to reach a little farther, hold a little longer, ground my heels a little deeper and enjoy the gift of solar powered muscle fibers.

After another fabulous meal, I had a wonderful session of reflexology. While very relaxing, it unfortunately increased rather than relieved a small but growing headache I had. As I rested, drank water and took other measures to convince the headache to disappear, I heard Marlene



again. "If you find the classes too much, you don't have to go - take a walk, have a nap, read a book. It is a weekend for you to relax and unwind." As usual, her advice was sound. I took all of her suggestions and by the time our savoury Indian style dinner was ready, I was back to my old self.

Of course, I also listened to Shirley Daventry French who actually led the sessions at Saltspring. As always, she was inspiring, insightful and a wonderful teacher. I must extend my heartfelt gratitude for her hard work and patience throughout the weekend. But the words of yet another teacher best describe how I feel about my 'visitations' by Marlene. My children's swim coach used to tell parents, "If I've done my job well, your child should be able to hear my voice inside their head at every critical point in the race and that will encourage them to do their personal best." Judging by Coach Al's standards, Marlene has done a terrific job of coaching me through my early months of yoga practice and I welcome her voice, either internal or external, as I pursue this exciting path.

View of a First Timer

by Marg(aret) Mangelsen

From the moment my car left the driveway on Friday afternoon, the weekend yoga retreat on Saltspring Island felt unique. Mainly because I rarely leave home when I am not in the company of my husband, daughter, one of my sisters, or a friend. This feeling prompted me to think about "comfort zones" and how we all have comfort zones connected with where we go, who we spend time with, the activities we usually participate in and even the food we normally choose to eat. I had a feeling some of my "comfort zones" were about to be extended just a little.

The trip over on the ferry was smooth sailing all the way. I may have held up a bit of traffic on the road looking for the turnoff but I didn't hear any horns honking. Pulling into the driveway at the Centre, the first person I said "Hi" to turned out to be one of my roommates. All three of my roommates were very



enjoyable, which gave the place a comfortable feel right from the start. Settling in on Friday afternoon, I felt like I was 10 years old again and back at Church Camp in Terrace, B.C. with my friends from Sunday School.

There is no need to give words of description to the meals for any of you who were there, you already know first hand how tasty, satisfying and visually appealing they all were. Another ingredient that made the meals so enjoyable, was the interesting people to eat with. I sat with different people every meal and every meal the people were interesting, pleasant, well rounded and well read. Nothing better than enjoyable dinner companions to help good food digest thoroughly and easily.

I totally savored the suggested silence from 1.00 p.m. to 8.00 a.m. For one thing, I did not realize that number of people in one building could be so quiet. But more than that, it was such a good feeling to experience so many people completely respecting their own, and other people's, peace and quiet. There was a very caring, healing, restful quality about the experience.

The asana practice on
Saturday proved to be



very challenging and that is one of the reasons I enjoy yoga so much, you never stop learning. Every class and every teacher brings a new opportunity to develop.

Saturday evening was a delightful experience with the Satsang. Beautiful faces, joyful voices and an abundance of warm smiles sent me to bed with a warm glow.

Waking up on Sunday morning I was feeling my opportunity to be at the retreat was good karma. I was thinking how something that had been on the periphery of my life for so many years was finally moving in to take up more space, and I delight at this idea.

After another satisfying workout on Sunday morning, again led by the energetic, enthusiastic, knowledgeable Shirley Daventry French, we queued up for our last enjoyable meal. Soon after lunch, people began to pack up and pull out. I took the opportunity to head for the shower. As I lathered up and scrubbed, I had an image of some of my tight attitudes and ideas being loosened up and washed down the drain, and the cool water washing over me was nourishing me with new attitudes, new ideas, new challenges and new perspectives. If I am able to expand and grow just one degree from my weekend at Saltspring, as time stretches into next year, perhaps that one degree of change will translate into three, four or even five degrees of letting go.... who knows where that could lead? I sure don't. I am curious but not anxious. I plan to take one day at a time, enjoy them all, learn all I can, and continue to have "Peace of Mind" as my mantra.

Namaste

The Sound of One Cell Grinning

by Athena George

On the first evening of the Saltspring Island Retreat, when Shirley Daventry French guided savasana, saying in her clear, calm voice that yoga was a discovery of our true inner selves, a silly grin sprang on to my face. This grin returned every time Shirley mentioned inner self, or divine inner spark. A burst of private glee joined each grin and I wondered: does this mean my true inner self isn't very serious?

On my drive home that evening (I live on Saltspring) I began to chuckle and then laugh. Before long, I had to remind myself to concentrate on the road because I was *howling* with laughter. Each burst would slow and I would sigh and catch my breath and then the laughter would bubble up again, rising from my belly, rolling up my chest and flying out of my mouth which, yes, was grinning away.

For me, this outburst was astounding. I have been grieving for months, driving around the island with tears flowing down my cheeks. Could this laughter be the result of letting my tears flow? On those tearful drives I kept telling myself, "Let it out, Athena. Just let it out." Or could this burst of silly laughter blossomed from the words of Sheri Berkowitz, my yoga teacher here on Saltspring, who once said during savasana, "Imagine your deep inner self smiling and happy. Now imagine every cell in your body smiling." This appealed to my true inner nature which I am discovering to be

impish and I began to imagine smiling cells at the end of every savasana. Perhaps the first time only one cell grinned, and every relaxation after that, another joined in until they all got together to party on my drive home.

The next morning at the Saltspring Centre, when I sat down to a breakfast of garden fresh strawberries — heavenly sweet and tender — home made granola, warm coconut-orange muffins, cantaloupe, whole grain bread with organic nut butter, the woman next to me

whispered, "Wouldn't it be funny if they served Tang and Fruit Loops?" Uh-oh, hello true inner self, my grin was back. The woman on the other side of me said, "We'd have a sugar low in the middle of practicing asanas." I said quickly, "We'd have to stop for doughnuts." The one who started all this added, "and we'd have a big pig roast at night." Throughout the five hours of asanas that day, every time I found myself in a pose that was difficult I would remember the remark about the Tang and the Fruit Loops and collapse into inner giggles and an outer grin. This silliness was heightened by the delicious smells coming from the kitchen all day.

That night, during the chanting with members from the Centre, I felt my sadness rise up again. Ah, there it is, like a duffel bag full of rocks slung over my right shoulder. Words Shirley had said during practice came into my mind. "Go right to the edge of a posture where you can hold without forcing or strain and wait there patiently until an opening appears." I've been impatient with my grief, wanting it out of my life. I decided to just stay with the sadness and wait for an opening.



Minutes after this decision, the chanting broke loose. First with a chant that had words sounding suspiciously like "hairy bum, hairy bum." Although the words had been explained as a tribute to the boum-boum of a drum, I couldn't repeat them without thinking "hairy bum," and my goofy grin was back. Then the chanting exploded into arribas, yips, yipes, hoots, laughter, clapping - not at all the serious spiritual event I had expected.

On our final morning of asanas, Shirley wondered if we couldn't bring the same joy and laughter of the singing the night before to our yoga poses. Someone responded that singing was *easier* and everyone laughed. There was lots of joking and laughter that morning and I delighted in how funny people can be. When I was standing on my head, I realized that, from my upside-down vantage, everyone looked as if they were hanging from the floor by their heads. My face lit up with an upside-down grin.

Saltspring Retreat 1998

by Jennifer Rischmiller

I've been to many Saltspring retreats, each one the same, each one different. I know I can rely on a safe serene space, marvellous food and music that moves me to my soul. I know I can rely on teachings that help me work toward discovering the unity between body, mind and soul — and finding places in my body that I never knew were there before! Another reliable event is the discovery of how breathing — or not — affects my body. The early morning pranayama sessions are often difficult for me and I experienced considerable discomfort at the beginning of the Sunday morning session. So I just watched my breath for most of the time, noting the length of my exhalations and inhalations and the peace that came with soft gentle breath.



I took the experience of the Saturday pranayama session with me throughout the day; to my asanas and to the massage I had in the afternoon (compliments of the Yoga Centre). The memory lingered on through the evening and my chest expanded during Satsang. What an incredible memory that evening will make. The music and singing were outstanding, we all enjoyed our offering to the Divine. There was no room for anything but the experience so our message was sent, clear and true.

My mind is always more clear when I leave Saltspring with the knowledge of what needs to be worked on. I have often desired a mind-blowing experience, something that would let me know I'm on the right path, that my work has been recognised and I've received my reward. It's now clear to me that I am to accept the daily work rather than receive a revelation. In fact, I now recognise that change is a mind blowing experience and its difficult for me to handle the changes that have happened to me in the last decade.

As long as I can keep the connection between mind, body and spirit I will not have wasted the teachings of the Saltspring Retreat. I offer my thanks and gratitude to my teacher, Shirley Daventry French, to all those who arranged the retreat and to the Victoria Yoga Centre for giving me the gift of the Saltspring Retreat, 1998.

Om Om

Facilitation Skills Training

As the Victoria Yoga Centre Society has become more involved with other groups we have found great benefit by using trained facilitators to help us run our various meetings. Because of this experience the executive has decided to bring in a facilitation trainer from ICA Canada to put on a facilitation-training course here in Victoria. This 2-day course is primarily for the executive and members of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society, however unfilled places will be available to non-members.

This course will help you to:

- Facilitate groups more effectively,
- Make meetings more productive,
- Focus a diverse group's energy on a common goal,
- Create a sense of teamwork,
- Improve staff morale, and
- Use a group's creativity to maximize productivity.

ICA Canada, the Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs, is a unique facilitation, training and research organization providing effective participatory skills to thousands of people across Canada. ICA Canada has 40 years of experience in 28 nations.

Course Dates & Times:

Friday and Saturday
October 2nd and 3rd 1998
9am to 5pm

Cost:

- Victoria Yoga Centre Society members: \$300.00
- Non-members: \$325.00
- Lunch optional for an additional \$7 per day

Location:

Queenswood House
2494 Arbutus Road
Victoria. B.C.

Registration:

Register by September 15th 1998

Contact person:

- Jim Rischmiller.
Phone: 250-474-5630
Pager: 250-413-0515
E-mail address: jimr@bc1.com

Please make cheques payable to
'Victoria Yoga Centre Society.'

Ramanand Patel is a dedicated student of Yoga Master B.K.S. Jyengar and is one of the world's foremost teachers of Jyengar 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.



Ramanand Patel in Pune at the celebrations for Gururji's 79th birthday, 1997.

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

An Interview with Leslie Hogya

by Caren Liedtke

One of my husband's close friends, Will, does bodywork for a living - massage and myofascial release (working with the fascia surrounding the muscles). He loves what he does and loves to talk about it. We enjoy talking about it with him because so much of what he says is congruent with yoga. For instance, when doing myofascial release you need to apply pressure to the fascia for two to three minutes to get a release. Will says that holding a yoga pose for the same length of time will achieve a similar effect.

The other day Will was talking to my husband about the importance of having a postural role model, someone you can quickly bring to mind and try to emulate, especially when you are tired or grumpy and catch yourself adopting a less than enlightened stance. His role model is Kevin Kline with his tall, but loose, often comedic, usually confident posture and way of moving.

My role model is Leslie Hogya. She is not my postural role model, although not because there is anything wrong with her posture. She is my "way of being in the world" role model. When I am feeling particularly self-critical and am ruthlessly comparing myself to others, I sometimes bring Leslie to mind. I don't have to do much more than that. I don't have to think, "Now, what would Leslie do in this situation?" For me she embodies a deep self-acceptance and all I have to do is bring her to mind for some self-acceptance to rise up in



me. I almost immediately loosen my grip and relax, even if only a little. This technique works in other situations (being critical of others, for instance) because (for me) Leslie embodies not only an acceptance of self, but an acceptance of others and of life, as well as a quiet determination to work diligently with what's there.

I don't know when I started doing this, when I took Leslie on as my role model. It wasn't any one thing that she did or said. I guess that is the way it is with people on a spiritual path - they don't have to do anything special for others to notice there is something special about them. They can't help but express their deepening spiritual connection and blossoming spiritual understanding in every mundane thing they do and others can't help but notice, notice what's available to them in their own lives through practice.

Thanks Leslie, for all your hard work.

It's spreading out in ways I'm sure you hadn't imagined. And thanks for lunch. It was a pleasure spending some time getting to know a bit more about you.

Caren: *To begin with, I thought you could talk about what you're up to these days.*

Leslie: I teach kindergarten one day a week - Wednesdays. I job share with a woman who loves having Wednesday off. And I love going on Wednesday - it's perfect.

What made you decide to cut back just to one day?

So I could teach more yoga.

How many yoga classes do you teach?

About six, but it depends on the week because I share a class with Ann Kilbertus. I teach a Level One, a Level Two, two Gentle Yoga classes, I share a Level Three with Ann, and I also teach a pranayama class. I have one of almost every level.

I thought we could talk a bit about your presidency. Do you have any goals for the Yoga Centre as its president?

My goals are to get more people involved in the Yoga Centre. I felt that the groups within the Yoga Centre were becoming quite separate — for example the teachers' group and the executive. I would like to get more people involved and I think one way to do that would be to base our executive more on what they did in the Canadian Iyengar Teacher's Group which uses more of a committee system. So instead of Jerilyn being the treasurer, she would be on the Finance Committee. I am hoping that people would be willing to be on a committee. They wouldn't have to be on the executive. It would be like the newsletter which has gone to a committee system on its own because nobody wanted to be the editor.

What happens sometimes — I know it's happened before — someone will volunteer to help and they will never get asked to do anything. That person then thinks, "Oh, they really don't want my help." I want to try and make sure that doesn't happen. I just had a woman call me the other day and say she was willing to do something for the Yoga Centre. I talked to her, got her name and said I would let her know. As soon as I hung up, I started thinking about a little job I had to do that was easy and didn't require any previous knowledge or experience. So I called her right back and said, "I do have a job for you."

What do you see as your duties or your role as president?

An encourager - encouraging people to be involved and do things. Helping people to feel more empowered. I see myself in the background pushing people up.

Delegator?

Yes, I'm a good delegator. I wrote about that in the last newsletter. My desk has piles of things. I'm not too good at organising my own papers and piles. I'm not the kind of a person who works linearly - start task A, finish task A, put it away in a file so I always know where it is, then start task B. I do A, B, C, D, E and then I throw in Z — at the same time. I'll be doing something and then think, "Oh! I should have called So and So," about a completely different topic. I get up and do that. Then I notice that my dishes need to be done, so I'll start my dishes. Then I remember my email is open, so I better go back and finish what I was doing with that.

Good. Now I don't feel so bad that I'm not this perfectly organised person.

I'm good at giving people ideas, but I'm not always good at carrying them out, all the follow through stuff. I might get near the end of a task, but then I'll think, "That's good enough," and hope for the best.

What do you think you uniquely contribute to the Yoga Centre?

I think as a person I welcome people. I think they feel that. I try and always include people, whether it's in my home, my kindergarten classroom or at the Y.

Neil and I have certainly felt that. Neil wrote about it once, about how when we moved to Level Three . . .

that he thought he could do it because he knew that I would be teaching.

Yeah. He felt very comfortable and welcome. It was very challenging physically, but it wasn't stressful psychologically. What can people do to help the Yoga Centre? If they want to help, what can they do?

Ideally I'd like someone to be a volunteer coordinator — a central place where people who want to help or who need help can call. Let's say you are in charge of collating the newsletter and you are going to be out of

town one month, then you could call that person and say, "I need someone to collate the newsletter because I'm going to be away." So it would be nice if I could find someone who would be willing to be a volunteer coordinator. What happens when I have a job to do and I can't easily think of someone who can help me is I end up doing it myself.

And then the people who are busy end up getting busier.

Right. I want to try and avoid that. Another way to be involved is to come to things, like the Friday Night Gatherings, and find out about what is going on. People can also join the Yoga Centre and pay their dues.

Can you tell me a bit about your home practice?

I'm lucky that I live in a community like we have here where there are so many classes to go to. When I started doing yoga I had a young family and I relied entirely on my classes to do my practice. I used to come a lot, 3 or 4 classes a week, however many I could come to. I joined the Y and at that time it was really reasonable to come to classes as a member.

It's quite expensive now.

That's because we weren't getting paid when I started teaching. In the old days we were told that we shouldn't

get paid because we were performing a service and we were encouraged not to get paid. That was before

Shirley became the head teacher. Also later Swami Radha said that if you don't charge anything people don't value what you are giving - in the West, that is. It may be true in the East that a teacher is valued whether you pay him (or her) or not.

In the East, he or she is also supported by the community.

Yes - fed and taken care of by the community where that wouldn't work here. I

usually volunteer one class a term as a way of giving back to the Y because it is a community organisation

that supports lots of other programs, outreach programs like feeding street kids. I like to feel I'm giving something to the Y. But on the other hand, if I didn't earn any money then I wouldn't be able to do all the teaching I do.

Or travel to India to deepen and develop your practice and understanding.

My yoga income nearly matches my yoga expenditure.

Can you talk about your home practice?

Every morning I get up and do pranayama before I do anything else. If it's the weekend and I don't have to go anywhere, I go back to bed.



"Goddess" by Leslie Hogya



"Durga Festival" by Leslie Hogya

How long do you do pranayama for?

Twenty minutes or so. You have to take a break between your pranayama and asana practice, so on a regular day I shower and maybe write some notes about something before I do my asana practice. I remember some years back Shirley saying that teachers need to practice a minimum of one hour a day. I remember thinking, "Minimum! I'm lucky if I can get in twenty minutes." I have had two careers as a yoga teacher. One as an Iyengar teacher. I used to teach another style. Now I agree with Shirley; if I have an hour, it feels like a minimum practice. Sometimes I will just go over the poses that Shirley did in Monday night class. It usually only takes an hour because in class we stop to get props or Shirley points something out. At home, I'll get all my props ready at the beginning so they are there when I need them.

Do you have any advice for someone struggling to develop their own home practice?

I always say that the hardest pose is the first pose. First you have to get a sticky mat if you don't have one. Then you have to clear enough space in your life - physical space - to make room for that mat near a wall. If you don't have room, then you have to look at why not and get rid of something. Making that physical space is the first step, even if you use that space for other things during the day. Then if you are the kind of person like most of us are, you need to trick yourself in different ways. Say, "I'm going to do three poses. That's all I have time for." Or even one pose. Start with whatever number poses you can comfortably say you have time for. Then once you start, you usually find yourself feeling really good, so you do some more. If you say, "I can't do anything unless it's an hour," or "I can't do anything unless I do at least 20 poses. If it's

not good enough, I'm not going to even start," you're defeating yourself. If you have little children at home and it's really hard to make time because they're always interrupting, because they're up when you're up and they never seem to be asleep when you have the energy



to do yoga, just find a little tiny window whenever you can. When they are in their highchair, put your foot up on the counter. Breathe while you feed them.

Neil had a question related to that, about something you wrote in the last newsletter. Neil really liked this quote and was wondering if you could talk a bit about it:

"For me, she (Swami Radha) came into my life when I was a young mother. She helped give me a blueprint on which to build my life that was not based on society's views, but higher truths and principles."

When I was first introduced to Swami Radha my oldest son was about four. All I knew about yoga at that point was you laid on the floor and did savasana and stretched a little bit. It was pretty laid back yoga back then. We did savasana between each of the poses. (Really?!) So I heard about this workshop. It was called something like, "Yoga and the Mind." I couldn't figure out what this had to do with yoga, but I went for the weekend and Swami Radha had us examine how our

mind works. She asked us questions such as, "What is the difference between thinking and feeling? What is your brain compared to your mind?" I had *never* had anyone ask me anything like that before and I didn't know the answers. I didn't know that there weren't any right answers, that they were all just your answers and you use those to help you understand yourself.

That was the beginning of my work with her questioning your beliefs and what your purpose was and your goals and not having goals that are based on monetary acquisition. She taught me that your children were not your purpose. You have to take care of them and are responsible up to a point, when they are young obviously for their whole safety. But she really taught people to look beyond their roles in their family for their purpose and that's *not* part of society. When you're asked what you do, you say, "I'm a mother. I'm a technician. I'm a research biologist," or whatever your job is and *that's who you are* in society's mind and usually in your own mind. When those roles don't fulfil you anymore, that's when I think a lot of people get into what we might call a mid-life crisis. It doesn't have to happen in mid-life, but it often seems to where you've been going on this track, you've been earning this money in this career and you just wake up one day and say, "What's all this about? I'm successful. I get paid well. My job is supposed to be satisfying. Why do I have this empty feeling inside me?" Breaking down those stereotypes of what you are and what your purposes are made a huge impact on my life. I remember something one of the teacher's that she trained said once was, "When you are exposed to these ancient teachings it's like when the bee is exposed to the flower; you can't stop being attracted to them because there is such a beautiful truth in them." Once you have been exposed to the teachings, you know that there is this other way and you keep wanting to go back and get more of that nectar. Once you know about the other dimensions, the shallow Western view of the world seems more shallow.

Do you continue to practice in that (Swami Radha's) tradition?

It's like what I was saying, once you've started on that path, you never stop being involved with it. So even though I haven't been going to Radha house that much, I'm still very affected by her teachings. If I have a problem that I'm trying to solve, I try and come at it with the kind of the questions she might ask. And more to the point, yoga is the path no matter if it's Iyengar or Swami Radha as its teacher. The eternal truths are there. B.K.S. Iyengar says, "The body is the temple. The asanas are my prayers." When you perform the asanas the mind is calm, clear and the soul luminous!

For someone who has never been exposed to her teachings before, is there a book you would recommend or would you recommend that they visit Radha House?

Yes, at Radha House they offer things like Satsang and Kundalini classes. Every month or so they offer a workshop and sometimes they say no previous experience is necessary. So there are a lot of different workshops that might appeal to a person. One of the ones that I really liked and did about three or four times is called "Life Seals." You are asked to draw a symbol or a picture to represent each sense. For example, when I was a young mother I drew myself in a waterfall for the sense of sound. When asked to explain my picture, I said I felt there was so much noise around me from the children that I was being drowned. This symbol helped me realise I had to make space in my life for myself and for quiet.

It doesn't matter if you can draw. Some people just did little stick drawings. It really appealed to me because I like art. I also took Kundalini classes based on Swami Radha's book at Radha House for ten years.

What's the name of the book?

Kundalini Yoga for the West, by Swami Radha. It's the most amazing, amazing book. It's not something you read, you have to answer the questions.

It's like a handbook?

It's a handbook. If you answer the questions by your

self, it's only going to take you so far. If you're in a group and you bring your answers to the class and everybody reads their paper, you start to see that everyone has those answers that are unique and everybody has those that are universal. And just when you start to get too intellectual, she will give you an exercise that will get you totally in touch with your senses. For example, you'll do a taste test. You'll be blindfolded and somebody will put a bunch of food in front of you to taste. This brings up memories and feelings.

For me, the two systems of working (the Iyengar system and Swami Radha's system) have complemented each other all the way along.

Can you talk about sharing your spiritual practice with your life partner?

I don't want to say too much because that might be interfering with his privacy. We both have been doing yoga since the seventies. We got a book, *Youth, Yoga, and Reincarnation*, by Jeff Stern. It was one of the first books available in the West that was somewhat understandable. There were pictures in the back and we started doing the asanas from that book at the same time. Now I'm my husband's teacher, which is interesting. He comes to my class. One of the things Swami Radha taught us is that you can't change anyone but yourself. I think part of the reason my relationship is the way it is is because I never told him he should do yoga or told him he should do anything. Swami Radha said anytime you point your finger at someone you have three fingers pointing back at you. You better look at what you're noticing and clean it up in yourself first. That was one of the first things I learned from her and that I've tried to apply. Anytime someone really irritates me, I think, "Okay, that person is really irritating me. It's probably something they're doing that I am doing in another way that irritates me or other people. What am I doing? What can I do about it?"

In the tradition of Swami Radha, it seems fitting to end on a question.

Retrograde Menstrual Flow

by Linda Benn

from *Chatelaine Magazine*, April 1998, pg. 164

"New research suggests that endometriosis, a sometimes painful condition in which uterine lining migrates to pelvic organs, may be caused by retrograde menstrual flow — when excessive menstrual blood flows back through the fallopian tubes (and exits into the abdominal cavity). Over time, it can damage reproductive organs and cause infertility.

Gynecologists at the University of Milan, Italy, compared the menstrual blood loss patterns of 315 women with and without endometriosis to see if they were at greater risk for backward blood flow. They discovered that women with endometriosis had heavier menstrual flows than those without, making them more susceptible to backward blood flow."

My note:

This is referring to women with heavier flow being more likely to have a backward flow into the abdominal cavity. But if this tendency is combined with holding inverted yoga postures, the likelihood of this occurring is probably increased. I once asked a gynecologist about doing inversions and he said it makes sense not to do them during menstruation. He said that he had seen menstrual blood leakage into the abdominal cavity when he had done surgery.

My understanding is that this occurs because there is a gap between the end of the fallopian tubes and the ovaries.

Thus science once again finds evidence to support the teachings of yoga.

Yoga Centre Fact:

The Victoria Yoga Centre Society is a registered charity and non-profit organization and, as such, can issue tax receipts for donations.

Good Health Through Yoga

B.K.S. Iyengar

Health of the body as well as health of the mind is the prime concern of one and all.

Health is not mere freedom from disease. Health does not mean mere existence as this is neither purposeful nor eventful.

What is health?

Health is a distress-free state of body and mind, and a sign of unalloyed bliss in body, mind and soul.

Health is a perfect state of equilibrium, harmony and concord with the physical, physiological, moral, intellectual and spiritual sheaths of man.

Health is like a live wire, ever sensitive, ever vibrant and ever alert. It is like the flowing water of a river which is always fresh.

Health is not a commodity which one can buy but that which has to be earned by inspiration and perspiration.

Good health is inherited. It is also dependent on one's body structure and its functions; one's mental state; family relationships and the environment, and lastly, one's spiritual outlook.

The choice of health is in one's own hands.

However, nature does help man to take care of his body, and survive, in spite of indulgence in worldly pleasures which create imbalances in the body mechanisms.

We have to refine our mind, body and intelligence through Yoga to achieve health in body, mind and soul just as a goldsmith heats the gold over and over again to refine it.

A mirror reflects the objects clearly only if it is clean. Similarly, ***practice of Yoga leads to health that is free of divisions between the body, mind and soul.***



It is stated in the Mahabharata:

Talent is the best among riches,
Understanding is the best amongst treasures,
Health is the best amongst acquisitions,
Contentment is the highest amongst delights.

Patanjali also says:

“Yoganganusthanat asuddhiksaye
jnanadiptih avivekakhateh” — II.28

which means, “Practice of Yoga destroys the impurities of body and mind, and then the maturity in intelligence and wisdom radiates from the core of the being (atman) to function in unison with its vehicles - the body, the senses, the mind, the intelligence and the consciousness”.

Patanjali even cautions us with the sutra,

“Heyam dukham anagatam” — II.16

This is the other side of the coin of health. He says

that one does not know what type of suffering is in store for him. So he advises to pay attention as soon as the thought of health arises, as the hidden suffering has surfaced. Such sufferings may be dormant, attenuated, fluctuating or fully active.

What are these sufferings?

Sufferings may be physical, emotional, intellectual and instinctive.

These may be due to genetic, biochemical, environmental, emotional or perceptive causes and may lead towards physical diseases like ulcers, cancer, cardiac problems, arthritis, or mental disturbances such as anxiety, distress, dissatisfaction and depression.

These sufferings are categorized as *adhyatmika* (krita), *adhibhoutika* (karita), and *adhidaivika* (anumodita) rogas and tapas.

Adhyatmika roga is self induced (krita) whereas adhibhoutika roga arises due to habits wherein we disturb the ratio of balance of the five elements in our body (karita).

We are made up of *panchabhuta sarira*, earth, water, fire, air and ether. For example, constipation results if the earth element is high; frequent passing of urine and dropsy occur if the water element is high; excess of fire element leads to ulcers, bleeding and burning sensations; excess of air element leads to asthma, cough and bronchitis; while rheumatism, atrophy and arthritis result if the element of ether is high.

Adhidaivika roga may be genetic or allergic. We call it *prarabdha karma* or fate or destiny.

Patanjali speaks of the causes of rogas in Sutra I.31
"Dukha daurmanasya angamajjayatva
svasaprasvasah viksepa sahabhuvah"

That is, sorrow, despair, tremor of the body, irregular breathing, bring about *vyadhi stayna samsaya pramada alasya avirati bhrantidarsana alabdhabhumikatva anavasthitatvani cittaviksepa te antarayah* (disease,

inertia, heedlessness, laziness, indiscipline of the senses, erroneous views, lack of perseverance, backsliding).

Physical ailments or body diseases, sluggishness, mental ailments like carelessness, idleness, sense gratification, intellectual ailments like living in the world of delusion, and spiritual diseases like lack of perseverance, inability to maintain what has been obtained due to pride or stagnation overtakes man's good health.

Yoga is a psycho-physiological and psycho-spiritual science and art as Yoga distinguishes diseases and shows remedies.

Having said that about health and disease, let us know about what is in our possession - the body.

Body is the window of the mind.

The body is our only possession. It is one of the finest instruments and the most complex apparatus. Even if the body breaks down, it tries to repair the damage on its own.

Practice of Yoga accelerates the repairing process and helps to regain good health.

Do we know that our body has about 300 joints, 700 major muscles with hundreds and hundreds of minor and link muscles and hundreds of trillions of cells pieced together to form an organic system? The lungs which supply oxygen to the blood, if opened and spread out, are as wide as a tennis court!

The heart is the hub of the circulatory system and it is an extremely sturdy muscle, operating continuously as an automatic pump, pumping blood at the rate of 5 ounces per beat covering the blood vessels which run for about 60,000 to 70,000 miles. It also maintains and adjusts the frequency of the beats as the occasion demands.

Organs like the liver, spleen, pancreas and kidneys help in the production of blood and the lymphatic glands act as the drainage system.

The most important organ, the brain, is made up of 10 billion cells needing 25% of the total oxygen supplied by the blood. This is sufficient to prove the value of Sirsanana and Sarvanagasana!

The nerves if connected and stretched as a single thread run up to 6000 miles! It is a complete network of nerve cells and fibres with energy traveling at the rate of 200 miles an hour!

The nervous system has three layers - the peripheral, the autonomous, and the central systems. The peripheral nerves get impulses from the senses of perception; autonomous system through the mind, and the central system through the discriminative intelligence.

Skin transmits sensory impulses and the spindles of the muscles have the power of endurance.

Vedas say, "*Sanramadhyamkhaludhaaarama sadhanam.*" That is, "Body is the first and foremost instrument to perform *dhama*, the science of duty."

Ayurveda declares, "*Dharama artha kama moksanamaryam mulaluttamam*" which means that "Health is the key to the science of duty; to earn wealth; to enjoy life; and also for emancipation."

Upanishads proclaim, "*Nayamatma balahinena labhyah.*" "Self-realization cannot be attained by those who are weak and have no strength or vitality."

These sayings of our sages make it very clear that Health is Wealth. One can earn wealth only if one has good health. It induces one to do good deeds and at the same time keeps one free from sorrows and pains.

Let us see how this God-designed body is helped by the yogic movements and postures in generating health in the muscular-skeletal, cardio-pulmonary, respiratory, circulatory, glandular, digestive, urino-genital and excretory systems.

The word Yoga has come from the verb *yuj* which means to unite, to join, to associate, to discipline, to attend to and to yoke the body and mind to the soul.

"*Samyoga yoga ityukto jeevatma paramatmanah*" which means union of the individual soul with the Supreme or God.

Lord Krishna says, "Yogah karmasu kausalam" - "skillfulness in action is Yoga," whereas Patanjali says, "Yogascitta vritti nirodhah" that is, "restraint of movements in consciousness is Yoga."

Yoga is like a ladder with eight steps; a chain with eight links. These are *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*.

Yama and niyama are meant to cultivate good character. Yama guides one to discard violence, falsehood, stealing, lust and greed, whereas niyama teaches the ways of cleanliness, contentment, burning desire to develop a satvik nature, makes one study scriptures and also the art of surrendering to God.

Asanas create poise in body and peace in mind.

Asana means a posture. It is the positioning of the body in various forms with the total involvement of the mind and Self in order to keep all the sheaths of man, namely, *annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijnanamaya* and *anandmaya kosas* in the optimum level of health. Performing an asana helps to create and generate energy, staying in an asana organizes and distributes this energy, while coming out of the poses guides one to protect the created and distributed energy without dissipation. This is *svasthya* according to Ayurveda.

The body is like a railway track and train. The bones represent the rails, joints act as fish plates while the muscles are like the wheels which should be aligned with the bones to ensure smooth movements. The train derails if the fish plates are loose. Similarly, muscles move in different directions when the cartilages in our joints lose power, and thus cause diseases.

Our spinal vertebrae are like the bogies of a train. As the bogies are connected with vacuum pipes, our spinal vertebrae are connected in such a way that they take jerks without colliding with each other.

The bogies mutilate when the running train derails with a strong impact. The stress, strain and speed of modern living mutilates the cells, muscles and organs, introducing diseases.

Judicious practice of asanas lubricates the joints, creates mobility, increases the range of movements and awareness in each muscle, joint and organ. They burn out blood fats and keep the cardio-vascular system safe and healthy.

They transmit energy, build resistance and prevent unnecessary use of drugs. The judicious practice of asanas rejuvenates the physiological organs and mind.

Asanas cover man from the physical level to the spiritual level and therefore it is called sarvaangasadhana or holistic practice whereas the other types of exercise are angabhagasadhana where one part is developed at the cost of the other.

Patanjali explains the effect of asana as, "*Rupa lavanya bala vajra samhananatvari kayasampat*:- III.47. That is, perfection of body consist of beauty, grace, strength, compactness and it should have the hardness and brilliance of a diamond.

We have to treat this body as the temple of the atman and bathe the body in the pool of blood by increasing or decreasing the blood supply or rinsing or drying up of the same in the various asanas. This keeps the body clean and helps in the healthy distribution of the prana or bio-energy.

The ultimate aim of the practitioner is to mold the body as a bow, the asanas as arrows and hit the target which is the atman.

There are four stages of asanas: *arambhavastha*, *ghatavastha*, *parichayavastha* and *nispattyavastha*. One begins with cognitive action (*arambha*), cognates (*ghata*) then works with intelligence (*parichaya*) and after that gets totally absorbed (*nispatti*), loosing the awareness of the body, mind, intelligence, but living in the core of being (*antaratmasadhana*).

Asanas interpenetrate from the skin towards the Self and outerpenetrate from the Self towards the skin. They touch the *sthulasarira* (gross body), *sulksmasarira* (inner body), *karanasarira* (the innermost body).

Asanas can be practiced by all, irrespective of color, creed, country, sex or age. "*Yuva vrudho ativrudho va vyadrito durbalopiva, abhyasat siddhimapnoti sarvayogi svatandritah*." Any person, whether young or old, diseased or weak, can practice Yoga.

Just as patients are taken to the Intensive Care Unit when hospitalized, the yogis of lore gave us the use of props or supports to perform asanas, if one is an invalid, through the method called "*Yogakuranta*."

Pranayama is taught when perfection in asanas is gained. Pranayama helps to generate and distribute life's energy so that youthfulness in the physiological body is maintained and one grows old without feeling aged.

As the physiological body is the bridge to cross over from the physical body inwards, pranayama is the bridge to cross over towards the pratyahara (withdrawal of senses) for the intelligence to get stability through dharana and dhyana. This is known as '*buddhiparipakvata*' or maturity in understanding.

There is no oscillation or vacillation in the state of dhyana. One is in total attention leading to the light of perfect health and harmony.

Health shines without demarcation in the body, mind and soul. This is samadhi which is an auspicious state of brilliance and divinity in health, a perfect state of equilibrium in oneself.

Courtesy: All India Radio, Pune.

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Shelter From the Storm

by Neil W McKinlay

**"Come in," she said,
"I'll give you shelter from the storm."**

— Bob Dylan

Bob Dylan.

I don't know what mention of this name does for you, perhaps very little.

Maybe you think, "Bob Dylan? Who is this person?"

Maybe, "Oh I remember him, way back in the sixties. A folk-singer, right?"

Maybe you think, "He's still alive?"

Like I said, I don't know.

Me, I think of a song listened to about an hour ago, of the photo hanging beside my desk. I think of two of his friends - of Robbie Robertson and Allen Ginsberg - and of his nod to Frank Sinatra's passing not too many nights ago. I think of celebrating his 57th birthday last Sunday, and remember more than a few heads turning as we lifted our glasses and sang "Happy birthday dear Bobby!" I think of the Victoria Dylan Group, that I'll have to miss our next meeting - a barbecue with charades and a treasure hunt, gossip and, of course, music. I think maybe I should play a tape while I write this. Think a friend of mine will be seeing him live sometime in the next few weeks. And I think and I think and I think and I think...

See, I'm a bit of a fan.

So when I learned of an impending Vancouver concert about six weeks back, the winds of anticipation picked up all around me. And when a rare nightclub appearance was scheduled the day before, the sky positively exploded. Rains came down like a flood. Eating was

disturbed. Sleep was disrupted. An already busy time became completely frantic and my life began to seem more and more remote, like something way off in the distance, something made indistinct by the sheets of a storm.

"This is out of control," I said to a fellow fan as we arranged ticket purchases.

And that is just how it felt — out of control.

* * * *

I remember the day Swami Radha passed away.

It was a Thursday — I remember because I had yoga that morning.

Leslie was teaching class and right at the very start she announced, with emotion thick in her throat, that one of her teachers had died. Though I cannot quote precisely what she said to us as we began our practice, in rough terms it was something like, "Let us take solace in yoga this morning."

This struck me an odd thing to say, but we got on with class — with a slow, steady class — and two hours later, after a few more words and a moment of silence, after we had said "Namaste" and begun packing up, Leslie quietly stood up in front of us, bent into *uttanasana* and stayed there for a long while, taking a block under her head for support.

I remember staring at this.

I remember staring, with a half-folded blue mat in my hands, and feeling overwhelmed.

There was a powerful certainty soaking the air. A certainty she was finding something in that pose that she needed in that moment, a certainty she was finding something in yoga - solace, comfort, quiet - that was absolutely beneficial at that point in her life.

I remember staring and feeling terribly overwhelmed by the fact that I really did not understand how something

like uttanasana with a block could in anyway offer shelter in what was so clearly a time of storm, terribly overwhelmed by the fact that this, clearly, was happening right before my eyes.

* * * *

The four or five weeks I spent engrossed in pursuit of Bob Dylan tickets — worrying if we would get them, if we would be close enough, if I could afford this extravagance — the four of five weeks I spent engrossed in giddy anticipation of what songs he would play, how long he would play, what, exactly, he would wear, were out of control. Yet as thoughts whirled everywhere about me, I kept coming back, every few days, to Leslie. To the picture I have even now — even as I write this — of her bent over, arms linked, head supported.

So one night, when I was certain sleep would not come (the night before the first set of tickets went on sale), I took forty-five minutes and did the quietest practice I could come up with. Supta virasana, supta baddha konasana, lots and lots of long forward bends, lots of support.

It was difficult at first - noisy, irritated.

But with time, my mind began to settle, to quieten.

And I slept better than I had in a while.

* * * *

One of the things I most appreciate about Bob Dylan is how much I learn from the man, how much I am taught about commitment, perseverance, passion, courage and belief by listening to his music, by watching him perform, by following his career and considering his life. Over and over across the last forty years, he has made the choice to dive ever deeper into what it is he does, to dive ever deeper into the music and into performance. "I believe the songs," he has

said. "I find religiosity and philosophy in the music." Even in times of great personal turmoil, he has made this decision, has deepened his practice - and quite often, though not without enormous struggle, the results are amazing, inspiring.

On that Thursday morning however many years ago, Leslie could have chosen not to come to class or, at the very least, she could have decided to keep her experience closed up inside, kept out of sight and well away from the task at hand. One of these likely would have been my choice, but she was brave enough to share both her grief at having lost a teacher and a sense of the strength she gains through practising yoga.

I didn't really understand this at the time, I didn't really know what was going on. But her example made an impression that lingered, apparently willing to wait for me. Apparently willing to wait until I was ready, in my own way, to grasp just what might be meant by the oft-heard claim that commitment and perseverance are important, that with these yoga really can help in difficult times.

The weeks waiting for Bob Dylan to shuffle out onto the tiny stage of a Vancouver nightclub were difficult. And while perhaps the passing of a respected teacher cannot be compared to the coming of a popular performer, we all learn in our own fashion. For me, both Bob Dylan and yoga seem to work because through each I am repeatedly exposed to people willing to stand honestly before the world, willing to show and to share just what it means to take shelter in spiritual practice.

Thanks Leslie.

Thanks Bob.

And the shows, by the way, were fantastic!

Practice by Leslie Hoya

In another article in this issue, Caren Liedtke interviewed me and one of the questions she asked was about my practice. The most recent Yoga Centre gathering centered around practice. Brian London began with *tadasana*, Yvonne Kipp continued with *utthita trikonasana* and on we went throughout our Big Practice, together with a variety of teachers taking turns leading the class... After our pot luck, we talked about how to practice.

As I said in the interview, I had to work hard to establish a personal practice. It was not easy for me. I had to employ lots of tricks, but I did learn, as I said in the interview, that the first pose can be the hardest, in other words, just beginning. Once I began then the rest came. Now, I don't function well unless I do a practice. Ann Kilbertus continued on that theme saying how it was important to her to establish a certain place for a practice. She has an area in her bedroom that is dedicated to her yoga equipment. She finds that very helpful. She can be allured by the flowers in the garden if she lets her attention wander.

Brian London spoke about how he built up a practice and once in a while as "a treat" he would not do a practice. Then he noticed his day never went as well and it shifted so that now doing the practice is the treat. The days he doesn't have time for a formal practice are not the good days.

Sitting next to Brian, Jim Rischmiller talked about everything we do being a practice, and that there are lots of other practices besides *asana*. There is *Kundalini* as taught by Swami Radha, Mantra and so on. He also gave a graphic demonstration on what to do when emotions are building up, and when he feels frustrated or angry, he'll get down, do an upward dog pose and let out a roar.

Helping preserve the earth is important to Linda Benn. She related how that concern is translated into yoga

practice. By being thorough, aware, concerned, we can bring that quality to everything we do.

Yvonne Kipp who came to the meeting from Cortez Island where she lives and teaches, mentioned how crucial it was to get some props, how the beauty of a blanket that is only used for yoga can be a symbol of our practice. We see the blanket at the end of a busy day and wrap ourselves up in it.

It's very important to get some props together so you don't say to yourself, "oh well, I can't practice that pose because I need a belt." We defeat ourselves by not having what we need.

I mention to my students the importance of getting their own props. One may take a few tennis lessons with a borrowed racket, but if you really want to play tennis, the day will come when you will want your own racket. We seem to be able to spend a lot of money on a kayak or a new computer, but many people seem to have an aversion to spending \$37.00 for a sticky mat. I also think there's always space. There's the space in front of a door. I have room on our small sailboat to do yoga, because it is important to me to find that space.

It seems to boil down to a few main points:

1. Get some props
2. Make a space in your house or apartment where you can practice.
3. Make a commitment that is comfortable for you. Decide to do three poses every morning before you get dressed for work, for example. Or perhaps you can practice one half hour before dinner, and on weekends you can do it a little longer. Make it realistic for your lifestyle.
4. Everything we do is yoga. Bring awareness to daily activities. Smile, breath, relax. As Yvonne said in the assessment, "When in doubt, do *tadasana*!"

Shared Inspirations

by Rosalind Arscott

I have always been very lucky to have high quality yoga teachers, especially as I live on an island almost in the middle of nowhere! When I arrived on Gabriola Island fourteen years ago, Norma Hodge was teaching an abundance of yoga classes, including hatha yoga, Swami Radha's kundalini for the West, yoga philosophy and teacher training. I dived in and took as many classes as I could. Norma threw me a life-line. I grabbed hold, and I'm still holding on, although the life-line has now become a finer thread that guides me along the path.

My good fortune at finding inspired teaching continues. A few years ago I 'discovered' the Victoria Yoga Centre and landed in the lap of a committed yoga group with whom I can continue to deepen my understanding of how to do and teach yoga.

Most recently I was delighted to be able to attend Leslie Hogg's "Inspiration from India" workshop, the last of four workshops given by local teachers who studied with the Iyengars at the Canadian Intensive last year.

This workshop was special for me in various ways. It was the first time that a group of my own students from Gabriola and Nanaimo had made the trip to the Victoria Yoga Centre. I felt rather maternal as I watched their concentration and sincere effort doing the asanas. Later I was able to ask them what they got out of the workshop and of course each person got something different:

"the careful placement of the toes in *virasana* ..."

"maintaining the work in the legs is as important coming out of a pose as it is going in ..."

"the three stages of getting into shoulderstand made it effortless ..."

"a new awareness in the back of the thighs ..."

and the belt assisted *dandasana* was popular all round.

So we shared our inspirations together in class and our practice is that much more satisfying.

Another reason this workshop was significant for me was the emphasis on seated poses and how Leslie taught these to an all levels class. From a teacher's perspective I find seated poses challenging as many students (myself included) have tight hamstrings or hips, or both. Also, this workshop was very well attended and all the floor and wall spaces were filled. Again, I was curious, how does one teach this many students? I thought Leslie managed very well with a well-placed asana sequence, clear, simple instructions, and a thoughtful reminder that yoga was about more than stretching muscles. For me this workshop was a unique opportunity to observe an experienced, certified teacher, to learn by her example, and to catch some of the inspiration

I would simply like to thank all my yoga teachers, past and present, and I'd also like to thank my students for giving me the opportunity to keep the wheel spinning.



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I would simply like to thank all my yoga teachers, past and present, and I'd also like to thank my students for giving me the opportunity to keep the wheel spinning.



Life After the Presidency

by Jennifer Rischmiller

When I first thought about standing down from the executive of the Yoga Centre and as editor of the newsletter, I was concerned about whether there was anyone available to take on these positions. The first time it seemed like everyone was doing more than their

fair share and feeling it. So I continued for another year, learning, sharing and socializing. When I decided to stand down for sure, I left it to the Divine Committee this time and they helped me! Congratulations and best wishes to Leslie Hogya, who took on the position of Yoga Centre president.



**Jennifer Reschmiller,
past president, Victoria
Yoga Centre Society**

Congratulations to those people on the newsletter committee who produced a newsletter as editor: Lauren Cox, Neil McKinley, and Caren Liedtke. I get to be editor for the fall issue and Shirley Daventry French is editor for the special November/December issue that the newsletter committee is producing for Mr. Iyengar's 80th birthday in December. The transition was painless for everyone and my faith in the Divine Committee was reinforced. Now to keep the faith!

As I freed up time and energy, I thought to spend some by visiting our grandchildren in Ladysmith and spending more time with my daughter and her husband in Victoria. When I passed on the presidency, our son and his wife announced their departure to Binscarth, Manitoba and, of course, they decided to take their children with them! So I heard a message that my time was to be spent in other ways, working towards some of those goals I had formulated when I was thinking what

I would do in my 'spare time.' I have avoided, often successfully, looking at some of the issues involved in attaining those goals — and avoidance was one of those issues! Here again was my Divine Committee offering me yet another opportunity to grow.

I find it hard to be disciplined about filling up time, using energy, on myself and in a disciplined way. This is partly because when I look at what I want to do and the time I have to do it, I'm completely overwhelmed by the task of fitting it all in! However, making the time to focus on what needed to be done was a great help. I decided that dealing with some goals was not a short term job so it wouldn't be finished for a long time. Then I worked at being OK with that idea. I've often said that there's another lifetime to do some more work if necessary and now that helps me have less anxiety about a short time for a long term goal. Next I focused on looking at myself realistically so that I could set realistic goals about the lifestyle I lead and the lifestyle I want to lead.

For those of you who don't know, I'm very overweight and I want to do something about it. I have wanted to do something about losing weight for a long time and have tried various methods that haven't achieved the desired result. However, I've had some time to work on a plan which I hope will bring about the change that I'm working toward. Mr.Iyengar says, "the body is my temple, the asanas are my prayers." I am learning respect for my body through the asanas and a connection to my spirituality through my mind. My mind hasn't talked to my body in a 'right-minded' way before, there has been a lack of respect and honour. Now I am discovering there is a connection between body, mind and soul!

When Jim, my husband, was laid off from his work, I was asked, if I was given an opportunity to change my life in this way, what would I do. I hadn't worked out the answer then. I know more now that I have taken time to look inside for the answer. I don't want a trip, a new car, a different job, a move. I don't want major

changes to what is happening in my life. I want to work harder at it, to improve the quality even more, to pay attention to the sweetness of every day, to be grateful for the opportunities I've been given and to make my life a gift to the Divine. Sounds a bit 'airy-fairy,' doesn't it?

I think I can improve the quality of my life by showing respect for my body, exercising and eating properly. I can look around me every day at my family, the trees, the sky, the people I work with, the city I live in and feel grateful for what I have. I can translate that gratitude into respect for those people and my surroundings, treat them with compassion and spirituality. I can work at my yoga practices so that I can find a place for my soul.

That's what I'm doing with the time I would have spent being president of the Yoga Centre and full time editor of the newsletter! My gratitude and thanks to all the people who have made it possible.

Teacher Training Workshop

with

Julie Gudmestad

November 20 – 22, 1998

Victoria Yoga Centre
Scholarship - \$100

Details in September Newsletter

Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association

B.K.S. Iyengar, Honorary President

by Leslie Hogg

The 11th meeting of Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers was held in Saskatoon from May 9 – 10, 1998. Attending from our local group were Shirley Daventry French and Ann Kilbertus to continue their work on the professional development committee, Marlene Miller to work on the finance/membership committee, and I, Leslie Hogg, to co-chair the meeting. Kelly Murphy from Parksville came and filled the role of recording secretary.

With its tranquil old stone buildings, the University of Saskatoon was a great setting, very comfortable and convenient. Val Paape from Winnipeg helped co-chair the meeting. Asana and pranayama classes were taught by Val Paape, Ingelise Nherlan, Shirley Daventry French, Jo-Ann Sutherland, and Patricia Dewar. In order to help keep communication from membership to and from the committees that run the organization, Canada has been divided into four zones, and in the zones there are regions. All seven Regional Representatives attended the meeting or sent an alternate, from Vancouver to St. John's.

We worked hard as usual in our brief time together. Some people worked through breaks and late into the night. Documents were analyzed in work sessions so that when the AGM began on Saturday, the group was able to move very quickly through the agenda. There were no surprises. Below is a summary of what was accomplished:

1) Professional Development Committee:

- has a working document that was polished and finalized at the meeting to establish procedures for assessing teachers based on the international model for Introductory Level I and II certification.

2) Ethics Guidelines:

- A revised version of the Code of Ethics was passed.

- (The Ethics) Committee will continue working on Grievance Procedures which will be presented at the next AGM. All of the Canadian teachers are now bound by the Code of Ethics. They are based on the yamas and niyamas set forth in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.

3) Revisions to Organizational Documents:

- The proposed changes to the Organizational Document concerning Regions and Voting Procedures was passed. In the next year we will be working towards formal incorporation.

4) New Region:

- Ottawa-Hull has been accepted as a new region within the Central Zone.

5) Membership Guidelines:

- Membership and Directory Guidelines were passed. Many points were made and clarified, and this will be part of the final minutes.

6) Mr. Iyengar's birthday:

- Ideas for how we can help celebrate Gururji's 80th birthday were recommended. As a national group we will be buying an ad in the Pune Souvenir, and we are going to begin an archive/ library of Iyengar yoga materials in his name, which be available to be loaned to members.
- Also, the newly certified (and soon to be certified) teachers are reminded to list themselves in the worldwide directory of teachers.

If anyone has any questions about the meeting, please contact your representative or a member of the Coordinating Committee. Who is your new Coordinating Committee? There were personal reasons I did not want to chair this committee, but I have finally agreed to take this job on. Bob Power from Atlantic Zone stays on the committee for one more year, Michael Siddal replaces Edith Layne in the Central Zone, and Evelyn Nixey who will take the place of Jo-Ann Sutherland in the Prairies.

I want to thank Edith Layne for her work as chair of the committee for the past two years. Edith edited and

formatted the organizational document, and indexed it so it is easier to use, she also did the same type of formatting for the minutes from Saltspring AGM and Akala Point AGM minutes. She has given us a legacy of work that will hold as our model for many years. She also identified major and minor issues for this past AGM which helped immeasurably

in keeping things flowing! Thank you for this and all the other many things you did, Edith.

Also thank you to Jo-Ann Sutherland, who came on the committee two years ago with no prior background in the CIYTA. She took minutes last year at Akala Point, and worked hard all year preparing for the AGM in Saskatoon with very few local teachers to help. Thank you!

Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association

1998 Conference and Annual General Meeting

by Marlene Miller

On May 7, 1998, Iyengar Yoga teachers arrived at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. We arrived with reports and documents and computers and printers ready to work: Karma Yoga! The first item, after check-in, was a buffet lunch where teachers from across Canada came together. Some had not seen each other since last year's meeting in Akala Point, Nova Scotia. Others, particularly committee members who had been communicating by phone and e-mail, were together in person for the first time. This is always a most enjoyable moment of such events and meetings - reconnecting with colleagues and meeting and greeting other teachers for the first time.

We were housed in Saskatoon Hall, each of us having our own room, and all practices and meetings were able to be held in the same building and on the same floor! the "small gym" was an excellent room for the meetings of the whole group and all our practices. There were other rooms available for committee meetings and the hallways were wide enough for all the "after meetings" that members of various committees merged into. It was here late on Saturday evening that Shirley Daventry French observed us to be like the walking dead!

The Conference and AGM was four days (Thursday noon through to Sunday afternoon). It was designed to allow committees to meet and fine tune reports and review documents in preparation for presentation at the AGM which began on the Saturday afternoon. On Thursday

afternoon Leslie Hogya, of the Coordinating Committee, briefly welcomed us and there was an orientation in which Jo-Ann Sutherland, chair of the Host Committee for this year's conference, appraised us of the facilities and equipment available and of where there were walks to and from the Saskatchewan River. We then broke into our committee groups: the Professional Development Committee, the Finance Committee, the Ethics Committee, and the Coordinating Committee.

The ProD Committee was working on the next draft of the document relative to General Assessment for Introductory I & II certification process, the teacher training requirements, and the guideline for assessors. The Coordinating Committee was preparing the amendments to the Organizational Document. The Ethics Committee would be presenting the first Ethical Guidelines for our Association, and the Finance Committee was fine tuning financial statements and the proposed budget for 1998, and further developing directory and membership guidelines. Meetings were filled with intense discussions and the genuine desire on the part of each member to provide the association with the highest quality of their efforts. Periodically, if you walked in the empty hallways during this time, you would hear boisterous laughter. The laughter as passionate as the discussions - after all, we are "Iyengar" Yoga Teachers.

On Friday morning at 7:00 am Ingelise Nherlan lead the asana class, the majority of us in attendance. Marlene Mawhinney was sitting at her lap top computer continuing to work on the next draft of the ProD Committee's documents. Breakfast was at 9:00 am. Then at 10 we met as a whole group to receive the amended format for the next level of certification from the ProD Committee. Following we broke once again into individual committees.

Lunch was at 12:30 pm. All meals were in the student union building served buffet style with good variety. Following lunch we met as a group to hear from Edith Layne, chair of the Coordinating Committee, to discuss the suggested revisions to the "org.doc." (organisational document). Then we reviewed the first draft of the Ethics Guidelines presented by the chair, Nadia Horodinsky, and the ProD Committee once more "retreated" to another committee meeting. At 5:00 pm Shirley lead most of us in a much needed pranayama practice. Then supper and back at committee meetings by 7:30 pm! Our original agenda plan for the evening was to have been a panel discussion on the latest teachings from India; however, the time was required for further committee business. The Coordinating Committee was taken to Jo-Ann's studio to use her computer! The two computers brought to the conference were tied up!

Jo-Ann led the Saturday morning asana practice - our numbers were dwindling! Saturday morning's meeting was of the whole group at which time we heard the presentation from the Coordinating Committee and discussed the changes to regions and the suggestion of developing four zones in which the regions would function, and how this would effect representation of the standing committees. We also finalised the agenda for the AGM, which we started at 2:00 pm on Saturday afternoon with Leslie Hogg as the chair, and Kelly Murphy from Vancouver Island joining us as the recording secretary. At 6:00 pm we broke for supper, and the evening was given to discussions about the Canadian celebrations for Mr. Iyengar's 80th birthday. (The ProD Committee met yet again!)

Sunday morning Patricia Dewar lead the asana practice to yet a smaller group. Some still sleeping, others working on a computer! The AGM continued with Val Paape chairing. Each committee chair presented their report. There was open and frank discussion, as there had been in all the preparatory meetings of committees and the group as a whole. The ideas and suggestions that arose from the "collective mind" had given each document greater richness and depth. I spoke with Kelly sometime after the meeting for her impressions. Kelly is an apprentice teacher, and this was her first contact with the Association. Kelly's

observation was that the AGM went very smoothly because of all the preparatory work that had been done. This was work that had gone on all year, not just at the conference.

As you can tell this was a very full four days for the 27 teachers who gathered. The setting was symbolic of the atmosphere at the conference: open and expansive, allowing for discussion, contemplation and incorporation of various ideas and perspectives. The central location was symbolic of a coming together, working cooperatively and collectively so that the best of ideas were expressed and incorporated into our working documents. It has taken us many years, and here we were a young formalised association, dynamic as we have always been and moving forward. And, like our teacher who gives his name to our yoga, always refining our work.

Thank-you to Jo-Ann Sutherland and her committee for the excellent organisation and hosting of the 1998 conference and AGM. Finally, on behalf of the CIYTA membership, I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to all the chairs and members of the committees, and the members at large, who came to participate in the administrative organisation of the CIYTA. Thank you for all your efforts and dedication.

Report from Saskatoon

C.I.Y.T.A. Annual General Meeting

by Ann Kilbertus

On May 7th some thirty teachers and student teachers arrived at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon for the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association annual general meeting.

....yet another interesting location on the yoga trail. It is a beautiful campus and we were housed individually in a very comfortable university student residence. Thanks go to the organizational effort put forth by Joanne Sutherland, Patricia Dewar, and many others.

As usual, every moment was used to the maximum and even more if one sat on any of the three main committees, (Co-ordinating, Professional Development, and Finance). Such is the reality of an evolving association working within a very, very limited budget.

Teachers and student teachers from all over Canada worked hard in preparing and assisting for the many meetings. It seems that even a few laptops have made their way into assisting! They certainly allowed information to get out for review so that discussion could be up to date and relevant. Interspersed with all this business were a number of welcome practice sessions led by various members of our Canadian mosaic.

A highlight for me came when the Professional Development Committee worked its way into the night not knowing how we would handle the workload of syllabus, certification, workshops, and other related issues. By breakfast, (just joking), we had created a realistic structure. Marlene Mawhinney and Val Paape led us through a process of categorizing and re-categorizing cards on a wall, so that eventually a new structure appeared...one I would not have seen or found without this process.

Having attended a few A.G.M.s over the years I have observed that as a group we are now working with more ease under the guidelines of the consensus decision making model. The skilled facilitation of Maureen, Val, and Leslie Hogya coupled with the strength of the circle in which we sat each day, helped to move everything along in a very satisfactory manner and to address the important issues while we were all together.

As the time came for us all to head our separate ways, it seemed we had made good progress in creating ethical guidelines for teachers; working on future certification dates and structure; amending our organizational document; and in coming up with ideas for Mr. Iyengar's 80th birthday celebration.

Fall Work/Study Program
at HOLLYHOCK on Cortes Island

August 30 — October 17, 1998 (7 weeks)

YOGA DRUMMING AND DANCING

This program combines a structured learning component — 1 1/2 hours of yoga 5 days a week, and 8 hours weekly of African drumming instruction and rhythmic movement/transformational dance — with hands-on work on the land of 15 hours a week on outdoor projects such as groundskeeping and landscaping.

Jocelan Coty, morning yoga teacher at Hollyhock who has studied with several senior teachers in the Iyengar tradition, will lead the first 3 weeks. Yvonne Kipp, Hollyhock yoga instructor and bodywork practitioner, and certified Iyengar Yoga teacher, will teach the last 4 weeks of classes. Drum and dance sessions will be led by Gordy and Zoe Ryan.

Tuition, meals & accommodation:
\$2,250

Registration and Information:
1-800-933-6339

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.

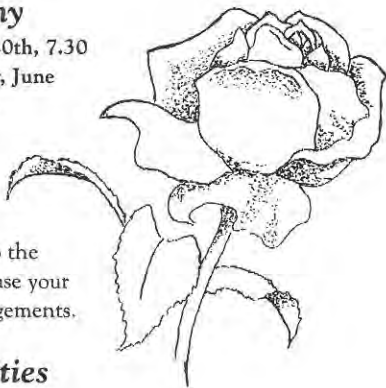


Workshops and Events

Rose Ceremony

Saturday, June 20th, 7.30
p.m. and Sunday, June
21st, 7:30 p.m.

A dedication
to the Most
High. Make
your personal
commitment to the
Divine and release your
grudges and judgements.



Weekly Activities

Kundalini Yoga
The Yoga of Dreams
The Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga
Satsang

Teachers:

Swami Durgananda is the director of Radha House. She lived at Yasodhara Ashram for 16 years, studying with Swami Radha personally and receiving training in the Teachings. She holds certificates from the Ashram for the Yoga Teachers Course and the Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga course. She has taught classes and workshops at the Ashram and at Radha Houses in Canada and the U.S.

Karin Scarth teaches Hatha Yoga on Mayne Island and at Radha House. She holds certificates for the Yoga Development Course and the Teacher Training and Hidden Language courses from Yasodhara Ashram.

Karin Lenman lived at the Ashram for six years and holds certification in the Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga.

Radha House

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

YOGA CALENDAR

JULY 1998

20-24: Teacher Training Intensive with Shirley Daventry French, Leslie Hogya and Ann Kilbertus. Registration: Linda Benn or Leslie Hogya

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: Family Yoga with Lauren Cox.

OCTOBER 1998

2/3: Group Facilitation Training with Institute of Cultural Affairs Canada at Queenswood. See ad this issue.
16: Friday night gathering at the Y.
17: Teachers meeting
17: Fall Workshop at Hollyhock with Jocely Coty, Yvonne Kipp, Gordy & Zoe Ryan
25: Sunday Workshop at the Y: Menopause with Marlene Miller.

NOVEMBER 1998

6: Friday night gathering
21: Weekend workshop with Julie Gudemestead

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: _____

Phone: _____

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

☐ Receipt Required.



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

Unit 592, 185 - 911 Yates St.

Victoria BC V8V 4Y9

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

PROVINCE _____

POSTAL CODE _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____

SEX _____

RELIGION _____

EDUCATION _____

EMPLOYMENT _____

HOBBIES _____

REASON FOR JOINING _____

AGREEMENT TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



September/October 1998

Please Subscribe



A group of participants from the 1998 Summer Intensive enjoying a festive evening at the French's home in Metchosin.

Victoria YM-YWCA

Program of Classes in the Iyengar Approach to Yoga

Term 1: Sept 7 – Nov. 1, Term II: Nov. 2 – Dec 20



Level I

Day	Time	Instructor
Monday,	9:00 - 10:25am	Lauren Cox
Monday	4:00 - 5:25pm	Jo Anna Hope
Monday	7:30 - 9:00pm	Ann Kilbertus
Tuesday	7:00 - 8:30pm	Caroline Sophonow
Wednesday	9:00 - 10:25am	Lauren Cox
Wednesday	6:00 - 7:25pm	James Currie-Johnson
Thursday	8:30-9:55am	Linda Benn
Thursday	4:30 - 5:55pm	Maggi Feehan
Sunday	10:00 - 11:30am	Ty Chandler

Level II

Day	Time	Instructor
Monday	10:30 - 12:00pm	Lauren Cox
Tuesday	5:30-6:55pm	Leslie Hogya
Wednesday	7:30 - 9:00pm	James Currie-Johnson
Friday	9:00 - 10:25am	Linda Benn
Saturday	9:00 - 11:00am	Marlene Miller

Level III

Day	Time	Instructor
Thursday	10:00 - 11:55pm	Shirley Daventry French
Thursday	6:00 - 8:00pm	Ann Kilbertus & Leslie Hogya

Level IV

Day	Time	Instructor
Monday	5:30 - 7:25pm	Shirley Daventry French

Sixty & Better

Day	Time	Instructor
Wednesday	10:30am - 12:00pm	Shirley Daventry French
Friday	10:30am - 12:00pm	Linda Benn

Gentle Yoga

Day	Time	Instructor
Tuesday	10:30 - 11:55pm	Linda Benn
Thursday	1:15-2:45pm	Leslie Hogya

Noon Yoga

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

Vinyasa Yoga

Day	Time	Instructor
Thursday	12:00 - 1:00pm	Lauren Cox

Early Morning Yoga

Day	Time	Instructor
Tuesday	7:00 - 8:00am	Ty Chandler

Restorative & Pranyama Yoga

Day	Time	Instructor
Tuesday	4:30 - 5:25pm	Leslie Hogya

Pranayama Yoga

Day	Time	Instructor
Monday	4:30-5:15pm	Shirley Daventry French
(4 classes only)		

T.G.I.F. Yoga

Friday	4:45 - 5:55pm	Wendy Boyer
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Registration:

Victoria YM-YWCA, 880 Courtney St, Victoria, B.C.
V8W 1C4. Tel: 386-7511

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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

Deadline for next issue: October 2, 1998.

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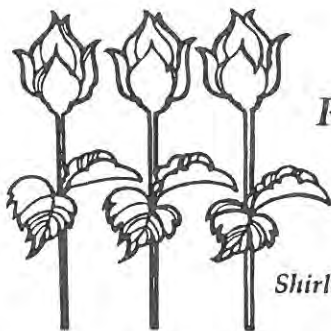
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Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

"Teaching is a difficult art, but it is the best service you can do to humanity."

— B.K.S. Iyengar

I've been married to a physician for forty four years. I've been a yoga teacher for twenty six of those years. When we discuss our respective occupations, my husband often says that he considers my work to

be as important as his. It was not always so. It certainly is not the case in society in general.

In social situations, Derek prefers not to let it be known he is a medical doctor. There are many reasons for this. Frequently, people address him differently when they know he is a physician. If they have a current health query, they may ask his advice even at the most inappropriate times. If they or someone close to them has had a bad medical experience, they may berate him for the entire medical establishment. I have seen both these examples acted out many times. Good or bad, there is a stream of generalities and ignorant statements about doctors and medicine freely and often insensitively delivered by much of the public. Since he does not want to spend his time arguing, defending, contending, depending on the environment Derek may choose to protect himself by anonymity.

Nonetheless, whatever a person feels about "orthodox" medicine, they generally recognise and acknowledge the years of study, training, commitment and sacrifice which went into becoming a doctor in the first place. In addition there are the never-ending demands of post-graduate study essential to keep up-to-date in a fast moving scientific world. On the whole, Medicine is a profession which continues to command a high measure of respect

The same cannot be said of Yoga. As an occupation it has yet to earn widespread recognition. Not many

people would support

Derek's statement that my profession of yoga teacher is as important as his profession of medical

doctor. *Abhinivesah* or clinging to life is far more prevalent in the West than preparation for eternal life.

While yoga has become more accepted in mainstream Canada than it was when I began teaching, it is still viewed as a recreational pastime rather than a way of life, and teaching yoga is seen as an avocation rather than a profession.

This was certainly the view of my first yoga teacher who thought no-one should be paid for teaching yoga, which should be taught as it had been for generations in the East as *karma yoga* or selfless service. An English woman, she had grown up in India under the Raj. A former nurse, it was her nature to serve others, and at this stage in her life, somewhere in her late fifties, she appeared to be financially secure. She was married to a psychiatrist and lived in a pleasant home in the most exclusive neighbourhood of Victoria. Moreover, she came from a generation of women who worked only when it became necessary to boost their husbands' incomes or if they remained single or became a single parent – a relatively rare situation in those days.

My teacher's sentiments were noble, but I took exception to them partly because the lack of sufficient

income even to defray expenses might exclude some otherwise exceptional candidates. I lobbied for the option to choose whether to be paid or not, which eventually happened. To this day virtually all the teachers working under the auspices of the yoga centre continue to volunteer some of their time and in some cases, much of their time.

The attitude does linger that yoga should be offered for little or no cost to the student which would logically lead to no fee for the teacher (although logic rarely has anything to do with such expectations!). Just the other day I received an enquiry about my private classes from a young man who started the conversation by asking: are the classes free? When I said they were not, he asked why I charged so much. I told him that I charged what I thought the classes were worth, given my training and experience. He started to argue with me and I brought this exchange to an abrupt end by saying that I did not intend to justify myself to him and there were plenty of other classes in Victoria which he could check out.

I have learned from experience that it is impossible to judge from appearances whether someone is in financial straits or not. The statement "I'm broke" has many different meanings. To one person it means there is nothing left to draw on in the foreseeable future; to another that they have spent all their surplus cash that month and don't want to dip into their savings. I do accept students free of charge or on reduced fees occasionally, but only when I have assessed a need accompanied by a sincere longing.

The idea of receiving some financial remuneration from teaching had the support of Swami Radha. She always stated that, in our society, people do not value something that is given away for nothing; that the yogic teachings were probably the most valuable gift you could give anyone, and should be treated as such. Besides, we have to live and this costs money. This was not to recommend going to the other extreme and making yoga classes so expensive that no-one could

afford them. It is important to remember the yama *aparigraha* or non-greed and, as Mr. Iyengar says: charge, but make sure you give more than you receive.

In those days, the early 70's, we were paid \$3 an hour. Perhaps it was a reasonable fee, because we certainly did not know much.

One day, not long after I had finished my first ten-week yoga training course, my teacher said to me: "I don't think you're ready yet (for teaching)." I agreed with her. I was not even sure at that time that I wanted to become a teacher, and had only taken the course at her encouragement. However, it appears I made a lot of progress in a very short time, because one week later needing someone to teach a noon hour class at the Y, she asked me if I would do it.

My life took off in an unexpected direction — one that did not, at that time, have the wholehearted support of any of my family. This had to be earned. Once I began teaching, my ignorance of this vast subject became abundantly clear to me. Along with my Victoria friends and colleagues, Carole Miller and Leslie Hogya, who also began to teach at much the same time, we grasped at every chance to study yoga that became available. Swami Radha, Swami Padmananda and other teachers from Yasodhara Ashram were coming to Victoria several times a year to give courses and we were always there, learning about Eastern philosophy but mostly learning about ourselves. Self-study (*svadhaya*) is one of the fundamentals of yoga along with self-discipline (*tapas*) and surrender (*isvara pranidhana*).

To be a good teacher of yoga, first and foremost you have to become a good student — and this does not mean the most flexible or the most adept (which is the image of yoga most people have in the West), but establishing a strong personal practice, exploring your own potential, working to your own maximum, giving your very best time and effort to this spiritual practice. It means sustaining your practice through thick and thin, when it's going well and when it is a struggle. To

teach well you must have personal experience and a thorough knowledge of the practices you are teaching. Experiments should be conducted on yourself, not on your students.

Gradually, as awareness of Yoga expands in the populace at large, it is becoming understood that you need more than good intentions to be a good yoga teacher. More and more schools of yoga have established certification, including Yasodhara Ashram where I received my initial training and the Iyengar tradition in which I now teach. Nevertheless, unlike medicine which is very heavily regulated, we have no federal or provincial licensing of yoga teachers. Therefore, anyone can teach yoga, and being a "certified yoga teacher" can mean a great deal or very little. Four week teacher training courses offering a teaching certificate at the end, are not uncommon in North America - just look in any issue of *Yoga Journal*.

We receive many calls from people who want to take our teacher training course who have done no Iyengar Yoga and sometimes no yoga at all. One woman told me she had decided she did not want to pursue her education degree and become a school teacher and thought she might like to teach yoga instead, it would be easier. Another wanted to take teacher training so she had something to do when she retired from her job. In both these cases, from questioning it was clear that they had little or no experience or knowledge of yoga. Then there was the aerobics teachers who felt that when she was too old and decrepit to teach aerobics she could move to yoga instead.

We have to educate the public and in particular those who set up classes in health, recreation and other centres that all certificates are not equal: training and standards vary enormously. In Victoria, our Iyengar Yoga teacher training program takes an initial two years plus a year of internship when the teaching continues to be monitored, discussions take place and guidance continues. It does not end here, because without exception, all of us from the most experienced to the newest teacher continue our training. In the Iyengar system there are

various levels of certificates, and for those who have passed the introductory level there lies ahead the opportunity to attain a higher level of certification requiring further study and a broadening and deepening of your practice.

In Victoria, at first, the teacher training was entirely under my auspices, now we have a six person teacher training committee — Linda Benn, Lauren Cox, Leslie Hogle, Ann Kilbertus, Marlene Miller and myself. It is wonderful for me to share this responsibility, and it is stimulating to work with all these fine teachers. We are constantly rewriting and refining our teacher training document and our methodology as new situations arise which we have not anticipated.

Certification in Iyengar yoga commenced in South Africa in 1975, in the United Kingdom shortly after and in the United States in 1982. Canadians were reluctant to move into certification. Not surprisingly, in a country overburdened with so many levels of government, it was seen as another unnecessary level of bureaucracy. However, the matter was taken out of our hands in 1993 when Mr. Iyengar came to Toronto as guest of honour at a national convention. He made it quite clear that the teaching in other parts of the world had improved through the implementation of certification, and asked us to begin this process in Canada.

After several years of setting up a national association, establishing syllabus, policy and procedure, we were ready to begin this process. At our intensive in Pune last summer, Gururji issued the first Canadian certificates to some of his longtime students. This summer we have just completed our first year of assessment for teachers with ten or more years' teaching experience and now have forty four certified teachers in this country. Next year, teachers with five or more years' teaching experience will be given priority to attend one of the three assessments planned, but if space is available they are open to all qualified candidates. Having got over the first hurdle and now that the

senior teachers in our community are certified, I am doing my best to encourage all others to prepare themselves to join the ranks of those who call themselves "certified Canadian Iyengar Yoga" teachers, an imprimatur which is gaining worldwide respect.

To this end I recently sent a letter to the teachers and apprentices in our Vancouver Island Iyengar Yoga Teachers' group (excerpts from which appear elsewhere in this newsletter).

*Teaching is not merely teaching to earn your livelihood.
Teaching is learning also - learning to refine
your body, nerves, intelligence and self,
so that you can refine those who come to you.*

— B.K.S. IYENGAR

This month's reflections are written in appreciation of Jessica Tucker, whose initiative, energy and persistence got the yoga programme at the Victoria "Y" off to a good start, of Swami Radha whose encouragement to establish a spiritual community fueled the creation of the Victoria Yoga Centre, and B.K.S. Iyengar whose brilliance in the practice of yoga and genius in the art of teaching is a constant source of inspiration.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SCHOLARSHIP

**Anatomy Awareness in Asana
with Julie Gudmestad,**

November 20 - 22, 1998

One Scholarship: \$100

for Iyengar Yoga Teachers or Trainees.

Deadline: October 30, 1998

Applications in writing:

Scholarship Committee

c/o Linda Benn, 698 Rockridge Pl.

Victoria, B.C. V9E 1H3

Tel: 478-0757

Yoga

In Metchosin

with
Shirley Daventry French



Daytime and Evening Classes

**Fall classes
commences
September 15th**

*Private lessons are also
available by appointment*

Shirley is a student of B.K.S. Iyengar and an experienced teacher of his method of Yoga.
Information/Registration: 478-3775

The Victoria Yoga Centre is pleased to present

Yoga and Menopause

with
Marlene Linda Miller

Sunday, October 25, 1998
10:00 am – 1:00 pm
Yoga Lounge at the YM-YWCA
880 Courtney St., Victoria

Fee: \$30 Yoga Centre Members
\$35 Non-Members

To Register: Call Marlene at 655-4306
or the Yoga Centre at 386-YOGA
and/or mail your registration to:

8570 Sentinel Place
Sidney, BC V8L 4Z7

Facilitation Skills Training

As the Victoria Yoga Centre Society has become more involved with other groups we have found great benefit by using trained facilitators to help us run our various meetings. Because of this experience the executive has decided to bring in a facilitation trainer from ICA Canada to put on a facilitation-training course here in Victoria. This 2-day course is primarily for the executive and members of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society, however unfilled places will be available to non-members.

This course will help you to:

- Facilitate groups more effectively,
- Make meetings more productive,
- Focus a diverse group's energy on a common goal,
- Create a sense of teamwork,
- Improve staff morale, and
- Use a group's creativity to maximize productivity.

ICA Canada, the Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs, is a unique facilitation, training and research organization providing effective participatory skills to thousands of people across Canada. ICA Canada has 40 years of experience in 28 nations.

Course Dates & Times:

Friday and Saturday
October 2nd and 3rd 1998
9am to 5pm

Location:

Queenswood House
2494 Arbutus Road
Victoria, B.C.

Contact person:

- Jim Rischmiller.
4489 Lindholm Rd.
Victoria BC V9C 3Y1
Phone: 250-474-5630
Pager: 250-413-0515
E-mail address: jimr@bc1.com

Cost:

- Victoria Yoga Centre Society members: \$300.00
- Non-members: \$325.00
- Lunch optional for an additional \$7 per day

Registration:

Register by September 15th 1998

Please make cheques payable to 'Victoria Yoga Centre Society.'

Congratulations!



Congratulations to the sixteen newly certified teachers who passed the second Canadian national assessment held in Toronto on June 19, 20 & 21, 1998. :-

Lauren Cox (Victoria)
Barbara Dick (St. John's)
Donna Fornelli (Ottawa)
Michelle Katz-Blumenthal (Toronto)
Sally Ker (Bermuda)
Claudia MacDonald (Vancouver)
Mieko Nakamura (Toronto)

Andy Orr (Toronto)
Marilyn Prange (Kitchener)
Pamela Stewart (Charlottetown)
Eugenia Sussex (St. John's)
David Thomas (Halifax)
Beverley Winsor (St. John's)

Three assessments will be held in 1999: in Edmonton March 26th to 29th, in Ottawa June 4th to 7th, and Winnipeg in September (date to be arranged).

On Teaching in the Iyengar Tradition

Following are excerpts from a letter written in July 1998 by Shirley Daventry French regarding certification and assessment, and sent to Vancouver Island Iyengar Yoga teachers and apprentices.

In 1997, Mr. Iyengar issued the first Canadian Iyengar Yoga certificates, twelve in all. Now, a year later, we have successfully completed the assessment of teachers with ten or more years' teaching experience. Sixteen teachers were certified in Vancouver in March, and thirteen in Toronto in June. Three teachers earned certificates in other countries. This makes forty four certified Canadian teachers at present. In one year I think we have made a very good start.



▲ Donna Fornelli (l) and Lauren Cox

All local teachers who participated in this year's assessments did exceedingly well. *Congratulations to all of them.* Coming together with teachers from all across the country, they were great ambassadors for our community,



▲ Wrap up! Three of the assessors, Shirley, Marlene, and Marie-Andrée

but it did not happen by accident. They had prepared for this and, therefore, it worked for them. Not only have they taken classes on a weekly basis for ten, fifteen and, in some cases, over twenty years, but they have attended the majority of local workshops and travelled further afield to deepen their practice and teaching of Iyengar Yoga. They have all made the pilgrimage to Pune, and attended many special teachers' courses in and out-of-town. They participate regularly in the monthly teachers' meetings. In all of this time it has been rare for any of them to miss an event related to the teaching of Iyengar Yoga.

The first generation of yoga teachers who trained with me are now certified. What next? Hopefully what is next for them is preparation for Intermediate level of certification. But what about the rest of you who still have to take that first step towards an Introductory certificate?

In Victoria, a lot of our energy is going into refining our teacher training program. Leslie, Marlene, Linda, Ann, Lauren are all working directly with apprentices. Vicky is training people up-Island. We are intent on maintaining the high standard which Mr. Iyengar expects of us. Hopefully this will produce the next



▲ The scene of the "event" — the Toronto Yoga Centre

generation of certified teachers — teachers who, when the time comes for them to be assessed, will be as well prepared as were the first generation.

Whether you are an established teacher with less than ten years experience and, therefore, ineligible for this year's assessments, or you are somewhere in the midst of our three-year apprenticeship program, how are you going to prepare yourself? I hope you are going to work towards certification, not only because Mr. Iyengar requires this of those who use his name — but because I have seen and experienced how it improves the quality of teaching. In any case the moment you step into a classroom to teach Iyengar Yoga it is (as Geetaji would

say) your duty to be constantly monitoring and upgrading your teaching skills.

For those of you who are still completing your initial three years of training but have begun to teach, has your thirst for knowledge been quenched by teaching? Yes, we all experience that thrill of putting into practice what we have learned and understood, of receiving positive feedback from our students. How relaxed the students feel! What good teachers we are! What a great class we taught! Here is the biggest trap of all awaiting the neophyte teacher. We have to remember that it is the practice of yoga that is wonderful, and the most valuable gift we can pass on to anyone. When we teach really well we are acting as a conduit which connects the students to a body of timeless wisdom: to the truth about themselves, their lives, their world — even their universe. They have to make their own journey; it is up to us to see that they are properly prepared.

In his sutras, Patanjali states that ignorance is the major obstacle on the yogic path and the source of all

▼ Two west "coasters" — Claudia from Vancouver and Lauren from Victoria



other obstacles. A good teacher is a channel for the light of knowledge. When we are teaching well, this light will illuminate and reveal the students' resistance and ignorance, and they are not always grateful. In fact, in my experience, they are very rarely grateful at that precise moment and, depending on the maturity of the student and the personal work they have done before coming to this class (in this life or others), it may be a long time before they are able to feel any gratitude.

This is not to suggest that classes cannot or should not be fun. Laughter is a great help in dealing with obstacles on the spiritual path. Laughter has been an integral part of my experience of working with B.K.S. Iyengar and Swami Radha, laughter sometimes mixed with tears. Laughter has helped me overcome anger and self-pity, and the futility of blaming other people or circumstances for predicaments I have got myself into. A sense of humour is an essential ingredient for progress in yoga.

▶
Barbara Dick, Nfld,
Sally Kerr, Bermuda,
Andy Orr, Toronto



▲ Shirley & Pamela Stewart

However, the purpose of yoga is not to "feel good" and the purpose of teaching is not to make others feel good but to help them become proficient in the use of certain spiritual tools. In the case of Iyengar Yoga, these tools are primarily asana and pranayama. Their prolonged practice will definitely improve the quality of life for all students and they will feel better about themselves. However, we have to bear in mind that with our

students we do not know what karma is involved. Maybe when they come to yoga they will practise regularly and change slowly and steadily. Maybe their obstacles will be such that they will need to become very uncomfortable and confused before they begin to initiate changes. Maybe they will leave yoga and avoid making these changes at all. If we refuse to face our obstacles, sooner or later, whether we are doing yoga or not, we will receive a blow from what Swami Radha



referred to as a “two by four” — a wake up call! We can't run away from ourselves and our destiny.

Most of us employ many different strategies, sometimes facing major challenges like a warrior and at others behaving more like a wimp. Our students will be no different. Our job is to train them so that they will have strength, stamina and courage to keep going even in the most difficult of times, to make sure they are so well versed in their practice that it will be there to sustain them when they need it most. For us to do this job compassionately and effectively, we have to refine our own body, mind, senses and speech through our own practice. We must become so knowledgeable about the asanas that we can teach them in a clear, precise, uncluttered, professional manner, knowing how to sequence them properly so that they may fulfil their purpose. To this end we have to know the asanas inside out and be able to teach them safely and efficiently in all situations to all who come to our classes. We have to know ourselves through *svadhyaya* or self-study. We have to study the philosophy which lies behind all of this work and put it into practice in our teaching and all of our life. Is it not our duty?

For me it was a very great honour to receive my certificate from Guruji last summer. I was also delighted to see those who have trained with me awarded their certificates. Applications for assessment must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation. I had no hesitation and it was a pleasure for me to write letters of recommendation for those local teachers who attended this year's assessments. I knew they were more than ready. When the time comes, I hope your recommending teacher can respond with the same pleasure and confidence. A tradition has been established which I hope you will continue.

In the Light of Yoga,
Shirley Daventry French

Pictures in the Clouds

by Lauren Cox

Thursday, June 18

“Have fun!” All week people have been saying that to me. Have fun? I know they mean well, but do they realize the irony of it? I'm flying to Toronto to be assessed, tested, graded, compared, challenge and constructively criticized on something I've been teaching for 10 years and practicing for more than double that. Have fun?

The half hour car ride provided a mild sense of fun as I chatted with my sister between the early morning yawns. The forty-five minute wait at the airport again proved to be ‘fun’ in that it provided me with the opportunity to surprise Carole Miller with a hug from behind. She was already certified, having been through the assessment in March. She gave me some words of encouragement and we parted with a hug at Gate 1. It was fun that my connecting flight in Vancouver was not hours away. I enjoyed my brisk walk through the post rainfall dampness of the Vancouver airport to check in and board as soon as I approached again another Gate 1. And it is always fun to try and sit on airplane seats. Due to my size it is not impossible to squat or sit in *sukasana*, *sidasana*, *padmasana* or *virasana*. I spent an hour stretching in the back of the plane when I exhausted all the seated variations. Back in my seat I sat in *virasana* leaning my forehead on the back of the seat in front of me. If anyone should ask I'll just tell them I'm boosting my immune system. So yes, I am having fun. But I know that the big fun is yet to come!

My hostess met me at the airport and provided me with transportation all weekend. Jean Ahlgren and her husband John provided me with comfortable lodging and took all the stress out of having to deal with public transit.

Friday, June 19

Good sleep. Firm bed. Lots of bird activity around 4 a.m. Knowing that the assessment orientation was scheduled for 6 p.m. I enjoyed the luxury of sleeping in till 8 a.m. (it was 5 a.m. Victoria time I rationalized). I stretched and did my practice in Jean's yoga room after a pleasant jog along one of the many trails along the river. What a treat!

We arrived at Yonge and Eglinton Streets around 5 p.m. I met the assessors already at work when we got to the top of the stairs at the Toronto Yoga Centre - Ingelise, Marie-Andree, Shirley, Margot, Sheri, the 2 Marlenes and Mahyar. People slowly trickled in and the group of lucky 13 came together at 6 p.m. to begin the process.

Round 1: the big practice was to begin. Assessors perched or leaned on pune ponies and wandered around the outer peripheries of the room while the timer took her place and called out the poses. I felt focused and drew strength from the stillness of the group as we each went into our poses. Even though I was unaware of anyone else, I felt the group coming together.

Before dispersing we drew numbers and I got '4'. Team #4 consisted of Marilyn Prange and Andy Orr from Toronto as well as myself. We will be the last team to teach on Sunday morning.

I was already awake before my 5.30 alarm. A few stretches and then out the door for a quiet jog. Saw some wonderful pictures in the clouds - A Kahil Gibran face, a young German Shepherd, a reclining cat, face of Hanama and an angel. Interesting!

Round 2: 8-11 a.m. Each group worked on getting a class of 16 poses together with an assigned theme in mind.

Round 3: 1 p.m. Claudia McDonald from Vancouver started of #1 from Group #1. What are the chances I end off our session on Sunday as #3 from Group #4?

Numbness is setting in. My rajasic nature is not being honoured (and what little tamasic nature I have is hurting from sitting - even the bolster feels too hard). The irony of the situation comes to mind - my ego is working overtime - I am a member of the last group, I will be teaching the quietening poses, I will be sitting quietly for hours just watching, just listening, just waiting - and it's only Round 3!

Group #1 is done now. They can exhale!

Round 4: 5 p.m. Interesting to watch teachers' body language. They're getting a little more relaxed now. I notice that perhaps I'm a little more relaxed now. Shirley can relate to my discomfort in having to wait, having to hold back till the end. We laugh - its all a lesson.

Sunday June 21 - Happy Solstice!

Day of Rounds 5 and 6 dawned bright and beautiful. I awoke willingly and embraced the day and all it held. I turned on the bedside radio and was greeted with beautiful music. I slipped into my shirt and shorts to go downstairs to feed Jasper her rice milk before heading out the door.

Big skies greeted me. Pictures in the clouds today included a crocodile, a frog, an upward dog bounding across the skies and several Ganeshas. One by himself and another strong white one confronting a smaller dark immature ganesh. I saw a playful female figure doing a drop over from Tadasana. Just for the sheer joy of it all.

I ran strong, felt strong and greeted the beautiful bright ball of a sunrise with big arms and big heart giving thanks to the greater power from above and within. Back to the house by 6.30. The temperature at 7.30 was already 27!

Everyone was in a good mood this morning. More than half the teachers have taught. Claudia and I shared a hearty raucous exchange. I explained it as giddiness

from her relief of having already done.

Round 5: Group #3 wrapped up their backbend session by 9.30 a.m. During my time out I observed how a number of assessors wore total or dominantly black during the weekend. Shirley wore light colours during the first two days and on the last day wore navy - she might have subconsciously wanted to recede a bit more into the background during my day of assessment. I remember her words, "What I have to say won't count." Even though her observations won't count, I know that she's done all that she could to help me along my journey to this point. And so, to my 'Gandalf', I give her thanks and from her teachings and guidance I draw strength to approach this whole exercise with humour and optimism.

Round 6: Sheri handed us the cup with the numbers and guess what? Seeing the '3' did not register right away - when I unfolded my piece of paper it was sideways. After my initial 'suspended' reaction I gasped and threw it up in the air to call out "I KNEW IT!" Someone from the room called out, "You did say so this morning."

The final act - 12.30 p.m. My turn! I felt clear and focused. When my allotted time came to an end it felt sweet.

5 p.m. Cars going up and down Yonge Street honking horns, waving flags, wipers going, hanging out and waving arms and cheering. What perfect timing - we just finished our wrap up celebration with photo taking and cake cutting. A sense of lightness was with us all. The celebration outside was a bit more boisterous but the celebration inside was no less happy. I found out that the party outside was due to a World Cup win. My chauffeurs arrived at the agreed time and we soon merged with the joyful parade!

Originally, I thought my low point of the weekend was picking #4 and #3!! But hindsight it was a valuable lesson. I was rewarded by my hours of sitting, observing, listening and waiting. When my turn came I was

ready. I felt like the knight of swords - able to cut through the unnecessary sorting, discarding, keeping what was needed, staying focused, being flexible like my fluid chain mail. So when it was my turn, I approached the challenge calm and clear. There wasn't the expected quickening of pulse or moistening of skin. All that waiting was for the best.

B.K.S. Iyengar 80th Birthday Celebration



Sunday, December 13, 1998

10:00 am to 4:30 pm

- *Workshops for all levels of students* •
- *Reflections on his writings* •
- *Whole Group Savasana* •
- *Birthday Cake* •

Details in special birthday issue



Light on Cycling

by Bill Wilson

Now that Mr. Iyengar is approaching 80, I'm wondering if we might see him make writing forays into more leisurely activities - Light on Sailing, Light on Gardening, Light on Running. Certainly appealing subjects for Cascadiana....but what would find universal appeal throughout the world is a dissertation on cycling. Yes - I'm sure Mr. Iyengar cycles. I have a vision of him....loosely half-dressed, barefoot, sitting upright on a one or 3-speed taking the world in as it comes - not even having to pedal - he just rolls his wheels!

And now I conjure up a vision of myself - by the time you read this I'll be cycling around Wales and Ireland exploring pagan roots and Celtic lore and working out all the ways of doing yoga on a bike. I'll hear all those familiar refrains in the wind - "focusing on the breath",

"heels down", "tucking the tail", "rolling the wheels".....

Or maybe I'll be wondering why I thought a purple sticky mat could replace a camper's sleeping pad or why I didn't follow through with replacing my bicycle seat with a wooden block - would my butt have felt any different at the end of the day? Probably better.

So lately, now in the present, I've been considering the yogic aspects of cycling and following along the lines of Mr. Iyengar - the importance of grounding and alignment.

Grounding oneself on a bike is done at the three points where the hands, butt and feet contact the bike. If you look broadside at your bike and see these three points as the apexes of a triangle (since the feet revolve around a point, the crankset is considered the foot apex) the way this triangle is shaped and tilted is the

“setup” on your bike. And just like our downward dogs, seemingly insignificant nuances in how we place our hands, feet and butt have considerable effect.

Tilting the triangle down to the front gives the classic 10-speed racing position bent forward into the hooks of drop bars and looking down at the road. I think I need to work on forward bends for several lives before I find this position comfortable, but for those who have the flexibility, it is a very efficient position. One drawback is that more weight is placed on the hands but this is partly compensated by the multiple hand positions drop bars offer. These bar positions also allow you to vary the depth of the forward bend.

Tilting the triangle back, the other extreme is the classic English upright “sitting on a wooden block” position, straight back, looking forward, passively taking the world in as it comes. Lauren Cox is the quintessence of this riding position. There is some loss of power and increased wind resistance but...yogis are not in a hurry anyways.

In yoga we are always reminded to fully extend our limbs but it's very common to see cyclists with knees that never straighten. No wonder knee pain is such a common complaint, that side of the setup triangle needs to be lengthened by raising the wood block er...seat,

Pedals. All the cycling experts would have us place the ball of the foot directly over the pedal axle and to descend the heels on the down-stroke. From a yoga perspective this sounds good - the weight on the ball should spread the foot and toes - only were it not for those shoes! And cycling shoes are some of the narrowest, tightest and hardest on the market, the theory being that all forces are to be transferred downward solidly into the pedal rather than wasted in lateral movement and cushioning. Serious yogi-cyclists should be riding barefoot with English rubber block pedals!

Handlebars set up the whole upper body, and there's

much more to them than just their height. If they are not wide enough they close up the chest and breath is strained. I also find the popular straight bars make breath more difficult and create shoulder tension. A backward curve of the bars will allow the upper arms to roll out.

Ideally our weight and movement is mirrored on both sides of the long axis of the bike and all movement parallel to that plane (don't let those knees stick out!). But just as there are differences between our left and right side in yoga, it can be carried through to cycling. In my case I always mount the bike from the left and stick out my left foot when stopped - I'm always leaning left even when moving, enough to show up on tread wear. It's only with very conscious effort that I can remember to use the right side too.

Of course, I couldn't end discussion without mentioning the spiritual aspects of cycling - the simplicity of it all, connecting with the earth, the rhythms and harmony.

Namaste

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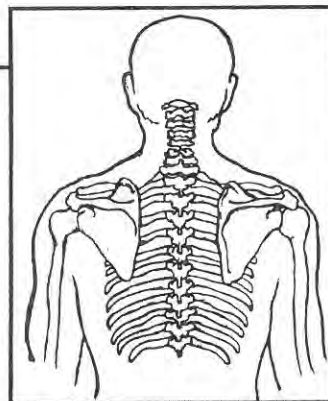
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Julie is a certified Iyengar Yoga teacher and licensed Physical Therapist in private practice in Portland, Oregon. For 20 years she has been integrating her anatomical and kinesiological knowledge of the body into the structure of the yoga poses. Julie teaches with clarity, strength and a delightful sense of humour. This is her second visit to Victoria. Julie's workshops are in great demand throughout the Pacific Northwest and the U.S.A.



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Notes From A Summer Journal

by Neil W McKinlay

In the summer of 1996, I decided to do yoga with the swim team I coach. Arising out of a great many factors, this decision was made mainly because I was dissatisfied with the stretching we had been doing to date and curious to see whether something a little more rigorous and precise - not to mention novel - would increase my swimmers' flexibility and interest level. Throughout this period I kept a journal, noting my impressions of the experiment's progress. While I had always intended to work these notes into an article for this newsletter, I somehow never got around to it. This summer, however, after local teacher in training Ty Chandler came and did a wonderful one hour class with the kids, after I asked two of the participants to write something up, I realised an ideal time to resurrect the journal project was at hand.

As some background, I coach about 20 swimmers who are between 15 and 22 years of age. We swim together throughout the year, although May through August - the sixteen week span of these notes - is our most intense period, the period in which we train at least five times a week and attend competitions on most, if not all, weekends. Before every practice we get together and stretch. Monday and Friday, for only fifteen minutes, we do easy arm swings and such. On Tuesday and Thursday, however, we do thirty minutes of yoga. Wednesday, we do perhaps half this much yoga after we've finished in the water.

Hope you enjoy our discoveries!

Week One

Day One started with legs up the wall and while watching everybody get into position, I suddenly realised I really don't know how to teach yoga! Of course the swimmers don't know this, and if I don't let on I'm sure they won't figure it. After so many years coaching one would think I could fake it, but I decided to cut the session down to twenty minutes anyway - call me chicken. For someone who likes being organised - who is *used* to being organised - it was a little terrifying standing there, no direction in sight. Realisation number one, then, is that our teachers very probably have some idea of what they are going to do each class. Imagine!

We eventually focussed on active legs as, like me, they tend to be quite lazy in this regard. I think they got the point as all through practice they claimed they thought their legs were going to fall off! Part of this expression was obviously genuine, but another part, I suspect, was sort of showing off, making a big deal about doing something new, something freaky weird - something like yoga. Case in point: during a short kick set, someone waited until I was looking, then closed their eyes and hummed "ommm..."

Today everyone laughed when I demoed our first forward bend and moved a paltry 10 degrees! This laughter, I think, points to a potential problem with this whole experiment: the kids, like most of us, subscribe to a bigger is better model and yoga, much to my frustration, doesn't work this way. A lot of the challenge I encounter practising, in fact, stems from this. I always think the answer is to exert more, to go further, but in yoga such actions are always balanced with a need to maintain integrity - to simply do the pose properly. Sometimes it feels like I'm not going anywhere - and 'why do it if I'm not moving' is a more common thought than I want to admit. I hope they stay interested.



Week Two

We did our first Sun Salutation today! And after two rounds, we encountered our first sweat ! A couple interesting questions came out of this, and it was a new experience having to answer them for other people - for people, more specifically, with less experience than myself. First, someone asked why yoga was so hard, why we were so tired after only twenty minutes. I told them that we are very active in yoga - maybe more fully active than in any other activity! The body is moving, creating space, in all directions. Muscles are reaching up and down, joints are opening. And the mind is made to attend to - no, to *participate* in - all of this! No wonder you're tired! Second question was why so much attention to legs and feet? These are our foundation, our ground, I explained. It is through our legs and feet that we connect with and move in this world so doesn't this seem a good place to begin? I thought these answers were surprisingly adequate. As I spoke them, however, I felt nervous - as if Shirley were near at hand, checking up on me.

Maybe teaching yoga to the swimmers wasn't such a great idea. I feel out of whack afterwards, when I'm standing on deck and they're in the water. Demoing one side but not the other is crazy. It's like - well, I'm not quite sure what it's like but it is noticeable and I don't really like the feeling. Plus, they get to practice while I just stand around! How do teachers do it? Why?

I'm amazed how quickly things are being picked up! Not that our first triangle was all that great - but at least the idea of active legs seems to be digging in. Not wanting to be overly stereotypical, but it seems - with this group anyway - that the bigger, more muscular guys are really struggling. Their ability to move into and through the poses is quite restricted. I try to be encouraging and to explain things when I can, but once again I have concerns about continued interest if their conceptions of flexible - not to mention their egos - are so challenged. On the other hand, exposure to different ideas about strength and flexibility can't be such a bad thing!

Week Three

Warrior Two was introduced and, for the first time, the group really sucked. I tell the coaches who work for me that if something in a practice goes poorly the first thing to do is ask what was lacking in my instruction? Same thing here. What was lacking? I think I need to move into the pose more gradually next time. I think I need to take more time warming up the legs, the groin, the hips before trying something like this again.

Coming out of poses is becoming an issue. Some - a lot of them actually - just twist themselves out of whatever we're doing and I can actually see the strain that's placed on knees and hips - on *teenaged* knees and hips, joints that are still growing, still developing, still vulnerable. I need to instill the truth that going in and coming out are as much a part of a pose as being there, that beginning and end are real and vital parts of the whole and should be given due respect!

Warrior Two revisited. Moved toward this pose much more gradually this time, much more deliberately. Spent time warming up, reminding everyone about active legs, active arms. Spent a lot of time in runner's lunge - rear heel pushing back, front knee moving forward, holding a 45 degree angle. It was hard for them when we got to the full pose, but the improvement was dramatic. Getting them to keep their upper bodies lifting - and helping some with this - seemed to release a lot of energy that wasn't available before. It was quite amazing to watch. So impressed was I, in fact, that we did a quick Warrior One afterward. A lot of sore bums and lower backs....

I'm wondering what might be an acceptable balance between just doing the pose and doing it properly. In swimming, I encourage coaches to get beginners 'just doing' and to then work on integrity as time passes. There are a lot of coaches who disagree with this. What is the view in yoga I wonder? In Iyengar Yoga specifically, where so much emphasis is placed on precision?

Week Four

I'm having trouble getting the kids to lift their sit bones in Downward Facing Dog, to get this part of their body rising while their heels descend. I think of how this might be taught - without props as we have none - at the Y. Most likely with some physical contact. Hands and fingers touching the area needing awareness/energy is a very effective teaching method, speaking from my own experience. But it is also very invasive and while, at the Y, there is an acknowledgment that this invasiveness is appropriate and even desired, I'm not certain the same exists at the pool. In fact, I'm quite certain it doesn't. I don't feel comfortable touching my swimmer's buttocks and saying bring attention here! Sometimes, I've used my feet to lightly touch something in someone's legs and I've used a finger to point, but fuller contact seems inappropriate. I could always ask - although this raises a whole other set of issues. It's frustrating because I feel a really valuable tool for instruction exists outside my reach!

"All we're doing is repeating the same thing over and over." This thought was voiced during a longer sun salutation today - longer meaning 6 to 8 repetitions. Yoga does seem like 'the same thing over and over' in a way, but because my awareness differs from moment to moment, 'boring' is not a word I would use. Repetitious, perhaps. But I must acknowledge that the opportunity for boredom is always there - after all, we are 'doing the same thing...' So how might I structure sessions to avoid dribbling toward boredom? Especially with younger individuals, shorter attention spans? Variations, isolations, different explanations, highlights, partner work, demonstrations are all things we do in class that I haven't touched on yet. Perhaps I should try to broaden my approach.

Week Five

Heavy shoulder work today and it was both well received and well performed. Early on we did Cow's Head and few could even touch their fingers; ten minutes and three or four poses later we tried again and even the least flexible touched tips for an instant! Afterwards, I think everybody was impressed to actually experience the effect a really good stretch can have on performance in the water - which is just what I had hoped would happen. Perhaps one day, my swimmers will do yoga before racing!

Regarding my fears of boredom: today I thought my instruction, my planning, might address this through considering some of the following: don't focus on any one pose too long; keep moving; move around the body, use different parts in varying ways; let the poses be less than perfect; try something new and/or challenging each day (I'm amazed how open they are to some of the more 'difficult' poses...."That looks cool they say, let's try it!"); on a related note, do something familiar, something that they can do relatively well, each day; finally, remember my audience - these are young people not necessarily interested in a lifetime of yogic practice...they are naturally curious but not necessarily committed - work with this, don't change it, simply work with it!

Forward bends after practice - much complaining and, then, silence!



Week Six

How am I supposed to correct Dog Pose? Words and demonstrations only go so far! I still don't feel good about physical manipulations. And I'm still not confident they will be careful enough in partner work. What about props? They are so taken for granted downtown, what I wouldn't do for a belt! In spite of all this, however, after another good shoulder warmup, I found Dog was much improved. Sequencing seems very important - a good sequence can basically lead students right into a new pose. But this demands knowledge of how each pose works, etc... Ideally I should know this without teaching, but standing in front of a bunch of beginners, pretending to teach, certainly puts a lot more pressure on me to know such stuff. Maybe I should do some reading...

Week Seven

Someone found a picture of headstand somewhere. "Can we do this?" First thing I think is 'Some of you might be menstruating,' so I say no. "Why not?" Okay, now I'm in a bit of a bind. I am not prepared to talk about *this* - definitely more than I bargained for!!!

Week Eight

Introduced props today - a piece of rope perhaps three feet in length. Not much by any means, but the impact was extraordinary! Cow's Head improved dramatically - as did the esteem of those who typically struggle in

the pose. We did a longish series of leg raises with the rope and it was obvious that some were, finally, cluing into the idea of staying active in a pose. The rope, I guess, gave them something to press against. It's kind of funny that their musculature is not enough - or is it

something else? Is it more that their *awareness*, at this moment, is not enough? That their physical intelligence has not yet developed in this way and the external aid is needed to draw awareness in the appropriate direction? Coming out of poses remains a real problem... Just like swimming, I guess - even on a good day, you always return to the basics.



Week Nine

More prop revelations! Downward Dog was much improved! I could actually see it in their bones - the realisation of what it actually *means* to have light, lifting arms! Just a clearer flow of energy - at least this is what it looked like! One person actually gasped as their partner applied

lift from behind. It didn't work for everyone, though. Some still struggled, especially those with really tight hamstrings. These just don't seem to allow the pelvis any mobility, which in turn keeps the back rounded, etc... One boy was having serious struggles in this regard, so I gave him a hand later on, when we were in Dandasana, where hamstrings pose similar problems. I got him to pull hard on his butt flesh, to strongly activate his legs - to drive the thighs into the floor - and with my hands pulling his arms and my knee pressing into his back, lifted up. Big difference! And

when I let go, he even held it...well, for a second or two. It was a neat feeling using my own, seeing my own, experience help another. When we did the pose again, the rounded back had returned though. I'm impressed he keeps trying.

Did Viparita Karani after practice tonight. They loved it, though I had to keep reminding them the aim was not to sleep, but to soften into, sink into, broaden one's awareness. Someone asked if we could do it every day after swimming!

Week Eleven

We had a very long meet this weekend and I thought it might be a good idea to do some all-over work - arms, legs, joints. Everyone was slow and stiff, though this shouldn't be too surprising - two 11 hour days, two 4 hour drives, a lot of fast swimming, no warm downs, short warm ups, etc... Anyway, I was impressed at just how well the slow, general stretch worked - once reluctance to begin was overcome. They seemed, if not recovered, at least more alive and open once in the water. This highlights the importance of being able to recognise what is needed at any given point. A preset plan is great - it is good to be organised - but equally, one needs to respond to what lay in front of you. It is important to recognise what is appropriate at a particular time, what is needed in the moment. I think this ability is at least one mark of a good teacher.

Week Twelve

We talked about attention this week. What are your legs doing as your arms lift? What is your hand doing as you firm your knees? Where is your weight distributed? Are your shoulder blades cutting in or sliding out? Trying to soften the mind, to ease its edges so

there is curiosity throughout the body is a constant challenge. I can certainly feel this in my own practice but boy oh boy, I see it in the swimmers. Their faces when doing *tadasana*, when I ask "Are your legs still active?" are something else! The clear surprise that legs have been forgotten! Sudden surprise, like they've just wakened from a dream!

Used *Vrksasana* to talk more about internal focus and slowly, surely they picked up on the idea. A great pose for this. Don't look at your neighbour. Don't turn toward people passing by. Don't bend over to see your leg straighten. Just feel your own positioning. And when that positioning is solid, move on. Lift your knee, your torso, your head, your arms. And all the while check your place in the world, keep coming back to make certain it is solid before going any further. Know where you are. Great pose. An intelligent practice. And when they hit the water, they seemed so much more present in their movements.

Did some running late in the week - a lot of starting and stopping, starting and stopping - and everybody was very sore afterward. We did a lot of long, slow forward bends - held each one for an extended time, kept really active legs. There were a lot of complaints to begin, but slowly things started to release for most of them, at least a little. There were even a few astonished exclamations!

Week Fourteen

Came back after a week off doing yoga. So this was, in fact, our first session in twelve days. A couple of things struck me. First, how excited the swimmers were, how much they seemed to have missed it. Second, how good a warmup yoga actually provides - especially compared against what we've normally done. I'm continually amazed at how ready both physically and mentally the



swimmers are after thirty minutes of practice...no matter, it seems, what we do.

It's a very different experience, standing up front and teaching a class versus standing up front and leading a practice. I want to move to a more practice-based model for the rest of the summer for a couple reasons. First, the swimmers are familiar enough with 'the basics' for me to leave them alone for a while. I think it might be nice for all of us to have me a little less directive as they move through the poses - it might be a break. Second, with summer winding down and race season upon us, I want to introduce less and less new stuff and give them more time to practice what they know. I do much the same in the water through this phase of the summer and I used to do the same with dryland (situps, pushups, etc...) when we did that - 'tapering' is the technical term - so it makes sense to do the same with yoga. At least I think it does. Finally, in a purely selfish vein, I'm so busy right now these sessions are sometimes my best opportunity to do yoga and I want to make use of that. I'm tired and flustered and barely holding on so I say nuts to lopsided, nuts to teaching, I'm just going to follow along. How often do my teachers think this I wonder? How often do they want to - *decide to* - just practice with the rest of us? Now I wonder if I am living up to their example.

Week Fifteen

The season's nearly over and, rather than writing about what's *going on*, I want to consider what has *gone on*. What do I think, looking back, of this experiment? I think, first of all, that I am amazed by the swimmers' patience, by their tolerance for something as weird as yoga. Perhaps I underestimated their curiosity. Perhaps I was wary of being laughed out of the pool trying to teach this stuff. I don't know, but I am amazed nonetheless. Did yoga increase their flexibility? Funny, but this became sort of irrelevant as time wore on, it's not something I really thought about. I would like to say "Of course it did!" but I really don't have any way to measure this. Interesting. I am astonished at just how

HAWAII

Yoga and Adventure Retreat

Felicity Green and Jan Roberts

*Six days of Iyengar Yoga, swimming, kayaking,
and hiking in some of Hawaii's most lush
and exciting terrain. March 1999. Call:*

Jan Roberts (808)889-0222
PO Box 1561 Kapa'au, HI 96755
email: yogajan@gte.net

much I actually know about yoga. Several times a year I run a coaching clinic with a friend of mine. This course is intended for younger coaches and based on the assumption that they already know a fair bit about swimming, but just need some help moulding that into something they can use on deck. I feel a lot like that myself. When pushed by the task before me, I really thought about how certain poses worked and how they related to one another. I never got around to doing any research, to reading any books, so I was always drawing upon my own experience and the more I tried to draw, the more seemed to be there! Not saying I'll be replacing Shirley anytime soon, but still I was struck by the breadth of knowing. Of course, there was also so much I didn't know, but learned to avoid or compensate for - or just plain fake - as the summer wore on. Lastly, I am slightly shocked at how much I enjoyed doing this with the swimmers. Tuesday and Thursday's pre-swimming yoga practices came to feel like something we did together, something that drew us together, made us tighter. In fact, the entire team is a little tighter because of this experiment - it was a bit of a novelty having the older swimmers doing this and yoga became a small conversation piece in some of the other groups and with a few of the parents. I certainly hadn't imagined this when we started, but I'm glad for this effect. Maybe we'll do it again next year then? Who knows.

Why We Do Yoga

by Lindsay Mitchell

People are always asking me why we do yoga as part of swimming, and I usually just shrug my shoulders and say, "Cause." Not that I don't know why, but it's hard to explain. Some people don't accept the idea of yoga being hard or challenging or painful, they picture class as a bunch of people sitting in lotus position, chanting a mantra - but this is *definitely* not what our group looks like every Tuesday and Thursday before we get in the water. Amongst us, there is an amazing range of flexibility - from those working to get their elbows on the floor, to those only barely holding their shins and grimacing. Yoga pushes us all, and so is an ideal activity - it allows even the most bendable to stretch themselves, while those who are not so pliable can hold where they feel challenged.

Many of the poses we did with Ty - the teacher in training who offered to take us under her wing for an hour and guide us through the rigours of a full practice - were new, but there were some old favourites in there: Downward Dog, Upward Dog, Warrior 1 and 2 and 3, Extended Angle. A new pose was Tree Pose. One foot on the ground, that leg active, the other leg bent and the instep on the side of the straight knee, we stretched both hands into the air and concentrated on our breathing, on our balance. This was a personal favourite as it allowed me to think about keeping myself steady and pushed away all other thoughts.

Near the end of the session, we lay down on our backs in the grass, feeling our bodies sink into the ground and feeling the air all around us. We were told to stay focussed on our surroundings and to keep our senses heightened while letting everything else release. Ty walked around silently, occasionally taking our hands or our feet and gently pulling, lengthening us out. When we were ready, we opened our eyes and slowly sat up, relaxed.

Like I said, people are always asking why we do yoga as part of swimming. We do it not only to improve our strength and flexibility, but also to find some time to relax and calm down in our lives, to become aware of our selves and our bodies and our surroundings. And while yoga is not always so peaceful and relaxing as after Ty had finished with us - while sometimes we hold poses that we feel for days, while sometimes we walk down to the change rooms flushed and glowing - it almost always pays off. Through yoga, we have definitely built both flexibility and strength. And it's flexibility and strength not only of our bodies, but also our minds.



the Victoria Yoga Centre presents



Family Yoga

Sunday, September 27, 1998

10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

YM-YWCA YOGA LOUNGE

♥ refreshments follow ♥

this workshop will introduce some basic poses. Emphasis will be on having fun. So bring, borrow or beg a child to join you!
minimum age: 6 years maximum age: no limit

YOGA CENTRE MEMBERS : \$25.00 = one adult + one child
NON-MEMBERS : \$30.00

To register phone Lauren : 382.3287 or YOGA CENTRE : 386.YOGA(9642)

YOGA OUR WAY

by Sarah Cape

I'm tired, I think to myself. Its a cool morning, mid July and I'm surrounded by a group of people - many of whom I have known for years, some whom I have only had the chance to get to know more recently. All of this is irrelevant of course. What is important is the situation. All of us are a little bit sleepy, and a little bit dazed, and each one of us is hurting a little bit at the present moment. I hear several groan coming from those around me, several voices muttering quietly. A fair amount of silence as well as concentration is also evident. You see, we are at a swim meet and it is probably about 6.45 a.m. and we're outside Nanaimo's Kinsmen Outdoor Pool. Why? Well, because that is what we do. Because we are all here for the week-end to compete yet again and try to achieve whatever goals we might have for this particular meet. This morning is unique in the fact that we aren't all dripping wet, just out of morning warm-ups like everyone else from the other teams. I am pleased with this. Imagine.....you're cold, you're tired and you are trying to prepare yourself both mentally and physically for a very stressful, emotional, demanding week-end. No, we're not in the water warming up. Neil, our team's Head Coach decided, much to our approval, that this morning perhaps it would be best if we were to skip the usual warming up and do a little yoga.

People from other teams are always asking why we do yoga. And to be honest, I'm not quite sure. About three years ago, Neil incorporated yoga into our training. Personally, I just figured we might do it for that season and have a little fun learning something that Neil enjoys himself. Imagine my surprise as we continued to do yoga for the next year and this summer as well. Not that I'm complaining. Far from it actually! Tuesdays and Thursdays before we get into the water, we spend about 30 minutes learning several poses. On Wednesdays after practice, we all emerge from the change rooms for approximately twenty minutes of stretching/yoga.

Commonly practiced poses are downward dog, upward dog, sun and moon salutations and many others that I'm sure you'd laugh at if I tried to spell them. This year we took another step and had a friend of Neil's, teacher in training Ty Chandler, come and teach us for an hour-long class, showing us various skills and answering some of our questions. We all worked pretty hard and she seemed pretty impressed with us. We enjoyed it so much that we unanimously requested to have her come teach us again.

My perspective on why we do yoga three times a week has changed over the past few years. At first, as I mentioned before, I thought it was just something fun to try, different from the exciting world of plain stretching. Soon, I began to realize the benefits that yoga had to offer me, someone with a mile-long list of injuries. I realized that it was helping us get just a little stronger and a little more flexible. Then I began to put together the fact that some of the yoga we did, especially the relaxing poses where we focus on breathing and our environment, just might serve as a guide for visualizing or calming nerves at meets or other situations. Then comes the fact that we all do yoga together. Sometimes in pairs, sometimes with demos, sometimes seemingly on our own. But never really "on our own". We always do yoga together in the same spot each week. Together being the key word. Since our team is, in my opinion, half swimming, half socializing, yoga is a uniquely fun way for our group to share something. Everyone laughs as we all groan during our first week back to swimming after a restful winter. Everyone makes similar funny noises as we push ourselves to go a little bit further. Everyone falls down at least once.

So we haven't totally mastered all the skills yet, and we don't always do things the conventional way. But somehow none of this matters at all. We aren't about perfecting our yoga skills, and perhaps people who do yoga seriously wouldn't understand why we do it. I'm not even sure why we do it, what our reason is. But as I've shown already, we have received so much from it. And who really needs a reason?

Why Do We Do Yoga?

B.K.S. Iyengar

We begin to do yoga with a motive. That motive may be for health, or for making a career or enjoyment of worldly pleasures or for emancipation. It is only after we continue practicing yoga that it dawns on us that we do not do yoga for health, or for enjoyment or for emancipation. Then, why do we do yoga?

In his treatise, the Yoga Sutras, Patanjali explains in the very beginning that mind, intelligence, consciousness and the very core of our being gets involved with thought waves making us forget for that moment their true element of nature. This conjunction of mind, intelligence and consciousness with the thoughts of the objects seen, perceived or conceived create desires. These desires make one to act at once without using the discriminative faculty (the extra sense given to man) and one becomes a victim of his own thoughts and deeds.

Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita that each one of us remains unmanifest in the beginning, gets manifested and at the end dissolves into the unmanifested state. The cycle of our life is in these three forms; from the unmanifested form towards manifestation and from manifestation to unite back into the unmanifested state. Along with this cycle, our wheel of desires, fulfillments and frustrations get recycled as subliminal impressions.

These subliminal impressions act as seeds in our lives. These subliminal impressions, which are formed on account of our actions and accumulated merits and demerits of our past lives, become the cause of pleasures and pains of this life. The cultivation of modes and moods of this life becomes a springboard for the next life. Hence, Patanjali's expositions come handy to minimize these impressions so that the practitioner of yoga can build up free will and make his own destiny. He resolves to face and accept the fruits of his past actions and passively undergoes the merits and demerits without being caught in the web.

Life is eternal like nature which is eternal. As nature revolves as past, present and future, so life too revolves between birth, death and rebirth.

Uninterrupted practice of Yoga done with devotion, as propounded by Patanjali or Svatmarama, keeps the practitioner free from motivation, desire and reward and he develops discriminative intelligence. This discriminative intelligence which develops in the practitioner of Yoga keeps his mind free from contact of the tempting objects and yokes it to the soul which is unmoving, unrotating but ever in the state of present.

Yoking the mind, intelligence and consciousness to the Soul or the Self is possible only through the Yogic disciplines which keep the body firm and pure, mind stable and intelligence clear.

Precisely this is what the practice of Yoga does. Patanjali does emphatically say in Sutra II.28 that, "Through reverential practice of Yoga, the fire which emanates from the practice burns out the impurities of body, mind and intelligence and bestows the consciousness with the crown of wisdom for it rests on the lap of the Self." From then on the never changing intuitive light of the Self radiates and frees the practitioner from the actions which are filled with afflictions.

Therefore practice of Yoga is meant only to eradicate such actions which may not afflict the practitioner. Then emancipation is in his hands.

Like the nine planets of the zodiac which as the servants of God maintain a rhythmic universal order, we have nine gates in our body - two eyes, ears, nostrils and a mouth, anus and generative organ. By the regular practice of Yoga these nine gates which cause nine afflictions (disease, sluggishness, doubt, carelessness, idleness, sense of gratification, living in the world of illusion, not being able to hold on to what has been undertaken, and inability to maintain the progress achieved) are controlled and then the energy is channeled towards self realization.

As one installs a device in the form of a metallic rod on the top of a house to absorb the impact of lightning and prevent it from striking the building; practice of Yoga protects the practitioner by minimizing the onslaught of the effects of the past and present actions and frees him from bondage.

Thus, the main reason for us to stick to yoga is to free ourselves from the fluctuations and afflictions. The practice of yoga guards the doer from the recurrence of mixed sorrows and pleasures and thus dualities are minimized.

That is why I continue with my practice daily. My advice to all of you is to practice with intensity daily, so that one can reach that state of emancipation that is free from the afflictions of sorrows.

That is why Yoga is done!!

REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. The Finance Committee is looking for 2 or 3 people to assist with an informal internal review of the financial records of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society. This review would take place in late December or early January (fiscal year end is October 31) and would require a minimal commitment of time.
2. The Board is seeking an accountant to prepare the Annual Financial Statement for the Victoria Yoga Centre Society and to act as a resource person for the Treasurer on an occasional basis, throughout the year. The Society has the resources to provide for a modest honorarium.

Please contact our Treasurer, Jerrilyn Wass,
at 478-3867 if you can help.



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)

Discussion with
Lama Tashi Namgyal

Date: Friday, Oct 16, 1998

Everyone is welcome to join us.

A Special Day

*Today slipped by
Like water on slithering stones
Smooth and easy
Like the grey threads of fog
That wound around me
As I walked to a Yoga workshop.*

*How strong and lithe
The body felt
As we glided through the asanas
Upper back and shoulders
Responding to needed stretches
Muscles tensed
And relaxed
Filling the cells with energy.*

*Later on
Sweet tiredness
Crept through
From the skin to the very bones
As they lay stretched
On the chair on the sun-filled deck.*

*Touched too the soul
Dulled to Mantra chanting
And voiceless meditation
A feeling of being the Great Compassionate One.*

*It had been a day
Of body meeting soul
A cherished treasure
A gem of days.*

Anonymous



Volunteer Coordinator

by Leslie Hogya

The Yoga Centre was feeling the need to try and coordinate efforts a little more, so we thought we should have a volunteer coordinator. Thank you Traci Skuce for offering to do this job. Traci has just begun teacher training and is the mother of two year old Seamus. She said she would be glad to help do a job that could be done from home. The two ideas came together, so welcome Traci.

For those of you new to our community, the Yoga Centre is a non-profit society. The board is made up of yoga practitioners and Iyengar Yoga teachers. We do not have a building, our centre is more ephemeral. Many of our activities take place at the Victoria YM-YWCA. The Y generously donates the Yoga Lounge to us to use for our Friday night gatherings and teachers' meetings.

We have a huge array of volunteers, some doing more than one job, some of them taking hours per month (such as the newsletter editors), others do small, but essential ones. Some people help at one time events, others work year after year at the same job.

Many of us on the executive do lots of jobs; small, clerical, errand running jobs because its easier to just do it and get it over with than to take the time to find someone to do it, explain the nature of the task to them, perhaps deliver the materials, pick it up later, or worry about whether or not the job got done, or how well.

The kinds of things volunteers do:

- running errands, picking up photocopying
- designing flyers
- taking, typing, distributing minutes
- ordering envelopes and stationery
- delivering the newsletter to the post office
- answering the voice mail
- bookkeeping, making deposits
- typing for the newsletter
- setting up coffee at Friday night gatherings
- stapling the newsletter, putting it in envelopes

- paying bills, sending bills
- investigating insurance coverage
- phoning people with messages
- taking registration
- checking the Yoga Centre mail box and distributing the mail
- soliciting items for the newsletter and/or doing the writing and editing
- coordinating events
- keeping the library
- selling books, ordering books
- keeping the membership list, making labels for the newsletter
- finding someone to volunteer to do some of the above

These jobs, and more, are done regularly - maybe you could help do one. Maybe you have offered to help in the past, but noone actually ever asked you to do anything. We have had that complaint; people say they will help but nothing comes of their offer.

Please don't give up on us. The problem with volunteer organizations is that they are run by volunteers and not everyone is aware of what others are doing, or who said what to whom. We hope with Traci's help we can make us of more volunteers.

How will it work? We have lots of jobs to do. People who would like a break from the job could notify Traci. People who are willing to do a job could be on file. Traci's job would be to try and keep the two lists feeding each other, and current.

Could you help us? Do you already do a job for the Yoga Centre, but would be willing to do another job on a short term basis when someone is away? We have enclosed a questionnaire in this newsletter you can complete and send to Traci, you can leave a message for her at 386-YOGA(9642) or you can call her at home, 920-7710.

In the meantime, come to your yoga class, help put the props away neatly. Come to the Friday night gatherings, the Sunday workshops. Join the Yoga Centre.

Karma Yoga

by Corrine Lowen

Over the years that I have practiced yoga, it has in its own way come to permeate every aspect of my life. In the beginning there was the new physical awareness. Those regions of my body that I didn't realize existed before were brought into sharp focus as I struggled to learn the poses. The amazing revelation of movement as I learned new variations and ways of deepening the work. The simplicity of Tadasana brought awareness of posture and the movement of energy into everyday life. Pranayama awakened awareness of the life force that breaths in all life.

Since moving to Victoria, I have been fortunate to further my practice as a part of the very vital and special yoga community here. Within this community the limbs of Yoga have extended to further enrich my life. Here I have had the great pleasure to share in the work of the many volunteers who contribute time and effort to make the Victoria Yoga Centre a strong, exciting and vital organization. This dedicated group of people have extended their practice to include Karma Yoga. "The active man finds realisation through Karma Marga, in which a man realises his own divinity through work and duty.... He who works selflessly for the welfare of others, with love in his heart is thrice blessed." (BKS Iyengar in *Light on Yoga*).

The operation of the Yoga Centre is attributable entirely to this wonderful group of people. They perform a wide variety of tasks ranging from short and simple to all consuming. Some of these people have selflessly dedicated their time and energy consistently since the Yoga Centre began nearly two decades ago. All Yoga Centre members, and anyone who takes part in the activities and classes provided by the Yoga Centre, are welcome to be a part of the wonderful Karmic energy that creates and supports the life of the organization. Volunteering offers an opportunity to expand your practice to another limb of yoga. It is a

great way to get to know the members of your yoga community. There are many ways you can offer your time or talents.

The Yoga Centre Executive would like to acknowledge and thank the volunteers who have worked with us over the past year and continue to do so. We would also like to invite everyone to consider making a small contribution of time to these efforts.

Thanks very much to the selfless dedication of these people whose efforts make it possible for us all to enjoy the wonderful yoga community that exists here:

Newsletter committee (rotating editors) - Lauren Cox, Shirley Daventry French, Jennifer Rischmiller, Caren Liedtke, Neil McKinlay, Louine Niwa

Layout and Production - Gord Hooker, Lauren Cox

Photography - many people have contributed regularly in this area, its a job that's ongoing, trying to get photos of workshops, etc. for the newsletter. If you attend a workshop, take your camera in case you get the opportunity to snap a pose or a person for the newsletter. Thanks!

Typing - mostly for the newsletter - is done to a large extent on computers nowadays as is the newsletter layout. The typing is done mostly by Shirley Daventry French and Jennifer Rischmiller although many writers now do their own and present it on a disc ready for layout.

Advertising - Carole Miller

Collating and distribution - For many years the collating was done solely by Renate Grinfelds and the distribution solely by Jill Roberts. However there is now a group which takes care of both: Karen DeLisle, Susan McLellan, Janine Beckner.

Volunteer Coordinator - Traci Skuce

Membership/Mailing List - Renate Grinfelds

Communications - Ann Cameron, Paul Lescarmure

Finance/Membership - Jerrilyn Wass, Carolyn Sophonow, Paul Lescarmure, Renate Grinfelds
Jim Rischmiller

Newsletter Index - Dave Rocklyn prepares the index every year.

Teachers Group Liaison - Marlene Miller, Linda Benn, Shirley Daventry French, Linda Benn

Special Advisors/Mentors - Shirley Daventry French, Derek French

Scholarship Committee - Linda Benn, Marlene Miller, Maggie Feehan

Program Committee - Corrine Lowen, Leslie Hogya, Wendy Winbush

Friday Night Gatherings - Wendy Winbush, Ty Chandler

Publicity - France, Julie Price

Workshop organization and registration - nearly everyone who is a local member of the Yoga Centre has covered this task at some time or another.

We know that this list can never be quite complete. So many make quiet contributions to the work and I am certain I have missed names. To those whom I cannot publicly acknowledge here today, please accept the heartfelt appreciation of the Victoria Yoga Centre and all of its members.

"Work alone is your privilege, never the fruits thereof. Never let the fruits of action be your motive; and never cease to work. Work in the name of the Lord, abandoning selfish desires. Be not affected by success or failure. This equipoise is called Yoga." (Quoted from the Bhagavad Gita in Light on Yoga).

To volunteer please call the Victoria Yoga Centre at 386-YOGA (9642).

Notes from the President

Leslie Hogya

When the summer issue of the newsletter appeared in the middle of a class I was teaching, there I was, in blue, on the cover.

The first copy I picked up, I ended up giving to Shirley Daventry French, whom I saw immediately after class, and so another day went by before I could get my own copy. It was a warm sunny afternoon and I was just rolling up my car windows to run an errand that day, and glanced down at the newsletter. I decided to have a peek and see how the interview looked in its final form. As I began to read the opening remarks by Caren Liedtke, hot tears started rolling down my face. I was taken aback at the tribute she paid me. She said she used me as a model for how to be in the world.

Later, on my way home, when a car cut me off, I started swearing and then suddenly thought, "What would Caren think of this behaviour!" It occurred to me that this is what it means to be in a spiritual community, and still function in the every day world. We support each other's ideals. As I said to Caren later, "Now I'm in your head and you're in mine."

I was busy that week and it took a few more days before I had time to finish the newsletter. I was again taken aback by Neil McKinlay's article. I wrote to Neil to thank him and said I didn't know what to say. I still don't. Except thank you.

Reports from the Salt Spring Retreat were written by many people who obviously enjoyed the Retreat very much and who are new writers for the newsletter. Thank you for your input. Write again! (See article on the new Volunteer Coordinator). The whole newsletter was rich with photos and articles. Congratulations, Caren, for a job well done. Caren Liedtke, editor of the July/August issue, did her first editing job of a full issue.

Yoga in New York

One of the wonderful things about being involved in Iyengar Yoga is that almost anywhere you go in the world, you can find an Iyengar class. Some years ago, when I began coming to New York with my husband while he did research in the New York theatre world, I couldn't find many classes in New York. Iyengar Yoga was, at first, much more on the west coast. But in 1994, I was going to be in the city for an extended period and had heard about the Iyengar Yoga Institute of New York so I set out, with my subway map and yoga tights, determined to find it. I decided noon hour was probably a very popular time for busy New Yorkers to fit in a yoga class and arrived before noon, to find I was right. (See the current attached schedule).

This past August (1998) I was fortunate enough again to be able to attend a few classes at the New York Institute. I stopped by their studio, which is located in a smaller office building on West 24th St. near Sixth Avenue, and picked up a current schedule, which is always available outside the door. The first thing I saw was that, on the day before, August 2, Mary Dunn had given two classes as a Tribute to B.K.S. Iyengar. All proceeds were to go towards the celebration of Gururji's birthday. I was wishing I had found this out earlier! But she had a class at noon on the following day for Level III students.

I arrived in plenty of time and immediately felt at home. Pictures of Iyengar hang on the walls, there

Sign in at
New York
Yoga Classes ►



are sticky mats and Iyengar books on sale, displayed in a small glass fronted case. Leaving the busy streets and subway, it was so comforting to be in this atmosphere. I am a member of the Institute and the young man at the desk recognized my name from the mailing list. And I felt more welcome.



▲ Mary Dunn, Iyengar Yoga Institute of New York

In the larger of two studios, students were signing in under the statue of Patanjali. People pay either by the month or by the class and each person must practice their yamas and niyamas by signing in, and leaving a cheque or cash for the class.

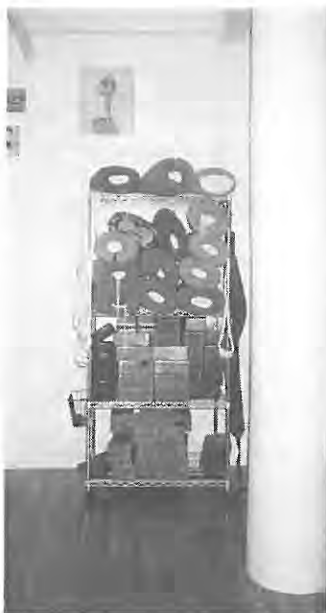
The class began with the quiet sound of OM being chanted by Mary at the front of the class. With my eyes closed, I could have been in India. The air was sultry, the fans overhead whirled and, outside, cars honked and buses roared. Yet in the centre of the city there was stillness.

Mary talked about the Tribute she had given on Sunday, and said it occurred to her that if it was a tribute, she was a tributary! She mentioned how she had found quotes of Gururji's to read or recite during that class and one she didn't use was, "Let fear descend and confidence ascend." I made a

mental note to remember this and several times during the class she referred to the quote again. Each time the words penetrated more and helped reinforce the maxim that anything we want to impart to our students needs to be repeated three times. In Tadasana, fear descends into the feet and away, confidence ascends, and I felt my sternum lift. We spread the feet from the metatarsals through each toe, and from the arch and through the heels, which activates the upper back thigh.

The class that day consisted of several series of standing poses in a sequence, usually including one of the balancing poses such as Arda Chandrasana or Virbradhasana III, interspersed with Uttanasana and Prasarita Padottanasana. Halfway through the class, we shifted to seated poses. We worked deeply into Paravrita Janusirsasana. At each stage of the pose, we stopped and let the work go deeper. Finally it was time for the class to end and we did Viparita Karani, ending with Savasana having our legs crossed on the bolster, our backs on the floor.

As teachers, wherever we live, we have Iyengar's teachings to follow. He demands that the standards are uniform, the principles of yoga remain, so no matter where we go to an Iyengar class, whether it is New York or Victoria, San Francisco or Paris, walking into a class there should always be a sense of being at home.



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, Nov 6, 1998

Everyone is welcome to join us.

1998 Teacher Training Intensive

The time was Thursday evening and we were at the home of Shirley Daventry French for a celebratory Indian banquet. We had one more day to go in the 1998 Teacher Training Intensive. In after dinner conversation with Leslie Hogya, I unwittingly mentioned writing an occasional outdoor recreation column for a weekend newspaper in Prince George. Without skipping a beat, Leslie came back with "Oh well would you mind writing something on the intensive for the newsletter - we'd love to get an out of town perspective."

I was caught, so here goes.

The course, the teachers, the other participants, and the location were all great; the weather cooperated well, and the hospitality shared by members of the Victoria Yoga Center Society was wonderful. In a word, it was outstanding! The class was taught by Shirley Daventry French, Leslie Hogya and Ann

Kilbertus, who between them have over 60 years of yoga teaching experience, and a dozen visits to India. They were assisted by Linda Benn, who I learned a few weeks earlier is the sister of Dave King, a mountaineering friend of 20 years in Prince George.

There were 29 students in the class, comprising 26 women and 3 men. This ratio was certainly agreeable from a male perspective, but it would be nice to have more of a balance. Six students were local, and 12 came from the remainder of Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland. Two students came from Prince George and one from Kelowna to complete the B.C. contingent, and three came from Alberta and Saskatchewan. Significantly, five people came from all over the continental US: Alaska, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The room had been accidentally double booked for the hour before the intensive was to start, and early arrivals on Monday morning were greeted by the sight of Leslie Hogya valiantly guarding the door to stop camp kids from tracking street stuff into the room. As we seated for the opening remarks, the Yoga room at the "Y"

seemed terribly crowded as the hot morning sun streamed full on through the generous windows. "No matter", we were told, "this will help simulate conditions in Pune." Yet as the week progressed, the environment proved to be pleasant and the space more ample.

Wrestling with the dilemma of whether to try and take notes, or to focus instead on absorbing as much learning as I could, I



opted mainly for the latter. I think that with more experience, I would put more emphasis on notes. As a relative newcomer to Iyengar yoga it would have been easy to have been overwhelmed by the amount and level of information that was presented. But the teachers stressed that learning this art is a long and repetitive process and it's OK to take what you can absorb from a class. Because of this, the intensive was applicable to a wide range of experience.

"Intensive" is a good name for a course where no bathroom breaks are scheduled during the 3-hour morning or afternoon sessions! Actually, this works out very well - individuals can slip out when they need to, without the 15 minutes disruption that a formal break inevitable produces. The course was also 'intense' with respect to the knowledge that was offered, but I don't think it was ever intense in the sense of people feeling pressured or overwhelmed.

The emphasis on the poses was not so much to try them, but quoting Mr. Iyengar, to "Just do it." And when anyone expressed concern about some aspect such as falling, the standard response was "Why would you want to do that?" The teachers were everywhere in the room, and with their help I was able to make at least two breakthroughs. I did my first Urdhva Dhanurasana (upward bow) and my first Salamba Sirsasana (headstand) away from the wall. On Thursday afternoon I also had an opportunity to teach a pose for the first time. Even teaching the relatively simple pose of Janu Sirsasana, I learned a lot in that 10 minutes, mostly about how little I knew. Peer teaching was optional, so that nobody felt pressured. But this is one of the best aspects of the course, and I don't think it matters how well you perform; the opportunity to work with a supportive peer group is not to be missed by anyone with thoughts of teaching.

The course was beautifully structured, one might almost say choreographed. A lot of attention was paid to sequencing of poses, and (as I look back) to the sequencing of the week. Before moving to B.C. in 1978, I used to hike the hills of Ontario. Usually up

and down, repeated many times during the day as dictated by the topography of the Canadian Shield. When I moved to Prince George in 1978, I started mountain hiking and discovered the great satisfaction of going once in the morning and coming down in the afternoon. Not that the total effort was necessarily more than Ontario hill walking. It was just that the essential cycle of working to reach the top of the mountain in order to build a foundation for the day (standing poses), followed by a glorious few hours of alpine meadow and ridge walking (combination of other poses) and concluding with the main descent (shoulder stand and relaxation) felt very restorative.

Thanks to Chris and Ida whose house I stayed in - I never met you as you were away. Thanks to Leslie for hosting us at your house for the informal Tuesday evening dinner and discussion. Thanks to Keiko for the delicious salmon dinner at your place on Wednesday evening, and especially for the surprise Japanese tea served even as the taxi was pulling into the drive. And, of course, thanks to Shirley for your teaching and for the marvelous Indian Banquet on Thursday evening. Apparently the police must have heard that there was a party at Shirley's as they set up a Counter Attack roadblock nearby. Happily, everyone passed inspection, and there were no "Yogi's spend night in jail" headlines the next day.

Above all, I think I appreciated the good humour and down to earth approach demonstrated by all the teachers, as an effective way of softening their obvious wealth of knowledge and experience.

Michael Nash
Prince George, B.C.

Footnote: Three of us shared a pre-arranged cab to the airport on Friday afternoon, driven appropriately by an Indian driver. He gave us an excellent deal, and I certainly recommend making a prior arrangement with Jas of Executive Cabs at 744-0462 if you need a cab when coming into Victoria for a Yoga seminar.

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.



Free Introductory Classes

We invite you to experience Swami Radha's teachings by taking a free class:

Youth and Yoga

Tuesday, September 15
7.30 pm to 9.30 pm

For young people age 16-25

Dreams

Wednesday, September 16
7.30 pm to 9.30 pm

Kundalini Overview

Thursday, September 17
7.30 pm to 9.30 pm

Fall Schedule of Classes

Classes begin week of September 21.

Hatha Yoga Hidden Language:

Basic Hatha:

Youth and Yoga:

Dreams:

Continuing Kundalini Classes:

Monday and Wednesday evenings; Thursday mornings

Tuesday evenings; Saturday mornings (drop-in)

Tuesday evenings, for people aged 16 to 25

Thursday evenings

Please call for schedule

Call us for class times, fee schedule and to register in advance at 595-0177.

Fall Opening Potluck Supper

Saturday, September 19, 6.00 pm.

ALL WELCOME. Bring your
favourite dish and join us.

Sunday Morning Meditation

Beginning Sunday, September 6,
9.30 to 10.30

Join us to chant and reflect.
(No charge)

Satsang

Sunday evenings beginning Sunday, September 6.

We begin at 7.30 with bhajans (spiritual songs). Satsang begins at 8.00. We chant a mantra and listen to readings or tapes of Swami Rhada or talks by Swami Durgananda. Come for bhajans and Satsang, or just Satsang.
(No charge)

RADHA HOUSE

1500 Shasta Place, Victoria
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YOGA CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 1998

- 19: Teachers meeting
- 27: Sunday Workshop at the Y: Family Yoga with Lauren Cox.

OCTOBER 1998

- 2/3: Group Facilitation Training with Institute of Cultural Affairs Canada at Queenswood. See ad this issue.
- 16: Friday night gathering at the Y.
- 17: Teachers meeting
- 17: Fall Workshop at Hollyhock with Jocely Coty, Yvonne Kipp, Gordy & Zoe Ryan
- 25: Sunday Workshop at the Y: Menopause with Marlene Miller.

NOVEMBER 1998

- 6: Friday night gathering
- 21: Weekend workshop with Julie Gudemestead

DECEMBER 1998

- 13: Light on Yoga Workshop in celebration of B.K.S. Iyengar's 80th birthday

JANUARY 1999

- 16: Teachers meeting
- 23: Annual General Meeting for Victoria Yoga Centre Society
- 29-31: Teachers Assessors meeting

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

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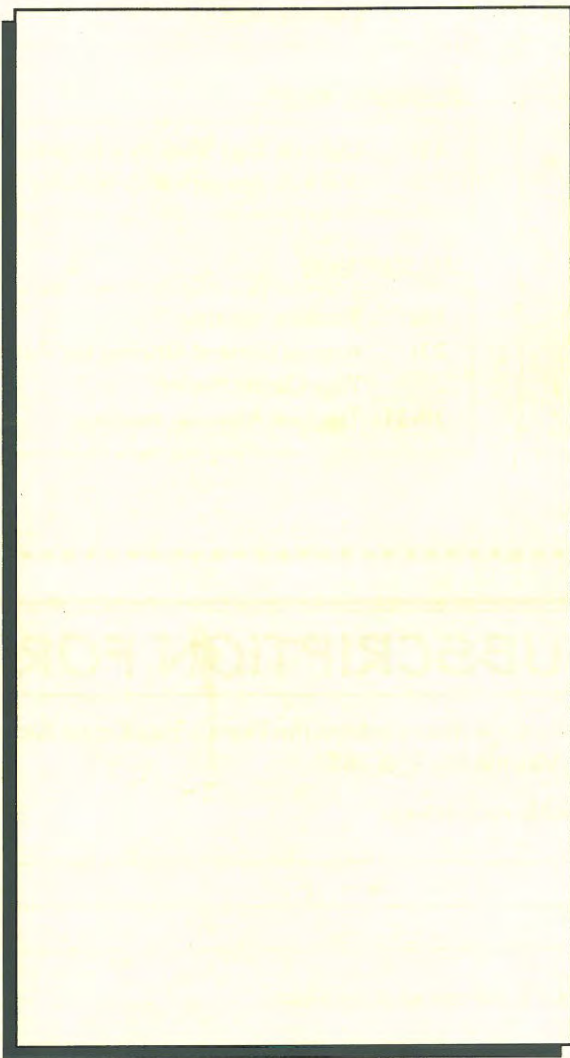
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VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY
Unit 592, 185 – 911 Yates St.
Victoria BC V8V 4Y9



Volunteer Form

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Victoria BC V8Y 4Y9

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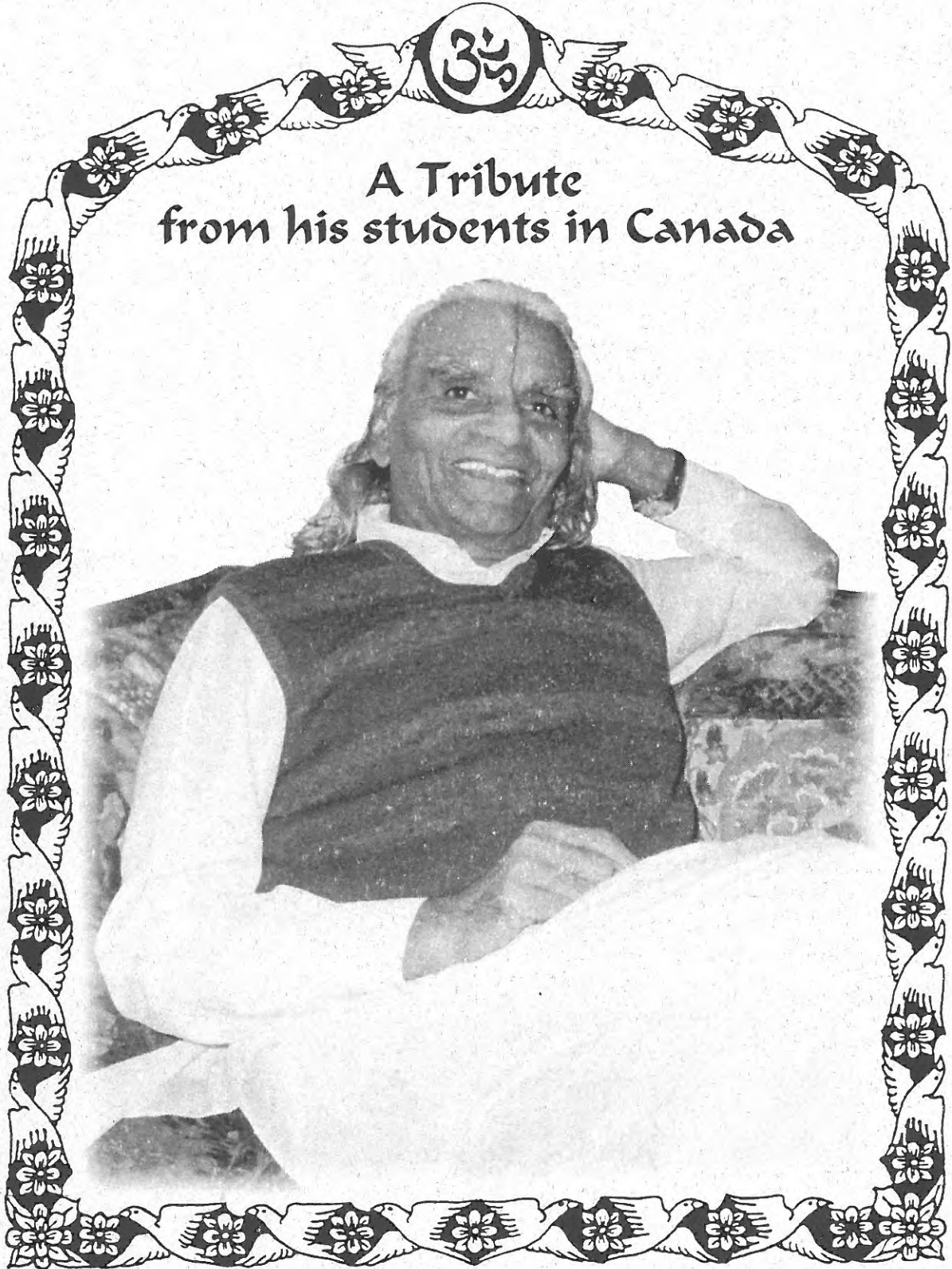
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| ☐ do word processing/typing | ☐ forever (just joking!) |
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Questions/Comments _____

To Guruji On His Eightieth Birthday

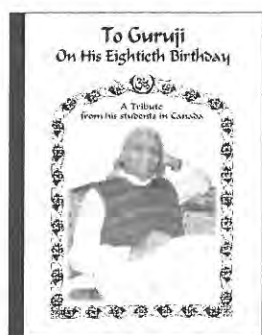
A Tribute
from his students in Canada



SOUVENIR MAGAZINE

A Tribute to Guruji on His Eightieth Birthday

Published by the
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partnership with the
Canadian Iyengar Yoga
Teachers' Association



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Editorial

It has been a labour of love to edit this tribute to Guruji B.K.S. Iyengar in honour of his eightieth birthday on December 14th 1998. I sent out a plea for contributions and received a response from Atlantic to Pacific, from Newfoundland to the Queen Charlotte Islands. We heard from some of Guruji's most senior students who have been

with him since the earliest days of his work in Canada. We heard from students who have made the pilgrimage to Pune once, twice or many times. We heard from students who have yet to make that journey and who may never make it but nevertheless appreciate Guruji's work and the innumerable blessings it has brought into their lives.

This magazine contains articles from most of the major centres of Iyengar Yoga in Canada, from large cities such as Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Canada's capital Ottawa, from the maritime communities and islands of the East and West Coasts. This was not a surprise since in these areas Iyengar Yoga is a long established tradition, but most gratifying was the response which came from many small and isolated communities where the robust seed of Iyengar Yoga has germinated: British Columbia's Fraser, Okanagan and Slokan Valleys – Cortes, Salt Spring and Mayne Islands – Northern B.C. We are delighted they are making their presence known.

Thank you to all of you for your helping make this a fitting Tribute to our Teacher.

The highlight of our presentation is some excerpts from an interview with Guruji during a Canadian Intensive in Pune in 1985. As always, his dedication and unquenchable enthusiasm for Yoga come through in his own inimitable way.

For all of us who worked on this magazine or contributed in any way, it is a gift to be able to do this work as part of our sadhana. Happy Birthday Guruji, and thank you for the inspiration which brought us to this task.

Shirley Daventry French
Victoria, British Columbia
November 1998

Mr. Iyengar arriving at the
Edmonton airport, 1990.



A Special Issue

by *Leslie Hogg*
President, Victoria Yoga Centre



he Board of Directors of the Victoria Yoga Centre warmly congratulates B.K.S. Iyengar on the occasion of his Eightieth Birthday on December 14th 1998! Jai Guru! The inspiration of Iyengar Yoga has spread throughout our city and our land. We are pleased to publish this special newsletter in his honour on behalf of both the local community and the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association.

The thirteen Yoga Centre Board Members are all involved in Yoga by taking classes, teaching, teacher training, helping to publish our newsletter and keeping track of finances, insurance, and the many myriad tasks it takes to keep the centre

going, both in Victoria and throughout the Islands.

Many people ask where is the Victoria Yoga Centre. This is not an easy question to answer. We are a group of people committed to spreading Iyengar Yoga in the community. We have a post office box, and a voice mailbox. It is an ethereal centre, but based on a firm foundation of the principles of yoga and a commitment to practice all its aspects. Many of our classes, workshops and teacher training are based out of the YM-YWCA in Victoria. But lots of the work gets done in our own homes, on our personal computers and via phone and email. The centre is where each of us is, and so the centre spreads throughout the city and Vancouver Island and the outer Islands beside us.

As President of the Board, I want to express my appreciation to Shirley Daventry French for the dedication and hard work that went into publishing this special issue of the newsletter. Her hand was in every aspect of this issue, from soliciting articles across the country, editing most of them, working on the design, writing her own contributions, plus making sure publication and distribution were carried out, even as she prepared to fly to India to be at the Gala Celebrations in Pune. Thank you Shirley.

Congratulations Guruji on this auspicious birthday! With deepest gratitude for the Light which you have brought into our community, from the Executive and Members of the Victoria Yoga Centre

Iyengar Yoga in Canada

by *Leslie Hogg*, *Chair of the Coordinating Committee*,
Donna Fornelli, *Chair of the Finance/Membership Committee*,
Marlene Mawhinney, *Chair of the Professional Development Committee*



he Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teacher's Association, expresses gratitude and appreciation to our teacher B.K.S. Iyengar as we celebrate his eightieth birthday.

In the early seventies, yoga teachers from Canada began traveling to Pune to the Ramamani Memorial Iyengar Yoga Institute to take classes with the Iyengar family. The teachings began to spread across the country. Canada, the second

largest country in the world, has a small population in a vast amount of geography. So for a long time, teachers worked in small groups or in isolated communities, not really communicating with each other.

In 1984, the first Iyengar convention was held in California, and for the first time many of us got to witness Mr. Iyengar's genius first hand. Afterwards, Guruji spent a few days visiting and teaching in Vancouver, Victoria and Edmonton. About this time, the Victoria Yoga Centre, under the inspiration of Shirley Daventry French, began publishing a directory of Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers.

In 1987, at the Boston convention, Guruji met with those teachers who were attending from Canada, and encouraged them to share and learn together. Every year since then the Canadian Teachers group have met once a year, and have slowly, with much consultation, debate and growing pains, developed a unique organization. The structure is based on a consultative, consensus model, which is built into our Organizational Document. There are three major committees whose members come from four zones across Canada. In each zone there are regions, and regional representatives who pass information to and from members and to the three committees.

B.K.S. Iyengar was Guest of Honour at our first national convention held at the University of Alberta in 1990. He taught, watched us teach, and answered questions. The Regional Representatives were established at this conference, a grass roots way to facilitate communication between communities. The chair

of the eleven reps disseminated information, and helped plan annual meetings. These Regional Representatives are the foundation of the association.

In 1993, Guruji was in Toronto for our second big convention. After he watched several classes, he taught the whole convention in a huge dining hall. It was at this time, that he felt Canada had better get more organized, and join the rest of the world with certification. It took much consultation and a lot of hard work to agree on how certification would begin, and how it would spread across Canada. This daunting task was done under the direction of Marlene Mawhinney, Chair of the Professional Development Committee. The first eleven certificates, were given directly by Guruji to some of his longtime students during the Canadian Intensive in Pune in July 1997. In 1998, the Second Wave of teachers, those who have taught for ten years, had an opportunity to be certified. The result is that Canada now has forty-four certified teachers. Being a bilingual country has added further challenges. When there are enough teachers in Québec ready for certification, French speaking assessors will be invited from France to help in the process.

The work continues as we prepare workshops to train assessors and prepare for more certification weekends so the remaining teachers will be able to earn their

certificates. We are now working on the international model of certification so that, if you take a class in New Zealand or New Brunswick, Great Britain or British Columbia, the standards and quality of teaching will be similar.

Last year, Guruji honoured our national association by agreeing to become its Honorary President.

We thank Guruji for his inspiration, his tireless efforts in teaching, and above all for his patience with us as we established certification in Canada and a unique and strong organization.

Maxims

*Look into the essence and
do not be misled by
names.*

*If you only practise
spasmodically,
you cannot expect to
maintain the sensitivity
of intelligence
nor the maturity in the
effort required to progress
towards the ultimate goal.*

*In yoga there is one thing
you should all know:
the weakest part is the
source of action.*

*The brain is the hardest
part of the body to adjust
in asana.*

Membership/Finance Committee

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Fax: (819) 685-1535
Janet Debenham (Winnipeg)
Donna Rao (Vancouver)
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Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association

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Teddy Hyndman (Edmonton)
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(Saltspring Island)
Linda Benn (Victoria)
Carol Brophy (Sechelt)
Susan Bull (North Vancouver)
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(Galiano Island)
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(Galiano Island)
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Overseas

Sally Ker (Bermuda)
Linda Shevloff (Hong Kong)

"I AM STANDING ON MY OWN ALTAR;

THE POSES ARE



MY PRAYERS"

— B.K.S. Iyengar

An Interview with B.K.S. Iyengar

Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar is one of the truly great contemporary yoga masters. He is renowned and respected all over the world for the depth and refinement of his study, practice and teaching of yoga. His dedication to his art has inspired teachers and students on every continent, and sparked a light which illuminates the study of yoga in all corners of the globe.

The Victoria Yoga Centre is honoured to present excerpts from interviews with Mr. Iyengar which were conducted at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, India in November 1985.

Present at these interviews were Shirley Daventry French, Leslie Hogya and James Rischmiller of the Victoria Yoga

Centre, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. We were joined by Caroline Coggins and Peter Thompson of the Sydney Yoga Centre, Sydney, Australia, and have designated this "The Commonwealth Interview".

This interview was transcribed and prepared for publication by Shirley Daventry French in 1985. Now as we prepare to celebrate Guruji's Eightieth Birthday, we thought it fitting to revisit this interview. The teachings of the master do not get outdated!

Re-edited by Leslie Hogya and Shirley Daventry French.

On yoga in the west

Shirley Daventry French:

Guruji, it's three years since a Canadian group came to Pune for an Intensive. During those years you've done a lot of travelling. Would you speak about the changes that have occurred during that period both in your personal work and the work that is being carried on in your name all over the world?

Sri B.K.S. Iyengar: As far as I gather, the work has been carried out very well. At the same time my only fear is that people emphasize things where very little emphasis is required and do not pay attention where attention

needs to be paid. If this barrier is taken off, in view of the missionary zeal for propagating yoga, the work will have a better background. Otherwise, I am afraid that it may get stale soon.

Shirley: Have you seen this happening?

Iyengar: Yes, I have. For example, there is a proverb "out of sight is out of mind." People who come here regularly and hear the same words hammered in again and again, naturally develop a grip. Unfortunately others who come only once, go away without clarifying to themselves if they have understood or not.

For instance, India is a hot country, even in winter: here a little rest does not disturb the body. The blood current will continue to flow to the extremities due to the weather conditions, so we can offer a little more explanation. Many Western countries are very cold; there, if the explanations are too long, the warmth of the body disappears and it takes time to recharge that body. This is one way one has to adapt between the East and the West.

In the West, the teacher should be careful to see that the warmth of the pupils is maintained. When the body is cold even if the correct technique is given, the body cannot accept it; all explanations lose their charm. You have to

demarcate how much you can explain whilst maintaining the body's warmth, and continue from there next time. But I am seeing that teachers try to explain so much in one day that they exhaust themselves as well as their pupils. Teachers should break their sentences, see whether their words have been digested or not and whether the system has absorbed the instruction. Give it time. Then add a few more words.

In the West teachers are not differentiating between untrained

beginners and someone who has been practising for years. When we give an intense course there is no uniformity in our dealing with the groups. We give these courses on condition that you have practised sufficiently to take our points, but many who come are very raw and haven't got much experience. Old students, new students – how soon we can see the difference! The intense course is too much for some. So we also have problems, but by looking we know exactly that we have to give



"Do not contract your brain
when you stretch your body."

points for beginners and for toned bodies.

Teachers should observe how much the pupil can absorb, otherwise what is the use of expressing, boasting of my pride, my intelligence? It's of absolutely no value unless the pupil can receive it. When we run classes we give our technique and present how the poses should be done because we know the subject, but at the same time we see what mistakes are happening. This is known as feedback. Teachers in the West must develop this feedback, capture the weaknesses of their pupils and build from there. That will make the teacher a good teacher, and also help the pupils - understanding will come slowly. Maturity in the pupils will come as the teachers mature. That is what I say is lacking and when that develops, I say "Wonderful!"

Shirley: There's more patience in India than in the West.

Iyengar: It's not just enough patience. Do you mean to say that there is no impatience here? Your brain may say "I want to get it today," but can your knee take it, can your spine take it? If your arm is injured and you cannot lift it, what is the use of my saying I want you to lift it? The range of movement must be understood - that range may be too much but what about this range? This is known as co-ordinating. It is not impatience, it is skilfulness in understanding.



"Health is firmness in body, stability in mind, and clarity in thinking."

We teach asanas as living anatomists. Although many western people have an intellectual knowledge of anatomy and physiology and can name the different parts of the body, they don't really understand their functions. Only asanas can teach this. His leg is long, your leg is short. We cannot depend on anatomy alone to teach yoga because it does not give the whole picture.

Analysis and experience should go together. Teaching is analysing, analysing the students - their mental calibre, their physical calibre - then discovering how to bring their deficiencies in par with their mind or their mind in par with the body. Sometimes an ignorant man does better than an intelligent man. Why does this man without brain present well? Why does this man with such understanding commit a mistake?

Compare the bodies. That is known as factual intelligence from which you can gain the methods of teaching.

Shirley: That's the science of yoga.

Iyengar: Yes, that's the science of yoga. I know the asana, I know the technique of the asana; but I also have to know how this technique is going to help the individual.

No doubt, very good work is going on. I have been teaching sincerely for years, people love my work, although they were criticising before. Now they come to you because they know I am a strong teacher and at least you people are sincere and honest; so they go to you - if you don't kick them or anything like that. (Laughter.)

Shirley: If my feet were as sensitive as yours I might kick them. (Laughter.)

Iyengar: My intelligence flows everywhere so I act fast.

On sequencing, rhythm and cycles

Leslie Hogg: Can you talk to us about order of practice and sequencing?

Iyengar: Correct order means rhythm in the body, otherwise there is no rhythm. For example, take music, when you go to a high pitch in music, can you come suddenly or do you come gradually?

Leslie: Gradually.

Iyengar: Ah, now you have understood. When you go to the ascending order, don't you go scale by scale? When we finish the work we send the pupils away with joy because we bring them back to the normal. For example, can you do back arch immediately? You gradually build up to the back arch. After the back arch can you suddenly come back to forward bends? They are known as cycles. We can group these cycles but for certain persons they may not work at all, so we have to show another way according to their body. You know that in cars they have four or five gears. Can you change the gear without coming to neutral?

Leslie: No, you'd grind the gears.

Iyengar: It's the same in yoga. We lose our tempers when we see people come and suddenly do the back arch, or suddenly they go back over the rope. What happens without coming to the neutral poses?

Leslie: Injury.

Iyengar: We are showing that cycle. You have to experiment on several people to know the ill effect and the good effect. That's why we change immediately if something happens. That is known as rhythm. There should be rhythm in yoga. In music unless there's tone and tune, do you listen to that music? What is body, after all, but an instrument and the vibration is the sound, the tune? The vibration in my body must synchronize in my movement. That is why poses are done in a certain order.

For example, we recently started a class for beginners upstairs; I gave them a syllabus to use in my absence whilst I was in London. First, the teacher should demonstrate the pose two or three times, then stand and take the class. If the pupils have not understood, show it again twice more, and then the third time do it with them saying, "Look at me. Look at my leg. Look at my hand. Look at my other leg." In the beginning the teacher has to work thirty minutes and the pupil only twenty minutes. After one month the teacher will be working twenty minutes, the pupil will be

working twenty minutes. After four or five poses have been taught, the first pose will be shown once and taken also once.

When I am doing the pose with my pupils my practice improves, and I know what to teach them next. As I am explaining I am looking at them to see what is missing. Capture one or two mistakes then teach the same pose tomorrow giving only one or two points - major points, not minor points. Until we bring the gross mistakes to the surface, we should not touch the finer ones. Gross points are important. You have to make the gross body a foundation to correct the finer points. Later, these finer points will give you the idea of rhythm and cycle.

Now, what is neutral? If you do a back arch, you can't immediately do forward bends. *Bharaṇḍvājāsana* is a neutral gear. How many people know the neutral gears? Three or four standing poses and in between you are made to do *Uttanāsana*. It is a neutral gear. I am telling people now to trace the neutral gear. When they make a mistake, I bring them back to the cycle again. I also measure overdoing or underdoing the cycle. This prevents injury to any part of the body.

Explain less and do on your own bodies. For instance, when you say "legs straight," do it yourself and find out whether your own leg is straight. If not, this will amaze you and you will learn to use less words but to see the facts.

The rhythm is essential, then no dangers will take place. If someone does complain, ask what they did and then play with your own body until you understand how she or he did it and you know how to correct. Then the cycle will come to you. The cycle is important.

Secondly, a teacher may be telling pupils to keep their feet straight but instead of looking at the feet will be looking at their faces. If I say "chest," I look at the chest. The teacher should co-ordinate his eye with his terminology. You go on explaining about the hand in full arm balance yet the legs are collapsing. When the legs are killing how can I explain about the hands. I have to look up and down and see what is happening overall, not just forget and go on with the same point.

If you can put all this together then you will understand how to remove and lessen the pain. Cycles are a must. One link can pull the chain down. We have hundred of links in our body: three hundred joints, seven hundred major muscles, and many other muscles around those major muscles helping them to function. One muscle is dependent on the other. We have to come to the basic end root to find where this muscle is holding. Then you will become a good teacher, the art will have a strong foundation which cannot be shaken because you have a grip of the art. This is what I want.

On meditation

Iyengar: What is the difference between asanas and meditation? Don't you experience calmness and tranquility in a good head balance? Don't you experience serenity when you are resting very well in *Sarvangasana*, *Halasana* or *Setu Bandha Sarvangasana* on the prop? Then you also do meditation. In the asana you are connected and at the same time detached.

Meditation, as it is ordinarily taught, leads you to emptiness. There is a disconnection between the body and the soul and in between there is emptiness. But when you do *Halasana*, the mind is not distracted from the body or from the soul, and that is known as fullness.

People with emotional disturbances cannot meditate immediately but they can do yoga. Haven't you seen that many people cry when they do *Savasana*? Those people cannot meditate at all. They become empty and fearful because there is no connection with where they are. They are up in the air, in suspense like a suspension bridge.

Leslie: When the emotions are out of balance then they can't meditate.

Iyengar: Ah, they cannot – asanas are more effective. Patanjali said: "*Prayatna Saithilyanananta Samapattibhyam*" (II.47) and "*Tato Dvandva Nabhigatah*" (II.48) - By

relaxation of effort and meditation on the Infinite, posture is mastered. From that (mastery of posture) there is no assault from the pairs of opposites.

Patanjali would have been a fool if he had said that these asanas are only for physical yoga. *Dvandva* means split: in asana the dualities disappear. In meditation dual personalities set in and create a fear complex. I can't face it! I can't do it! Whereas in yoga it is not loneliness it is aloneness. Aloneness, fullness - everywhere you are there. You are in contact but alone. Hatred does not come in yoga: "Oh I am far advanced. I don't want family. I don't want children." That feeling does not come in yoga, in my method. Asanas bring the mind closer to the self without losing the contact with the external world, whereas in meditation people get completely lost. They can't touch the internal world, they cannot come back to the external world and that is the problem.

That is why Patanjali has given meditation as the seventh stage, but today everybody starts there because that's the easy way. Patanjali has explained very well that an unbroken flow of thought without any feeling is meditation. It is not said anywhere that you have to close your eyes and sit in a corner.

The Bhagavad Gita says you have to keep your body as firm as a rock; from the centre of the anus to the throat, you have to draw a straight perpendicular line. You have to sit in such a way that

there is parity between the centre of the anus, the throat, the front body, back body, side body. This is the art of sitting for meditation or pranayama. In pranayama the head is kept down whereas in meditation the head should be exactly in the centre of the throat so that it will not fall forward or back. Without using the body, how can you meditate? The Gita explains how one has to sit, but today they say "Use any comfortable pose and meditate." After five minutes the person stoops forward and that becomes comfortable pose – so meditate on that. (Laughter) Is it not a fluctuation? You have to learn why you stooped. Learn that deliberately. When I sit, I am observing the behaviour of my cells. I am studying my own emotions. I am studying the working of my intelligence. Asanas lead to fullness, tranquility with fullness, not tranquility with emptiness. That's the difference.

On the family

Leslie: It seems that family life is very different in India from the West.

Iyengar: What has happened is that you solve all your problems intellectually, but emotional problems cannot be solved intellectually and that's where friction comes. When you have fallen in love with one person in the beginning, how can hatred come later? That I have still not understood though I have gone several times to the West. A

person who has loved once, how can it happen, tell me? Sex is emotional. How can these problems be solved intellectually?

Emotionally we are mature. You are intellectually mature. Suppose we interchange – you develop our emotional feelings and we develop your intellectual feelings. What a nation that would be! Marriage means give and take, but this is not there in the West. There should be fifty per cent give and fifty per cent take. When two people cannot come together, how can you expect humanity to come together? Marriage is meant to learn the art of give and take. But I am surprised – people live together for thirty years then all of a sudden there is conflict, they quarrel and break up. That I have not understood.

In India, the girl and the boy were not allowed to come together before marriage. You may laugh, but this still has a value because mentally and emotionally they were developing. Physically they were kept apart which brought them closer emotionally, and when that emotional feeling of coming together increased then the nuptials took place. And today, it's all on the physical level, especially in the cities.

Leslie: This is happening in India, you mean?

Iyengar: Yes, that is happening here too. You give an intellectual education to your children but you don't see children with the intellectual brain, you see them

with the emotional heart. That is lacking in the West.

Leslie: The feeling in the family is so strong in India.

Iyengar: That is the way to live, and the yoga family also should live like that. I was very happy when I stayed in Victoria. In the West I have seen so many families living very well until another man or woman enters in, and the whole family cracks. What a pity! What about the fate of children. Nobody thinks of this. We take it for granted that it's a personal matter. For yoga teachers, there's no life called personal life. Let us be a public chapter; then nobody can point a finger at us. That is what I am struggling for, and if that comes I think I am the happiest man in the world. (Laughs.) Through the means of the body, through the means of the mind, it's time to come together and develop this oneness – one family, which may run to millions?

Shirley: Well, I think certainly your visit last year to North America helped. It brought the Canadian groups together.

Iyengar: Canada was very good. There is a good homely feeling and that's what we want, why we practice yoga – to have a homely feeling inside, outside, everywhere.

On teachers and training

Caroline Coggins: In Australia, and I also think in America,

people are going to many different places to learn yoga from many different teachers. What is your feeling on that?

Iyengar: A base has to be established. Once you have found a teacher why should you want to go to another? If you have not learned what the first teacher knows, what is the use of going to a second person. When you have exhausted the first person's knowledge then find a better teacher; there's nothing wrong with that. Or the teacher may tell you, "I've given you all I know, now find out for yourself." This is the right method. But what happens is - we learn one thing, we learn something else, we learn another thing and we do not know how to connect them. Certainty and surety does not come when you go to many different teachers, because each teacher explains according to his or her mind. Until I know this mind, how can I know the other mind? Get mature with one teacher. When you come here to Pune, even though you may have come several times, we teach you as a beginner so that a fresh mind will be there.

Read the notes of all those pupils who go to various teachers and you will know what a confused state they are in. Get a base from one person; from that base you can judge the capacities of other teachers.

Yesterday, Geeta was adapting a pose for a sciatic nerve problem, but if you practice like that all the

time, what progress will you make? You have got to come back to the original pose to find out whether you have made progress or not. When you turn the foot the sciatic nerve becomes straight; if you keep your foot straight, it goes crooked. So like that one has to learn.

As I have said, if *Adho Mukha Svanasana* could not be performed then from square one whatever you may be doing, the base is gone. In *Urdhva Dhanurasana* your arm should be straight, but when the base of dog pose is missing you cannot make it straight - the elbow is bent. It is a fact that if the elbow is bent in dog pose, it will also be bent in *Urdhva Dhanurasana*; whereas in *Kapotasana* the elbows are bent so the same mistakes will not come. This is known as weakness, and we have to find how to correct these weaknesses, then nobody will be great, nobody will be small. Even advanced people will also see the mistakes they are committing. That's what I say to my pupils - find out the mistakes in me so that I can improve; I don't mind.

You have seen so many yogis, right? How many have you seen doing yoga with their pupils? I am in class with everyone, that's known as father and son relationship. I could sit on a high pedestal saying, "Very good, I bless you. Carry on the work," but I don't. I do the poses with everyone. Sometimes I stand in front of one pupil, sometimes another. Why I am doing that?

Even if I don't say a word, by looking at me, by looking at my pose, you are beginning to be taught. I do it indirectly. I do the same pose many times close to many different people. If there is a mistake, I go and show so that the student can look at me and then correct themselves. Here all words come to an end because there is direct perception. Many people don't see it. They just think, "Oh he must be doing his own practice." (Laughter.)

On therapeutics

Shirley: I've observed that a lot of teachers want to do therapeutic work very quickly.

Iyengar: This is not good at all. They don't know the diseases. They don't know the names of the muscles. Symptoms of the diseases should be known. I'm not speaking about medicines at all but about the cause of disease. You have to think if this is the cause, from such and such a source in the body it has started, what are the asanas which touch that part. When you know this, then you are able to teach something. For me it is quick. I say, "Alright try this, try this, try this." For you people....

Leslie: It would be very dangerous.

Iyengar: That's what I said, don't jump into therapy. First take minor cases where even if you go wrong the complaint will not be too big. When you get confidence

in handling minor problems, then you can tackle something a little more complicated. There are so many different types of problems. If somebody has a heart problem you cannot teach them immediately. If you make them do standing poses, the heart becomes worse. In such cases you have to depend on people like us because we have experience. We can guide and you should not go beyond that. You can't use your intelligence to try things out when life and death diseases are involved; how to handle them is vitally important.

When I began therapeutic classes I took a chance. I said, "God save them, God save them." I did not know anything then. When I worked with therapeutic problems I moved according to their bodies – I always used to stretch a half centimetre or one centimetre more than their actual body could take. That's how I learned. Now just by looking at you I can see the maximum you can do, but first I did not know the maximum. I used to ask them, "Can you stretch a little more? Try, try." While they were trying I would touch them, and from that touch I would know whether or not to say, "Ah, try again." The moment the area refused to move I knew that was their maximum. If they co-operated, co-ordinated, I kept going. The moment the area hit back, I used to hold there very firmly – not allowing them to come back – to educate so that at least it may not retard next time.

That's how I became a practical doctor. Therapeutic classes should

not be introduced by inexperienced teachers.

Jim Rischmiller: One of the problems seems to be that a lot of the people who start to do yoga do so because of some injury.

Iyengar: Yes, correct. It is a fact. Now, if I could not teach I would say, "Go to somebody who knows more than me." This is my guide. If you can do it, do it, otherwise find a senior teacher who has the experience to handle the case.

Now here in the medical classes, Geeta and Prashant sometimes come to me asking what they should do. I look at the face of the patient, I look at their body and say, "Not that way, try this way." I concentrate mainly on the bad cases, leaving the light cases to others because I know it will not be so dangerous even if they go wrong. But I am there in the class; even the light cases could become dangerous if I were not there. When something happens I am right there. I am fast. Sometimes I say don't take so much. My eyes are always looking here, there and everywhere in the therapeutic class, and I move quickly from place to place modifying the poses and making adjustments – because these are experienced fingers which naturally learn quickly. With therapeutic classes, then, take only cases where you are confident, where you know that you will not injure people.

Peter Thompson: I'm interested in why people start yoga.

Iyengar: Because they cannot find relief from any other method. The gateway for human health is the respiratory system and the circulatory system. When you do *Setu Bandha Sarvangasana* the lungs expand automatically. In my method the process of breathing increases indirectly even without teaching pranayama. That's why pupils find relief. The chemicals of the blood change, which gives them health.

For anything, a motive is necessary. A cause is there – a cause in the form of pain, a cause in the form of suffering which makes people come to yoga. The real religious practice commences afterwards. First we have to help them find relief, then we have to encourage them to get attached to the real art and science of yoga and to live this art. Ninety nine per cent of the people who come are motivated only to get rid of their pain, and we have to work in that area alone. Don't injure them – even if you don't give relief right away it's all right, still you are safe, because when they can bear the pain that itself is progress. First give them bread, then they are stuck with that.

Yesterday in the general class there was a person from Iran who was complaining of severe pain in the lumbar. I understood this case, and told him, "Don't ask me for a cure, but I can make you do a pose where your big pain will become a small pain." Later I asked him, "Is the pain big or small now?" and he said, "The pain has become a little small," so

I told him to be satisfied with that for a few days. Trying to bring about a cure too quickly could cause him severe pain. When we teach yoga we are trying to minimise pain. First we minimise, then we know how to stabilise. If we do not minimise, how can we cure it? In therapeutic classes – this is very important – don't take as a cure, but "can I minimise their problems?" Just minimise, then you are guarding yourself.

Sometimes fear is very good, because the fear stops you from going too far. You are afraid, so you take the minimum.

I can give quick relief because I know the direction in which each and every cell of the body has to move in the poses. But your knowledge is limited and you should make sure you do not go beyond your capacity. Find out how you can help within that capacity. Many people have taken complicated cases just to make a name and fame, and I was dead against it.

On asana as prevention and preparation

Jim: You talk about using your teaching for prevention.

Iyengar: It's a one hundred per cent preventive, sir. No question arises at all. It's a hundred per cent preventive, physically, mentally and spiritually. Suppose by the grace of God spiritual light falls on you; if your body cannot take it, tell me?

Shirley: Devastating!

Iyengar: Ah, devastating! I have to make sure that my nerves will be strong enough to take the light, the spiritual light, easily. So that comes under prevention.

With asanas, you develop such a tremendous potential. Nature runs in abundance in the yogis, because every part is clean so it can take this force. We have to do the poses so that the energy is not dissipated in all different directions, but is controlled and stabilised. That's why I have to perform, even today. If I don't perform, this might burn me out completely. Who knows?

Leslie: Do you think in the ancient days there was more of a following of the eight Limbs – that asana and as well as all the other limbs were more followed?

Iyengar: Yes, all eight Limbs were followed; not one was neglected in those days. If you read the mythological stories you will find they were all practising. For us, the Puranas are the groundwork, and even the Upanishads contain instructions on how to practice. Their sadhana was not neglected at all.

For example, in his fourth chapter Patanjali explains how even after experiencing Samadhi, a liberated man has to live in the world. Not until the fourth chapter does he explain what is black action, what is white action, what is grey action. Why not before? Why only when that state of freedom and beatitude comes – then he explains, not before. He gives a clue, how one has to live. The liberated soul is not neglected according to Patanjali. He says all your actions should be free from



"A sense of direction is right intelligence. To move the part you have to move the whole. Motion means freedom."

white, black and grey. That's how you have to live. He has not said leave everything. Your action should not produce any reactions at all. No white, no gray, no black. These are the things which give reaction. So act in such a way that you are free from these three types of action. Patanjali explained how although ordinary human beings have three actions, a yogi is beyond these actions. That is how you have to be in the world. No renunciation is necessary. The fourth chapter deals only with the action of a Jnani - the action of a man of wisdom, how he has to live in the world. When there are no reactions he is a renounced person who does everything for the sake of humanity, and not for himself.

Light on Patanjali

(At the time of this interview, Guruji was writing "Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.")

Iyengar: I'm summarising all the sutras - I'm writing from the practical side not on the academic side. I've done a lot of spadework, including how Patanjali was born, which many people don't know. I am developing some clues I found in the Puranas - Vishnu Puranas and others. For example, when everybody says, "Now a new exposition on yoga," it's not a new exposition - the "now" refers to when Patanjali took birth as a dancer.

Lord Siva asked him to write a commentary about grammar. He

finished the grammar, and then he wanted to learn dance to please his master, Lord Vishnu, and to understand the movement of the body. He finished his work on speech and on body, and said, "There's one job I've not done - I've not spoken about the mind. Now let me speak about the mind." My interpretation is on a practical not an academic level - how my experiences fit into Patanjali's experience and explanations. Most commentaries took each of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras as if it were a separate entity - as if the second sutra had no connection with the first. That caused confusion. Each sutra was treated as a new chapter. I thought, "Let me connect them, if possible, one to the other."

This is a terse subject and very difficult to simplify. I am trying to write a practical book for ordinary people - I consider myself an ordinary man. It is not an intellectual book at all, but how to practically translate Patanjali into our day to day activities. Patanjali gave no commentary at all; so I asked myself, as if I had not read any translations of Patanjali, how does it relate to my practices? If there was no commentary on Patanjali how would I convey it?

I have already rewritten it six or seven times. When it is finished I may become lazy, and not want to touch this book.

Shirley: Do you think that likely, Guruji? Do you think it's likely that you'd become lazy?
(Laughter.)

Iyengar: I never find it monotonous to work on this book. Even if it takes ten years, even if it absorbs all my time, I'll never feel exhausted or dull or tired or anything. But once I have finished it I will say enough, the job is done.

On pranayama

Iyengar: About prana. That is a very good question: what is prana? We speak of energy. Now I also have the conclusion that I can explain more clearly than so far others have done.

God is One but He is called by different names. Energy is One but it is called different names. It has only just come to me how it is produced in our systems. We are made up of five elements. The base is the earth, the expansion is the ether, in between are the other three elements - air, water and fire. We cannot live without breath. That is as old as civilisation. This has given me an idea that normal breathing is like water flowing in a river; it has got a current because there is a flow but does it produce electricity? Does any water which has got a current produce electricity? Take for example just ordinary running water? It has a current but cannot produce abundant force to create energy.

So what do scientists do to produce electricity? They build a reservoir and then direct the water so that it falls down at a speed on to a turbine and the

turbine revolves. Similarly the spindles of the muscles in our body act as turbines. Normal breath cannot produce electricity although it does produce a current. There is life in running water whereas a lake is stale water. Compared to stale water, running water is better. If there is no movement of the breath in a body, it's dead like a stagnant lake. It is this movement of the breath which helps a minimum production of electricity or nectar of life termed as "prana."

Right practice of pranayama makes the air go deep into the lungs like a waterfall, and the air which is drawn in brings into fusion the element of fire and the element of water. Fire and water are anti-elements to each other – water cools fire, fire evaporates water – so naturally element (water) and anti-element (fire) produce life force as prana. When we do pranayama this stream of air activates the spindles like a turbine, and in that activation the fusion between water and fire takes place in our body, produces energy which is known as prana, triggering the central nervous system as well as spreading that energy into the bloodstream.

It only struck me in 1985 to understand what prana is. In pranayama, water and fire come together with the help of the air, in a place known as the element of earth. For production there must be a place, for distribution there must be a space. One is the factory, the other one is the

distributor; in between are the three important elements called raw materials. As we are made up of five elements and they are already there in the body, we draw these five elements, which exist in the external atmosphere, through breath to refine the inner elements for activation to filter the human system.

Why should we do pranayama – so that it is taken deep and the ions which exist in air work for the air cells to magnetise them to draw the ions nearer them to filter the blood. Unless the ions move nearer the magnetic cells of the lungs, they cannot grasp. Just as a magnet slowly taken closer to iron ore will grasp the ore which comes within its power, so also deep breathing makes the ions go nearer where the air cells absorb, grip them and produce the life's nectar.

That's why pranayama is essential. Provided, as I said, the lungs are clear, you should penetrate, and the chakras are nothing but the various transformers – how much they can store in various places so that it can be distributed. This meaning has come just now; no books have explained. So what is prana and how is it produced in our system? It took me years to know the fusion between water and fire like negative current produces electricity. These two coming together produce a new lightning fire; that's why kundalini is everywhere.

Stories of India

Shirley: Guruji, it's very obvious to us who work with you how your work integrates all the Eight Limbs of Yoga – that this is spiritual practice which we do here. Have you any suggestions for understanding and studying the Sutras in the west?

Iyengar: Sutras are so difficult, they will not convey the depth of understanding very easily. I would prefer people first to read epics such as the Ramayana. Get a background of our culture. In the Puranas each story has a philosophical background. It gives what we call the *samskara*, a sort of cultural behaviour of life of the rishis. Stories are better than just reading philosophy. Each story ends with a certain meaning. Each story is full of moral practices. No doubt yoga sutras could help you, but how do you translate them into your practices unless and until you are well equipped to translate the meaning? The Sutras are the cream; but in order to know the cream you should know some gross – so I say read the Puranas. The Ramayana, Mahabharata, Baghavata. Ramayana is the life of Rama, Mahabharata is the historical war in which Lord Krishna acts as a guide, and Baghavata is full of stories of Lord Krishna. These three books will give a good background for spiritual upliftment.

Shirley: It was lovely that Geeta told us stories this time. She told us about the meaning of Divali and other stories.

Iyengar: Yes, because if you get such background you can know something about the Sutras.

Shirley: It's very different when we come here and study in India and see the work at its source; it brings a new dimension of understanding, but everybody can't come here. Unfortunately.

Iyengar: Today when you were twisting, when you were doing *Marichyasana*, your toe was moving. What is the difference between when you turn your toe or when the extended leg is moving and the mind is moving?

In the third sutra Patanjali says that when the mind is quietened the self rests in its abode. So can we not interpret another way? Suppose you are doing *Marichyasana*, twists; keep the hip in its position, keep the leg in its position. What happens? You know the pose. You know the technique of the pose. You know the movement of the pose. You hold the position and all parts of the body rest in their abodes. How many people can translate Patanjali this way, tell me? As I said, each cell should rest in its place. When the mind does not move the Atma rests in its abode. ("*Tada drastuh avarupe 'vasthanam*" – Patanjali's Sutras, I-3). If the cells which move up and down due to our volition are made to

rest in their own places, what happens? "*Tada drastuh*" means the seer. In the same sutra, I take "*Tada drastuh*," to mean buttocks, and "*Svarupe 'vasthanam*," keeping the positions. So if the buttocks are kept in their positions, equanimity, tranquility, serenity is there in them. So this meaning may take a longer time, which is why I said read these stories and it will help you.

That is the way to learn. Get the traditional background; these stories have a moral background. Morality is spirituality, and spirituality is morality. Morality is not different from spirituality. We have to know that first. You can't think of spirituality and say, "Oh it's my personal whimsical things I'm involved in, so it's a personal matter." Morality is morality. Morality is everywhere in the world. Morality is there in the West, it is in the East, the North and the South. That's traditional – only explanations will be different. There may be such stories, even in Christianity.

Shirley: There are.

Iyengar: Then what does it matter? It can be brought in a different way, comparing the story of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Baghavata and the stories of the Bible or something which will lead to the same.

Morality has to be followed. These stories are there to help us develop our own conduct. Then you should jump to intricate

books like Upanishads and Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. Even (Bhagavad) Gita is very good, because it is simplified Patanjali Yoga Sutras, and a little easier to understand.

On morality in teaching

Shirley: Geeta in the Intensive has spent so much time – and Prashant when I was taking public classes too – giving us an understanding of the method and teaching us not play around with it. And that's why it's important to talk to you now because I feel it's a responsibility.

Iyengar: It is true. It is a responsibility when I've taken fifty years to build up but now everybody is just using my name. Do you mean to say that my heart doesn't hurt? It does hurt me, although I accept at the same time. But should I get polluted by these methods? No. As long as I remain pure I say, "No, let me not come down myself." So I will not.

Today when you were in class, I was there practising. When I had finished I came out to explain to you *Sirsasana*. Until then I did not, even though I had seen lots of mistakes. I was involved in my own practice so I said to myself, "Keep quiet, when I've finished I will explain to them." In five minutes what I explained is nearly ten years of practice for you people.

For example, when Geeta and Prashant are explaining,

sometimes I say "Oh, let them finish. Why should I interfere?" but sometimes I do interfere, is it not? But my interference is in such a way that I cultivate their words. I follow their own wordings so that they know how to act. It's a subtle criticism of mine. It's very subtle, but at the same time I build constructively for the next time. When I intervene they listen very carefully, they never argue, they observe everything. That is what I do here for everybody, whoever teaches, even a junior teacher.

I can teach a man like Krishnamurti; I can teach a sweeper. I know the brain of the sweeper; I know the brain of Krishnamurti. But if I use the brain of Krishnamurti teaching to you people, you will never understand the A.B.C.D.

Now in Canada, when these people were teaching, I built up. When you were all teaching was I not explaining to you?

Shirley: It was incredible. So much in such a short time. Yes!

Iyengar: Is not that a teachers' training course? Now here Geeta is explaining is two things: not only to learn but also the art of teaching. Here two things are involved. How to see. How to observe. Also I observe the classes. I am there. So we are teaching two things at the same time: the art of seeing your own position, the art of looking at others' positions and how to correct.

Shirley: I can't think of any better teacher training than we've been having.

Iyengar: This is the advantage you people have. Now these people cannot go wrong, why, tell me? Because I am there. Some people come here for three weeks and go away saying they have learned many things, but they don't come back. If they come back, well and good. Those who come back, next time they are sober here. But first time when they come they are not at all sober. They think they are already far ahead, so they come with pride. If they come three or four times that pride is gone, and the teaching is very easy for us. (Laughter.)

Shirley: You can't come here a second time in ignorance. (Laughter.)

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

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

Iyengar: What to learn, what to unlearn? In the beginning, when you jump, you jump to get the head balance. You are learning, but in that learning you do so many mistakes. Then when you get a little confidence you have to unlearn - "I use these muscles which I should not use now." That is unlearning; then real learning comes.

I have seen many teachers who were going on speaking, and I asked, "What did you say two minutes before?" They said, "I don't know." "Then how can you be a teacher?" Connect back. What is the use of just going forward, you should know how to come back too. No one Western teacher knows the art of coming back, whereas we come back every now and then to the first word that we used, so that the memory gets it right. But in the West they go forward and forward, forward and forward - the intellectual gathering has come. "Oh, he used lots of words, he must be a very good teacher." But how much did I benefit from that in my body - not in the brain? In the East I say "How much did you collect from the brain," because here the brain is slow. In your country the brain is fast, the body is slow, so you have to enquire, "Did the body catch what he said?" But here I say "Did you understand with the brain?" That's all the difference between here and there.

Jim: To me that's the morality.

Iyengar: Yes, true. It's morality when a teacher observes whether the pupil has understood what has been given. If not, what must I do to get them to understand? This is morality.

Teachers should be very mobile. There are two types of teaching. First, you should know the technique of the pose. Secondly, you must understand the intellect of the heart or the emotional feeling. That is the second movement – the intellect of the heart or emotional feeling. Take head balances today. Technically, I know the pose, but according to the emotions, so I change. This thick muscle, you have to make it thin. Technique cannot be given there. The technique is from my experience, and to change the technique is from the presentation. What techniques do I have to adapt to change the position this person is presenting? A technique has to be created on the spot. That what is the teachers

have to learn, and if they learn, those teachers are tops. Take it from me, those teachers cannot be shaken. What little they know, they know very well. They will be better teachers than those teachers who say, "I can teach this, I can teach that."

Jim: Previously you said that if teachers teach a pose they must be able to do that particular pose.

Iyengar: Naturally they have to know. If they know well then their presentation is good. There are some people who are injured who cannot move their bodies. I say they should accept their weakness but explain that their presentation has been affected. This is honest - again morality. If my hand is broken or if I have a spine injury, I will say, "I have this defect, don't follow this defect." That's the guide. Say openly that "Because of injury I cannot do it." Then if you see a student doing the movement you want, use him to show. A teacher should be of that type.

That is again morality I am speaking of. If I can't do it because some impediments have come to me, what have I to do? Express my impediments. It's better to acknowledge my weakness. Many people hide their weaknesses, and that is not morality.

Jim: Have you thought of writing a short piece that could go into all of the newsletters?

Iyengar: Well, this all should go. For example, something which appears in your paper could be published in *Dipika* of England, reproducing what is common to all. It is good to communicate with each other, please reproduce those articles which are good. In your magazine you give permission to reprint your articles as long as they acknowledge, is it not? So this way it should come. People must not keep information for themselves. If they do, I will not give at all later. Let all get the message.

Shirley: So it's up to us. We'll do our best. Thank you again, Sir, for your time.



"In all poses - ascend to descend."

"CONVERT TALENT INTO GENIUS BY HARD WORK AND UNINTERRUPTED SADHANA"

— B.K.S. Iyengar



A Portrait of Guruji

by Shirley Daventry French
Victoria, British Columbia



ot a day passes when I do not feel grateful to B.K.S. Iyengar for the Light which he has brought into my life.

There is a large portrait of Guruji in my yoga room and I have placed a statue of Patanjali on one side and a statue of the dancing Siva or Nataraj on the other. Patanjali is an incarnation of Lord Adisesa, the serpent God, and the statue depicts his upper body in human form and lower body as a coiled serpent. To me, Siva and Patanjali symbolise different

aspects of B.K.S. Iyengar, and their images have become an altar or focal point for my yoga practice. I always begin and end with a prayerful salute before this altar, seeking divine guidance and expressing gratitude for the teachings of yoga.

In the Prologue to his book *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, Guruji describes the process by which Adisesa came to manifest in human form. The Lord Siva played an important role in this event and influenced the path Patanjali would follow here on earth.

It is said that Lord Vishnu was seated on Adisesa, Lord of serpents, watching the magnificent dance of Lord Siva. As the dance progressed, Vishnu became heavy, making it uncomfortable for Adisesa to support him. When the music stopped, Vishnu became light again and Adisesa enquired what had happened. Lord Vishnu explained that the beauty and majesty of Lord Siva's dance had created vibrations within him which had made him heavy, and Adisesa professed a desire to take human form and learn to dance.



Lord Vishnu predicted that not only would this come to pass and Adisesa would be able to devote himself to perfection in the art of dance, but Lord Siva would command him to write treatises on grammar, ayurveda and yoga. And so Adisesa took human birth and in the form of Patanjali produced three great works: a grammar for the cultivation of language; a book on ayurveda, the science of life and health; and finally the yoga sutras a guide for mental and spiritual evolution.

Patanjali obviously made the most of his birth because he also became proficient in the art of dance and, in the same way that students of yoga pay homage to Patanjali as the father of Yoga, Indian classical dancers acknowledge him as a great dancer and an inspiration for their dancing.

Siva is one of a triad of major Hindu Gods which includes Brahma, the creator, and Vishnu, the preserver. Siva is the

destroyer, but is also known as the compassionate one and his presence is very helpful in destroying those obstacles which interfere with spiritual progress. Siva dances the *Tandava*, the dance of death but he also dances the dance of creation. My statue depicts him dancing on the back of a turtle which symbolises the ego. It is not easy to overcome the power of the ego; it takes all of Siva's fire and passion. It is impossible to make progress on the spiritual path until the ego is diminished, its dominance replaced with that of the Divine. We need our ego for this earthly existence, but not a very large one. The turtle is small, babylike, reduced to size. In fact, in my statue of Nataraj, the turtle has a baby's face.

I have seen Gururaj dance the *Tandava*. It is well known that in his classes he tramples on egos with impunity; but what is not so

often remarked on is that the purpose of this diminution of ego is to reveal the Divine Light within. This dance of destruction is also the dance of creation. I know, because I have experienced it myself.

Gururaj does whatever is necessary to remove the veils of ignorance which obscure the light and prevent us from getting in touch with our individual spark of divinity. In Sanskrit this is called *atman* or *purusha*, and in English may be referred to as our true self or soul. The window of opportunity for Gururaj to accomplish this task is generally small. With his foreign students he will see them at best every year or two, and perhaps only once or twice in a lifetime for brief periods. You can rely on the fact that he will not waste this precious time.

In fact, he does not waste time at all. A day in the life of Gururaj is



filled from dawn to dusk and beyond with yoga in all its aspects: his personal practice, plus interactions with pupils and family as well as constant worldwide demands from those who wish to benefit from the acquired wisdom of this elder statesman.

Guruji never neglects his practice and, since he generally practises



in the open studio at the Institute, many of us have been able to observe him practising. This is another dance, a prayer dance, offering the fruits of the practice to the Divine. He becomes so completely absorbed in his practice that you may not notice he is there; something which could not possibly happen when he is in teaching or performing mode.

Once, when studying at the Institute, my colleague Marlene

Mawhinney and I arrived a little late for pranayama class. We had had an interview with Guruji, and you don't cut that short! It was a huge class and we had trouble finding enough space for ourselves and our equipment, but managed to squeeze into a back corner behind a pillar close to the balcony. Geetaji was teaching. First we did pranayama in savasana, and then she asked us to sit up. As I turned to arrange my blankets, to my surprise I discovered Guruji wedged into an even smaller corner next to us doing a restorative practice. How long he had been there, who knows? Neither of us had had an inkling that he was there; we had not heard a sound or felt any disturbance.

Not only did this demonstrate Guruji's ability to withdraw and to all intents and purposes become invisible, an accomplishment Patanjali mentions in the third chapter of the yoga sutras⁽¹⁾; but showed another side of his nature, his humility. How many teachers would make do in their own Institute when they had the unquestioned right and authority to ask that others move and space be made available for them?

When Guruji gives a public demonstration it is yet another form of dance, beautiful and fluid, delighting and inspiring his audience — an incomparable artist!

Like Patanjali, Guruji's productive life has brought him

prominence in many fields. A consummate teacher and practitioner of Yoga, he is also an author of many books⁽²⁾ including the definitive text *Light on Yoga*, that is sometimes referred to as the Bible of yoga. Together with *Light on Pranayama* and *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* it forms a veritable fount of yogic wisdom for serious students of yoga.

Guruji has also followed Patanjali's footsteps into medicine with his work with health problems and injuries. Sometimes he refers to himself as "a practical doctor." When my husband Derek, who is a physician, was in Pune following Guruji around looking at various cases and trying to understand what was going on, he asked Guruji about one woman. Why had Guruji put her into that position? And Guruji replied, "because it works!" And it does work!

Guruji's consideration for others was evident on another occasion, a particularly joyous one for Derek and I, when he stayed as a guest in our home during his 1984 visit to Victoria. Much energy had been devoted to getting our house in order (on many levels) to make the most of his short visit. With the help of Derek's mother who lived with us, we prepared special vegetarian dishes, no eggs. It was early September and we had a vegetable garden full of wonderful salad makings, but word had reached us that Guruji was not keen on raw vegetables so I cooked an Indian meal. I was also

told he liked warm milky desserts, so I prevailed on my mother-in-law to make a traditional English rice pudding. He really seemed to enjoy this and expressed great appreciation of the whole meal, but I am sure he would have been diplomatic even if it were not to his taste. Conversation around the dinner table, or anywhere else for that matter, with Guruji is always stimulating, and this was no exception.

Guruji is also a wonderful companion on expeditions. While staying with us we took him down to the park and beach close by our home, and despite a cool blustery day he revelled in the fresh air coming off the ocean and the beauty of the area. He said this was a special place, and we should not move unless it was to another place with such an atmosphere.

I also had the pleasure to accompany Guruji to Niagara Falls when he came to Toronto in 1993. He had a very tight itinerary and when he first expressed a desire to go to the Falls, I thought there was not really enough time, that he would find it tiring, and questioned his decision. No, he said, this is one of the wonders of the world and I would like to see it while I am there. And so it came to pass, that Hilda Pizarro and I went with Guruji and his entourage to Niagara Falls in a van driven by Andy Orr of Toronto. As we arrived at the Falls it literally poured with rain, but Guruji was out of the car in a minute and

standing up on the wall, plastic raincoat billowing in the wind, revelling at the splendour of the falls.

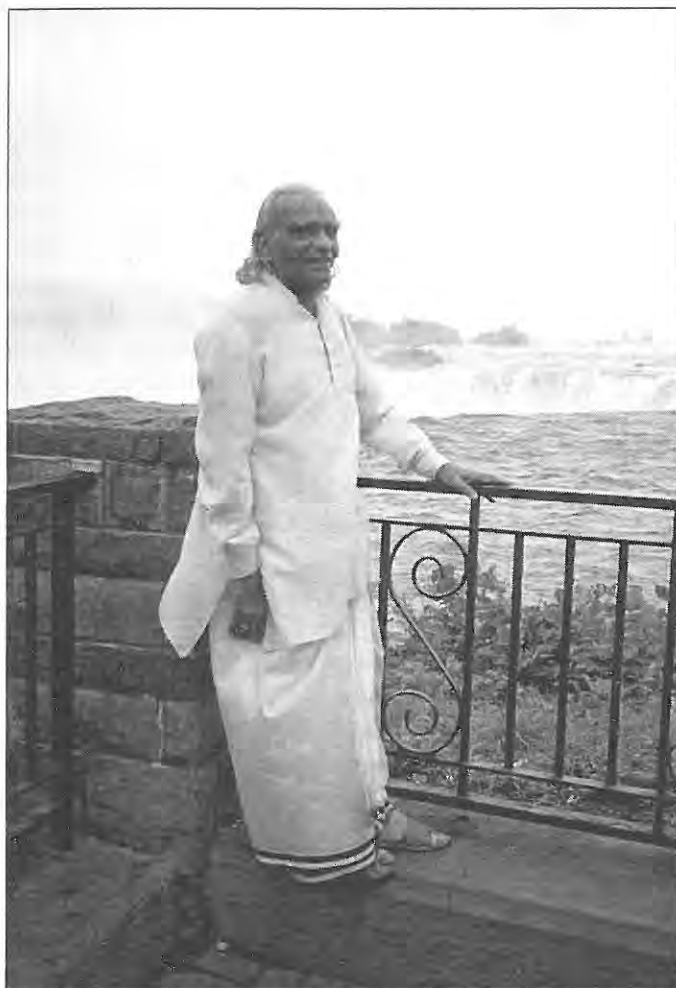
Laughing, we followed him to drink in this sight.

Yes, they are indeed one of the wonders of the world, and consequently the whole area was packed full of people. If I had gone on my own I would have probably balked at lining up for the *Maid of the Mist*, the boat

that takes you close to the falls, or the tunnels which go under the falls and other tourist attractions, but Guruji wanted to see it all.

And so we did, and the time waiting in line passed quickly because of the animated conversation which Guruji always generates.

This was a lesson I needed to learn, that the whole day was the experience including the time spent driving there and standing in lineups, and not just the peak moments. Guruji is a good



Mr. Iyengar at Niagara Falls, Toronto, 1993.

example of the yogi's creed to live each moment to the fullest.

Occasionally, when a disgruntled student complains about what they perceive as harsh treatment from Guruji, I have heard another respond that he's only human and that it is his human side which shouts or loses his temper. I don't agree with this. In class, I think it is the Guru side of him that does this, trying at all costs to help an imprisoned soul find freedom. Whether they like him or not, like

his methods or not, there is the purpose of spiritual awakening. Outside of class, while Guruji can be quick and impatient and sometimes gets irritated by the events of life just like the rest of us, he is often quiet, humble and modest – almost shy on occasions – and with one of the liveliest senses of humour and most infectious laughs I have ever heard. When he is teaching he functions from a different, deeper place with the best interests of the student very much at the forefront. To some extent I see the classes as theatre, with Guruji acting out different roles to elicit certain responses from his students, and he is a great character actor with the talent to play a variety of roles.

This great contemporary Master of Yoga, unparalleled teacher, celebrated author, speaker, diplomat, unofficial ambassador for his country and culture, has

another role of great importance to him: that of philanthropist. Never forgetting the humble roots from which he came, his early struggles to survive and establish himself on the path of yoga, Guruji is a benefactor to many charitable causes in his native village, in Pune his city of adoption, and throughout India.

I consider myself fortunate indeed to have found such a teacher, to have been taught by him directly, and to have known him personally. Such blessings carry responsibility to share what we have been given. The teachings are universal and all of us who have received the teaching of B.K.S. Iyengar, directly or indirectly, have a role to play in keeping this Light alive in our own practice and our interactions with the world and all its creatures.

Thank you Guruji for devoting your life to yoga, for the grace of

your teaching, for your many blessings and the stream of consciousness which emanates from Pune into our community. Congratulations on your eightieth birthday and may your journey continue to be illumined by the Light.

Footnotes

1. "By control over the subtle body, the yogi can suspend at will the rays of light emanating from himself so that he becomes invisible to onlookers. He may again make himself visible by bringing back the power of perceptibility." B.K.S. Iyengar, *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, Vibhuti Pada*, III.21.

2. See Bibliography on page 68

Maxims

*When practising asanas
go beyond thoughts
of pleasure and pain.*

*Balance is a gift
of the creator.*

*Bring the complex mind
to a state of simplicity
so that we are pure
inside and out.*



Banquet at the Crystal Garden,
Victoria, 1994.
(left to right) Shirley Main,
Bruce Carruthers, Swami Radha, Guruji,
Shirley Daventry French, Victoria Mayor
Peter Pollen, Maureen Carruthers.

One Person

by *Ingelise Nherlan*
West Vancouver, British Columbia



It never ceases to amaze me what one person can accomplish in a lifetime.

As one looks back, history is filled with people who had a thought – followed their dream – and changed the world.

Sri B.K.S. Iyengar is such a person. From an extremely difficult start in life, through struggles that few people would endure, he persevered to understand and refine the ancient art and science of yoga, and bring it to anyone who

wanted to learn and was fortunate enough to live in his lifetime.

Because of his devotion the world is a better place. Everyone has the opportunity to leave a giant mark on history – few do.

I for one have been changed profoundly. I am one of many who are fortunate to call this Master Teacher their Guruji: One who removes darkness. The teaching is given. We, your students, Guruji, have one thing in common: to learn and absorb the depths of your teaching, the subject which you gave new life and which will take

yoga into the 21st century under the name Iyengar Yoga.

Just imagine what the world would – will – be like as Iyengar Yoga continues to grow and benefit humanity. The work of one man who was born to a simple life and gives the world richness.

It is with thoughts of deep gratitude to my guru that I start every day, every practice and every yoga class.

Guruji, Thank You! A small word – yet so big. Happy Birthday. God Bless.

The Relevance of Guruji in My Life

by *Linda Shevloff*
Hong Kong

Dear Guruji,



Thank you for dedicating your lifetime to the pursuit of yoga.

Thank you for teaching all of us.
Thank you for teaching me.

It is quite easy for me to catalogue the basic facts about my involvement with Iyengar Yoga, but it becomes more complex when I try to describe the impact Mr. Iyengar has had in my life.

My first acquaintance with Mr. Iyengar came from my new yoga

teacher, Shirley Daventry French in Victoria, in British Columbia, in 1980. She transmitted to her students the precision and passion of her revered Guru, Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar, and instilled in many of us a desire to follow that example.

By the mid 80's I had done teacher training under Shirley, and then in 1987 and 1992, I had the opportunity to do intensives in Pune where I finally got first hand experience of the great man himself, an experience that was terrifying, awe-inspiring and humbling.

In 1994, my husband and I moved to Hong Kong where I learned to practice yoga without a teacher close at hand. And this year I travelled to Canada in March to gain Iyengar Certification. In September, I will begin to build an Iyengar Yoga programme in Hong Kong.

Mr. Iyengar's example is an inspiration for me. I marvel at his single pointed direction, how he never seems to veer from the truth he seeks, how he continues to study and learn, and I think that perhaps I could try to acquire some of his

persistence. He doesn't appear to waste his time; can I learn not to waste mine?

He is brave. He has had the courage to look deeply at human life and examine it with tranquil objectivity, not being swayed by emotionalism. He sees into the beings around him and I believe he must also see the profound depths of himself. Can I learn to be honest and clear in my life too? Can I find my own truth?

He cherishes the talents which

God has granted him, using his remarkable abilities to the utmost of his capacity. I think of gifts I have been given but which I sometimes ignore. I recognise, through him, that to make progress on this path I must do more cherishing.

He is generous. He has offered his work, knowledge and time to those who seek him. He has trained hundreds of students in the study of yoga and challenged everyone to improve. His generosity has allowed thousands of people

worldwide to be helped and healed by the pursuit of yoga. I consider my own generosity and selfishness and I hope that I learn selfless service and patience through his example.

On the occasion of the eightieth birthday of B.K.S. Iyengar, I wish to offer him my prayers and blessings. His life is a beacon of Light to me. I gratefully acknowledge him and thank the Divine for having given him this incarnation.

Happy Birthday, Sir.
With Love.

This Man Knows

by Hilda Pezarro

North Vancouver, British Columbia



My very first encounter with Mr. Iyengar was through his book, *Light on Yoga*, in 1969. My memories are of attempting to hold the asanas and "pulling my kneecaps up."

I had had excellent tuition from several yoga teachers and I had begun teaching at the YWCA in Calgary. There were questions arising out of my own practice and I did not know how I could help students who had such differences in strength and flexibility in, for example, *Sarvangasana*. Nobody that I knew was able to help me.

In 1976 my son, who was attending Cambridge University in England, wrote to tell me that

he was taking yoga classes from Janet Downs who was an Iyengar trained teacher. I asked him to ask Janet if I could attend some classes as I was coming to England for a visit. Janet graciously said yes, and also sent me the address of the Iyengar Yoga Institute in London. I wrote to the Institute to find out if I could attend some classes there and received a big surprise when the reply came that Mr. Iyengar would be in London at that time and that I could have a watcher's ticket to see one of his classes.

There must have been about three hundred people watching Mr. Iyengar teach and I was fascinated to see how he would demonstrate, then have the students move into the asana, ask

one person to hold it and then call the other students in the class to watch his correction. I thought "this man knows." I remember him talking about moving the skin. It was a revelation! I had never seen asanas taught like this before. It was frustrating to be a "watcher" because we had to stay in our seats! The hall was big. That was a wonderful day for me.

From there I went to Janet's classes in Cambridge, totally unaware that I had taken the first very small step to a new understanding of what yoga could be in my life.

Words are inadequate, Guruji, to express my appreciation for your inspired teaching. Many, many thanks.

Honouring Mr. Iyengar on His 80th Birthday

by Sheri Berkowitz

Salt Spring Island, British Columbia



What can one ever say that goes deeply enough about a connection that has been central in one's life for twenty years? There is something astonishing about unrolling the mat every day (you may fold, but mine, I roll!), and watching as the colours change over the years. First the mats were a dull grey-green, then royal blue, then purple, now sky blue with texture changes to match the hues....slick, sticky, tacky, plush and firm. A mat! Now there's a concept.

I remember that what I liked first about yoga practice was that it was totally portable. All I needed was myself, my intention and the world was a set for this daily set of practices aligning me with life. Then, one day in Berkeley, I took my first class with Mary Dunn, or was it with Melinda Perlee...hard to remember for I returned to that room several times that week with a hunger for these new classes and studies with both teachers. I felt that I had travelled from kindergarten to university in one day. From a comfortable learning of classic yoga postures in Sivananda classes to some kind of deep experiential and physical challenge that annoyed me to my depths.

My ego, which up until that time had never exposed itself, came rushing to the fore. After all, didn't

I know it all *already*? I now had to face the reality of inexperience, insensitivity, physical weakness and the fact that I really knew very little of this subject at all. At the same time an interest began to burn in me in a way that I could never have imagined. I went home, closed down my classes and started this practice.

Oh this practice! Over and over through these years I have hit the wall of the very same ego burners I encountered the first week. So many times has a guest teacher, a senior teacher, arrived with good basic information which scuttled the understandings I was working from. How could one ever arrive at

a point of understanding where one's students would be safe from all the potential disasters of wrong working? How could one's own students go away to a workshop and come back with something I didn't know? And how open would I be to hear it from such a source? How could humility and respect and sensitivity and honouring all manage to commingle so that this would and could become truly a spiritual practice?

Very early I went to Pune. After only one year of practice. There I was, 1979, in India and all that meant to my senses. My heart opened to this gorgeous population with deep dark eyes, inquisitive,



"Yoga has to be done using the intellect of the head as well as the intellect of the heart. This is spiritual yoga."

helpful and kindly supportive. The Institute was quieter then, a regular schedule of classes taught by Geeta, Prashant and Mr. Iyengar. I stopped by the Institute, rang the door of the household, was politely given my assignment of classes and told to come back in 5 days as they were still on their holidays and would recommence classes at that time.

Friends of mine from home were in Pune for the Rajneesh Ashram, so I went over and took a weekend called Enlightenment Intensive. (When in Rome why not do as the Romans? I was in India, time to get enlightened.) Fortunately, I did have a little enlightenment from that few days, or the ensuing month at the Institute would have been beyond me. At a certain point in the Intensive, I had been sitting listening to a series of people from other countries speak in their own languages (what seemed to me) interminably. I decided that I had had enough – my back hurt and I ached with boredom and it was time to leave this. So I called a facilitator who simply looked at me and challenged... "Sit straighter and listen more." My back pain fell away, my boredom ceased and life abounded.

It was this attitude of deepening my attention and being more present that took me through my month at the Iyengar Institute. Sometimes I wonder if this isn't indeed the nub of all spiritual teachings. Pay attention! Be present! Be responsible to the moment and your own conduct in it!



"Life is dynamic, so the poses should be dynamic."

A ten day trip to Feathered Pipe Ranch in Montana to study with Ramanand Patel and Judith Lasater put the finishing touches on a new level of readiness to embark on sharing these new understandings.

Return to Winnipeg was deepened by the sharing of practice once a week with Karen Fletcher who was the only other person in Winnipeg to have encountered and begun to work with Mr. Iyengar's teachings. I mention this as there are likely still many around the country who do not have access to a teacher. To study with another serious student is a rich and rewarding way of deepening one's work. So much can be seen by looking at another, by sharing what you do remember and by trying adjustments and

suggestions with one another. Karen was great! Gradually we began to teach at the same location and to advertise together and our little community grew. In 1984, we each had an opportunity to be away from Winnipeg and to deepen our learning elsewhere. So, as this was the "early days" and such things could be done, we hauled in our most knowledgeable and capable students to carry on classes for the year we were away. (Val Paape is one of those two annointed early teachers and has recently opened a new studio in Winnipeg.) A year in San Francisco with my two daughters, studying at the B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Institute, was my time in study; Karen spent a year in Victoria with Shirley Daventry French.

When Karen and I returned to Winnipeg, we trained others,

taught classes, brought in guest teachers from across Canada and the U.S. Before long, a small group including Val, Karen, Hart Lazer, Yvonne Kipp, Stephanie Kostiuk, Marg Heiland and myself opened Yoga Centre Winnipeg. We had it all! A clean, reliable space for students and no more hauling of props to dirty public spaces. It was terrific.

As life moves on, so did I. To Kenora and back to public spaces and new students. I had heard Mr. Iyengar urge teachers to take the work into the smaller communities and there I was hauling props again. And being rewarded big time. Bringing this work to a community with little yoga and few opportunities for folks to partake of holistic spiritual practices allowed me to meet and be of some service in my new community. People were eager for this kind of opportunity. Those who had perhaps at one time studied yoga, or Eastern philosophy, and wanted to expand their experiences joined in with those who came for reasons of stress or injury or readiness to improve their fitness levels. Before long there was sufficient interest to set up a teachers' training and I was to reap the rich rewards of guiding others to read, to do assignments, to study and practice and to be able to enhance their lives and those of others in years to come.

I was in India a second time with the Canadian group guided by Liz McLeod in 1988. There I met and enjoyed the company of others from across the country. I had the

joy of being there with a student of mine, Val, and then later seeing Laurie Jo Lindroos of Kenora travel to classes in Pune, summer of 1997. Nothing quite ever reaches the satisfaction of watching those you have worked with take up these teachings, make them their own and form their own relationships with the Iyengars and the community.

I have often attended the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association meetings across the land. I have participated in my own way as this very group has grown through the efforts of the very remarkable and capable people in our community. This group met and struggled with the sensitive issues of creating a structure and *modus operandi* which would be uniquely Canadian and also follow Mr. Iyengar's request to formalize and begin to grant Certificates at a world standard. The desire was to create a way of doing this which at the same time respected seniority, learned experience, maturity, and could honour the entire community and bring it into the dialogue without becoming a rigid hierarchy. We wanted the certification to become a celebration of achievement and an honouring of participants.

We have begun, we are launched. We have much to accomplish. In our vast and expansive land this will take and is taking the ongoing inputs of duty, caring, time, insight, and many strengths of experience from other fields of endeavour such as organizing, financial and communication skills. We are

challenged in many ways to grow personally and as a community.

Is there ever an input without an ultimate reward? It may come in forms quite unexpected, or seemingly unrelated. It comes as new skills, new friends, enhanced confidence, and ever so often as a beautiful *Tadasana* from a student.

Over many years of practice and of life I got to learn that there is no direct line of achievement or success. I have had injuries and some challenges to my health. It has taken both courage and the sometimes insistent support of senior teachers to deepen the practice into some scary territory. I had earlier wondered what the firmness was all about in this community. Couldn't they be "nice." I was willing to work. But in fact I wasn't. Not really...as my fear was in the way. So easy it is to believe your own fears and medical pronouncements. So easy to take it easy. Coming to better health has had many components, much growth and learning and using these practices with attention and appropriateness.

The enrichment of it all continues for me today. I am living in another small community, on Salt Spring Island, again offering classes and meeting wonderful people. I also live close enough to Victoria to partake of Shirley Daventry French's classes, to attend meetings and to join in the community.

I am heading out to India for a third time. It feels BIG. It always is a huge event to go to India. It is

to confront one's entire beliefs and cozy structure. It is to see anew, to freshen one's eyes. This time it is also to celebrate the 80th birthday of this giant of our times.

To be able to honour this man who humbly, and with incredible purity of heart and intention has led the way for so many. His gifts to all who follow, his refinement and attention to the moment and

to our experience therein will resound for centuries. I can heartfully say God Bless Mr. Iyengar and his family, and thanks for such a richness in my own life. Namaste.

The Path of Self Knowledge

by Barbara Yates

Mount Lehman, British Columbia

When I began to study Iyengar Yoga I had one reason - to change a postural habit that caused chronic pain. While I was getting a handle on the pain, another reason surfaced. Perhaps I'd resolve some unrealized life ambitions, vague and vacillating though they were. I searched the faces of advanced students and teachers looking for signs of the certainty, clarity and satisfaction I lacked.

A year after entering my first class, I was asked to teach and had a new reason to learn the poses. This was very involving and my lack of focus faded imperceptibly. I am really only remembering it now, reflecting on my history with Iyengar Yoga. It became my life because dedication to yoga and its classical form came easily. I thought about yoga and did it more than anything else. Over time yoga became my livelihood and other means dropped away. Whatever else I could have been doing, that question was forgotten.

Guruji, Geeta and Prashant teach the Sutras, Gita or Upanishads as the basis for any action. This approach penetrates through layers of elephant skin, glass ego, and granite musculature, and overrides my own prosaic motives. Enticed into self exploration over how I am to move my leg in *Trikonasana*, I am a lottery winner who took a stab at wealth. The question gets answered even though I had not the clarity or courage to articulate it.

Patanjali describes the steps to self knowledge, warning that the path is harder and trickier the closer you get, and fleeting. Achievement is not resolution. Walking the path is reason unto itself, and the only thing to resolve is to do. It is Guruji's teaching that alerted me to the depth of the help that yoga offers. If Iyengar Yoga were not such a concrete, practical guide into metaphysics, I might still be where I started.

Guruji brought his art to the West where one searching could wander into a class led by someone trained by someone he trained, and news of this path, the giving, and the art of giving, touch so deeply as to transform perennial dissatisfaction to an intrigue of fun, amusement and joy. The essence of the message is intact, so strong, so clear is the teaching.

Thank you, Guruji, for your gift. Happy Birthday, with the deepest affection.

Maxims

*Sincerity and stupidity
cannot go together.*

*The practice of yoga
is to remove weeds from
the body
so that a garden can
grow.*

*To a yogini, her body is a
laboratory,
a field for perceptual
experiment and research.*

Thoughts from B.K.S. Iyengar's Visit to Victoria, 1984.

by Jennifer Rischmiller
Victoria, British Columbia



I remember being part of the fundraising efforts for this visit and our disappointment when the dance we had planned had to be cancelled. There was no time to brood, though, his arrival date came upon us quickly.

Before I saw him, I had a sense of how great Mr. Iyengar's commitment was to his work and of how much effort and experience he brought to his teaching. I had read about him; however, it was the taped interviews I heard that crystallized my feelings. With what was almost shock I listened to his voice; it demanded my attention and respect. I heard how hard he works in the tone of his voice. His daily, lifelong commitment is what drew me to him, admiration of his self-discipline. I find it difficult to describe what strong feelings were evoked in me about Mr. Iyengar's devotion to duty and the hard work that brought him to his present level of commitment. I was made aware of my own potential and what a sacred gift my life is and how important it is to use this gift with awareness.

With all this in mind the appearance of Mr. Iyengar in the flesh didn't surprise me. My

impression of his strength is the first memory and remains the strongest memory for me. The strength of his body was not so apparent as it came to be for me when watching him teaching. It was more the strength of character, the spiritual strength that shone through and reinforced the feelings I had had when listening to the tapes. His strength sustained and nurtured me through his visit during the times I spent with him. There were no intimate discussions with him for me, I was present on several occasions to listen to him talk and watch him teach. I heard him talk about the yoga of the split personality where the body and mind are two separate entities. When there is unity between the body, mind and intelligence then yoga is a total practice, he said.

Many of you will know that Mr. Iyengar considers the body the temple of the soul. I speak of this as I have often heard people refer to Iyengar style yoga as not having any spirituality. In my experience, my studies of my body during Iyengar Yoga very early on led me to my very soul.

Mr. Iyengar recognises the humour in life and has compassion for the struggle of many people he meets. These qualities have



brought a balance to my perception of the path on which I travel. I believe his experiences and struggles have strengthened his perception so that he gracefully accepts the dedication of the path of a yogi.

When he left Victoria, he had infused me with an energy that brought about vision – he helped me see more clearly what I needed to help me on my journey. He continues to give me support through his teachings, his teachers and his students. He also gives me vision. I see my strengths and my obstacles through his eyes and know that if I want to continue on this path I have chosen, I, too, need to work hard and be committed.

In recognition of Mr. Iyengar's teachings, I give thanks.

My Impressions of Sri B.K.S. Iyengar

by Terrilyn Wass

Victoria, British Columbia



I had the privilege of taking classes taught by Mr. Iyengar while attending the Iyengar Yoga Convention held in Ann Arbor, Michigan during August 1993. I was filled with awe, trepidation and curiosity. I feel fortunate and honoured to have been in a few classes led by him, and to have observed him during question and answer sessions and other activities during the week.

When Mr. Iyengar taught the classes, many of the instructions were familiar to me. The purity of the teachings are maintained by his system. This also reflected my teachers' respect for their Master, their openness and willingness to continually learn and process the teachings. I found it reassuring. It strengthens my admiration of and gratitude for them and the yoga community in Victoria.

It was inspiring to observe Mr. Iyengar demonstrate asanas, and I saw movements and control of the physical body I could now only begin to visualize in my being. And even though, there were six hundred students in the classes, his eagle eyes still observed and corrected students at the back. How fortunate to be so blessed.

I was honoured to be able to attend the question and answer sessions. They revealed Mr. Iyengar's wisdom, compassion and

tenderness. The therapeutic and medical information made a particular impact. He observed, processed, suggested asanas or exercises, observed the questioner doing them, interpreted feedback, adjusted. The message I received is that the Master is still absorbing and deciphering, learning. It takes humility and flexibility to do so.

Like Divine Mother, Mr. Iyengar exhibits strength and softness. Mr. Iyengar ensured that two students with physical disabilities be placed at the front of the class to receive individualized attention from himself or someone in his entourage. He always gave them the time, individual instructions, props they needed. Ever patient.

Twice I recall him being sharp with someone in his entourage. His expectations of teachers is naturally much greater than of his other students. He is responsible for their teaching, and they have a responsibility to pass on his teaching as clearly as possible. It reminded me of how I have so much more expectations of those closest to me.

There was a presentation, *Myth and Symbol of the Yoga Asanas*, *The Warrior and the Moon*, combining storytelling, yoga and Indian dance. I found it profoundly moving and extremely powerful. The obvious delight it gave Gururji was heartwarming.

Looking down from above into the squash court at a small class (approximately fifteen students taught by a well-known teacher from the U.S.A.), Mr. Iyengar from an awkward angle observed me and gave a correction. Although the instruction addressed the physical, he saw into my soul, unraveling the layers closing my heart. The skin reveals, I suspect, through my heart into my soul so he was aware of the fear of exposing my heart, fear of being vulnerable holding me back. He read my body and recognized the potential of my heart.

Mr. Iyengar increases awareness, inspires and pushes students to reach their potential. His method of yoga opens my body, my mind and my spirit on many levels. It has been for me an unfolding into the Light, a journey that is now combining with other yogic practices, integrating and working together permeating my being, nourishing my spirit. It has become, as Father Joe Pereira says, my "journey into wholeness, journey into holiness."

I feel truly blessed.

Words seem too inadequate to express my gratitude to Sri B.K.S. Iyengar. Ways for me to show it are through practice, applying the teachings and contributing to the local organization that promotes his work, the Victoria Yoga Centre Society.

"POSITION GOD

FOR EVERY ASANA

THEN REACH TOWARDS HIM"

— B.K.S. Iyengar



Insights of a Summer Break

by Margot Kitchen
Calgary, Alberta

Unity.

Sitting by the river.

Clear water - seeing above and below.

Fish dives,

Frog jumps,

Loon calls.

Yoga.

Unity.

Sitting in *Dandasana*.

Clarity - feeling within and without.

Femurs descend,

Spine lifts,

Chest opens.

Yoga.

Unity.

Standing in the river.

Currents - feeling inner and outer.

Mirroring the shore,

What is reality?

Water flowing.

Yoga.

Unity.

Standing in *Tadasana*.

Currents - balancing inner and outer.

Reflecting the soul,

Knowing reality.

Energy flowing.

Yoga.

Unity.

Watching the river.

Ripples clouding images.

Lily pads seemingly floating,

Strongly rooted.

Water yellow, green to blue.

Yoga.

Unity.

Watching in *Savasana*.

Thoughts clouding images.

Kosas letting go,

Bones dense,

Abdomen, throat softening.

Yoga.

All is one, all is yoga. Thank you,
Guruji, for your gift.

A Picture of Mr. Iyengar

by Wies Pukesh
Victoria, British Columbia

I have formed a picture of Mr. Iyengar
over the years
of a magnanimous man, somewhat wild
and larger than life
I feel I know him
He speaks through me
while I am doing asanas
allowing me to evolve ever more:
Being while observing
Observing while being
Creating such joy at times
It reflects in my worldly life
more present and more aware
my influence growing
at times inspiring

And I think of all those
trained in Mr. Iyengar's yoga
extending the knowledge in daily lives
So many people touched
by this single human being
Expanding like ripples
from a focal point.

May these ripples fill with
fondness and gratitude, Mr. Iyengar
and return to you on your 80th birthday!
I would like to meet you one day
but then I have met you many times already.

Thank You.
Namaste.

A Gesture of Thanks for the Gifts of Yoga

Selected poems from "Toward the Light"
by Patricia Oughton
Mayne Island, British Columbia

Cosmic Breath

My breath
Your breath
Our Breath
One breath
Then
Now
Forever
One.

Savasana

Lying in surrender
My body at peace
Soft
Quiet
Unfolding
Open to this day.

Virabhadrasana

Standing in warrior pose
My body as a symbol
Firm against evil
Strong in adversity
Protector and guardian
Balance
Powerful
Ready for this day.

Just Let Me Catch My Breath

Where is the breath?
Outside to in
Inside to out
Radiating, pulsing,
Swelling, subsiding.
A labyrinthian journey
From the heat of each cell
Out into the universe.
To and fro, to and fro
From light to dark, dark to light
The breath will do itself.
Why do I want to catch it?
Why can't I just give the breath away?

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"TREAT THE PRACTICE OF YOGA AS PART OF YOUR LIFE, ALLOWING IT SPACE WITHIN YOUR NORMAL ACTIVITIES"

— B.K.S. Iyengar

The Power of the Teachings

by Elizabeth Stocking
Toronto, Ontario

There was quite a wonderful article in a popular magazine recently about naked babies and the glory of their nakedness. How in them we see and delight in the human body "before it has learned pain or shame or self-consciousness." Is there anything more beautiful than a baby naked and new, fresh from a bath rolling in ecstasy? The article went on to say it is a taste of the "perfection that slips away, minute by minute, as we grow and learn and fall and falter and fail, cover ourselves with coats against the cold of everyday life." As I read the article it was so clear to me that the practice of Iyengar Yoga with its demands for honesty and integrity at every level of practice and being has helped me penetrate those layers

of coats so that with clear eyes, firm feet and a steady heart I remain as free and happy as that naked baby. Not easy as a mother of five children! And it is about this that I want to write. I want to say something of the blessing of yoga in my life as a mother and the particular way in which the gifted teaching of Mr. Iyengar has made it so. Not only for me but for all the mums of so many different ages that populate yoga classrooms around the world.

My body has long since lost the tone and suppleness of the models in yoga magazines, much less a new baby. Breasts are well worn after years of breast feeding and hips have their own definition of what alignment is! Spiritual awakenings happen more in the honest interchanges with my

children and husband and less in profound meditation where I too often fall asleep from sheer exhaustion. Yet I am healthy and well as yoga has seen me through all the challenges of what it is to be a mum.

The children grew from diapers to teen years and I grew from yoga student to teacher (a continuing student!). I have been blessed by a method that is not content with how things appear on the surface and digs deep to know the truth. Who is this here under all these coats? Why do you cling to them so? Pay attention here! When I have felt that I just could not go on, I was told to spread my toes. When the pain and grief in my heart over my parents' deaths had to find a place with children to care for, I was told to lift my

D 'Treat the practice of yoga as a part of your life, allowing it space within your normal activities.'

sternum and raise my chest higher. Thank God I was not handed valium and told to relax in a hot bath....

I am now approaching menopause with a houseful of teenagers – a lethal combination I am told! But

not nearly as powerful as the teachings of Mr. Iyengar. The strength, the integrity, the honest on-going inquiry of this method has brought health and wellness to me and so to my family. I am eternally grateful and celebrate the birth of someone who after

eighty years is as clear in his body and mind as that newborn but with so much more wisdom and life. Together with so many mums around the world whose lives have been saved in the rough years of child rearing by this remarkable teacher, I say thank you.

Surrendering to Motherhood

by *Melanie Jollymore*
Lawrencetown, Nova Scotia

Becoming a mother has completely transformed my life, dramatically altering daily routines and creating subtle shifts in personal relationships. My relationship to yoga has also changed in the process.

Throughout pregnancy, I modified my practice of Iyengar yoga as my baby and my body grew and changed, and used my practice to help prepare myself for the act of giving birth itself. I feel absolutely certain that if it hadn't been for the abdominal and pelvic strength, openness in the hips, and ability to relax and focus developed through yoga, I would have ended up with a Caesarean delivery after 46 hours of labour and four hours of pushing. The doctors and nurses were amazed that I could still push (they'd never seen anyone push that long before), but I felt I could push all night if need be, just keep that knife away from me! After

Benjamin was born, I healed quickly and now, seven months later, look as if I'd never had a baby, thanks to the resilience provided by my strong foundation in yoga.

The resilience is as much of mind as body. The mental and spiritual adjustments required by motherhood are profound. I no longer have the hours of uninterrupted time to do the kinds of practice I used to, and feel the need to do more restorative postures to compensate for the lack of sleep and non-stop demands of mothering an extremely active baby while also running a thriving business. Simple relaxation is a challenge, but I try to surrender my body to the pose and my soul to motherhood. My mind is the least co-operative, as I struggle to let go of the hyper-alert, ready-to-spring-into-action state of mind I've developed. Every day, I find myself learning to let go of my

plans and ideas for what I needed to 'get done' that day, surrendering to the demands of the moment ever more gracefully (then getting up at five in the morning to make up for it!). In the process, I'm learning a new kind of yoga – a yoga of devotion.

Maxims

It is a fact that healthy plants and trees alone yield fragrant flowers and tasty fruits.

Similarly, from a healthy man, smiles and happiness blossom out like the rays of the sun.

I am standing on my own altar; the poses are my prayers.

Yoga: A Mother's Journey in Search of the Gem

by Maggie Dunphy
St. John's, Newfoundland

I am thirty six years old and admittedly a little uncomfortable putting my feelings into words. I will try my best. I began practicing Iyengar Yoga (in St. John's with Beverly Winsor) about seven years ago...I'm not sure how long it's actually been, as it seems like a lifetime since I began the yoga journey. A lifetime of change and growth. Change in attitude and outlook. Letting go of the old habits to make room for the new. Growing to know and love myself. Growing free in body, mind and spirit. For all of this I am thankful!

My pre-yoga life was a struggle. If there wasn't enough stress to warrant the norm I set for myself, I manufactured some. At this I was very effective. I had not learned to focus my energy in a truly positive manner, and had learned to keep my mind busy with endless thought processes. This took its toll on my overall health and well being. It's interesting to look back and analyse that period....but I am far too analytical by nature. It is healing to look back without judgment and accept that stage as a stepping stone in the journey. I tell myself to stay in the present moment and breathe. Finally I am able to accomplish this feat.

My early yoga practice, quite rudimentary but steady, was key to two extremely healthy pregnancies. The gloriously simple births of our two children are for me the greatest benefits of yoga in real life. I was able to enjoy each experience at a dimension unknown to most new mothers I meet. The memories are crystal clear and my pride swells too large. Lengthy adjustment periods following each birth were eased by asana and pranayama under the guidance of my teacher and friend. Having settled into the family routine with two preschoolers, my parenting abilities are evolving in parallel with my yoga practice. The rewards are obvious. I realize I have been given many precious gifts, indeed some are gems.

I am working hard to make this life less of a struggle and more of a joy. I am confident this will continue to get easier through yoga, particularly with meditation naturally progressing from my yoga practice. I look forward to the future with a sense of peace. I am beginning to teach our children the yoga postures, but more importantly I am continuing my own practice so I will be the best role model I can be. Luckily I have a supportive husband who has encouraged me through all the ups and downs of change.

Together we laugh and cry, learning to take one day at a time.

I feel blessed to be subject to the teachings of B.K.S. Iyengar. I sign off with a big yoga smile in my heart. Namaste, my friends.

Maxims

*When performing a pose,
you have to find out
whether your body
has accepted the
challenge of the mind,
or whether
the mind has accepted
the challenge of the body.*

*The asanas
should be performed
in such a way
as to lead the mind
from attachment
to the body
towards the
light of the soul
so that the practitioner
may dwell in the
abode of the self.*

*Without art
there is no science.
A philosopher is always
an artist and vice versa.
Our body is the
instrument for our art.*

D "Treat the practice of yoga as a part of your life, allowing it space within your normal activities."

In Appreciation of Yoga

by Jennifer ML Whitfield
St. John's, Newfoundland

I started doing yoga in 1989. I was very hesitant about getting "into" this "exercise program," as it all seemed so hard to do and, I was told, it might interfere with my religion! I had just witnessed another very traumatic incident within my family and I needed something to help my addled brain through this episode. So I persevered as I had read of the good things that come from learning and practising yoga. Nine years later, I am still learning and practising yoga and thankful that I am, as it has allowed me to grow through that major event, and many others, in my life. I cannot emphasize enough what wonderful profits come from yoga for oneself – the mental and physical well-being which I have is marvelous and blends in well with my religious and spiritual self too. This, of course, does not surprise me now!

In St. John's, Newfoundland, there are quite a few Iyengar Yoga teachers, all of whom do their best to pass on to the students what they know and have learned from their experiences. Whether they travel to India (as many of them have), or across Canada to Vancouver, or to the States; we benefit from each new learning session. This is always refreshing for us all as so

much is shared amongst the yoga "family," which is alive and well in this province. Various classes meet regularly throughout the year and there are new people signing up for "Beginners," thus enhancing the community as they grow in the practice of Iyengar Yoga. I notice more young people here participating in yoga. Personally, I think they are very smart! If they can learn to include yoga in their lives early, their time on earth will be much richer and fuller for this.

Workshops, which are of such benefit to our groups, are often held here in St. John's. We have been blessed with some excellent instructors from other parts of the world who share their time and experiences with us over a long weekend, in peaceful surroundings. This kind of sharing leaves one energized and ready to take on life once again!

What would have happened to me if I had not "discovered" yoga? I really do not know. However, I suspect I might have slipped through the cracks somewhere along the way. The discipline and practice of yoga have allowed me to live my life day by day with such fullness, it is almost overwhelming at times. Because of my yoga, I have also met wonderful people.



From all of us here in Newfoundland, I would like to take this opportunity to wish Mr. Iyengar - our Yoga Master - a very happy birthday, and thank him sincerely for the gift which he has given us.

Happy Birthday!

Maxims

You must savour the fragrance of a pose.

"DOING ASANAS



IS A GRACE FROM GOD.
TAKE IT OR HE WILL WALK AWAY"

— B.K.S. Iyengar

Sixty and Better

by Linda Benn
Victoria, British Columbia

When I went to the Institute to study in 1992, one of the things that impressed me about Mr. Iyengar was the supple power of his body at age seventy four. His skin was vibrant and smooth and I could see why he insists that we use the sensitivity of the skin to learn. What a fine example of human potential Mr. Iyengar sets for us all as he ages with character, grace and wisdom. He continues to explore, to learn and seek wisdom.

This week I checked the registration list for my seniors' yoga class at the Victoria Y and was struck by the ages of several of the students: eighty, seventy-

eight, seventy-seven, seventy-three, etc. I was startled by their actual ages as I don't focus on age when teaching. It is not that they don't have the normal problems of an older body. Each of them is challenged by something, be it heart problems, sciatica, failing hips, bionic knees, weaker eyesight, less hearing ability, or stiffening spines, to name the ones I know about. As in all yoga classes they just get on with doing the poses the best they can.

Seniors who practice the yoga asanas show respect and reverence for their bodies which have served them well on their life journey. When walking, we feel the ground with the sensitive nerves in our feet to create

balance and movement. As we age, some of that sensitivity is lost. Wearing thick-soled shoes cuts that sensitivity even more. Going barefoot in yoga classes helps to regain some of that awareness, as well as developing supple, strong feet and ankles. The standing poses can be practiced and adapted so all can benefit from the strengthening and confidence that they promote. Practicing the yoga asanas helps to prevent falls, increases stamina, improves posture and mental well being, lessens mood swings and encourages relaxation.

As a teacher I have learned from Mr. Iyengar and his senior teachers how to move the

students into twists, forward bending, supported backbends and gentle inversions. Today I was delighted to see a very tight upper body finally let go and soften into savasana for the first time, eyes softly gazing downwards under peaceful eyelids.

Breathing awareness and deep smooth breathing are important to people who may not be as physically active as they once were. Breathing practices bring up the oxygen levels in the blood, remove impurities, as well as releasing tension in the heart and brain. The breath is where the mind and body connect and flow one into the other.

I enjoy the light-hearted banter and the enormous amount of support the students give to each other in that class. These are mature people whose egos no longer have to be protected or proven. There is openness and generosity in their hearts in spite of physical difficulties.

Yoga is learning about oneself, svadhaya. Even though many of the students in my seniors class are working at jobs, doing volunteer work or caring for their families, the yoga class is time to nourish their bodies and to look for meaning and the sacred in themselves and their lives.

Something my father said when I sat with him in the long hours before death stayed with me for unknown reasons. I have finally understood why I remembered his simple comment about the dying process. In his voice there was no anger, regret or fear - just curiosity

and wonder at this last great mystery.

I thought that by the time I face death I might have answers to the Big Questions. If not, this would mean that I had failed in my life search for meaning.

My father revealed to me that it is possible to age and die gracefully

while still questioning, remaining open to the mysteries of Life and Death. In Mr. Iyengar and in the seniors' yoga class I feel and observe that although great wisdom has been achieved, there is still curiosity, awe and a sense of adventure. I thank them for that gift.



Linda Benn (left) and Shirley Daventry French (right) celebrating the 80th birthday of Helen Pirie (front centre) along with other students from the 60 & Better classes.

Septuagenarian Yoga

by Chris Pratt

Victoria, British Columbia

Shirley eyed me rather skeptically when I first came to her door a few years ago to talk about yoga classes. I'd just entered the eighth decade of my present incarnation, and my stooped appearance was ample evidence of my lack of flexibility, the reason for coming to see her in the first place.

It was a challenge for both of us at the start, but with Shirley's patience and my perseverance, results slowly began to appear. Shoulder blades long since frozen into a fixed position gradually began to show signs of movement, and each small increment was greeted with encouragement.

I'm a keen walker and kayaker, but never realised the importance of stretching the great muscles after that exercise. I do now, but I only wish they'd stay stretched!

Mr. Iyengar is, of course, a wonderful role model as he prepares to enter his ninth decade. Realistically, I know I could never hope to approach the perfect control of mind and body and spirit that he has achieved over a long lifetime, but since this is a personal journey, I can set my own goals.

Of course, I try every day to keep up my exercises of mind, body and spirit, but like the old

grandfather clock that stands in my hall, I need winding up once a week, and I really miss my Tuesday classes when they are not available.

All of this is a familiar story, I'm sure, but I'd like now to share with you some of the wisdom of Lao-tzu. In Chapter 10 of the Tao Te Ching he says:

*"Can you coax your mind from its wandering?
and keep to the original oneness?
Can you let your body become
supple as a newborn child's?"*

Emile Conrad-Da'oud has this comment:

*"There is no self-consciousness in the newborn child. Later on, the mind wanders into self-images, starts to think 'Should I do this? Is this movement right?' and loses the immediacy of the moment. As self-consciousness develops, the muscles become less supple, less like the world. But the young child is pure fluidity. It isn't aware of any separation, so all its movements are spontaneous and alive and whole and perfect.
If an adult body becomes truly supple, though, there's a quality to its movement that the child's doesn't have, a texture of experience, a fourth dimension of time. When we watch a seventy-year old hand move, we feel, 'Yes, that hand has lived.' All the bodies it has touched, all the weights it has lifted, all the heads it has cradled*

are present in its movement. It is resonant with experience, the fingers curve with a sense of having been there, whereas in a child's hand there's a sense of just arriving. The child's movement is pristine and innocent and delightful, but a truly supple adult movement is awesome, because all life is included in it."

Finally, I happen to have spent many years of my life serving in our Navy and must include these lines with another comment from the above source:

"Can you love people and lead them without imposing your will?"

"The more supple your body is, the less dictatorial you'll be. The military stance is the most invasive stance that you can possibly take. Its opposite – the boneless, wishy-washy posture of someone who doesn't stand for anything – is just as unhealthy. Suppleness is really fluidity. It transcends strength and weakness. When your body is supple, it feels as if there's no barrier in you, you can flow in any direction, your movement is a complete expression of yourself."

Thank you, Shirley, and deep thanks to her teacher B.K.S. Iyengar!

Life with Yoga

by Gertrude Elton

St. John's, Newfoundland



sometimes try to imagine my life without yoga. For years it has been a way for me to keep and improve my flexibility, to strengthen and become aware of my body. I was fortunate to attend a weekend seminar conducted by Mr. Iyengar, itself an inspiration. Following this great teacher's example, I continue to strive for improvement. Now well into my sixties, another reward is the joy

and satisfaction I get seeing the transformation yoga brings to my students.

I extend my gratitude and congratulations to Mr. Iyengar on this important occasion.



A Message to All Seniors Who Want to Live Life at it's Best

by Lois Fey

St. John's, Newfoundland

"DO IT THE IYENGAR WAY!"



pon retirement from office work for twenty five years, I was quickly becoming old before my time. My left shoulder was so stiff I could not get my arm to go back any further than my hip bone. Both legs and hips were stiff and aching most of the time. Being

advised by my chiropractor to get into a good exercise program or, in his words "seize up," I joined Iyengar Yoga classes. My first few sessions I was very stiff and feeling awkward.

After one year of yoga I am now moving very freely and able to get out of bed and get going in a few

minutes instead of a couple of hours. I feel alive and vibrant and look forward to each session with anticipation. At sixty two I am planning on living out the rest of my life the Iyengar way.

"FOCUSING ON ONE POINT IS CONCENTRATION.

FOCUSING ON ALL POINTS AT THE SAME TIME IS MEDITATION"

— B.K.S. Iyengar

From the Dark Maze to the Bright Path

*Meg Seaker
Kaslo, British Columbia*

"**B**lessed is the country in which he was born, blessed are they who lived on this earth at the same time...." These words, written by an American disciple of Swami Vivekananda, spring to mind when I think of Guruji. Without his light, I would surely have resembled the little girl in Wonderland who never came upon a door leading to freedom but remained bewildered throughout her long dream. Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama – how clearly Guruji has marked the route leading to bliss and serenity.

I have heard that a person vividly remembers places in which he or she has been intensely happy. The Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune is such a place for me. In an instant I can be feeling the smooth cool floors and drinking in the atmosphere of fervent dedication. Perhaps the Institute is a state of mind, or grace, more than a place.

My deepest thanks to Guruji for all his creations, and felicitations on this most auspicious occasion of his eightieth birthday.



Caught

by Ann Kilbertus
Victoria, British Columbia

"Let fear descend, and confidence ascend."

— B.K.S. Iyengar

Iyengar Yoga has caught me. What is it about Yoga in this tradition that keeps me coming back for more?

Certainly it was initially the physical effects of the asanas. They could penetrate areas of tensions in my body that seemed untouched by other practices I had tried. Eventually the pull went deeper and intuitively I began to study more, read more, and take more classes.

What caught me at a deeper level is harder to describe and in some way, remains just that — indescribable. But there were, and are, observable changes in my sense of self and inner confidence and awareness.

My first trip to the Institute in Pune, in 1992, came by chance. Following a major personal upheaval I had both the time and the inclination to attend an intensive and there were still spaces available. Somewhere between Victoria and Singapore I turned thirty five years old, (possibly a few times), as we crossed the international date line.

Joseph Campbell talks of thirty five as a turning point. And in this way my adventure began.

The intensive was demanding and exhilarating. Many times I left the Institute feeling like I had had a cellular bath. But a time for deeper reflection came not in asana class but in a special needs class where I had only a brief moment of Mr. Iyengar's attention. I was watching the class from the sidelines and another teacher was engaged in helping Guruji position a student to get the maximum effect from a posture. Suddenly he requested more help from the sidelines, from a "teacher," and I jumped forward. I began to hold the student in the way I thought he had requested when all of a sudden he addressed the senior teacher: "Who is she?" (Meaning me!) "She has no confidence!.... She is shaking MY confidence!"

Fortunately he didn't say get out, because that's what part of me felt like doing, even though I continued on. So many sheaths penetrated in a passing moment.

I could choose to leave now!
What right had he to say such

things to me in front of other people? But there was only the moment and Guruji went for the TRUTH (Satya) in that moment. So many ways to work with this. To stay with the asanas and pranayama, and build my confidence from the inside as well as the outside, or to move on, trying something new and different.

For fourteen years I have stayed. The practice of yoga in the Iyengar tradition has put me more in touch with aspects of my own nature, bringing the spiritual into the real through the metaphor of the body. And, from my standpoint now, the wonders of Yoga seem unending.

Because of the work that has gone before me and because of the continual refinement of the practices by a living Master, the work continues to grow and change. Its uses and applications for individuals of all ages and in varying stages of ability are a well from which I will continue to drink for a long time.

Namaste and Happy Birthday,
Guruji.

Pilgrimage to Pune

by Lauren Cox
Victoria, British Columbia

Why didn't someone tell me that only a certain amount of energy is allotted to each individual entering this place called India? And that one must be on the frugal side – not to overextend oneself in the first week. Because you do not get a refill.

As I laid on the tiled floor gearing up for our eighth *Urdhva*

Dhanurasana I became distracted by the heavy ceiling ropes. Knotted and twisted together they look ancient and weary from years of use. The visual drew me in and took my imagination away. Mr. Iyengar's Institute in Pune feels like an arena filled with ghosts of warriors past working out under the guidance of a much younger B.K.S. Not much imagination is needed to hear the orders projected and the sounds

of effort echoing in this high ceilinged room.

Youth replaced by maturity – a maturity which has come from years of seeing, practising, studying and refining. How fortunate we were to be here studying with the master himself. To see him in action was genius at work.

Namaste.

A Cleft of Light

by Marlene Linda Miller
Sidney, British Columbia

I have always enjoyed the outdoors: to be in the fresh air, outside of a building, to walk and especially to connect with nature, the earth, the plants and trees, the sun and moon, the water and air. It is a wonderful exhilarating feeling of aliveness. I have looked up to the summit of a mountain and wanted to stand on the top and see the land around, or have looked along the coast and been drawn to hike the shoreline. I am connected not only with the nature around me, but to something inside myself. The mountains and trails call and lead

me along the paths. What is it that beckons me? It is to reconnect with a profound feeling of the spirit and oneness that I experienced several years ago when I was hiking up the side of a mountain.

This summer the group I hike and backpack with went to Cathedral Lakes in southern British Columbia. On one mountain trail there is a cleft in the range that is very dramatic. There is a view from the top of this range to the valley floor 500 metres below. The view and the light are confined, directed and focused by this cleft.

I stood there feeling the power of this natural phenomenon.

The experiences and feelings I have had as a student of Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar have been the same as when I saw this cleft, especially the first moments of standing in *Tadasana* in front of him in the Institute in Pune.

It has been nearly twenty five years since I went to my first Iyengar Yoga class and had that "ah-ha" experience when one finds something that truly fits into their life. I can still vividly visualise and feel the sensations of



that moment in that room. I knew then that to do Iyengar Yoga and to teach was what I wanted, where I belonged. Further, I wished to learn this art from qualified and competent teachers.

This realization of what I wanted to do and where I was going has taken me in a very unexpected life direction, not anywhere I ever imagined from my childhood fantasies. Never did I expect to go to India to stand in front of the Master. Like the moment that I discovered the cleft in the mountain range, it was a dramatic experience for me of being in the presence of Mr. Iyengar, himself, the source of the yoga teachings I had been studying. I was fearful, humbled and honoured, but also exhilarated and excited. It was a confusing mix of emotions. I

doubted my ability to be present and whether I was worthy enough to receive his teachings. However, there I was and there I stayed, and my path has taken me back to the Institute to learn from the source on several other occasions.

Each time I return to the Institute I question and clarify why am I going, what am I doing. It is a struggle and takes much effort in preparation; however, I am drawn to learn more, to deepen my practice and understanding. It is like the struggle and effort it takes to hike up a

mountain where each step must be done with absolute awareness and presence. My purpose in making such journeys has been to search for answers, for experience – "to get it" this time, to be connected to myself, to belong to the group of like-minded people. What I have received is the realization that the journey is a continuous search. No, an answer has not been given. Yes, experience has been gained – a moment, an explanation that brought some Light. Guruji splits a concept or preconceived idea that prevented me from a deeper experience of a pose, of myself and/or of knowledge. He has guided me to know and experience for myself. He has guided me along the shoreline and up the side of the mountain of

yoga where I have glimpsed the vastness of the subject. His greatest gift is his teaching that encourages me to be my own guide, to discover and find out for myself through personal practice, and through studying and practising with fellow yoga students and teachers.

Mr. Iyengar has used many ways to get us to be fully attentive and become aware that we too may know the Light of Yoga, whether it is through his voice and body, or by student demonstration or by the example of his personal practices. He always has enthusiasm and a great, deep desire for us to know for ourselves what is yoga. It has not always been a "comfortable" way to learn, like many of life's daily teachings. My emotions and ego get in the way of the learning, but I know now, that I am able to stand firm, face my fears, and change my perceptions of life. And the one thing I always will have with me is that never was I so present in the moment as I was in that first class with my teacher.

Guruji, thank you for your teaching which created a cleft which enables the Light to come through. On this occasion of the celebration of your 80th year, may the Love and Light you have so generously shown and given to your students be reflected back to you a hundred fold and with great Joy.

Namaste.

Truth in Living Form

by Yvonne Kathleen Kipp
Cortes Island, British Columbia



Yoga brings me to the stillness within myself. There are many struggles to achieve this. To put oneself on to a practice mat every day is one of the major ones. I teach at a Retreat Centre on Cortes Island, situated in the Pacific between the rugged, mountainous, sheerface walls of the British Columbia coastal mountains and the shores of Vancouver Island. This is a very remote location and from November through to February in the long, dark, drip drip dripping of the evenings, Cortes can feel on the edge of the world far from the centres bursting with yoga studios, workshops by visiting Gurus and joy of joys weekly classes.

After two and a half decades of practice, studying, following the teachings of Astanga Yoga as taught by Sri B.K.S. Iyengar of Pune, India, I realise that Yoga, this transformative science and art of the ancients of India, is an integral part of my life. I am really amazed and humbled by this realisation. On my remote Canadian island I am able to access and practise one of the most ancient practices known to human culture.

Mr. Iyengar brought Yoga to the West in such a way that one can apply the yogic principles to

everyday life through basic postural alignment. With yogic principles, the more one practises, the more is revealed. More doors open the deeper the enquiry. The tradition is so ancient, practised by generations of Yogis. An ocean of knowledge has been made available to us all.

Mr. Iyengar changed the one to one student teacher ratio which was traditional in India, and taught yoga to groups of students. At one International Conference, he instructed over a thousand people in the refinements of Trikonasana. His extraordinary dedication and outstanding teaching has served to spread this ancient knowledge all around the globe. His work has created a solid foundation upon which thousands of people are basing their lives. When his book *Light on Yoga* came to the West a door was opened, a way to liberation was offered.

Awareness of oneself that is not culturally carved, awareness that touches the unceasing self that is shared by us all, how to access that awareness? To touch that which unites us as humans is one focus for the New Age. We have discovered ways of reducing our daily labour and have created space and time to reach through the myriad projections of the

mind to the core of the Higher Collective Self.

For me Yoga, union, as taught by Mr. Iyengar and passed on through his senior teachers around the world, has been the means to rise above daily chatter and find, for however fleeting a nanosecond, a sense of the Divine.

When I was in Mr. Iyengar's presence in Rishikesh in 1996 and in Pune with the Canadian Intensive in 1997, I felt a deep love. Love is the only way I can describe the feelings that I had; not a sensual love but a true spiritual love. There was a feeling of being completely with myself. In the presence of a Master everyone around may experience the same sense of High Self simply by being in the presence of truth in living form.

I feel so honoured and happy to be part of the vital Canadian Iyengar community. Many many Happy Returns of your Birthday, revered Gururji.

Maxims

*You cannot say you are
intelligent
if you do not also have a
body of intelligence.*

"STAND ERECT OR YOU CAVE IN THE VERY SELF"

— B.K.S. Iyengar



A Legacy of Teachers

by Neil W McKinlay
Victoria, British Columbia



Shirley is using someone to demonstrate an adjustment in Downward Dog tonight. We are concerned with the arm action, and having realised the desired changes in her model, she steps back and says, quite confidently, "Now, isn't that better."

We crane in for a closer look, nodding until a comment rises among us.

"It looks worse, in my opinion."

Shirley looks from the speaker to the pose, seeming suddenly uncertain.

Leslie comes onto her knees, stretches one arm, points.

The two women begin an impassioned dialogue.

Eventually Shirley changes something. "Is that better?"

She looks at Leslie.

"I think so."

* * * *

I have never met B.K.S. Iyengar. I have read very few of his writings, and I think I've seen him just once on videotape – though if I remember correctly this tape offered only a very few minutes of a very grainy image jumping very quickly in and out of *Trikonasana*. Thus, in eight or so years, my interactions with the man whose name distinguishes my practice have come almost exclusively through others - through people who *have* met him and read him and seen him, through people who dedicate a considerable portion of their lives to continuing his work, through people I consider my teachers.

They're not all that impressive when you first walk into class. At least they weren't all that impressive to me. Decidedly ordinary individuals who immediately seem quite flexible and certainly seem to have some knowledge of what they're doing, but who wouldn't turn a head on the street because they're just like the rest of us.

Only they're not.

I'm not sure when it first occurred to me, but these people, these teachers of mine, they are most decidedly *not* ordinary.

I know it wasn't during my term in Linda's class - not out of any lack on her part, but more because I had little idea what was going on, who these people were, what it was they and we were doing. Through my years in Lauren's Monday morning class, I

think I began to develop the slightest inkling - she's so strong I thought, and so alive with this stuff. But I assumed this more a personal trait, not something all the teachers might be noted for, and I guess I thought this because I really didn't know there were any other teachers at that point - names on a schedule, yes, labels in the newsletter, yes, titles mentioned occasionally in class, but flesh and blood still eluded me.

I guess, then, I really began to understand on Thursday mornings.

Leslie led that class for about six months one year. I had never really met her before and from the beginning I was amazed by her power and her thoroughness and by the depth of her understanding. I was amazed that anyone could be as good as Lauren, who was actually a *student* in that class. As was Linda, who now impressed me whenever she chose to speak up in class, which Leslie seemed to encourage and appreciate, impressed me with her insights and her ideas and her ability to recall something done only once several years earlier.

Caren and I started talking about how *extraordinary* these women were, and how tremendously fortunate we were to be in this class, one with three awesome teachers - four when Shirley returned from India. It was at this point, I think, that I began to recognise the existence of a community of teachers all around

me, right here in Victoria. A community of decidedly unordinary teachers.

* * * *

Most readers will know that I coach swimming for a living. I have been doing this for a long while now, and one of the things I have come to understand from this experience is how difficult it can be developing and maintaining any sort of community amongst people.

It's something I try to do every summer with the teams I coach. With the parents and the swimmers and my fellow coaches, I try to find some common idea, some common aim that will join us together, will unify us and keep us moving, more or less harmoniously, in the same direction. It might seem obvious that swimming itself could serve as our link, but I have found this is not specific enough, that there are too many ideas about what swimming is, about how one might best approach the activity and that a much more focused vision is necessary. Being part of a community, after all, involves at least some degree of submission to a greater whole and, in my experience, people are much more able to make such submission - to surrender pet theories and personal agendas - when the light guiding everyone is as clear and bright as possible.

I think this is why the incident that begins this piece has stuck with me.

To me, it was obvious who was the senior teacher in that moment, obvious who was leading that class. Yet, in spite of this, when Leslie raised questions about a supposed improvement, her concerns were greeted with an openness that allowed the two women to set about trying to better understand a particular aspect of Downward Dog. Their concern, it seemed, was not with themselves or with perceived hierarchies but instead with what

they shared in common - and have shared in common for many years. Their concern was the work.

* * * *

I have never met or seen B.K.S. Iyengar. I have not read many of his writings and have only caught a fleeting glimpse of him on video. But I feel touched by his legacy each and every time I go to class. I feel I am placed in the light of his wisdom each time Shirley or

Leslie or Lauren or Linda or whomever says, "Let us begin." I feel awed that one man can inspire so many individuals to become such extraordinary teachers, awed that this man's inspiration can keep them working together toward Higher Good. From this place of awe, I offer thanks - thanks to Mr. Iyengar on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, and thanks to all those who continue to spread his teachings.

From Darkness to Light

by Donna Rao

Vancouver, British Columbia



ow has yoga changed my life!

I came to yoga about fifteen years ago when I was in my late twenties. At that time I was going through many changes. I felt like I had fallen asleep for about ten years - living a lifestyle that was unhealthy, physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. It was interesting though, because during that time I was somewhat aware of how empty I felt and I knew there was more to life if I went within.

I started studying and participating in a series of teachings that emphasized spirit and how it manifests in form. I met a fellow student who told me about a yoga class that really helped her back pain. So, off I

went to try it. It was wonderful. I began opening areas of my body that had been closed for a long time. Going within to all of those dark areas.

Gradually I started practising between weekly classes, trying to remember and absorb everything I was learning. My teacher, Wende Davis, had a solid presence that instilled in me the confidence to move from Introductory Level to Level One and then Level Two. At some point I started to think about teaching yoga, but my career and relationships were changing, so I decided to wait.

My life continued, as did my yoga - which became as much a part of my life as my friends and family. In my mid-thirties I found yoga to be a helpful stabilizer, as again I

was facing more of life's changes - the death of my father, the end of a relationship, and the return to Vancouver after working overseas for two and a half years. Yoga helped me to stay focused and calm, and again to work through fear in the poses as well as my life.

And then just when I least expected it, I met a man in my yoga class, whom I soon knew would be my life-long mate. We've been married for seven wonderful years. There continues to be many changes in our life, but we maintain our practises and go to classes and workshops and remain excited and enthusiastic about yoga. A few years ago some of my neighbours asked if I would teach them some poses, and from there I began my yoga teaching path.

I found a wonderful teacher in Barbara Yates, who was willing and able to take me on as an apprentice. I have been studying with her for almost two years and continue to teach classes. There is so much to learn and to try and be patient with myself, realizing that I have many years ahead. So

when I stop to consider how yoga has changed my life, I have to say – immensely.

I thank all of my formal teachers – Wende, Barbara, Donald, Julie, and many more. Also thank you to the students who attend my classes, their willingness and

eagerness to learn about themselves and how to be better people is inspiring. But mostly I thank B.K.S. Iyengar, for having the tenacity and courage to do so much for yoga. He is truly one who sheds light on the darkness. Looking back into the darkness of my twenties, I truly appreciate the light that yoga has shed into my life.

A Space for Practice

by Nancy Dutaud
Orleans, Ontario

This year's annual Iyengar Yoga weekend workshop that I attended in Ottawa in June, 1998, taught by Shirley Daventry French was timely for me. My family and I were planning to move from Carleton Place, Ontario to Orleans, Ontario in August, and much work lay ahead of me as our moving date was getting closer. I decided that the workshop would be my calm before the storm of relocating.

Shirley's creative approach to yoga worked away on me over the weekend. I was tired and sluggish at the beginning, and as the afternoon wore on I started to feel energized. The next day I returned with eagerness. I was clearly, feeling great. The weekend provided some peace, and I welcomed this at a time

"There's always space for yoga."



when my life was starting to turn upside down. I walked away from the weekend with a lightness. It was as if every part of my body was lifting up. I was invigorated, inspired, and I'm sure a few inches taller.

I also felt the benefit of a concentrated practice over the weekend. I knew that if I could keep up with a regular practice over the summer that I could continue to reap the benefits of yoga. For an active mother of three children, I have always found it a challenge to keep up a regular practice. Now with school winding down for the year, there would be even less quiet time and space at home for yoga.

A week had passed since the workshop, and I was noticing that I was still feeling the calm effects

of yoga with Shirley, despite the fact that I hadn't rolled out my mat all week. I noticed how hectic things around the house were getting, kids, boxes and packing paper were everywhere. No room in the house looked as I knew it. Everything was in various stages of getting ready to move. What could have been stressful and overwhelming was somehow easier to manage. I'm sure this was owing to practicing Iyengar Yoga.

Throughout the remaining weeks and days before our move, I was not able to practice with much regularity, however, I did make a discovery concerning my practice. I knew there would be no gain by getting discouraged over my lack of practice. I adopted the when I can, I will attitude. More and more, my time and attention was

being taken up with the details of moving. It was at this time that I became aware that although my asana practice was less than what I wanted it to be, I was indeed practicing yoga in other ways. At first I found that packing boxes was boring, but with so much packing ahead of me I knew that it would be better to change my thinking. I turned a dull, boring task into an opportunity to mindfully go through my family's belongings. This acted as a reminder of what Iyengar Yoga has taught me. That the practice of mindfulness brings meaning and purpose to every task in life.

I am now moved into our new house in Orleans, and I have declared a space in the house for my practice. Classes resume next week and I am ready to invite Iyengar Yoga back into my life again.

Sanctuary

by Margaret Danylchuk
Victoria, British Columbia

For me, yoga began about eight years ago with an ad in the *Sooke Mirror*. "Yoga in Metchosin." I was looking for a program which allowed individual growth and progress. Shirley seemed very knowledgeable and I liked the idea of learning in a small, safe setting, which her home proved to be.

At a recent workshop, Ramanand Patel asked why we do yoga. Having had plenty of time to reflect on this question, I realise yoga started out as, and still is, an incredible sanctuary. A place to take my body, mind and soul away from this everyday physical life, and a place where we all have permission to do and be the best we can, without all the restrictions and frustrations that life demands.

Tuesday mornings I experienced a wonderful camaraderie of mostly women, also seeking a physical and mental refuge. I was most pleased and relieved to learn Shirley was, and still is, very humorous, serious, sensitive, mature, and truly walks the talk. When times have been difficult, I know I have drawn from her strength and knowledge and found inspiration. I have learned to understand that yoga is truly an art that works.

I had a dream a few years ago, where Shirley came to my bedroom window. She was on the roof, jumping about, not unlike a monkey. She was asking me to come out, and of course I was afraid. Much playfulness and humour on her part enticed me outside too, and I had fun!

For me this dream was a message to embrace my fears of heights, of being upside down, vertigo, ego, reality. I was never a sporty dare devil, but always willing to try and try again. Shirley represented

trying the unknown and trusting I could do it.

With B.K.S. Iyengar's 80th birthday rapidly approaching, I was moved to express my gratitude to him, for mentoring and guiding Shirley in her years of dedicated learning and service to yoga in the Iyengar tradition. Without her discipline and hard work, his age old doctrine would never have touched so many here in our part of the world. I feel very lucky and thankful to Mr.

Iyengar for his wisdom, teaching and sharing.

Also, now that I am living in Victoria, I have experienced classes with other Iyengar teachers, and have felt in them too Mr. Iyengar's long range influence and inspiration. I know they are all a reflection of his embracing spirit, and a refuge for the body, mind and soul.

Yoga is a safe anchorage, for sure.

Thank You and Happy 80th birthday, B.K.S. Iyengar!

Mr. Iyengar – The Yoga Way

by Caroline Sophonow
Victoria, British Columbia

Nearly this morning when I awoke, my neck is questioning its comfort. Still in my loose pyjamas, I go to the wall, do half *Uttanasana*, *Adho Mukha Svanasana*, then up into handstand (which was a revelation wearing these pyjamas).

As I jumped up my head got lost in the tent like top, and I was given a whole new angle on my approach to handstand. This made me question my headstand and why I cannot for the life of me go up gracefully with straight legs. I then went back to my neck, placed my clasped hands at the base of my skull and released my head forward feeling a remarkable sensation at the back on both left and right sides of my head.

Immediately my memory went back to the summer intensive, and my fellow student, Marg from Wisconsin who became my teacher in many ways that week. As she observed my inversions she repeatedly told me to use more of my back brain. I was very much in the front of my head. It's easy to see. I have identifiable lines across my forehead and between my brows. Being an aesthetician by profession, those fine lines look like deep ravines. Marg is right, it's true, I haven't been using enough of my back brain, the creative side of Caroline. Instead, all these years I've been hovering in logic.

This morning, stretching my neck took me back to the days of

whiplash and all that excess scar tissue holding me good and tight, and hold me back from finding freedom and balance upside down.

Now a new place in my yoga, in my lifestyle, has come. This is where I feel great inner growth, strength and the devotion to continue this path.

Where did it come from? Why is it here?

My persistence plus my teacher Shirley Daventry French's intense work, and, of course, Mr. Iyengar's accumulation of eighty years of life here on this planet, giving to me a gift of immortality.

"HEALTH IS THE STATE WHEN THE SOUL IS GIVEN THE KEY OF THE BODY TO ROAM AT WILL"

— B.K.S. Iyengar

Available to All

by Caren Liedtke
Victoria, British Columbia



was sick this summer. It started out as a cold and after about a week the illness took root in my chest. A few days of non-stop coughing sent me to the doctor. She said I had a viral chest infection and that there was nothing I could do but wait it out. I waited and waited and waited, mostly impatiently as I had never been sick this long before. After about three weeks my cough began to subside, . . . and my ribs started to hurt. The physiotherapist said I had, in essence, sprained my rib joints from so much coughing. She said there was nothing I could do but rest and, again, wait out the healing process. All told, I was physically incapacitated for the better part of two months. During this time, my yoga practice went the way of my health - pretty much out the window.

I am not the world's best yoga practitioner, but, normally, I do practice. When I practice, I am inclined to do the more active poses. I used to be a competitive swimmer and I think part of me is still looking for a good workout. So I rarely, if ever, practice quietening or restorative poses.

This summer changed all that. In the throes of my chest infection, one of the few ways I could find some relief and comfort was to lie on a bolster in *Supta Baddha Konasana*. Every day, I lay in *Supta Baddha Konasana*. It was the extent of my yoga practice for about four weeks. In that time I became very appreciative of bolsters and of *Supta Baddha Konasana*, of the respite and relief they offered me. It was so tangible. One minute I was slouched over, literally coughing uncontrollably, with a

tightness in my chest and strong pain in my side ribs. And then, when I was in the pose, the tension seemed to roll right off of me. My chest opened. I could breathe.

While lying there, I thought of other people suffering with varying degrees of physical difficulty, both temporary and chronic. I thought about the relief they have found in yoga and I thought about the people who have worked hard to bring them that relief. I thought about the Gentle and Special Needs classes offered in our community. I thought about Father Joe and his work with people coping with AIDS and addiction. I thought about how whenever anyone goes to Shirley with a specific physical complaint, she responds without hesitation. She brings all of her knowledge and years of practice and teaching to

bear on that person's specific problem, doing her best to alleviate their suffering. She has done this for me a number of times and I am always moved by the generosity involved.

I have never met Mr. Iyengar and I have never seen him work, not literally, not in the flesh. But I can and do see him at work through our community, as it is in his light and under his guidance that we operate. I have heard about his medical classes in India and have heard many stories about he helped this person or that person with some specific medical problem. Thus I have come to understand that it is by his example that our teachers work to do the same in Victoria. Through our teachers I can see his vision and his efforts to bring yoga to as many people as possible, not just the able-bodied.

And so it should be. I think a spiritual practice should be accessible to all and that a spiritual teacher should help make it so. If it is something only the rich, beautiful, or healthy can access, then, to me, it is not a spiritual practice. And if a person teaches only these people, then he or she is not a true spiritual teacher, not a guru to be followed. I think of Jesus Christ and how he lived and taught among the sick, the destitute, and those cast out of society.

Yoga should be accessible to all, but I feel unworthy of its gift. This summer, as so many times before, yoga was there for me when I needed it, unfolding its wisdom as I needed it. I didn't work particularly hard, with pure heart and good intent, to realise this wisdom. More like I was at

home wallowing in self-pity when the idea to do *Supta Baddha Konasana* bubbled up, an idea passed on to me by a lineage of devoted and hard working teachers. The pose worked; my suffering was relieved, and although I felt unworthy, I sure was thankful.

With the memory of my minor suffering and subsequent relief close at hand, I would like to bow in humble and heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Iyengar on the occasion of his 80th birthday. Thank you for all your years of intensive effort from one who has reaped the fruits of your labour. With humble and heartfelt gratitude, I would like to bow in turn to all my teachers. Thank you for working so hard in Mr. Iyengar's light and for bringing that light to me and others from one who has reaped the fruits of your labour.

A Healthier Lifestyle

by Maureen Wilde
Abbotsford, British Columbia



I study yoga with Barbara Yates in Mt. Lehman. I have been with her just under one year but studied yoga years ago in Alberta when Father Joe came to town.

I returned to yoga following abdominal surgery recognizing that my physical being needed rejuvenating. I remembered how

well I felt in the past doing yoga and felt that I should seek that feeling once more. Whoever thought that I would happily leave the house at 5:30 in the morning to attend a yoga class and then go straight to work? My colleagues comment on my euphoric state upon arrival at work. Everything seems to be in perspective and the energy flows with ease. I feel also that my yoga

practice has helped me maintain a healthier lifestyle - I have not been as sick this past year as in other years. The wisdom of Patanjali brings a new awareness to my thinking and beginning spiritual awakening.

Thank you for sharing this ancient wisdom and providing others with knowledge and insight.

The Medical Classes

by Donna Fornelli
Aylmer, Québec

*Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga
Institute, July 1998*

Watching the medical classes from the stairs of the Institute is fascinating and inspiring.

Mr. Iyengar strides around from one person to the next giving the helpers instructions on how he wants the patients to work. It is crowded, noisy and appears chaotic. You see students (patients) of all ages struggling in asanas using the ropes, over the trestler, at the bars on the windows, using bolsters, blocks and weights. There were some children being held up in *Sirsasana*, propped up in *Viparita*

Dandāsana and struggling to keep still in *Viparita Karani*. No matter the age, ailment or infirmity, Mr. Iyengar found a way for each individual to work so they could reap the full benefit of the asanas. And work they did! I remember one man who could barely walk, even with assistance. He diligently worked in *Virabhadrasana I* holding onto ropes. There was such a look of accomplishment on his face.

A woman directly in front of us was in *Setu Bandha Sarvangasana*. Guruji was not satisfied with how her legs and feet were working. Being a master of ingenuity, he asked one of us for an elastic band. Slyly watching us from the corner

of his eye, he took the elastic and wrapped it to join her big toes. That achieved the result he wanted and he smiled broadly. It was brilliant. After all his years of teaching, there is still the joy of discovery.

It was inspiring to watch these people. I remember thinking how fortunate I was to be able to go to regular classes and be grateful for my struggles in poses that I find difficult. Iyengar Yoga is one of the many blessings in my life. I am profoundly grateful to Guruji for his inspiration, his kindness, his patience and his unstinting generosity in sharing his vast knowledge.



Canadian Intensive at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, Pune, July 1997.

Reconnection

by Sharon Skidmore
Abbotsford, British Columbia



My name is Sharon and I am a student of Iyengar Yoga. My instructor is Barbara Yates from Aldergrove, BC. In honour of Guruji's 80th birthday I wanted to share a little bit about how Iyengar Yoga has helped me. As a person with chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, and a survivor of childhood abuse I have found that practising yoga has been beneficial to my mind and body in numerous ways. I

especially find the asanas are helping me to reconnect my mind and body as a type of extreme disassociation from the body can occur from childhood abuse. I also find that I am becoming less afraid of my body and the pain I experience. As I continue to practise I am gradually beginning to feel more grounded to the earth and more centered within my body. I also notice the added benefits of a stronger and clearer mind. I continue to learn more each time I practice.

Even though I am limited in the amount of time and type of asana I can do, and most of my time is spent doing restorative work, I find even a small amount of practice is extremely helpful.

I am grateful to B.K.S. Iyengar and to all his teachers for this wonderful practice. A special thanks to my teacher Barbara Yates.

Namaste

To Mr. Iyengar:

by Jim Rogan
Kaslo, British Columbia



I wish you a happy and peaceful 80th year and my sincere gratitude for passing your yoga teachings down to us. I find the practice of yoga beneficial to my body (external and internal), mind and spirit. Iyengar Yoga for myself is calming, energetic, and therapeutic.

I broke my neck in an auto accident (it's fused together), and I feel the neck and shoulder muscles are now coming out of shock (after eighteen years).

By releasing the body from its rigid state, perhaps one can do the same to one's mind – then everyone can benefit.

Thank you again and have a happy birthday.

Toronto Conference, 1993



To Guruji On the Occasion of Your 80th Birthday

by *Diana Debenham*
Langley, British Columbia



It is interesting to reflect upon barely a year ago, when your name was still unknown to me and to realise the strong influence you now have on my life through your teaching of yoga. I count as a happy and fortuitous accident that a casual acquaintance gave me a teacher recommendation, which has brought renewed stimulus and awareness on a number of levels.

Those of us lucky enough to drive to Barbara Yates' studio from the west are frequently greeted with

the stunning, newly-risen sun behind the 13,000 ft. Mount Baker, across the border in the States. This sight, combined with the peaceful, rolling farmland along the way, prepares one well for the concentration and effort our teacher requires of us, and which we all gladly demand of ourselves.

A recent copy of the Institute's journal "Rahasya," from the studio library, in which your early life as a student under your Guru was recorded, astonishes the reader over some aspects of this

past experience. It begs comparison with one's own relationship to one's teacher. The same respect is present for her skill and knowledge, but also in the qualities of patience and personal interest in the student, which seem to have been absent much of the time for you. It is doubtful that any of us could surmount this discouragement as you did, and the celebration in your honour next month will recognise and laud this achievement.

With great respect.



"WHY SHOULD YOU PRACTISE YOGA? TO KINDLE THE DIVINE FIRE WITHIN YOURSELF"

— B.K.S. Iyengar

Iyengar Yoga in Victoria

by Shirley Daventry French
Victoria, British Columbia

Iyengar Yoga has been a dynamic force in Victoria since the mid-seventies. The first Victorians travelled to Pune to study with Mr. Iyengar in 1979, and since that time many others have followed in their footsteps.

Mr. Iyengar himself honoured us with a visit in 1984. He watched local teachers teach, and taught the whole group himself. He was officially welcomed to Victoria by Mayor Peter Pollen at an evening banquet at Crystal Gardens, and Swami Radha travelled here from Yasodhara Ashram to honour him at a luncheon at Radha House. During this visit the idea was born to bring out a new edition of Mr. Iyengar's autobiography/biography, and the work of editing, designing and proof-reading took

place in Victoria. In 1987 this book was published by Timeless Books under the title *IYENGAR - His Life and Work*.

The Victoria Yoga Centre has worked in association with the Victoria YM-YWCA to establish a centre of Iyengar Yoga downtown. This core programme, with its daily classes from beginner to advanced plus special classes for seniors and those with special needs, continues to thrive, but the work has now spread far and wide. Yoga in the Iyengar tradition is taught in many other centres, public and private, throughout Greater Victoria including the University of Victoria. There are active groups in mid Vancouver Island, in the Comox Valley, and on many of the small islands nestled between

Vancouver Island and the mainland of British Columbia collectively known as the Gulf Islands. Teachers and student teachers from all of these areas come together once a month for special practices and training sessions to deepen their understanding and upgrade their skills. At present the Vancouver Island Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Group consists of nineteen teachers and seventeen others in various stages of teacher training. These meetings are always well attended because teachers from the most senior to the most junior make it a priority to be there.

Four of our senior teachers were awarded their certificates by Gururji in Pune in 1997, and are taking on the responsibility of serving as assessors. Seven other

experienced teachers including two from up-Island and one currently living in Hong Kong earned their certificates at assessments held in Vancouver and Toronto in 1998.

Victoria is becoming well known as an Iyengar Yoga teacher training centre. We have been offering a summer Iyengar Yoga Intensive for many years, and in 1996 in response to demand this became a teacher training intensive. It has attracted teachers from all over North America. Teacher training throughout the year is now under the auspices of a six person teacher training committee consisting of Linda Benn, Lauren Cox, Shirley Daventry French, Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus and Marlene Miller. We offer a three-year apprenticeship: two years of basic training plus a year of internship,

with a view to preparing apprentices for national certification.

Victoria serves as a resource centre for many small communities throughout the Province of British Columbia where enthusiasm for Iyengar Yoga has been ignited, and with it a demand for teacher training. Teachers from those areas visit us for a week or more at a time for personal study and practice. Others have moved to Victoria temporarily to train here and then returned to their home community to teach.

Students who are not teachers are not neglected. We sponsor workshops for all levels of students with local and international teachers, and hold a yearly retreat at the Salt Spring

Centre. A popular event is our monthly Friday evening gatherings which consist of an hour's practice, a pot luck supper and a special yoga related topic for discussion.

Victoria also plays an active role in the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association with involvement in all of its committees and various projects.

Our newsletter, which has been published regularly since 1981, has played an important role in propagating Iyengar Yoga. For the newsletter committee, it is always a priority to read, research and write material for this journal and to make it as widely known and available as possible. Public relations and communication with the national and international Iyengar Yoga family is always at the forefront of our work.

Iyengar Yoga on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands

yengar Yoga continues to grow throughout Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands with classes now being offered in the mid-Island communities of Nanaimo, Parksville and Port Alberni by Rosalind Arscott, Kelly Murphy and Pip Van Nispen. Rosalind also teaches on Gabriola Island together with Doreen Fraser.

Vicky Catchpole has been teaching for many years further up-Island in the Comox Valley and has trained Tracy Dixon, Alison Yarwood and Jane Stedman to work with her in that area. Alison also teaches on Denman Island. Yvonne Kipp lives and teaches on one of the more remote islands, Cortes. To get there you have to take two ferries from Campbell River on northern Vancouver Island.

On Salt Spring Island, one of the larger islands and the closest to Victoria, there are two Iyengar Yoga teachers: Sheri Berkowitz and Celeste Mallett.

The up-Island and Gulf Island teachers are members of the Vancouver Island Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Group and join their Victoria colleagues for regular study, practise and peer teaching.

Yoga Tribute to B.K.S. Iyengar – From the Queen Charlotte Islands – Haida Gwaii

by Kathryn Wiggins



Geographical Area:

The Queen Charlotte Islands, or Haida Gwaii, the ancestral home of the Haida people, are located about eight hundred kilometres northwest of Vancouver, B.C., and one hundred kilometres offshore from the mainland coast of British Columbia, perched on the edge of Canada's Pacific Continental Shelf. The shores of these islands are bathed in the nutrient-rich waters of the north Pacific Ocean and the climate here is tempered by warm offshore currents. Some parts of the islands were not completely glaciated during the last great ice age, and an ancient and unique community of plant and animal life exists here.

The Charlottes have a powerful spirit about them, a quality that permeates everything and lends its vibration to the distinctive character of the region. Giant trees thrive in the cool moist climate – red cedars, Sitka spruce, western hemlock and yellow cypress. Flowering plants flourish in alpine meadows. Storm force winds buffet the islands throughout the winter months. More than 1,600 kilometres of coastal shoreline provide habitat for a tremendous diversity of

marine intertidal life. The islands support over 25 percent of all the nesting seabirds on the Canadian Pacific Coast. The largest black bears in the world are found here. The islands have been referred to as the "Canadian Galapagos," a rich compendium of ecosystems in which natural history can be appreciated and studied.

Iyengar Yoga on Haida Gwaii:

I began teaching Yoga here fifteen years ago. Initially, I offered a 6:30 to 8:00 a.m. class in the school gym, and ten people were sufficiently motivated to come do yoga in the early morning. Over the years, the number of yoga students has grown on these islands. Now, I have a small yoga studio in my home on Eagle Hill where I can accommodate nine people at a time, in four classes per week. People of all ages and from all walks of community life attend. Naturally the benefits received are individual, yet there is frequently an overall energy of peace, relaxation and contentment as people depart from class. Yoga offers a wonderful gift to our communities.

The Importance of Iyengar Yoga in My Life:

Yoga is my life path, and for me it is joyful, challenging, healing and

ever changing. After many years of practice and study I am coming to understand the sheaths that are talked about in the sutras. That feeling of wholeness that comes in a particular pose, frequently at the end of a practice, I am understanding to be the penetration of those sheaths, the integration of those sheaths in my being, and that blessed feeling that is so present as the energy merges on many internal levels. For me this is healing.

During the past few years, I have had some physical difficulties associated with menopause, as well as deep emotional issues associated with bereavement and grieving. During these experiences Iyengar Yoga has provided me with clear direction, and significant strength and support.

As an Iyengar Yoga teacher I am very supported by the wisdom, knowledge, and insight I receive from senior teachers, peer teachers, and students, plus the wonderful Iyengar Yoga literature, in the form of notes from Intensive courses, texts, and videos that are available for personal study and practice. The students who come to my classes offer me mirrors to continue the

journey in my outer world, as well as in my inner personal practice.

With respect I take this opportunity to wish Mr. Iyengar a Happy 80th Birthday and to say

thanks to him for his gifts to this path of yoga, and to his generous heart, mind and spirit that he so passionately shares with others. What an immense contribution he has given to the world - I

appreciate being part of it all. I honour and give thanks to him for his innovative teachings, and the inspiration that has allowed yoga to continue to flower. Namaste.

Iyengar Yoga in the Fraser Valley

by Barbara Yates

Mount Lehman, British Columbia



his studio came into being in 1993 after I relocated from Los Angeles, California where I had begun my study and teaching of Iyengar Yoga. I continue my studies with periodic visits to Pune and with senior level Iyengar teachers. The studio location is one hour east of Vancouver in the heart of Fraser Valley farmland.

Weekdays offer: a beginners course, mixed level classes, and a special needs class for people with chronic conditions. A few study privately.

The first Saturday of each month is a three hour class in pranayama, philosophy and asana. This is followed by a two hour teachers class for apprentices and certified teachers to study the art

of teaching Iyengar Yoga. Shirley Daventry French guest teaches the first Saturday of each February.

March 5-7, 1999, Mira Mehta will teach here and plans are set with other senior international teachers to visit so that up to date contact with the Iyengars' teaching in Pune is available.

Iyengar Yoga in Kelowna, B.C.

by Barbara Young



idsummer, 1998. After a typically mild winter and the startling beauty of spring in the Okanagan Valley, summer comes as an intense season in the semi-desert climate of the British Columbia interior. For some weeks now, temperatures have soared relentlessly to over 40 degrees centigrade. Forest fires rage, and just this week, one scorched the

slopes close to Margaret Lunam's home, high on a ridge overlooking Okanagan Lake in Kelowna.

Margaret came to Kelowna from Vancouver Island, where she studied Iyengar Yoga with Norma Hodge. Inspired by the work and informed by her background as a physiotherapist, she began to attend Iyengar Yoga workshops throughout Western Canada. She first taught yoga in Kelowna at

the recreation centre, and after a time, created a studio in her own home. It has become an oasis of Iyengar Yoga far from the larger yoga communities of Victoria, Vancouver and Calgary. The studio has hosted many workshops, bringing to students the wisdom and teachings of Shirley Daventry French, Ingelise Nerhlan, Gioia Irwin, Father Joe Perreira and others. Margaret has encouraged students to deepen

their understanding of Iyengar Yoga by travelling widely to participate in workshops and teacher training sessions; she has worked steadily beside apprentices and has shared with

them the immense joy and responsibility of teaching and learning.

As we honour Mr. Iyengar on the occasion of his 80th birthday, we

express our gratitude to people like Margaret Lunam, who work tirelessly in smaller communities to share his work with integrity and insight.

Iyengar Yoga in Kaslo, British Columbia

by Meg Seaker

Here in the Selkirk Mountains of Southeast British Columbia, streetlights are few and far between. At night the landscape is illuminated by the moon, even a sliver bathes the evergreen covered mountains in a soft, silvery light. *Tadasana*, *Vrksasana*, *Arḍha Chandrasana* – the spirit of these asanas

surrounds us. Our geography imprints their images in the core of our being.

Iyengar Yoga is new to the little village of Kaslo (pop. 1,000), but word of its benefits is spreading. Practitioners report, "My shoulders (or back or neck) feel much better;" "I'm aware of parts of my body I never felt before;"

"I look forward all week to class;" "It's amazing." Each comment is like a flower in a garland for Guruji, whose birthday everyone is eagerly looking forward to celebrating. Perhaps Iyengar Yoga will never be as popular as ice hockey in this small mountain village in Western Canada - but then, you never know.

Reflections from Northern British Columbia On the Occasion of the 80th Birthday of B.K.S. Iyengar

by Mike Nash
Prince George, British Columbia

Prince George is a thriving town in the geographic heart of British Columbia. It is situated at the confluence of two great arteries, the Nechako and Fraser Rivers. Collectively, they have carved out a large bowl from the glacial deposits left behind by the last ice age. Nestling within this bowl and spilling out onto the surrounding

plateau lives a population of 80,000 people. Small by today's standards, it is a place where people can still meet others that they know wherever they go, yet it is large enough to support a vital infrastructure.

Before European contact, little more than 200 years ago, people of the Carrier and Sekani First Nations were a hunter-gatherer

society. With the influx of non-indigenous people, the way of life shifted first to fur trading, and then to gold mining, transportation, communications, logging, ranching and agriculture. The economy today is principally based on forestry, but Prince George is also a government centre and a transportation hub for a land equal in size to many European countries. Most

recently, it has become the site of one of Canada's newest institutions of higher learning. The University of Northern British Columbia is situated in a natural wooded area overlooking the city, with vistas stretching to the Cariboo, McGregor, and Rocky Mountains. Only an hour away from this city that is home to one of Canada's best small Symphony Orchestras, the mountain ranges harbor grizzly bear, caribou, and wolves in their natural habitat, where it is still possible to walk in forests and alpine meadows never trodden by man.

Into this place has come the influence of a man living on the opposite side of the world. Nearing the end of his eightieth year, Mr. Iyengar's teachings are inspiring a group of yoga students seeking to deepen their practice by passing on what they know to others in the community. Responding to an increasing demand for yoga classes, the Prince George 'Y' has sponsored several students and teachers to attend classes and teacher training workshops in other locales. Foremost among these places has been the Victoria 'Y', which hosts the Victoria Yoga Centre Society. It is doubtful whether any of these people had thought of teaching when they took up yoga. But Judi Israel, Mona Keddy, Lorri Martin, Vernaye Heuft-Nisbett, Lynn Switzman, Sheryl Theessen, and most recently myself are on a path that is deepening our appreciation and

commitment to the practice and spirit of yoga.

There have been sparks of yoga teaching in Prince George before, but the past two years has seen an upwelling of general interest that has fanned the flames into a steady fire. No marketing of the idea was necessary as the ground was fertile. This kindling parallels the gradual change of Prince George from an industrial town to a university centre with a broader economic and cultural base. Classes are offered several times a week in Prince George at the studios of the 'Y' and the university, and are well attended. Students range in age from 12 years to 60, and are in all stages of health. One person joined a yoga class for a short period of rejuvenation even as he was dying. People from all walks of life are participating, although the ratio of men to women is yet low, reflecting the historic North American pattern.

Several visiting yogis with first hand knowledge of the Institute in Pune have taught in Prince George this year. They are Shirley Daventry French and Yvonne Kipp from British Columbia, and Hart Lazer from Manitoba. And just as Prince George is benefiting from centers in Victoria and Winnipeg, so students from outlying areas in Northern B.C. such as Vanderhoof and Smithers are traveling to Prince George. One man, Paul Fouchia, drives over 200 kilometers every Wednesday evening after work, in

summer and winter conditions, to take a one and a half hour yoga class – an inspiration to those of us who live nearby.

As I write these words, it is early October and the natural beauty of Northern British Columbia is emphasized by the blaze of autumn colour at the end of the best summer in living memory. This monumental display of life's essential change lends a sense of power and mystery to it all. In a few weeks, during the birthday celebrations in Pune, we will have moved into the snow and cold of a northern winter, like the shifting syllables of the universal 'OM'. And the yoga classes that B.K.S. Iyengar has helped to inspire will continue into the darkness of the winter night that underlies it all.

Maxims

The frame has to hold the inner energy properly. Work from the energy body.

The energy body, not the physical body, holds poses.

You must savour the fragrance of a pose.

The ribs are the wings of the body. Open your wings.

Yoga Centre Toronto – An Overview



Yoga Centre Toronto was founded in 1962 and was both formally incorporated as a non-profit organization and registered as a charity in 1972. The Centre is a teaching establishment whose mission statement is:

Purpose of the organization:

- To learn and teach the B.K.S. Iyengar method of yoga
- To promote the principles of yoga
- To provide an environment in which to foster the yoga community
- To promote healing, well-being and balance through the practice of yoga

The Iyengar method of hatha yoga is a precise approach to the postural and breathing techniques of classical yoga.

The Centre offers totally non-discriminatory yoga classes at all levels, seven days a week, daytime and evening for the general public. In addition, special workshops and intensive practice sessions are offered periodically throughout the year.

In 1973, the Centre's first teacher training programme began. This comprehensive programme, which is recognised by the Ministry of

Human Resources Development Canada and qualifies as an educational institution, requires a minimum of two years and involves at least 400 hours of classroom practice and apprenticeship. Currently there are fourteen student teachers, seven of whom would be in their first year and seven in their second year.

The Centre continues to place a heavy emphasis on implementing up-to-date management techniques and making many improvements to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its operation.

While the Centre has a full range of classes for the general public, it has continually expanded its programmes and services in response to emerging needs. Since 1979, special classes have been developed to meet these needs. Special needs can really be defined in two categories. Firstly those people who have a long term condition that requires the support of a

specially designed yoga practice and a supportive environment. These conditions would include AIDS or HIV, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, heart conditions, asthma or cancer.

Secondly, special needs can be those situations where one is in a structural crisis such as a severe back or knee problem or the discomfort of a long term structural imbalance which requires individual attention rather than the general attention given in a large class.



Toronto Conference, 1993

Iyengar Yoga in Ottawa

by Donna Fornelli

From a humble beginning in 1988 with one teacher and four students, Iyengar Yoga has grown into a vibrant, active community in the Ottawa-Hull capital region. There are

now four teachers who lead seventeen classes for the city, at recreations centers and school boards around the area.

There are five teachers in training, two of whom will be

nationally certified in June, 1999, when Ottawa hosts the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association assessment, making a total of three certified teachers in the area. Three teachers have been to India to study at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute. Another will soon be attending public classes.

We hold regular workshops and frequent celebrations. An annual workshop with Shirley Daventry French is an event we always look forward to. For Mr. Iyengar's 80th birthday we are planning an evening of festivities with Indian dancing and, of course, Indian food!

Although our community is small, we have representatives on the Professional Development Committee and the Finance Committee of our national association.



Ottawa teachers in India
(l to r) Patricia Fernandez, Cathie Lewis, Donna Fornelli

Iyengar Yoga in the Maritimes

by Maggie Thabms
Maritime Region Representative

CITYA currently has seven members in the Maritime Region, three of whom are certified teachers. This membership clusters in 3 areas: Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island (one); Halifax- Dartmouth,

Nova Scotia (four); and Fredericton, New Brunswick (two). Several yoga classes are held weekly in each of these areas and Charlottetown and Halifax have Iyengar Yoga Centres.

Two events in 1997 had major impacts on our community: the

1997 CITYA Annual General Meeting in Nova Scotia brought all our members together to meet for the first time. Four of the members met again in July, 1997, in Pune where they had the privilege of attending the Intensive Course at the RIMYI. A date was

set to meet again in the fall of 1997 to review some of what we had learned in Pune and to share it with the members who had not attended the course but an unseasonably early snow storm thwarted that effort.

So for now our regional community keeps in touch and shares information by telephone, fax and e-mail. The two Fredericton members meet weekly to study and train.

With thanks to the teachers from other parts of Canada who travelled to the Maritimes in 'the early years' to get yoga started here and to those who have come more recently, continuing to share our insights into the great art and science of yoga with us and our students.



Maritime Region CITYA members who were attendees of the July, 1997 Intensive, Pune, India.
(l to r) Pamela Stewert, Maggie Trahms, Elizabeth Kingsland, Robert Power.

A Brief History of Iyengar Yoga in St. John's, Newfoundland

by Bev Winsor

The first time St. John's ever heard of B.K.S. Iyengar was when Lisa Schwartz returned from a conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in the early '70's. At that time she was the only person teaching any style of yoga in St. John's and, following her experiences with Mr. Iyengar, that style changed radically. For some students the change was difficult to take, but others embraced it fully and became lifelong devotees.

Over the next number of years Lisa made several trips to Pune, each time coming back to her students renewed and invigorated. In 1985 Lisa moved to Toronto where she continues to practice and teach Iyengar Yoga.

Since then the tradition has been carried on and we now have 8 teachers with more than thirty weekly classes spread throughout the city. Over the years we have had students and teachers study at Ramamani Iyengar Memorial

Yoga Institute in both intensive and public classes. Once or twice a year we host a weekend workshop with visiting teachers. Three of our teachers have become certified and several others will be seeking certification in the near future.

Our community is eternally grateful for more than twenty years of Iyengar Yoga and we extend our love and best wishes to B.K.S. Iyengar on this auspicious occasion.

Bibliography

Compiled by Neil W. McKinlay

What follows is a bibliography of works by and about B.K.S. Iyengar, and of works specifically concerned with the Iyengar method of yoga. While all care has been taken to ensure the completeness of this listing, it is assumed that some works, perhaps well known in other parts of the world or long out of print, have been omitted. For such omissions, we offer apologies - and request that any readers possessing such information forward it to:

The Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter
Unit 592, 185-911 Yates Street
Victoria BC V8V 4Y9
CANADA

With your co-operation a more thorough bibliography may be possible at a later date.

Works By B.K.S. Iyengar

Iyengar, B.K.S. Light on Yoga. New York: Schocken Books, 1996.

----- Light on Pranayama. New Dehli: Indus, 1993.

----- Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. London: Aquarian Press, 1993.

----- The Art of Yoga. London: Unwin, 1985.

----- The Concise Light on Yoga. London: Unwin, 1980.

----- Sparks of Divinity: Aphorisms of B.K.S. Iyengar. Noelle Perez-Christiaens (ed.). Paris: Institut de Yoga B.K.S. Iyengar, 1976.

----- The Tree of Yoga. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1988.

Works About B.K.S. Iyengar

Taraporewala, BI (ed.). Body The Shrine, Yoga Thy Light. Bombay: The BKS Iyengar 60th Birthday Committee, 1978.

Daventry French, Shirley (ed.). Iyengar: His Life and Work. (A revised and enlarged edition of: Body The Shrine, Yoga Thy Light.) Porthill IN: Timeless Books, 1987.

The 70th Birthday Celebration Committee (eds.). 70 Glorious Years of Yogacharya BKS Iyengar. Bombay: Light on Yoga Research Trust, 1990.

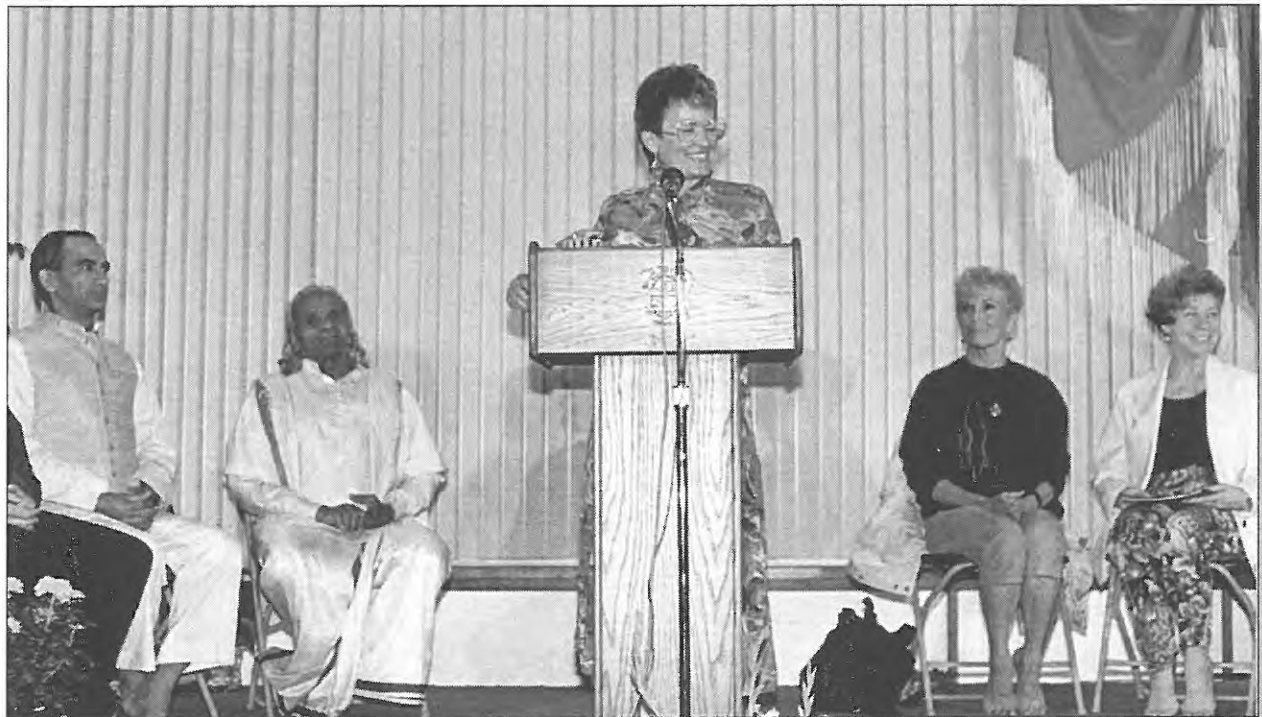
Works Specifically Concerned With Iyengar Yoga

Iyengar, Geeta. Yoga: A Gem for Women. Palo Alto CA: Timeless Books, 1990.

Mehta, Mira. How To Use Yoga: A Step by Step Guide to the Iyengar Method of Yoga for Relaxation, Health and Well-Being. London: Acropolis Books, 1994.

—————, and Silva and Shyam Mehta. Yoga: The Iyengar Way. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990.

Chanchani, Swati and Rajiv. Yoga for Children. New Delhi: UBS Publishers' Distributors, 1995.



Edmonton, 1990: A special reception for our honoured guests.
(L to R) Faeq Biria, Guruji, Ingelise Nherlan, the late Liz Macleod, Shirley Daventry French.

