

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE NEWSLETTER

Jan/Feb 2004



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"Yoga is a Universal culture, Universal religion. It is meant for one and all. Yoga practice makes a Christian a better Christian, a Hindu a better Hindu, a Mohammedan a better Mohammedan, a human being a better human being."

Victoria Yoga Centre presents



The Heart of Yoga

An Intermediate Workshop
with Shirley Daventry French

Friday, January 30–Sunday, February 1, 2004

For Levels 3 and 4 students or Level 2 students who have completed at least 2 terms

Shirley Daventry French is a longtime student of B.K.S. Iyengar and has travelled to India many times to study with the Iyengars, most recently in February 2002. Shirley's significant understanding of the teaching comes through in her direct approach.



Giving workshops at both national and international levels, her dedication to the art and science of yoga is apparent. With a unique personal perspective, Shirley brings traditional yoga philosophy and psychology to the forefront of her teaching.

Times

Friday 6:30-8:30pm

Saturday 10:30-1:30pm, 2:30-4:30pm

Sunday 10:30am-1:30pm

A light lunch will be provided on Saturday

Cost

Members: \$175 + gst

Non-Members: \$205 + gst

Registration

for members opens Dec. 8

for non-members opens Dec. 15

Register at

#202-919 Fort St., Victoria, BC V8V 3K3

phone: 250-386 YOGA (9642)

www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$10 cancellation fee.

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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

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For more information on Victoria Yoga Centre activities and events, please call 386-YOGA (9642) or visit our website: www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca

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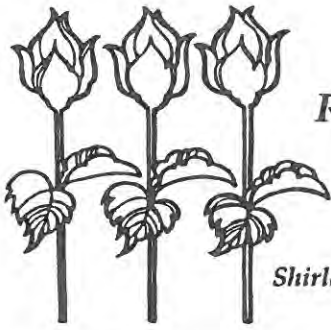
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Note: The editor/newsletter committee hold the right to edit all articles at their discretion. It should also be noted that not all articles submitted are printed in the newsletter due to space and other considerations.



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

In November of 2003 Shirley set off to attend Guruji's 85th Birthday celebrations in Pune by way of first teaching in Hong Kong. In her absence, we have taken the opportunity to reprint Shirley's Reflections from the May/June 1997 issue of the newsletter, the subject of which – as you shall read – is timeless.



First, there were not enough blankets. Then there seemed to be too few belts. Two ropes have been missing for a while and have not turned up despite a thorough search of the equipment room. Obviously it is time to do another inventory check, and intensify our efforts to keep this room locked when no class is in progress.

For years, Linda Benn has been keeping stock of our yoga equipment at the Y, and alas there is steady depletion. She tells me that this year eight blankets are missing. Sticky mats, wooden blocks, slant boards, foam blocks, bolsters, weights (even a *pranayama* bench is gone) – all are subject to attrition not only from wear and tear but from other less noble means.

This problem came into focus in class yesterday, when I wanted to teach headstand with four belts on the legs—something I have done many times before—but there were not enough belts. I shook my head dismayed at the thought that people were walking off with these

props, and someone said: “Well, it’s human nature!” But is it?

I have been thinking about this a lot since class. Is it the human side of our nature which acts in this way, taking things which do not belong to you—or is it the less than human side?

In his book *Practical Yoga*, the English philosopher and student of yoga, Ernest Wood, describes different grades of man (since he was born in 1893 he felt comfortable to use the masculine without qualification). Mineral Man – who is mentally supine and does not do anything without external cause. Vegetable Man – who is a bit more alive; who is pushing but is a weed, not cultivating himself. Animal Man – who behaves instinctually, whose thinking is limited, who obeys the natural law, seeks pleasure and is self-promoting. Ernest Wood states that you cannot start Yoga until you have developed beyond these stages and become what he calls a Man-man – one who governs his own life and cultivates himself. At this stage you are ready for Yoga, where the goal is to become God-man.

It is rare to progress from one level to another without some backsliding, and according to Patanjali it is only the advanced practitioner of yoga who has acquired the ability to hold on to all he has attained. For the rest of us, it is definitely a struggle: an up and down process, with a few steps forward and a few steps back, with actions and interactions conducted at varying levels of awareness.

There was an interesting exchange in one of my classes recently. Intermittently, I work with my dreams which can offer a reliable source of guidance. I had mentioned that sometimes, when I am seeking direction, before going to sleep I make an appeal: “Please send me a clear message tonight, not one of those mixed up dreams!” “When you do that,” enquired one student, “who are you asking?” A very good question! Who indeed! “My Higher Self,” I answered.

This is the aim of spiritual life, this is the purpose of spiritual practice, to identify with that which is Most High in me and live my life according to my highest aspirations rather than the baser instincts of mineral, vegetable, or animal man. Why would I want to do this? Why choose the difficult path of an aspirant? What is it that urges human beings to live according to our highest ideals rather than selfishly?

There is a very interesting discussion on the topic in Swami Vivekananda's discourse on Raja-Yoga. In a chapter called "Dhyana and Samadhi" he states that the human mind generally works in two planes: the conscious plane where all work is accompanied by a feeling of "I", and the unconscious plane where this feeling no longer prevails. The unconscious mind can work both above and below consciousness, for instance in deep dreamless sleep we lose that feeling of "I", but when we awaken "I" am very much in evidence again. However, there is another, higher plane where the mind goes beyond consciousness to a state which he calls "superconsciousness or *samadhi*".

How can we distinguish whether a state of unconsciousness is higher or lower than the middle plane? When a man awakens from sleep (dreamless sleep or with no intention of interpreting his dreams) is it with the same amount of knowledge and the same level of awareness as when he went to sleep? According to Vivekananda: "When a man goes into *samadhi*, if he goes into it a fool he comes out a sage." He calls this a state of "illumination", a much higher state than the field of reason in which the mind generally functions.

"There is a little circle within which human reason must move. It cannot go beyond. Every attempt to go beyond is futile. Yet it is beyond this circle of reason

that there lies all that humanity holds most dear. All these questions – whether there is an immortal Soul, whether there is a God, whether there is any supreme Intelligence guiding this universe, or not – are beyond the field of reason."

And he goes on to say:

"All our ethical theories, all our moral attitudes, all that is good and great in human nature, have been moulded by answers that have come from beyond this circle."

This is the aim of spiritual life, this is the purpose of spiritual practice, to identify with that which is Most High in me and live my life according to my highest aspirations rather than the baser instincts of mineral, vegetable, or animal man.

If there were not some higher force encouraging us to live unselfishly, why bother? Why not be self-serving like Animal Man, seeking comfort and pleasure whatever the cost to others? Why would we ever do good

deeds? Where do ideas like mercy and justice come from? Why would the possibility exist of laying down one's life for another or for a principle? It does not make sense. It is beyond reason.

According to Vivekananda, all great teachers of religion claim to have learned the truth from beyond rather than through their reasoning power; perhaps through a revelation from a divine being, angel or diva. Inspiration has so often been ascribed to a divine force outside ourselves; whereas the Science of Yoga teaches that not only does such knowledge come from beyond reason but also from within ourselves. Yoga does not dismiss or even devalue the power of reason: real inspiration never contradicts reason, it fulfills it.

Another interesting point which Vivekananda raises is that inspiration is in everyone's nature, and not just for a select few. While the prophets were great men (or women), they were not unique. They were great yogis who had attained superconsciousness. However, it is important to understand that this ability does not rest

with a select few, and that you and I have the same potential. More than that, we have the spiritual tools; body, mind, intelligence. The question is, do we have the longing, the courage, the stamina, the will? Do I want this enough to make the effort, to make sacrifices, or is the pull of my animal instincts still too strong?

If not now, when will I make this effort? All the spiritual texts say it must be done sooner or later, and perhaps next lifetime will not be as advantageous as this one. That's a sobering thought if ever there was one.

In the West, yoga is largely seen as a means of reducing stress, or becoming more flexible. As they gain some experience, students begin to understand that yoga is all about changes – to body, mind, and every aspect of life. This is the point at which many people withdraw for something more comfortable and less revolutionary. According to Vivekananda: "All the different steps in yoga are intended to scientifically bring us to the superconscious state, or *Samadhi*." Again and again, he emphasizes the scientific systematic nature of yoga.

Once, when Ramanand Patel was in Victoria and gave a talk on the yoga-sutras, he stated that the teachings of yoga do not tell us what to do, rather they say that if you do this it has such and such a result, and if you do that it has such and such a result. You have a choice. What we do not have a choice about is that we were born and one day we are going to die, despite avoidance and denial of this fact. According to the teachings of yoga we must reach self-realisation if not in this life, in another. If we do not use the resources which we brought into this life and squander the attributes we have attained in this lifetime – rather than getting rid of past *karma* we will produce a lot of new negative *karma* which will have to be dealt with in lives to come (maybe many of them).

Each lifetime offers us a wealth of experience, and all the experts on yoga emphasize that experience is the best and only true teacher. Vivekananda warns us to

take no heed of any so-called spiritual teacher who claims to have knowledge or experience which is available only to him saying that if there has been one experience in this world in any particular branch of knowledge, it absolutely follows that that experience has been possible millions of times before and will be repeated eternally. A true master, will invite his disciples to verify the truths he has discovered through their own experience. A true master will encourage his students to become disciplined and honest in their practices. A true master will encourage us to work faithfully and diligently using prescribed methods, and then light will come.

This article is written in appreciation of the clarity and brilliance of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), a great soul loved and revered in East and West alike. In the late nineteenth century he came to North America to initiate an exchange of spiritual ideas and ideals. I am grateful also to his disciples who have kept his teaching alive through various publications available to us today. It is also written in gratitude to my teachers B.K.S. Iyengar and his daughter Geeta, whose integrity and inspired teaching have encouraged me to search for truth through personal practice in the tradition of yoga. ☯

FULL

Yoga in Mexico

Feb. 14-21 &
Feb 21-28, 2004

Next winter Shirley Daventry French will be teaching two 1-week courses in Puerta Vallarta for intermediate students.

For brochure & information contact:
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email margotkitchen@shaw.ca
or David McAmmond (403) 244-5894,
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Following Dr Geeta S. Iyengar's European Tour in April and May 2002, Judith Jones interviewed her for *Iyengar Yoga News*, a joint magazine of the Light on Yoga Association (UK) and the BKS Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association. The interview took place on 25th August 2002 in the library of the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, India. Thank you to IYN and to Geetaji for kindly granting us permission to reprint it here.

An Interview with Geetaji: Part III

Do you see any particular ways in which Europeans need to develop their practice philosophically and ethically, as well as practically?



Geetaji: Are you asking me particularly about Europeans?

Yes.

Then in a way it is difficult to say. It is not only Europeans, human beings are like that. When we all practise, we have to have a

philosophical touch to it, an ethical touch to it. You can't be unethical and practise yoga, neither can you be un-philosophical and practise yoga. You may practise up to a certain level with physical movements and bodily motions but for how long? It will tire you! Somewhere you will get bored and you will say it is meaningless, futile. In your own practice you feel futile if you are just moving your arms and legs, just keeping yourself fit. It doesn't show much depth in the practice. At this point you are likely to brand *asanas* as physical exercises. So somewhere the spiritual and ethical practice has to be there. Again, I won't say that just

having physical movements is wrong practice. Undoubtedly it gives health, and removes dullness, slowness and laziness of the body and mind. These are the prerequisites for philosophical and ethical practice. It is called as *sharira shuddhi*, or, *kaya shuddhi* - the purification of the body.

But the question remains, when you say an ethical and philosophical approach, whether we understand that in a proper way. Our ethical approach and philosophical approach, that has got a different meaning. Like a train that has to move on the track, if there is no track or the track is broken the train cannot run. It will meet with an accident. The track has to be very clear, correct. So too with philosophy and ethics, both are like tracks, we have to go on that track. But for the train there is a fixed and visible track, therefore the train will go from one end to the other end, one station to the other station on the track. Here the track is invisible. The ethical and philosophical tracks are invisible, and what is invisible you have to trace. If you are a train driver the track is shown, that is how you know how to drive the train. You just take your train on that track. But here there is no clear cut way to say this is philosophical, this is ethical. One needs to trace the path inside. And there the problem arises. So I won't say that Europeans are unethically, unphilosophically practising - that cannot be. Then Indians too could also be unethically and unphilosophically practising. Anybody as a human being can practise, but for how long can you practise without a philosophical and ethical application? Somewhere you have to start to question yourself.

When you question yourself, "Am I right? Am I doing it in a proper manner? Was I going in or was I watching something outside?" When you question yourself you begin to bring yourself back to that track of philosophy and ethics. It is a kind of self-inquiry because you cannot just have unethicity or immorality in you, or you cannot be non-philosophical, and tread on the path of yoga.

Let us say you don't know anything about philosophy. You have been just taught by a teacher that you do yoga in a particular way. You have been taught to do some *asanas*, you have been taught to do some *pranayamas*, you have been taught to just sit quietly for meditation, you have been taught to say prayers. You don't know much about the background of the philosophy, the background of the ethics, however, you continue to practise. Why do you continue to practise? It must be giving you something. You don't name it as spirituality, you don't name it as morality, but something which makes you to feel that you are a composed person, that you are quiet, serene and that you are balanced. How does this happen? You may compare that you are much better than others. You may find that your friends are spending their time somewhere - at parties - and you don't want to go to the parties. You say, "let me practise" and you feel much better. Why did that difference come? You also can go to the parties, you can also dance but you say, "No". But when you don't know philosophy you don't know much about the ethics. It is not that you are specially taught the yogic philosophy at that time, but you don't go to parties and you don't go dancing. Nothing has been taught as an ethical discipline, but something changes you from within and you find that when you are practising you feel that you are connected to yourself from within. If that comes is it not a philosophical track? Because we are putting philosophy as something - a different subject, therefore you are perplexed. Yes, there is a yogic philosophy, there is a subject, there is a theory, yogic theory - you need to understand it. But when you are practising, does that enter into your mind? When I am practising does it make me to feel what yoga philosophy is? Later I may give a colour of yogic philosophy to it. That is how / what I do, I say. But while practically doing myself, the question doesn't come. I am going in - maybe with all my body pain, all my illnesses. Today, somewhere it is painful, I have got this problem, I have got this disease. For me when I have got this disease, it has been taught to me to do some programme which

has been given by my teacher. I follow that programme. I continue to do that because somewhere I know I am feeling alright. Then am I not becoming ethical at that time? Just one hour in the morning or one hour in the evening when I am practising, is it not taking me inside? To look within myself, is that not philosophy? What is philosophy? It is to have the inner wisdom, so I might not be educated in philosophy but just with the practice I am getting some inner wisdom. So I prefer to do the practice rather than going to the party. Rather than wasting my time somewhere spending three hours looking at the theatre or picture, I say, "I better do my practice". This is called *Karma Shuddhi*. If we do not practise our mind tends to go towards the external world, it gravitates towards worldly pleasures. It further makes us to do wrong, unwanted, unethical karma. The practice of yoga saves you from all such problems.

So, it's not that philosophy and practice are separate. In the very practice itself, when you begin to practise religiously - you become honest to yourself. That is called religiosity. When I practise religiously, I practise with a pure mind and that's why it becomes a religious practice. Religious practice has nothing to do with religion. When you begin to practise with your pure mind know well that these philosophical and ethical aspects have to come to you.

For example, I tell you, today was the first day of the children's class. They are very small children. The very first class that we hold from month of June, they have been told that when they come to the class what disciplines they have to follow, for instance that they have to get up in the morning, that they have to come to class regularly on time. We tell them, brush your teeth, be clean, have proper wash and dress, have proper bowel movement because otherwise there will be a problem such as headache, stomach-ache, etc. Everything is told to them and they listen very carefully as it is the first time and they have come with enthusiasm.

Now today in class, it happened to two children. One

in *Virabhadrasana I*, I said “spread your legs more apart” he said, “Oh my stomach is paining”. He was a bit annoyed thinking that I as a teacher am forcing him. I said, “Spread, nothing will happen to your stomach”, but he didn’t. Then I had an idea. Already twenty minutes they had spent on all these things. In *Virabhadrasana I* I told the teachers just to curve back with straight legs to have the abdominal extension, three times from *Tadasana*, curving back as if to drop into *Urdhva Dhanurasana*, but only to get the curvature. Take the hands back, lift your pelvic up, lift your abdomen up. They did it. They were all very happy because they got the curvature of the back and that fellow was free from his problem. His stomach-ache was basically because of constipation.



The second child literally felt dizzy. She fell down and one of the teachers was very nervous thinking that something serious has happened. I just put her down on the floor. Then I told the teacher. I said, “Ask her if she had a late night yesterday? Late food yesterday? And if she has had bowel movements today?” All the three things were true. She accepted that. When she recovered she came and joined the class. She said, “Yes, yesterday I was very late to go to bed, very late food at 12 o’ clock, no bowel movement today in the morning,” and she came to class, and a young girl! Hardly she might be 11 or 12, that’s all. Then I had to remind the people. I said “First Sunday in June, what was the instruction given?” So they agreed. They knew they could relate that “Yes! It was said to us that we should have a bowel movement, we should not sleep late, we should not see the TV Saturday night.

Everything was told - that if you have to come here at 8 o’clock see you have a good sleep - as you need eight hours of sleep.” Now, aren’t those children learning an ethical discipline and correcting themselves. They learnt their lesson. The ethical discipline includes

physical discipline. Why should children watch TV and movies late at night?

So, if we can make children aware of that, do you mean to say that we cannot make adults aware of all these things? Of course we can. We can make them aware of many more things. Even if you have to do the asana with that inner penetration, you need

maturity to understand. So anyway you have to know yogic philosophy. If you have got a good background of it you begin to understand because when we are educated we understand. But what about uneducated people? There are quite a few who are uneducated in India. Not only in India, the other places also you find that they are educated to speak and write, but they don’t know much about yoga. Often when one does yoga one thinks that one is doing exercises. The ignorance about social science and yogic philosophy is the cause. And when they are made to understand what it is, yes, it makes a difference. It’s a light to them. People are not illiterate, they are uneducated. So if they don’t know much about yoga, how will you educate them? They might be starting yoga for their physical problems but haven’t they changed? In fact when one suffers with diseases, it teaches one the philosophy of life.

So, people may come for the physical exercise but then they start to question.

Geetaji: Yes. How did philosophy develop first of all? Did it not come from the queries of human beings? Was it only Newton that had to think how the apple fell down? The mind inside sort of wakes you up. It's a waking up process in different styles. To some it might be in physics, to some it might be in philosophy. It is the same with yoga also. One doesn't become a scientist overnight. A child never says that I will become a scientist. He likes the profession if his father is a doctor, he says "yes, better to have a stethoscope and give an injection. With these things in my hand will I be a doctor". But the child with its inquisitiveness identifies itself with the father who is a doctor. If the father is in the military he thinks that he also has to be a soldier. If the father is a policeman the child also imitates the policeman. So with this imitation when you are doing yoga, you too begin to get the inner awareness. When the same child grows he understands better what it is to be a policeman or to be a military man. Then you understand whether the child is having a real liking, courage, valour, vigour etc. So a yoga practitioner also has to awaken oneself gradually in that manner. Always remember the fact that one cannot go both ways. Somewhere one fails. One cannot follow yoga just for "health's sake" for a long time. The awakening has to come. You cannot practise yoga and be un-philosophical and unethical. These two things cannot go together. It may take little longer time to meet with an accident. If I am a driver who is not having a proper judgement today I may be somehow safeguarded and I don't meet with an accident, but when I know that I am not a good driver some time or other I am going to meet with an accident. I have to develop the skill of driving in proper way, be very careful, be attentive, so that I don't meet with an accident. Or, if I am just careless, yes, it is going to happen. Similarly, if I am a yoga practitioner I have to be careful. I cannot say that I will be unethical and yet practise. Somewhere the accident is going to

**You cannot practise yoga and be
un-philosophical and unethical.
These two things cannot go together.**

happen. So these two cannot be separated as such. If you want to be a practitioner of yoga, yes, ethical practice has to come, philosophy has to come, in which way we don't know. But, otherwise the conscience will be pricking. A prick of the consciousness is the beginning of *citta-shuddhi*. The consciousness has to start with its purification. It is not necessary that I have to sit with a book in front of me, read the book and become a philosopher. Nobody becomes a philosopher by reading books where only words may be gathered. Then again, the philosophy becomes a

profession. Suppose if I have read a lot and I give a lecture, I'm a professional lecturer. I might be understanding everything but it doesn't mean that I practically follow it. If I

had to practically follow it - yes - there again the same question. One cannot have a separate path.

You just know it on an intellectual level.

Geetaji: So, know well, whether the practitioner is European, Indian or American, when it comes to the practice of yoga one has to begin with the process of cleansing and purifying the body, one's own action and the consciousness as well. The ethics and philosophy begins there.

Christianity is the major Western religion. Christians believe that the only way to God is through Jesus Christ. Some are interested in taking up yoga but see conflict between their religion and yoga. What can we say to them to help them overcome this obstacle?

Geetaji: Why only Christianity? Any religion may question this because basically this is again the pride arising out of ignorance. More than religion it is the human mind, which opposes. We always compare ourselves with our religion thinking that 'I am born in this family, so I am a Hindu', 'I am born in a Christian family, so I am a Christian', 'I am born in a Buddhist family, that's why I am Buddhist'. So it is not

something we are aware of at first. I think Guruji has said long back that since we are born in that family, we think we are Christians, we are Hindus and so on. We label ourselves, but as children do we know all these things? Because our parents follow some religion so we say we are following that. They go to the temple, I go to the temple. Your parents go to church, so you go to church. What do you understand more than that? Beyond that we don't understand anything. So it is like any culture that we develop, we too develop this culture of religion in this manner. Basically, it is a want of knowledge.

Yoga is a Universal culture, Universal religion. It is meant for one and all. Yoga practise makes a Christian a better Christian, a Hindu a better Hindu, a Mohammedan a better Mohammedan, a human being a better human being.

No religion is against ethics, morality or philosophy. No religion says to lie or steal. All the religions agree that God is Supreme, in whichever form they have accepted. All religions have said that God is beyond birth and death. Have you not seen the Bible and the Bhagavad Gita have been translated in many languages? Why? Because they are Universal.

The question is - everybody wants health, everybody has this body, everybody has the same emotional problems. Is not yoga helping them, apart from the religion? Does the question of religion come there? For instance, the Mohammedan Lady wanted to go to Haj, she had a very bad backache and sciatica. She joined the class for one year before going on the Haj pilgrimage. She took two belts with her to practise there as well. And after coming back from Haj, thanked me. She could sustain the excursion. So, did it not help her to follow her religion? Now Mohammedans, when they say their "*namaz*" don't they perform different postures? So, *Virasana*, *Uttanasana*, *Adho Mukha Svanasana*, all these are done very commonly, though one may not name them. And

when did Christ say that yoga should not be done? Anywhere in the Bible does it say, "Don't do yoga"? There is no question of it. When it speaks on the Ten Commandments are they not equal to *yama* and *niyama*? Are they not similar to Patanjali's ethics and morality?

Do you mean to say that Christianity says 'do violence'? Christianity also speaks of non-violence. Is it not speaking of truthfulness? So Christ - has he not said not to steal? So you too teach yoga in that manner. Perhaps you may be able to understand the Bible better. We are not asking them to belong to the Hindu religion. We don't tell them that they have to be completely yogic-minded. They have to practise their religion with a good background and practise yoga as well. The yogic mind has to be developed gradually. However, yogic mind is a very good base for one to follow one's own religion honestly and religiously. It takes a long time for one to be totally devoted, dedicated, to yoga. Further, it takes longer time for one to be completely yogic-minded. It is not a yogic mind, it's a pure mind. We have to train ourselves to become pure. Everybody has to train oneself. So if these people come and if they question like that, say that it has nothing to do with the religion. It does not interfere with religion. You want your health. You want to get rid of your problem, your disease, your pain and so on; and if something is there to help and bring the change radically why not adopt it?

And again it will be a wrong thing for a yoga practitioner also to force some ideas when still the mind is not prepared or matured to take those ideas. I cannot make you to say "I believe in God" when you are not believing. I cannot say "look you are not believing in God so you be out, I'm not going to teach you". That's not the way because believing or not believing is not a big problem or big issue here. You first begin when you have just come, where is the question of whether you believe or not? And Patanjali also says this. When he is talking about *samadhi* he says

Isvara pranidhanava - "or, by surrendering to the God". It's in the first chapter (*Samadhi Pada*) of the Yoga Sutra. So when he says, "or" you can surrender to God to reach that state, he means to say if you are not capable to surrender yourself to the God there is an alternative and that is, have faith - *sraddha* - in your practice. *Virya* - have that courage and vigour to practise yoga. *Smrti* - have the strong memory of what you have done what you have practised.

Samadhiprajna - have your intelligence and wisdom really sharpened to catch yogic practice. So if you are not sharp enough how can somebody force the ideas? So he said either practise faithfully, devotedly, courageously, applying your sharp memory and stabilised intelligence or meditate on God. He doesn't say that you meditate on God to reach the *samadhi* state. He says to adapt the other methods too. And when he wants to say that "*Isvara pranidhanava*" he means to say that at that highest level, at the culmination of your practice, where you begin to understand that, yes, there is something Supreme, because that intelligence now has matured to understand, adopt. If your system does not accept certain kinds of food, you cannot take it. Similarly, if you cannot digest God, you cannot take it. It's not God in a human form which Patanjali has explained, but there is something that is higher than us and I think every scientist also has felt like that. Don't even the scientists go and pray in a church? When the astronauts went on the moon they felt the presence of God there. They didn't know whether they would land on the moon but there was a faith that there is something, a strong energy, which is around them. You may say Energy, you may say Power, you can use any word, such as Supreme, Universal Spirit, because how



will you name? There is no name to the God. God is nameless because if you name then you have given some form.

For instance I tell you, when we went to Poland we went to Madonna's Cathedral. When we went inside, I didn't feel I was in Madonna's Cathedral, for me it was just like a temple. The moment the screen was lifted up I felt I was in Mother's temple. Later we saw the different dresses, beautiful silver and golden brocade dresses that have been kept there, which were similar to the saris that we offer to Mother. It did not make me feel that we are from a separate religion, or this religion is different to my religion. Not even once it occurred to my mind. I was just observing, I said - yes - it is like you are seeing the God, in any form. I really enjoyed those moments because as a special guest we were taken very much near the *sanctum sanctorum* where the priests normally sit. This question did not arise. After coming out I started thinking about the Pope. The priest explained to us that the Pope is very much connected to this place since he is from Poland. Sometimes he just feels like coming to this Cathedral and to be there. He spends his quiet moments over there because then he gets energy. That is what exactly was explained by that priest to us, that he gets energy.

And I totally believe and agree strongly that it is the sacred place where I felt the energy coming and we also consider Mother Kali is the one who gives the energy. The Mother Goddess is the one who gives the energy. So She is prayed to in that manner. She is worshipped in that manner. Ramakrishna Paramhansa too received the energy in the temple of Mother Kali. Energy is considered to be the part of omnipotent. If you take God in a human form then Mother Kali or the Mother Goddess is the energy of that God. You see its all our thinking process. There is a God. Then there is the energy of that God. Again we are taking it as a feminine form.

Rupa, Shakti.

Geetaji: Yes! That is why She is called *Adi Shakti*. The power of God is called in Sanskrit, *Adishakti* - the original power, the very root power, which has no beginning and no end. It is just there and that is the power of the Lord. That Lord is not in a human form. And that is what we were explained, that the Pope comes here sometimes just to get that energy and it's agreeable and acceptable.

It's not at all that my religion came in the way to make me feel and experience the energy. The religions do not fight each-other, it is the human beings who fight with each-other. Their egos and pride fight with each other. So you have to explain when a teacher finds this kind of problem, you have to explain since it's not a question of religion there. And when did we start with the religion? We never started with religion. Yoga never started with religion.

When Guruji came to England, when yoga was to be introduced to the Inner London Education Authority, they said don't bring the religion when you are teaching. Guruji accepted it because the question of religion does not come at all. You don't say that you become Hindu and then I will teach you yoga. Everyone wants discipline. The human mind wants the discipline, human body wants the discipline. Remember that the body and mind also cannot

tolerate too much indiscipline for a longer time. No-one is saying behave yourself in an undisciplined way, am I right? No religion says so. You want the discipline, you want to shape your mind, you want to go on the right path, everyone wants that. And that's how it was introduced by Guruji. Now the question is, that when you started doing yoga you might be new to yoga but Guruji is visiting UK from 1960. Those students of 1960-61, felt that they should be reading Yoga Sutra. Is it not inquisitive mind that tempted them to see the origin? Is it not a different wisdom to ask "Where is the source? Let us find out." What made them to understand? What made them to get this feeling? Is it not inner awakening which says, "Let us see the source". Suppose if you go to the music concert and some pieces are played, you want to know the source of it. You question, "What was it?" "Whether it was Beethoven or Bach"? You want to know. If you know the music you say that you are waiting to hear Beethoven, because you know. The more you know, it is more clear to you. But suppose if I don't know? I just say, "Oh, I don't know whether it was Bach or Beethoven, but I enjoyed it, it was very nice". I can enjoy that music because I have got those ears. But someone who is absolutely ignorant about it will say, "No - I don't understand anything". He may not sit there to listen to the concert. He will listen to the concert if he is either forced to or when his ears are prepared to listen. And we need the second one. Why do we have to listen to that music? Because our ears get prepared. You may not understand the music, but you need musical ears. And that's why we say "when you have good classical music, why do you go for other modern music?" You want to prepare their ears.

Even in the womb.

Geetaji: Yes! Obviously.

Though I don't know western music but I have prepared my ears to listen because I have heard. Thank God, we can really enjoy the pure classical music whether Indian or Western.

It is not going at all against Christianity. It is not at all going against the teaching of Christ. It is only the mind of the people, which plays the trick. As you need a musical mind, you need a yogic mind. Yogic mind is that which is pure, crystal clear. It is the mind which wants to free from passions, worries, anxieties, wrong, false and unwanted thoughts. It is the mind, which wants to be moral and ethical. Everyone wants equipoise, equanimity, peace. All these are essential human requirements, as much as food, water and shelter.

So it comes back to maturity.

Geetaji: Yes - maturity. And if they don't understand - fine, give them just the health. So what you can say as a Christian is to help themselves (people) with a practice of yoga to overcome the obstacles such as disease, feebleness and fear of the mind. It is said the Christ Himself went to Kashmir to do yoga. So really if one is interested I don't think there is any conflict between religion and yoga. The main obstacle is in ourselves, in our blind and dark pride. ☺

YOGA PROPS FOR SALE

(All prices subject to 7%GST and 7.5% PST)

Blankets (White Cotton)	\$30.00	(\$34.35)
<i>discount for orders of 10 or more</i>		
Bolsters	\$55.00	(\$62.98)
Eye bags (Flax)	\$10.00	(\$11.45)
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T-Shirts are \$ 20.00 including tax

Salt Spring is Coming!

Annual Saltspring Retreat June 4-6, 2004

Have you always wanted to attend the annual retreat at the beautiful Saltspring Centre and participate in a weekend of yoga with Shirley Daventry French? If you have, please remember to renew your Victoria Yoga Centre membership so you can be in the front of the line for an opportunity to participate in this wonderful retreat.

Registration will open for paid VYC members on March 15, 2004. If there are any spaces left, non-members may register by March 22, 2004.

Members Price

\$325 shared accommodation in house
\$285 to camp, \$255 for commuters

Non members

Add \$30. All prices include GST.

Watch for more details in the March/April newsletter.

Old Habits Die Hard:

Reflections On the Meeting of Yoga and Sport

by Neil W McKinlay

Spring spills light into the old yoga lounge. A clean, easy breeze rustles nearby trees. People are talking, laughing outside the big glass windows while in here, sun and sweat mingle with the familiarity of old friends. Two dozen bodies are arranged in almost neat rows. Their hands and feet press into the floor, their hips rise toward the ceiling.

Our teacher is wandering among us as we hold a long downward dog. I sense her on the far side of the room, then feel her presence weave between classmates. Every muscle has tightened during this pose. My fingers and toes grip the mat, my shoulders withdraw, my teeth clench. My face is grimacing - and very likely red - with exertion. "Come down when you've had enough," she says, a dozen feet away. Pay attention to the wisdom of the body.

I take these words as an opportunity to glance right and see that my nearest peers have chosen to stay up a while longer. The middle-aged woman a half-step distant is one of these and she looks positively relaxed there on her thin blue mat. Her arms are firm but fluid. Her eyes are open and alert. Her mouth is closed - but it curls slightly upwards, almost smiling.

I turn back to the floor, pull in my lips, stop breathing. The teacher is now standing to one side of me. I see tanned feet and wide-spread toes, the crisp, elastic hem of purple tights. I feel her attention scan the length of my shaking frame. "Remember," she says - and to me her voice booms through the room. "Remember that yoga is not a competitive activity."

In many ways, I am still a competitive athlete. As the scene above so aptly demonstrates, more than a decade after involving myself with yoga, my approach to this art continues to be governed by the thirteen years I spent cutting through local swimming pools. While at

my first yoga class, I spoke of a desire to overcome the physical restrictions imposed by a life in sport, I have since understood that the most profound limitations of that time were laid not in my body but, instead, wormed their way deep into my mind.

Twenty years after my final race, I still hold attitudes that challenge my ability to enjoy the wisdom of the yogic tradition. Twenty years later, swimming-inspired beliefs about competition, about the body and about involvement with physical activity remain much more intact than my once-sculpted physique. They accompany me to the mat every day and give new meaning, I think, to the phrase 'lifetime athlete'. They twist and direct my experience, affording me a constantly renewed appreciation for the insistence that yoga is a commitment one must enter over the course of many, many lives.

THE COMPETITIVE SPIRIT

I swam to win. While other motivations came and went, constant through the years was the motivation to be faster, to be better, than the person next to me. I vividly recall standing behind the starting block as a nine or ten year old. I am shaking my arms, rolling my shoulders, arching my back. I am trying to look ahead, trying very hard to appear casual and relaxed. I want to seem unconcerned with the person standing eight feet away, with the friend I swim beside each day in practice. In truth, though, I am aware of his every move. I know when he pulls on his cap, adjusts his goggles. I know when he places one foot on the block and tenses, and when he looses a long, loud shaft of air. And through each of these, I repeat the same thing. I am going to kick your butt, I say. I am going to kick your butt. Only during the third length of the race, as he begins to pull away, does this line alter in even the slightest extent. I hope I'm going to kick your butt, I begin, panicking. God, please let me kick your butt.

An only barely evolved version of this manifests every time I do yoga in a group setting. It matters little whether I am with my wife in the privacy of our living

room or practising as one of two dozen students in a weekly class. I watch someone balance in *Ardha chandrasana*, observe another in *Sirsasana*. And as I watch, I compare. How do I size up against that? I wonder. Am I better? Can I be better? Am I worse? Rarely attended to through such questioning are my own actions. What is my left thigh up to? In what direction is my knee moving? Are my feet in contact with the floor? All of my feet? Both of my feet? Swimming demands attention to such facts too, of course – there are stroke patterns to be mastered, skills to be refined, but these details are easily ignored once a certain level of proficiency is realized. And they are often dulled by long hours of mechanical repetition, and obscured by an urgent need to win.

It requires little short of a revelation, then, for me to respond to the suggestion that my thighs roll inwards. Such advice is, in fact, a demand that I draw myself away from long-ingrained habits of mind. It is a demand that I ask myself where is the mind, exactly? A demand that I let go of my fascination with other and root myself here, in this moment, in this body, in this pose. It is an invitation, in many ways, to involve myself with a very different kind of engagement, a very different kind of awareness, one that concerns itself not so much with victory or with betterment but, instead, focuses upon simply and wholly being.

WORKING WITH THE BODY

Our swim team used to host a training camp over Christmas. For ten days we got in the water morning,



Neil McKinlay explores the connections of Yoga and Sport
(Trina McKinlay photo)

noon and night. Before lunch we did weights. After the second of our three practices, we watched films or listened to guest speakers. One of these talks was given by a man with steely eyes and a rock-solid jaw. I remember being impressed at the hard torso showing through his shirt. I remember watching the muscles in his forearms contract each time he made a fist. "You have to be machines," he told us. "You have to push through; you have to drive your body." Here he started walking on the spot like a drill sergeant – his chest puffed up, his arms started pumping, his legs lifted until his thighs came parallel to the ground.

"We are machines," we repeated that evening during

practice. Whenever one of us seemed on the verge of faltering, on the edge of falling apart, we would turn and hold their eyes, slam a closed hand into their chest. "You are a machine!"

Through this and through an uncountable number of other experiences, I learned to keep going no matter what. I didn't always do this, but the message was always there, the desired response was always obvious. When tired, push the body. When near collapse, fight the body. When my shoulders began to ache and then burn with the fire of injury, ignore the body. "Keep going" was a mantra for us. And though it was the vessel through which swimming was possible, my body became an enemy under the assault of these words; my body became an obstacle. It became an opponent that, above all else, had to be defeated.

Yoga's assertion that the body is in fact a partner in the enterprise of practice presents a radical shift for someone with my background. When I encounter an edge in *Utthita trikonasana*, when I find a place of holding, a place where I can go no further, instead of fighting through, I am asked to pause. I am asked to stop and to examine the resistance. Is it my mind? I ask. Is it my body? Is there discomfort? Is there pain? If I find I can adjust and then move a little deeper, I do. If I need to stay where I am, I will. And if I have to withdraw, if I have to pull back because I have gone too far, well, so be it.

It is about curiosity, it seems. It is about being inquisitive, attentive, respectful. "Don't push! Don't jam! Don't force!" my teacher insists. "Let your body's natural intelligence express itself!" Sometimes weeks pass before I win even a glimpse of what she is talking about. Sometimes, dumb ex-jock that I am, I spend months staring where she has pointed, wondering how I might do something like *Virabhadrasana I* without trying to squeeze absolutely everything out of my shoulders. Sometimes years pass and, still, her instruction remains a mystery.

A LIFETIME OF PRACTICE

An obvious course of development lay before me through my swimming days. As I trained and matured, I knew my body would strengthen, my skills would improve, I knew I would become faster and increasingly able. But I knew this would continue only to a point. After that point was reached – and for some it came at eighteen, for some it arrived at twenty, for some it could be held off to the grand old age of twenty-two or twenty three – after that point was reached, decline was inevitable and the end of one's athletic career unavoidable.

Informed by this path – perhaps even frightened by it – many of us used to chuckle when the local Masters' swim team walked onto the pool deck. The guys especially, we toned and muscular and energetic boys,

used to make fun of the sagging middles and the drooping rears as they jiggled out and started to stretch. "Look at that one," we'd laugh, barely bothering to hide our disgust at the mother of four bending over in the corner, trying to touch her toes. We used to wonder aloud why they even bothered, these people. Didn't they understand it was over for them? Didn't they know they were washed up? That what they were doing looked ridiculous? Was embarrassing? Obscene? We used to swim by as close as possible when they dropped into the lanes next to us, trying to overwhelm them with our waves – to drown them with our strength and our speed and with our clearly superior youth.

Imagine my surprise, then, at walking into my first yoga class and finding it populated wholly with middle aged bodies, most of them female. Imagine my shock at discovering that the forty-two year old receptionist two mats over could hold *Adho mukha vrksasana* far longer and with much more integrity than I. In the back of my mind, I think I expected this pattern to alter given time. Surely, I thought, the young guys must be up in the higher levels where they belong. Surely, there will come a day when I am better than all these old people. But every step of my yoga journey, I have stood alongside more senior students who consistently evidence an experience and ability far beyond my own.

Confounding many of the assumptions I built up as a swimmer, contradicting much of what lead me to laugh and point at those Masters' athletes, my current teacher is a smallish, seventy-something Englishwoman. That she has a practice history nearly equal my lifespan astounds me. That her strength and flexibility exceeds any I can presently muster amazes me. And that she would likely say the same of her guru – of the 80-plus yoga master, B.K.S. Iyengar – leaves me simultaneously bewildered and filled with awe.

I am sitting outside the yoga lounge. It is a chill Monday night and I am here in shorts and shirt, waiting for my weekly class to begin. A small group of us has settled onto a half-circle of cool wooden

benches. We are listening to another of our local teachers talk about inversions. She has struggled with these over several decades, it seems, and she is speaking now of how she has become increasingly patient with herself as a result. Long-standing difficulty has forced her to acknowledge her own process, she says. She has developed more respect for her needs, for her body's wisdom. She has become less concerned with the abilities of others and with her mind's habitual demands and expectations. She has become more attuned to the reality of this present moment. "In a way," she finishes as the doors swing open and smiling faces stream out. "In a way, this struggle has been a gift."

I, like all of us, have my own struggles with yoga. As years have passed and as my body has become increasingly balanced, as my desire to address the physical restraints of a swimming youth has been more nearly realized, I have become aware of some much subtler, but certainly no less powerful, remnants of that time. Working with a comparing mind, entering into endless fights with the body, seeing meaningful involvement with physical activity as the domain of youth – each of these attitudes lingers from my years as a competitive athlete. I have carried each one of them out of the swimming pool and into the yoga studio, into my living room, onto the sticky surface of my thin blue yoga mat, and there they continue to shape and restrict and challenge my practice as much as any physical restraint I have ever encountered.

Thinking this, I find myself looking around during class tonight. I watch that teacher move easy through *Utthita trikonasana*, *Utthita parsvakonasana*, through *Virabhadrasana II*. I eventually watch her ready for shoulder stand and, in spite of what was said beforehand, after going up in slow control she becomes steady and firm as a marble column. Quiet action lifts her legs and stillness softens her forehead. "Impressive," I think shaking my head. "Amazing."

Inspired – inspired and affirming for the umpteenth

time that there is much to learn from this woman – I then proceed to prepare myself for the pose. I lay out blankets, arrange my body, kick my feet overhead. Coming into vertical, I purse my lips and hold my breath and pull my shoulders in nice and tight. Somewhere in the process of getting ready, I have decided I am going to push this one as far as possible. I am going to be as solid as ever in *Salamba sarvangasana* this evening. I am going to be as good as that teacher, I think, biting my lower lip. I am going to be as good as that teacher – and maybe even a little bit better!

It isn't until she stands up and walks out of the room that I realize what I am doing. "You need more support," she says, passing by. "There's too much pinching like that. It isn't quite right." Air bursts out of me, hearing this. My face loosens and my shoulders relax. I start rolling my head side to side in disbelief.

Old habits die hard, it seems.

Thank God yoga affords even someone like me a lifetime of work. ☺

Neil W McKinlay is a long time student of Shirley Daventry French, alumni of the VYC Newsletter Committee, contributor to the Yoga Journal, local swimming coach and father.

Upcoming CIYTA Assessment Dates:

2004

Jan. 16-18	Junior Intermediate III	Victoria
June 18-20	Introductory I & II	Kelowna
Oct. 15-17	Introductory I & II	Halifax
Nov. 19-21	Junior Intermediate I	Vancouver

Please note:

The Introductory Level I & II Assessments are held annually the third weekend of June and the third weekend of October.

News on Guruji's book

Guruji's book came off the press just in time to be sent to India. Thank you to the many donors who have helped make this project possible.

The donors at the time of newsletter advertising deadline are: Sylvie Argouarch, Jennifer Armstrong, Dr. Robert Austin, Carole Baker, Elizabeth Banister, Connie Barker, Linda Benn, Sheri Berkowitz, Noreen Braiden, Frances Bryan, Karin Campbell, Robin Cantor, Vickie Catchpole, Ty Chandler, Martha Chick, Valentina Chubak, Colly Dastur, Shirley Daventry French, Patricia Dewar, Monica Dimofski, Patty Dusel, Tara Dutcawich, Marlene Enns, Karen Fletcher, Marion Fontaine, Fay Gascho, Sara Gerring, Felicity Green, Donna Gustafson, Susan Hart, Simone Hengen, Leslie Hogya, Karin Holtkamp, Kelowna Yoga House Society, Linda Kusleika, Bernadette Letchford, Marianne Livojevic, Betty Macnaughton, Jane Mathieu, Photini McCullough, Carole Miller, Judith Mirus, Jane Munro, Paul Nasmith, Ingelise Nherlan, Evelyn Nixey, Louise J. Pal, Melissa Perehudoff, Hilda Pizarro, Margot Pope, Gwynneth Powell, Christopher Pratt, Donna Rao, Sue & Jim Riddell, Vicki Robichaud, Cathy Rowan, Eileen Rutherford, John C.F. Schumacher, Caroline Sophonow, Anna Stein, Krysia Strawczynski, Janete Vanderveen, Betsy Williamson, Elia Wright, Yoga Studio South.

Get your copy of the book *Illumination*!

Aphorisms of B.K.S. Iyengar illustrated by Lauren Cox. A beautiful gem of a book, be inspired by the words of our teacher!

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Delving into Patanjali's Yoga Sutras

by Leslie Hogya

In the last issue, I made an error in listing the Sutra on *Satya* as no. 37.

It is Chapter II, Sutra 36.

Satya pratisthayam kriya phalah asrayatvam

B.K.S. Iyengar's translation of this sutra reads: "When the *sadhaka* is firmly established in the practice of truth, his words become so potent that whatever he says comes to realization."

Satya.

In yoga philosophy according to the Yoga Sutras, there are eight limbs of yoga. Described as the first limb are the *yamas*, the ethical disciplines. How we interact with the world and those around us. There are five *yamas* and are often likened to the "Ten Commandments of Christianity." First is *Ahimsa*, non-harming, compassion. The second is *Satya*, truth.

Further reflection on both non-harming and truth bring me to examine my speech. All day long I speak to others socially, when I am teaching, in the yoga centre office, on the phone and with my family. It is the way I present myself to the world. I can express my feelings by the words I choose, and my tone of voice. Speech can impart many messages, both outright and subtly. My voice can inspire confidence in my students if I speak clearly, directly and with action words. Conversely, it could cause them doubt and confusion if I speak with hesitation, conflicting directions, or with tremors in my voice. If I chose to belittle their efforts, this could be seen as *himsa*, harming. Day after day, hour after hour, the interpersonal and daily interchanges provide me with grist for the mill. Each new encounter, each new phone call, gives me another chance to be clear and truthful.

However, there are the grey areas. Maybe then truth is not always the wisest choice. Shirley Daventry French

gave an example at her talk in October on the Sutras. She spoke of a little girl asking if she looks pretty who has dressed herself in a strange mix of plaids and outrageous colours, trailing petticoats and drooping shawls. It may not really be pretty to me, but why would I hurt her feelings by saying no, you look silly.

In *The Essence of Yoga*, a translation of the Yoga Sutras by Bernard Beuvenchaud, he says that there is a hierarchy to the *yamas*; if there must be a choice between truth and non-harming then non-harming takes precedence.

So as with all speech, it is good to reflect before speaking. The expression of putting your foot in your mouth is also something to consider. Not thinking before speaking can be embarrassing.

When I regret an action, it is usually tied directly to what I said. Once the words are out, they cannot be pulled back in. One encounter some years ago still causes me to feel regret at hasty and harsh words that I said. A rift occurred that has still not been properly repaired. In her classic book, *Kundalini Yoga for the West*, Swami Radha offers readers the exercise of putting a small coin or ring under the tongue, to remind us to pause a moment before we speak. When I practice this it gives me that moment before I speak, allowing me to be sure of what I want to say, before the words come out.

A short time ago there was a tribute to Carol Shields, the Pulitzer prize-winning author of *Unless*, among other titles. She lived here in Victoria before her death. At the end of the readings, her own voice was broadcast. This is not a quote, but she said something like this. I write about the domestic life, all of us have a

domestic life, and it is here that we exist, and is the crucible for our ideals. And in that crucible I use words to express my thoughts and feelings to everyone I encounter.



Speech has a companion: Listening. Really listening to others gives them a chance to be recognized. I show my respect when I listen. Speaking is usually a give and take affair. However, in social situations, I have often noticed how I wait my turn to talk, sometimes with impatience if the person speaking doesn't pause to let me add "my two cents." At times like these, am I really listening? Or am I just waiting to be able to have my moment of attention. My ego's chance to feel important. I see that in particular, socializing brings on the ego. I like to talk. It's a chance to show off what I know about this or that. I too, am intelligent, witty,

or whatever it is I want to be seen as.

All spiritual traditions recommend prayer, or meditation, or some form of silence. This is obviously no coincidence. The wise sages, through their own contemplation have learned that the communion with the Divine or with God or whatever one calls it, doesn't happen sitting around with friends over a cup of tea, showing off what one knows.

When I am doing my yoga practice, I do not want to be disturbed. I don't want to talk, or answer the phone. Yet living in a household, I do get interrupted, and I feel the deflection, the dissipating of energy when that happens.

Practicing yoga focuses my energy and brings a quiet state. Silence is the key. When I descend into the silence of my heart, then it is the heart that speaks, not the ego. ☺



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Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$10 cancellation fee.



Marlene Mawhinney is one of Canada's most experienced teachers. Director of Yoga Centre Toronto, chair of the Professional Development Committee of the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association, Marlene has been to India to study many times and brings a depth of understanding to her teaching.



Victoria Yoga Centre Society
**Annual
General Meeting**

Friday 6th February 2004

6:00pm meeting in Cedar studio
7:00pm potluck dinner in Arbutus studio

All Victoria Yoga Centre members are
welcome to attend the AGM.

If you are interested in helping to serve on the
board of directors, please contact Rosemary
Barrit or Leslie Hogya through the front desk.

Positions to be filled for 2004:
Secretary, Treasurer and volunteer coordinator.

Victoria Yoga Centre 202-919 Fort Street,
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John Schumacher is the founder and director of Unity Woods Yoga Center in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. John has studied in India with B.K.S. Iyengar many times since 1981 and is a certified senior Iyengar Yoga teacher. John has kindly provided us with permission to reprint his article first published in the spring 2003 issue of Unity Woods Yoga Center newsletter.

Namaste

by John Schumacher

I like to think that I communicate pretty clearly, both in my teaching and in my writing. In fact, when I am complimented for either, it is often for my clarity. But I certainly missed the boat in the last newsletter. Nearly everyone who read it thought I was saying that we were going to close the Beyondananda Boutique. Some even wrote to tell me that the props and learning aids that they had purchased here had been instrumental in inspiring and furthering their practice and to please reconsider closing the store.

In that newsletter, I wrote that, "I don't think it's wrong to sell (or wear, for that matter) an \$85 pair of leggings. We just don't want to be the ones to do it." That's true. We don't. But we have no qualms about offering folks practical and reasonably priced things that, as I also wrote, "provide students with tools to aid them in developing their practice."

So, in hopes of clearing up any confusion about the purpose and future of the Beyondananda Boutique, let me say that we do intend to discontinue selling items whose primary purpose is as a fashion statement or that are outrageously expensive.

We will continue to offer things (e.g. mats, books, blocks, tapes, clothing, etc.) that are useful to the student who is more interested in learning about yoga and developing a practice than in what the person next to them is wearing or how much it costs. That doesn't mean we won't have whimsical things, such as the Pilobolus Book *Twisted Yoga*, or the occasional expensive item, like Yoga Journal's *Yoga* book. It does

Congratulations

The following candidates achieved certification
during the Introductory Assessment in
Winnipeg in October:

Introductory Level II

Laurie Ankeman, Winnipeg
Glenda Balkan-Champagne, Toronto

Introductory Level I

Karen Clements, Winnipeg
Susan Ellis, Etobicoke

The following teachers received certification
during the Junior Intermediate I assessment in
Ottawa in November:

Nadia Horodynski, Mississauga
Theresa McDiarmid, Toronto
Karen Major, London
Barbara Young, Ottawa
Heidi Steinburg-Fenton, Toronto

mean that we won't have those \$85 capris.

In that last newsletter, I also wrote that part of the reason for this decision was that it seemed as though we had been "creating a situation where the focus became acquiring stuff and getting a deal," citing specifically how, at our inventory sale last summer, "[people] had argued about who got what first, jockeyed with each other for a good place in the check out line, and behaved like, well, greedy, aggressive customers."

As yoga has become more mainstream and trendy in recent years, I have noticed a different attitude in some of the people who come to take class. For the most part, that change can be described as an absence of respect for the centre, its teachers and staff, and the other student. I suspect that this can be attributed in part to the fact that a growing number of people come initially with the idea that they are customers buying a product. Considering the way yoga is often portrayed in the media and in advertising in particular, who can blame them?

I would like to point out, that aside from the items in the Boutique, we are not selling a product. Yoga is not a product. Yoga is a practice, a discipline, a philosophy, a way of life. Classes are a service that is offered (for sale if you can afford it, for free or exchange if not) to open the door to the experience of yoga. People who come to classes are not customers. They are students. That means that they are coming to Unity Woods to learn about yoga from the teachers here, teachers who have devoted a significant portion of their lives to its study and practice. Learning requires an open mind, receptivity, energetic attention, and willingness. To facilitate and clarify our approach to teaching yoga, over the years we have developed a set of guidelines and policies. However, as more students have come with the idea that they are customers purchasing an exotic exercise class at a fitness center, some seem to view the policies and guidelines as extraneous, even bothersome. After all, what do late policies and class behavior rules have to do with getting a workout? To tell you the truth, I would prefer not to write

explicit policies down, but over the years we have come to realize that this is the fairest and most open way to deal with the various issues that arise. Then everybody knows what the agreements are at the outset. That is why we publish them in the newsletter, post them online, and exhort friends to read them.

Even so, some of the things that come up – more so of late – make me scratch my head. They aren't things that should even need policy statements, but actually fall within the province of basic good manners.

Dropping trash on the studio floor, coming late to class, dropping in on class without paying, pushing into line at the reception desk ahead of others, taking library books out and not returning them, cell phones in class, yawning in the teacher's face, lying on the floor while the teacher is making announcements – all of these are examples of students behaving badly. And unfortunately they are happening more frequently. To a certain extent I would expect to have to educate a student as to the personal and interpersonal behavior that accompanies and enhances a yoga practice. The subtleties of non-violence, truthfulness, and surrender are complex and ongoing issues for practitioners to deal with. But it seems to me that the sort of things I'm describing are just common sense and common courtesy. If that's where we have to start, though, then that is where we'll start. Because yoga isn't just a set of exercises or techniques. It is much broader than that.

At the apex of the Unity Woods logo, the triangle points to the word *Awareness*. The underlying methodology that we employ for opening the door to the experience of yoga is to develop awareness. Sure, we teach *asana* (poses), *pranayama* (breath control), and philosophy, but in truth, despite all the physical, mental, and emotional benefits of these practices, they are basically vehicles for us to deepen our awareness. And it is awareness that reveals to us who we really are, confronting us with both the riddle and the solution to the mystery of existence.

This emphasis on awareness is a fundamental

distinction between a yoga class and an exercise class. What that means is that how the student returns the equipment to its storage space is as much a part of learning about yoga as what the action of the shoulder blade is in *Trikonasana* (Triangle Pose). By learning to bring awareness to all the things you do when you come to class, you develop the skill to bring that awareness to the rest of your activities of your life. When we say that the classes are an opportunity to acquire the information and experience to build an effective practice, and the skills you learn in class can bring a richness and fullness to your life outside of class. Knowing that that is what yoga class is about can make your (and my) experience of class so much more effective – and pleasant, too.

It is always a special moment for me as a teacher, when a student tells me that they have noticed that what they are learning in class is beginning to make a difference in their everyday life – in how their body feels, in their ability to concentrate, in their emotional stability, in how they relate to the people around them, in their outlook on life. I know then that yoga has begun to take root in that person, and that for them the realm of the possible in their life has become much more vast. And that is the purpose behind all that we do at Unity Woods. ☺

Friday Night Videos

Come be inspired by B.K.S. Iyengar

Jan. 9: Movie to be announced

March 5: Movie to be announced

Movies are free and start at 6:45pm

Bring your own popcorn

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

I would like to acknowledge the newsletter committee, our three dedicated editors **Gwynneth Powell, Melissa Worth** and **Greg Sly** and all their helpers and advisors including **Shirley Daventry French** and **Lauren Cox**, recent members **Jane Munro, Taimi Mulder, Karyn Woodland, Karin Holtkamp, Susan Robinson** and **Nancy Searing**.

The newsletter editors coordinate all and spend lots of time finding and writing excellent articles and taking photos. This is all volunteer work that requires dedication to the yoga center and the path of yoga.

The newsletter is our voice in the wider community. This hardworking team comes up month after month with ideas, inspiration and energy that have given our newsletter a fantastic reputation. Others cannot believe it is done by volunteers and that it comes out so often with such a rich variety of articles. Well done!

Thank you to **Stephanie Clark** of Haute Cuisine for donating a kitchen disposal can and to **Krysia Strawczynski** for finding us two room dividers for the downstairs office. Thank you to all of you who do the many large and small jobs for the Yoga Centre, to all the teachers and the board of directors. Special thanks to **Jo Anna Hope** who is helping to coordinate the Special Needs volunteers.

Thanks goes to **Charles Campbell** and **Karin Dayton** for their volunteer work in distributing YYC promotional materials around the city on an ongoing basis.

REVIEW WORKSHOP

In October of 2003, the Victoria Yoga Centre hosted Chris Saudek in her third workshop with us, billing it as an 'Intermediate' level workshop. Chris' intention was to teach to the Intermediate Syllabus of poses, to prepare some participants for this level of Certification, and also to continue deepening the work she had done with us in her two previous workshops. I had the pleasure of being present to experience the mastery of Chris' teaching, and to convey the qualities of her teaching in a review, I asked Ingelise Nherlan to write about the workshop.

Ingelise is a Senior Intermediate III teacher from Vancouver, BC. Ed.

WORKING WITH CHRIS SAUDEK

by Ingelise Nherlan

To an onlooker, an Iyengar Yoga teacher's work looks simple – deceptively simple:

- 1) Chose poses in a certain order
- 2) Give a few pertinent points
- 3) Observe for a moment
- 4) Make appropriate corrections
- 5) Modify where necessary
- 6) Ensure all understood
- 7) Move on
- 8) Savasana – Namaste.

These could be the Eight Limbs of basic Iyengar Yoga teaching principles, if you will. Right? Not quite.

I have available to me only a few week-ends each year where I can

be a student. Three to be exact this year and I guard those times of being taught like a hawk guards it's young. I treasure them.

A recent such week-end was the workshop in Victoria, B.C. with Chris Saudek. Chris is a shining example of the qualities we have come to recognize in an experienced Iyengar Yoga teacher.

Chris Saudek is fluid in the way she weaves her own and her student's energies together through the poses. Points get a new depth through her presentation. Insights come to life all over again. She masters well the art of linking, which enables her students to suddenly "find" themselves in poses that hitherto had been, shall we say, hard on the ego. One suddenly realizes that small physical obstacles actually started dissolving "three poses ago." Quite delightful really. A kind of "sneak attack gift" from teacher to you: so typical from someone who knows his/her job well.

Everybody seems attentive and content and somewhere in the room someone who just "got something" is outright happy.



Chris Saudek works with Ingelise in Supta Padangustasana II (Lateral)



Eka Hasta Bhujasana



Dwi Hasta Bhujasana

Chris' teaching is deep and light at the same time. One's being becomes alert, relaxed and open in a kind of "come-what-may-its-o.k.-with-me" state of receptivity.

I noticed her astute 'seeing' in working the group where it was 'at'. Challenges were reasonable in length and strength, followed by very nice periods of counter work. This created a nice wave-like flow filling the time so energy was on a constant upswing and never draining. (I speak for myself of course but am pretty certain all would agree.)

Savasana came at "just the right time" and therefore simply "happened".

As Chris said: "If you are not in the future and not in the past, you are in the present – and then you are in eternity."

Several people had said to me: You'll enjoy Chris Saudek. They were absolutely correct. What's there not to like?

Thanks Chris
See you again

Namaste

Ingelise Nherlan ☯



Saturday Workshops at the Victoria Yoga Centre

Backbends

With Marlene Miller

February 14, 1-3pm

Pre-requisite: Level 2/3

What and How to Practice

With Leslie Hogya

March 20, 1-3pm

Pre-requisite: At least 2 terms of level 1 classes.

Yoga Kurunta

With Ann Kilbertus

May 15, 1-3pm

Pre-requisite: At least 2 terms of level 1 classes.

Price per workshop:

\$30 + GST for members,

\$35 + GST for non-members

The Victoria Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street 250 386 YOGA

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

by Chris Pratt

The reason for this title will become evident later on, but first I should like to explain at some length what I personally understand by the mind, as in "body, mind and spirit". Please be warned that this is only a layman's sketch of what is an abstruse field of academic and metaphysical study, and scholarly debate. If it provokes comment or criticism I shall be grateful to receive it.

Whether the mind is integral with the brain or a separate and intangible entity is a matter of lively conjecture and debate. Here we shall treat it as a separate entity which is served by the brain, and through which it performs its functions. So the first step is to consider the brain itself.

The brain, according to the dictionary, "serves as the coordinating centre of sensations and of intellectual and nervous activity". The brain, through the spinal column and the central nervous system, is in two-way communication with every part of the body. It controls the sympathetic nervous system. It receives stimuli from the five senses, and senses pain and comfort. It also receives chemical stimuli such as hormones and endorphins, and it receives external chemical stimuli such as drugs, alcohol and medications. The brain itself is a complex system of component parts, capable of learning and remembering, and is susceptible to conditioning. The oldest part of the brain in terms of evolution, the limbic brain, mentioned below, is concerned with basic emotions and instinctive actions.

Whether we treat the mind as something distinct from

the brain or not, it is certainly served by the brain and performs its functions through the brain. Let us look at the mind under four headings:

The Subconscious Mind:

The "Id" of Sigmund Freud. This is the instinctive mind, instinct being an innate, usually fixed pattern of behavior in most animals in response to certain stimuli, and a similar propensity in human beings to act without conscious intention.

More than perhaps many are aware, humans are motivated by primeval instincts for survival and procreation, e.g. fight/flight, protection/aggression, greed and selfishness, fears, phobias and superstitions, lust and envy. We still see this in many ways, such as the urge to seek shelter from the dark, the way many of our homes have fireplaces, and candles on the table,

our fondness for furs, and the customs we observe in the way we treat our guests.

In fact, the distant past, we now discover, is still present in the human genome.

The dictionary defines the subliminal self as "the part of one's personality outside

conscious awareness". That is, below the threshold of sensation or consciousness. To the foregoing we may add buried or suppressed memory gained in this lifetime.

All of the foregoing elements of the subconscious mind operate through the limbic brain, the basic brainstem at the top of the spinal column.

The "Conditioned Mind"

Freud's Superego, or the mind of memory and learning. Here the influence of our cultural background, our parents, priests, teachers, peers, bosses, TV, in fact every external force or persuasion that provokes attractions and aversions, likes and dislikes, biases and prejudices, preferences and inhibitions forms part of

More than perhaps many are aware, humans are motivated by primeval instincts for survival and procreation...

our mental conditioning. These experiences are the source of our habits and their formation, our ethics and morals, our self-discipline and our conscience and our social behavior. Every experience we have builds our memory and conditions this part of the mind.

The Cognitive or Rational Mind:

Freud's Ego. This part of the mind is the locus of volition and the formulation of intent, of reason and intellect. It is the centre of thought and decision, reflection and wisdom, and self-image. It is our "persona" through which we project our self onto the stage of life. Such qualities as diligence, concentration, self-discipline, curiosity, imagination and wit are attributes of this mental function. One writer, Rod Stryker, said the Ego is "the self-image we create to compensate for the spiritual ignorance of not knowing who we really are." Both the subconscious mind and the superego serve the cognitive mind.

The Intuitive Mind

I don't believe Freud had much time for this mental component, but Carl Jung was interested in it. The



Chris Pratt doing yoga research

dictionary says intuition is "the immediate apprehension by the mind without reasoning", and insight is "the capacity of understanding hidden truths". So I suggest that the Intuitive Mind is pure consciousness or awareness without any other mental process being involved. At its best it is pure enlightenment, free from prejudice or superstition or other attachments. It is the doorway to spirituality, and it is the mind we aspire to through meditation and contemplation. Through it we attain an At-one-ment with the Divine Mind. If you don't believe this, no amount of argument will convince you; if you do believe it, no argument is necessary.

And now to return to our streetcar. The destination sign on the streetcar that

ran past his New Orleans apartment gave Tennessee Williams the title for his award winning play. Now, "desire" is a vague word that often gets a bad rap. Some desires are of noble intent, some are ordinary, everyday wants, and then there are others less worthy in the sense of worldly appetites – that's the desire we are addressing here. The route that this streetcar takes is really a loop that runs through Attraction, Desire, Fulfillment, Satisfaction, Memory, Habit, Attachment and Addiction and back again to Attraction. Of course

it stops at all the Seven Deadly Sins along the way!

There was in fact another streetcar in New Orleans, named "Cemetery". I'm sure the irony of this wasn't lost on Tennessee Williams. The old New Orleans

*Some desires are of noble intent,
some are ordinary, everyday wants,
and then there are others less worthy
in the sense of worldly appetites –
that's the desire we are addressing here.*

Cemetery with its great burial vaults and mausoleums and tombs built above ground because of the high water table of the delta land, is almost as big a tourist attraction as the fleshpots of the French Quarter. The streetcar named "Cemetery" would have made stops at Conception, Birth, Infancy, Adolescence, Adulthood, Maturity, Senescence, and, finally, Cemetery. There are those who claim that this streetcar also makes a loop. It enters a tunnel after its last stop and emerges again at Conception, but I cannot confirm this.

There is a tendency for passengers to become trapped on these two streetcar lines, alternating between the two seemingly forever. But I understand that there is a way to make your escape, rather like Harry Potter finding Platform 9A at Kings Cross Station, through Intuition, and Meditation and At-one-ment with the Divine Mind. And so to fly off to Enlightenment.

Well, perhaps this is only a facetious metaphor, but metaphors sometimes make a worthwhile point, and I do take seriously my musings about the mind. I'd really welcome some comments. ☺



VICTORIA
YOGA CENTRE'S



Friday Night Gathering



Date: Friday, April 2

at the Victoria Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street

Phone: (250) 386-YOGA (9642)

6pm: Asana practice

**Potluck dinner–
bring food to share**

*Everyone is welcome to join us.
Bring a friend, partner or family member.*

By donation, free for members.

Light on Questions

by Ty Chandler

Q What is *Pranayama*? Anonymous student

A I will start with the definition as stated by BKS Iyengar in the classic yoga text *The Light On Pranayama*.

Guruji states, "*Pranayama* is a conscious prolongation of inhalation, retention and exhalation. Inhalation is the act of receiving the primeval energy in the form of breath, and retention is when the breath is held in order to savour that energy. In exhalation all thoughts and emotions are emptied with breath: then, while the lungs are empty, one surrenders the individual energy, 'I', to the primeval energy, the Atma. The practice of

Pranayama develops a steady mind, strong will-power and sound judgment."

Sounds powerfully enticing doesn't it? But how is the practice of *pranayama* incorporated into one's daily life and how is it related to *asana*? And can it be practiced by a beginner?

Pranayama is the 4th limb of 8 limbs making up what is known as Ashtanga Yoga. Ashtanga Yoga is a system of techniques for keeping the body healthy, strong and clean, and the mind stable. It consists also of personal and universal codes for living an ethical and moral life, and finally practices and insights into understanding one's true nature. It is also considered the 'veil' between the first 3 limbs and the 5,6,7 and 8th limbs.

It is recommended that the yogin practices *asana* for



one year before beginning a *pranayama* practice. Patanjali (the great sage and codifier of yoga) states in chapter 11 verse 49 that *pranayama* is to be practiced when *asana* has been perfected. And in chapter 11 verse 46 he further states that *asana* is to be steady and comfortable. *Asana* also means 'seat'. So after practicing *asana* for a year the yogin is able to sit - or lay down (*savasana*) while being comfortable and steady. Also the yogin's attention is coming into focus in *asana*, this will be required for further refinement in the practice of *pranayama*.

The benefits of *pranayama* come with time and a steady and correct practice. They include a strong respiratory system, soothed nervous system and reduced cravings.

Many students who come to Iyengar Yoga from other styles are curious why they are not being told how or when to breathe in an Iyengar *asana* class. BKS Iyengar recommends that *asana* and *Pranayama* not be practiced together. "If a novice attends to the perfection of the postures, s/he cannot concentrate on breathing. S/he loses balance and the depth of the *asanas*." Disturbances may also come to the neurological system if breathing techniques are practiced when the body is not in a relaxed state.

The benefits are many when it comes to *pranayama* but they come with time and a steady and correct practice. They include a strong respiratory system, soothed nervous system and reduced cravings. It can also deepen one's *asana* practice. In Richard Rosen's new book *The Yoga of Breath a Step by Step Guide To Pranayama* he recalls BKS Iyengar once writing that *pranayama* acts like a 'jackhammer' on tight muscles, especially in the chest. Richard's testimony continues: "it has slowly pried open some of the tighter places in my body and so provided me with new openings in my *asana* practice".

Find a teacher and learn the basics of the practice. Take books out from the VYC library and familiarize yourself with the theory and philosophy of *pranayama*. Then gradually begin to make space in your day or week for practice. Richard Rosen also recommends that you commit to one year of practice - and then see if it is making a difference in your life.

And for long time *asana* students who have trouble creating a *pranayama* practice I share some advice our senior teacher Shirley Daventry French has given that carries a lot of weight. Shirley says that if her schedule is too busy for both *pranayama* and *asana* that she will choose the practice of *pranayama*. ☺

Ty Chandler is a Certified Introductory Level II teacher who has worked with the Iyengars at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, India.

Time to Renew!

This is a reminder that your VYC membership for 2003 has expired on December 31. If you haven't renewed your membership yet for 2004, now is the time to do so!

The membership subscription fee is \$32 (incl. GST) and renewable each January.

Membership benefits now include a 5% discount on all classes, free practice times at the VYC, timed practices, having the option of getting the newsletter mailed to you, early registration and discount for workshops, borrowing privileges in our library, eligibility to become a board member and being eligible to apply for scholarships for workshops and intensives at the VYC.

To renew your membership, please fill in the membership subscription form at the back of this issue or print out the subscription form from our website: www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca



The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

Program of Classes in the Iyengar Approach to Yoga

Term III: Jan. 5 – Feb. 29, 2004

Note: Some classes may be adjusted due to special workshops or holidays.

Introduction to Iyengar Yoga - 4 weeks

Day	Time	Instructor
Wed.	6:30-8:00 pm	Britta Poisson

Level 1

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	12:00-1:30 pm	Lauren Cox
Mon.	4:00-5:30 pm	Jo Anna Hope
Mon.	7:30-9:00 pm	Ann Kilbertus
Tues.	10:00-11:30 am	Leslie Hoga
Tues.	4:45-6:15 pm	Melissa Worth
Tues.	7:00-8:30 pm	Wies Pukesh
Wed.	6:00-7:30 pm	Gwynneth Powell
Thurs.	8:30-10:00 am	Linda Benn
Thurs.	5:30-7:00 pm	Wendy Boyer
Thurs.	6:30-8:00 pm	Jeannette Merryfield
Fri.	10:30-12:00 pm	Linda Benn
Fri.	5:00-6:30 pm	Gwynneth Powell
Sat.	9:30-11:00 am	Corrine Lowen
Sun.	10:30-12:00 pm	Ty Chandler
Sun.	3:00-4:30 pm	Christine Dimofski

Level 1/2

Day	Time	Instructor
Wed.	9:00-10:30 am	Ty Chandler
Wed.	7:30-9:00 pm	Melissa Worth
Thurs.	7:00-8:30 pm	Greg Sly

Level 2

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	7:30-9:00 pm	James Currie-Johnson
Tues.	10:00-11:30 am	Robin Cantor
Tues.	5:15-7:00 pm	Leslie Hoga
Tues.	6:30-8:00 pm	Melissa Worth
Wed.	7:45-9:15 pm	Gwynneth Powell
Thurs.	4:30-6:00 pm	Ann Kilbertus
Fri.	7:00-8:00 am	Christine Dimofski
Fri.	9:00-10:30 am	Linda Benn
Fri.	5:00-6:30 pm	Wendy Boyer
Sat.	8:00-9:30 am	Corrine Lowen
Sun.	9:00-10:30 am	Ty Chandler
Sun.	4:30-6:00 pm	Christine Dimofski

Level 2/3

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	10:00 -12:00pm	Lauren Cox
Wed.	6:00-7:30pm	Ty Chandler

Level 3

Day	Time	Instructor
Thurs.	10:00-12:00 pm	Shirley Daventry French Linda Benn
Thurs.	6:00-8:00 pm	Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hoga
Sat.	9:00-11:00 am	Marlene Miller

Level 4

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	5:30 -7:30pm	Shirley Daventry French & senior teachers

Noon Hour Classes

Day	Time	Instructor
Tues.	12:00-1:00pm	Jeannette Merryfield
Wed.	12:00-1:00pm	Wendy Boyer
Thurs.	12:00-1:00pm	Lauren Cox
Fri.	12:00-1:00pm	Ty Chandler

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE #202 – 919 Fort St. 386-YOGA (9642)

Term III: Jan. 5 – Feb. 29**Timed Practice**

Tues. 5:30-7:00 pm Ty Chandler

Ropes Class

Sat. 4:00-5:00 pm Lauren Cox

Restorative(registered and drop-in)

Wed. 5:30-6:30 pm James Currie-Johnson

Introduction to Pranayama (Level 2 required)

Wed. 7:00-8:00 am Ann Kilbertus
Feb. 11, 18, 25, March 3

Pranayama (Level 3 or 4 + teacher's permission req.)

Thurs. 7:00-8:00 pm Shirley Daventry French
Jan. 15, 22, 29, Feb. 5

Yoga Philosophy

Thurs. 5:00-6:00 pm Leslie Hoya
Jan. 15, 22, 29, Feb. 5

Sutra Recitation (free for Yoga Centre members)

Mon.. 5:00-5:30 pm James Currie-Johnson

Focus on Women

Fri. 9:30-11:00 am Christine Dimofski

Pre-Natal

Mon. 7:30-9:00 pm Robin Cantor

Post-Natal

Sat. 3:00-4:30 pm Lauren Cox

55 & Better

Wed. (continuing) 10:30-12:00 pm Leslie Hoya

Fri. (Level 1) 10:30-12:00 pm Wendy Boyer

Special Needs

Wed. 4:30-6:00 pm Shirley Daventry French,
Ann Kilbertus, Leslie
Hoya, Lauren Cox

Thurs. 1:15-2:45 pm Linda Benn, Ann Kilbertus

(more classes next column)

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

Term III: Jan. 5 – Feb. 29**Back Care**

Mon. 4:00-5:15 pm Linda Benn

Family Yoga

Wed. 3:30-4:30 pm Wendy Boyer

Ty's Yoga Kids (ages 10-14)

Fri. 4:00-5:00 pm Ty Chandler

Highschool Yoga (age 14 +)

Fri. 3:30-4:45 pm Gwynneth Powell

AT LONG LAST!

**NEW: 5% discount on all classes
for Victoria Yoga Centre members.**

Yoga is like music.

*The rhythm of the body,
the melody of the mind
and the harmony of the soul
create the symphony of life.*

-B.K.S. Iyengar

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers help with all kinds of things at the Victoria Yoga Centre. This column introduces some of the people who give a great deal to our community.

Genie Behind the Screen

by Jane Munro

Have you logged on to <http://www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca> to check out the schedule of classes, find a teacher's biography, or get information about a workshop? If so, you may have noticed the site's photo-captions: quotations from B.K.S. Iyengar's books next to duo-tone silhouettes of yogis performing *asanas*. Perhaps you watched the slide show of students and teachers on the home page, found answers to basic questions about yoga, or printed out the practice sequence. Maybe you enjoyed "A Portrait of Gururji" by Shirley Daventry French, or found articles from earlier issues of this Newsletter.



The Victoria Yoga Centre's virtual presence was created, and is sustained, thanks to very real time and effort spent on its website. The genie behind the screen for the past three years has been Rachelle Rey. She calls herself "a worker bee—not terribly deep, but stubborn enough to get things done." She grew up in a town of 150 people in Saskatchewan and observes, "I think there's a prairie sort of solidness to you that never leaves."

When Rachelle volunteered as webmaster, she and her husband had been regular Tuesday mornings in Metchosin yoga students for several years, where

Shirley's teaching had meant a great deal to her. Rachelle explains, "Creating the website for the Victoria Yoga Centre was my way of showing appreciation for everything Shirley's done for her students and the yoga community"

She knew what she was getting into. The first website she built was for a small business she and her husband, whom she describes as her best friend, started. After shedding many tears in frustration, she capitulated and took some courses. "That's how I tend to do things—

beat my head against the wall until it really, really hurts, and then turn left", she laughs. She's sure that Shirley, with her eagle eye, spotted this characteristic and has "knocked little gems my way encouraging me to explore the wisdom of learning when and how to surrender gracefully."

The overall graphic design, site navigation, and page structure for the VYC website are Rachelle's original creation. Various VYC members wrote copy and contributed photographs. She manipulated images, made things fit and work, then launched the website in November 2000. Last winter, in response to requests and suggestions,

she did a major revamp. To widen the site, she redesigned the layout and resized graphics. She also improved the navigation for the class schedule, and updated the HTML and Cascading Style Sheets code. This technical edit will help future webmasters maintain the site easily.

That's important because the business she and her husband started is growing at an explosive rate. Rachelle had to withdraw from volunteering for the VYC. Desperate for balance, she's hanging onto her *asana* practice, hoping it—rather like a website—will eventually give rise to more of yoga's "virtual" benefits.





Radha Yoga Centre

Dream Workshop

Sunday January 25, 1-4pm

\$20-\$30, sliding scale

Learn to listen to your own intuitive symbolic language.

To register please call 595-0177 or email rycvc@island.net

There is a saying in the Puranas that Vishnu dreams the world into existence. Life is the Divine Play, although sometimes the dream looks random.

We can see that each of us creates our own world by dreaming different types of dreams. As we become more aware, we can start to ask, "Why should I dream about problems and difficulties when I am the creator of my dream and have the power to change it?"

We can even dream about all the beauties of spiritual

life, but we might find that our own materials - the threads from which we weave the dream - are not always strong, or clean, or long enough. We might make mistakes in knotting, or tie some threads too tightly. So our dream cannot be as perfectly realized as it is in our minds or desires.



Swami Radha

We have to learn how to weave the thread of our dreams into the design of the Divine Play and not get tangled in the attachments of the world.

Excerpted from "Realities of the Dreaming Mind" by Swami Sivananda Radha

"What is dreaming up this life?"

"What is dreaming up this life? Get in touch with that and you will be in touch with the reality of your innermost self."

-Swami Radha

Please visit our website at www.radha.org for information about the Radha Yoga Centres and Yasodhara Ashram

YOGA CALENDAR

JANUARY 2004

- 9 Friday Night Video
- 16-18 Junior Intermediate III Assessment
in Victoria
- 24 Teacher's Meeting
- 30-Feb 1 Heart of Yoga Workshop

FEBRUARY 2004

- 6 Annual General Meeting
- 14 Backbends workshop
with Marlene Miller
- 14-21 Intermediate Workshop with
Shirley Daventry French in Mexico
- 21-28 Intermediate Workshop with
Shirley Daventry French in Mexico
- 28 Teacher's Meeting

MARCH 2004

- 5 Friday Night Video
- 12-14 Marlene Mawhinney workshop
- 20 Workshop: What and How to
Practice with Leslie Hogya
- 27 Teacher's Meeting

APRIL 2004

- 2 Friday Night Gathering
- 24 Teacher's Meeting

MAY 2004

- 14 Big, Big Practice
- 15 Workshop: Yoga Kurunta
with Ann Kilbertus
- 22 Teacher's Meeting

JUNE 2004

- 4-6 Salt Spring Retreat

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM:

Please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society,
c/o Constance Barker, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3

Membership/Subscription fee is \$32 and renewable each January

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Postal Code: _____ Country: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

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

☐ Receipt Required.

March/April 2004



yoga centre

NEWSLETTER



For the rest of my life
I want to reflect on
what light is.

– Albert Einstein



IYENGAR YOGA

Teacher Training Intensives

July 5-10, 2004

**With Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus
and Linda Benn**

This six-day Intensive will focus on preparing teachers for assessment in Iyengar Yoga at Introductory Level I or II.

Leslie, Ann and Linda are experienced teachers certified at the Junior Intermediate III Level through the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association. They are qualified C.I.Y.T.A. assessors. All three are committed to assisting local and outlying yogis to become skilled Iyengar Yoga teachers. Preference will be given to C.I.Y.T.A. members in recognized Iyengar Yoga teacher training programs.

Fees (incl. GST):

Victoria Yoga Centre members: \$535.00,

Non-members \$567.10

Registration opens February 16, 2004.

To receive the application and registration forms, please contact:

Victoria Yoga Centre, 202-919 Fort Street,
Victoria, BC V8V 3K3

Phone: (250) 386-YOGA (9642)

or Ann: (250) 598-0976,

or Linda: (250) 478-0757

Email Linda: lbenn@islandnet.com

or Ann: stpatrick@entirety.ca

August 16-20, 2004

With Shirley Daventry French

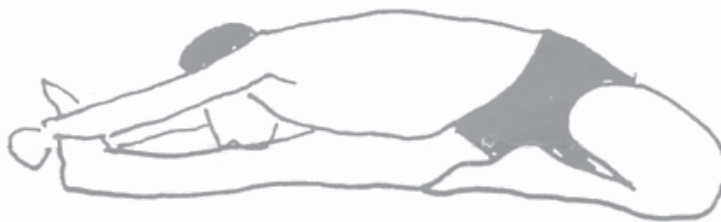
This course is for certified Iyengar Yoga teachers who wish to prepare for assessment at Junior Intermediate Level I, II or III.

Shirley is a long-time student of B.K.S. Iyengar who has awarded her a senior teaching credential. She has been teaching yoga for thirty years and is one of North America's most experienced teachers in the Iyengar tradition. Shirley has been training teachers in Victoria and throughout Canada for many years.

In both Intensives there will be daily classes in asana and pranayama, the art and science of teaching and peer teaching.

As in previous years, Iyengar Yoga teachers from other countries are also invited to apply. C.I.Y.T.A. members will get priority.

Short WORKSHOPS



Inversions

With Gwynneth Powell

Saturday, March 6, 12-3pm

Pre-requisite: Two terms of Level 2 with a good knowledge of Salamba Sarvangasana

Cost: \$45 + GST for members,
\$50 + GST for non-members

What and How to Practice

With Leslie Hogya

Sunday, March 28, 1-3pm

Pre-requisite: At least two terms of Level 1 classes.

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

Yoga Kurunta – Ropes

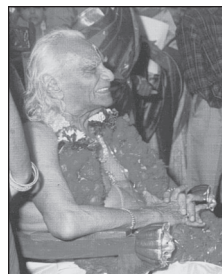
With Ann Kilbertus

Saturday, May 15, 1-3pm

Pre-requisite: At least two terms of Level 1 classes

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

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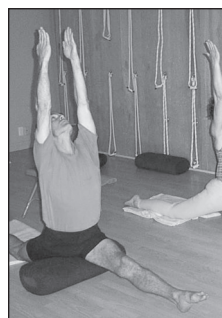
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Friday Night VIDEOS March 5: Movie to be announced

Movies are free and start at 6:45 pm • Bring your own popcorn

Victoria Yoga Centre, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC

Come be inspired by B.K.S. Iyengar



VICTORIA yoga centre NEWSLETTER

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
March 15, 2004

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of B.C., 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 Newsletter, published regularly by the VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY, provides current information on events concerning yoga in the Victoria area and the Yasodhara Ashram.

Send contributions, articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter: 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3. For information on activities and events, call 386-YOGA(9642) or visit our website: www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca.

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The editor/newsletter committee hold the right to publish or edit all articles at their discretion.

"You can acquire knowledge from books, but intelligence can only be earned."

— B.K.S. Iyengar, Pune,
December 2003

Each November, Derek and I spend a week on the west coast of Vancouver Island in a beachside apartment adjacent to Pacific Rim National Park. There, we take long walks, eat leisurely meals, practise yoga, sit and read looking up every now and then to take in the magnificent sweep of beach, the surf, the sunset. The elements can be fierce here, the rain torrential, the winds gale force or more. The apartment has a fire place and supplies of logs, candles and matches for when the power goes out as it often does. We love this place.

Long Beach, as this area is commonly called because of its long stretches of sandy beaches (not to be confused with Long Beach California), faces the open Pacific with the next landfall in Japan. It is not the easiest place to get to, although the true Canadian wilderness adventurer would probably scoff at this statement. By car, the last part of the journey is through a winding hilly narrow road encompassing many hairpin bends, cliffs on one side, steep drop-off on the other. You need to be constantly vigilant. If it's raining, which is not unknown in this region famed for its rainforest, there are waterfalls cascading down the rock faces and flooding the road.

A friend of my husband once had a really nerve racking experience here when his car hydroplaned on this road straight into a lake. At first he thought it was a shallow lake because the car did not sink and seemed to be sitting on the bottom allowing him to clamber out. Once out of the car he found himself in very deep water - literally not figuratively - and had to swim to shore. Shaken and shivering on the bank, he watched as his car suddenly sank and disappeared from view into



SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH WAS AWARDED SENIOR CERTIFICATION FROM B.K.S. IYENGAR. SHE HAS BEEN TEACHING SINCE 1972 AND FOUNDED THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE IN 1976. SHIRLEY LIVES IN VICTORIA AND TEACHES WORLDWIDE.

one thousand feet of water!

Directly after our trip to Long Beach, I would be leaving for Hong Kong and India. As the time approached I was feeling overwhelmed with work and decided that rather than drive with Derek I would fly there a few days later. Not many airlines fly from Victoria to Tofino in November so it required an extensive search to find a

flight. Then the day before I was to leave I came home to find a message that this airline had gone into bankruptcy. There would be no flight. Determined to go I searched again until I found another small airline which could take me.

On the day of departure the weather was terrible with rain, wind and thick fog and I wondered if we would be able to take off. The man who checked me in and took my baggage cheerfully assured me we would. A little later this same man led myself and five others out to board a very small plane, a Piper Navaho which could carry six passengers. As we climbed aboard this man enquired if any of us had flown in such a plane before, and no-one had. Then one passenger asked him if he had. When he answered no and proceeded to sit in the co-pilot's seat, I had a moment of unease as I thought to myself: I hope at least the pilot has flown this type of plane before! The passengers exchanged uncertain glances, and then we took off.

Despite the weather and the fact that most of the journey was over mountain ranges, it turned out to be an excellent flight with little turbulence. The magnificent scenery was obscured, but fortunately the pilot or his instruments saw enough to bring the plane down very smoothly on a short landing strip which was not visible to my naked eye. Once

there it was worth all the trouble and expense to spend the next few days resting, reflecting, reading and readying myself to teach in Hong Kong and travel on to India to celebrate my Guru's eighty-fifth birthday.

One of the particular delights of the west coast of Vancouver Island is the pristine air, full of negative ions, which invigorate body and mind and uplift the spirit. Each day I greedily inhaled hoping it would sustain my lungs to cope with the polluted air I would soon be breathing in Asia.

The difficulties I had with my flight to Tofino were a precursor of an obstacle strewn path to Pune.

I returned home with one day to pack and organise for my trip. Confident that everything was under control I commenced packing taking time out for lunch with my son and a visit with my youngest grandchild. Early that day I found I did not have the photocopy of my passport that I usually carry as a precaution. Derek volunteered to go out and take care of this so I could concentrate on packing. Late afternoon when we returned from lunch at our son's there was a message on the telephone saying that my passport had been left in the store where it was photo-copied. They were open until 4 o'clock. It was then 5.30 pm. The store was now closed until Monday morning.

Derek and I have dual nationality. "Well," he said pragmatically, "you can use your British passport." Fine, excepting that my Canadian passport contained my Indian Visa. There followed an emotionally charged evening of searching for ways to overcome this problem culminating in establishing contact with the store owners who graciously came out on a cold wet evening, opened their store and returned my passport. I was ready to go.

The journey to Hong Kong the following day was trouble free, but when I arrived my suitcase was damaged and unusable and I had to buy a new one. What next, I wondered?

Towards the end of my teaching in Hong Kong I began to think about organising myself for the ongoing journey to India. Looking through my documents I saw that I had not been assigned a seat for the flight from Hong Kong to Mumbai, so I phoned



Thai Airways and gave them my file number only to learn my entire itinerary had been cancelled. Impossible, I told them. Just two days ago Air Canada had phoned me with a time change. The file was obviously active then. Since my ticket had been issued by Air Canada, Thai Air was not prepared to do anything at all. Neither was Air Canada's Hong Kong office who said I would have to phone Canada, and there ensued two days of telephone calls, most of them long distance and at an inconvenient hour as I tried to find out what had happened and, more important, to get my flights reinstated.

At midnight the day before I was due to leave, Air Canada informed me that they had managed to get me on flights to India but not out of it. At 8 am on the day of departure I learned I could get a flight out of India two days' earlier than I had planned. Given the proximity to Christmas and not wanting to spend it in Mumbai airport, I decided to take these flights.

While all this had been going on, I had asked myself several times if these difficulties were portents that I should stop all this travelling and stay home. Perhaps, I wondered, I am getting too old for all this! Ironical when you consider that my onward journey to India was to celebrate my teacher's eighty-fifth birthday! At one point in Hong Kong I was so frustrated I considered abandoning the ongoing trip and returning to Canada. Who needs all this aggravation?

Thank God I dismissed that idea. A spiritual gift is of incalculable worth, and such a gift awaited me. To attain such a gift

Gururji receiving salutations and bestowing blessings at a Puja on December 6th marking the start of weeklong rituals culminating in his 85th birthday on December 14th.



December 14th Birthday Ceremony

*What, I wonder,
is it like to be
at that place
where so few,
if anyone,
can really grasp
the full depth
of your teaching?*

demands sacrifice, effort, inconvenience, facing challenges and removing or circumventing obstacles.

The late Swami Vivekananda, told us to discard everything which weakens us. It is not always easy to discriminate between that which weakens and that which will strengthen us. Sleep deprivation weakens us. Air travel weakens us. Stress weakens us. Breathing polluted air weakens us. It is a question of balance. Waiting for me in Pune was what Swami Radha called “a pearl beyond price”. Knowing this, I persevered in getting myself out of Hong Kong and on to a plane for India.

Contrary to the myth perpetuated in the West that yoga will make you feel better, look better, live better without any discomfort or upheaval, anyone who cares to read spiritual texts or biographies of spiritual leaders and teachers will find a recital of hardship, deprivation, supreme difficulty. My recent journey hardly falls into this category: my difficulties in unraveling the cancellation of my itinerary were being handled in the very comfortable home of two longtime friends, albeit having to be attended to at the same time as a demanding teaching schedule. This incident also involved some loss of sleep to contact airline agents in Canada late at night and early morning Hong Kong time. It was not how I had envisioned ending my two weeks there, but yoga teaches us to deal with life as it comes and not get carried away with visions of how it should be.

It was as long ago as last July, knowing I would be in Hong Kong in November, that I decided to travel on to Pune. I enquired whether any special events were being planned for Guruji’s eighty-fifth birthday, but no-one knew of anything out of the ordinary. Every December B.K.S. Iyengar’s birthday is observed and celebrated at the Institute, but some birthdays are more auspicious than others and there had been special events on his sixtieth, seventieth, seventy-fifth and eightieth birthdays. No matter, I decided to go anyway in gratitude for all he has given me, and because I wanted to be in his presence again. I also welcomed the chance to take classes from Geeta and Prashant and attend the morning

practice at the Institute where one of the highlights is that, if he is in town, Guruji will be practising at the same time. This is all part of the inspirational package of a visit to Pune.

My plans were already set in motion when news came from Pune of a special one-week course to be taught by Guruji. The festivities began on December 6th with a special Puja where Guruji sat on a platform surrounded by his family while priests chanted prayers and mantras and led him through sacrificial rituals involving fire, smoke and a ritual bath with consecrated water. The auditorium was packed with pupils, local, national and international. After the bath, which took place outside the hall, we all had the opportunity to receive Guruji’s blessing and then we were served lunch. It is always amazing to me in India, where it can take days to change an airline booking or (as I once discovered) hours to pick up a registered letter at the post office, they can provide and serve a nutritious meal for many hundreds of people speedily with aplomb.

On December 8th the course itself began. Guruji taught each morning for three hours and many times would have continued had it not been that we, his students, were unable to absorb any more. We were not working physically hard. A dozen pupils, most of them Indian, were on a platform where individually and in groups they received guidance from a master whose own practice has taken him to the zenith of yoga. We sat, watched, listened, our senses on full alert; and when he saw our attention beginning to falter he ended that session. What, I wonder, is it like to be at that place where so few, if anyone, can really grasp the full depth of your teaching? His daughter Geeta and his son Prashant, Guruji’s foremost disciples, are master teachers in their own right, way beyond the rest of us, but they would be the first to acknowledge the gap between them and their father.

A few years ago during an intensive taught by Geeta, she told us to pay attention to Guruji with all our faculties because we would not see his like again for hundreds of years. If there were any doubts about this statement, they would have been dispelled by attending this course. It was simply brilliant, as Guruji demonstrated the use of asana as a spiritual

tool to refine body and mind to go beyond body and mind. As he told us one day: “Spiritual practice in asana is when all the various links are in contact with Atma.”

Each evening, Prashant went over the morning's work for the benefit of those who were unable to be present in the morning, but also for the benefit of those of us who had been there. Guruji is mercurial and taught so much so fast, laced with sanskrit quotations and references to spiritual texts, that it was really helpful to go over the material again. For each day I have two sets of notes plus CDs to guide my practice and help me unravel the mystery of consciousness.

The first evening began with an unexpected visit (at least to those of us in the audience) from T.K.V. Desikachar, the son of Guruji's guru, T. Krishnamacharya, and a noted teacher in his own right. Sri Desikachar had travelled to Pune from

Prashant spoke of his dilemma in trying to portray the concepts Guruji was trying to get us to grasp, the fruit of seventy years of dedicated and intense sadhana.

Chennai (Madras) with a group of his students for the purpose of honouring Guruji. They had prepared a special chant for the occasion, and Desikachar and his son spoke warmly and appreciatively of Guruji's immense contribution to yoga as well as their family connection. Krishnamacharya's wife was Guruji's sister; therefore Desikachar is Guruji's nephew. It was a delightful interlude.

Each morning the level of Guruji's teaching was such that it cannot nor

should be regurgitated before being thoroughly digested, and that is a process which requires time. One evening Prashant spoke of his dilemma in trying to portray the concepts Guruji was trying to get us to grasp, the fruit of seventy years of dedicated and intense sadhana. He did not know, he said, whether to laugh or cry and likened himself to a lame dwarf at the foothills of Mount Everest. He told us: “A lame dwarf is going to guide you to the pinnacle of Everest”; and we laughed with him although we had trust in our guide. Of course, it was difficult and challenging for Prashant but he did a very fine job. I have been going back and forth between the notes I made in the morning when Guruji was teaching and the notes of Prashant's evening presentation, and the latter are helping me better understand the former.

As he concluded his presentation, Guruji told us that although the session was concluding, the subject matter is inconclusive. Drawing as he was from seventy years of experience, he found it impossible to cover the gamut of each asana in so short a period. “How many years did I have to wait for that light to flash on me?” And he drew a laugh when he pointed out that there is a gap between his sadhana and some of his pupils making it difficult for him! He also warned us that whereas he is first and foremost a student, many of his students are teachers and no longer students and this failure is visible to him. He had tried to build us up and reminded us that soul has no age, so you can always rectify what should not have been done. And for good measure, he added that nobody there was older than him so he could say this with force. Amen Guruji!

On December 14th we had a final gathering to celebrate Guruji's actual birthday according to the universal calendar. With Zubin Zartoshtimanesh acting as master of ceremonies, those who had been on the platform with Guruji

garlanded him with their words of appreciation, and longtime Pune student Colly Dastur garlanded him with flowers. After beautiful tributes to their father and Guru from Geeta and Prashant, Guruji himself came on the platform to address us. My eyes filled with tears as he defined the lineage by acknowledging his Guru, Krishnamacharya as the seed and himself as the shoot which has bifurcated into two strong branches represented by Geeta and Prashant.

I am so grateful that the Divine once again gave me the chance to be in class with my teacher. On the first day, after an introductory talk, as Guruji stripped down to his shorts and began to teach, it was as if twenty-five years fell away and he was as I remember him from my first class in Pune. This was not an old man but an ageless and immortal teacher, an incarnation of Patanjali – and I felt so blessed to be there. ॐ



Friday Night Gathering

APRIL 2

Asana practice: 6:30 pm

Potluck dinner: 7:30 pm

Showing of “Samadhi”

– a 20 minute video of Gurujii

Bring food to share

Everybody is welcome to join us.

Bring a friend, your partner
or a family member.

By donation, free for members.

Victoria Yoga Centre,
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC

An Interview with Geetaji: Part IV

Following Dr Geeta S. Iyengar's European Tour in April and May 2002, Judith Jones interviewed her for Iyengar Yoga News (UK) on 25th August 2002 in the library of the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, India. In this final installment of the interview Geetaji talks about Ayurveda and about women. Thank you to IYN and to Geetaji for kindly granting us permission to reprint it here.

Do you think that yoga practice and ayurveda are incompatible with Western medicine?

Geetaji: No! Undoubtedly, they are different branches. We have to respect Western medicine, respect yoga also, and respect *ayurveda* as well. I would say, when all these three subjects come together, they can bring a wonderful result. It could do wonders. But if this has to happen all the three branches have to be studied by all in order to do the research work. They should do yoga, they should go for *ayurveda*, and know modern medicine as well. If these three subjects come together I think it will be a great blessing to human kind. But separately we develop only one side of it and that is why the problem comes. Then it appears as though one is against the other two.

The doctors think only in the line of conventional Western medicine and medical science. The science of yoga is one of self-experience. To accept yoga one necessarily needs to practise it, but doctors don't want to find out what yoga does, and if they are doctors of *ayurveda*, they don't know about medical science and yogic science. They want to go in their own way. If they are a yoga practitioner, they don't know about either medical science or *ayurveda* and they want to go in their own way. But I think as far as Guruji is



Geetaji

PHOTO: NANCY BLECK & SUSAN STEWART

"Now medical science is accepting certain household medicines. For instance it is now agreed that turmeric powder is good for cancer, ayurveda knew it from the very beginning."

concerned, though he is not a medical practitioner or an ayurvedic doctor, still being a yoga practitioner he is always open for all these things.

Suppose if you are having a problem, you are taking the medicine, he has tried

to find out how to get rid of the side effects of these medicines. If you are trying to control your problems or disease with medicines, he knows up to what level the yoga can be taught. For instance you are controlling your high blood pressure with medication, he will remind all the teachers that you being a patient of high blood pressure controlled with medication what precautions have to be taken. He will try to see how it will be controlled through the practice. He doesn't say to stop the medicines. On the contrary he will say that if you are taking medicines what and how much to do. As you begin to feel better and light, and no longer getting palpitations or symptoms such as heavy perspiration, dizziness etc, he asks you to reduce the medication and increase yogic doses. As the pressure becomes normal, medicine is no longer required. Through yogic practice you mend.

There are certain good concepts in *ayurveda* also which are universally applicable, such as the three humours of the body. If modern medical science can pick up and apply that, it may help them to improve their own science. Now medical science is accepting certain household medicines. For instance it is now agreed that turmeric powder is good for cancer, *ayurveda* knew it from the very beginning. That is how USA wants to patent these substances.

Instead of patenting - making money, holding, possessing - instead of thinking on that line, why not say, "We are all possessors for the knowledge which exists in this work for human upliftment." Do we not have a right to have the knowledge for the good of everyone?

This is how the word *veda* also has come. *Veda* means **to know**. The *vedas* are not books. Later, they came in book form. *Veda* is the ocean of knowledge, which was always existing. *Vedas* do not belong to any particular sect, caste or religion. The word Hinduism is not found in any of the *vedas*. First of all understand this fact. There is no word called Hinduism or Hindu in Vedic literature. Vedic literature speaks about whole humanity.

Universal truth?

Geetaji: Yes - absolutely. It is universal truth. It is called as *Sanatana Dharma* - the eternal religion. Its eternity is meant for this eternal world. The *vedas* believe that the whole world is one family. Can you imagine the idea coming in those days? But still they have said *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*. The whole earth, the world is one family. Why did the idea come? Do you mean to say that the vedic rishis considered India as the whole world? Vasudha is earth, our planet. The whole earth is one family. If that idea has to occur, do you mean to say they were not knowing this whole world? It's only the question of Sanskrit language. It's not even Sanskrit. Vedic language is not Sanskrit. It is called *girvanabhasha* - the language of the God. *Girvana* means God and *bhasha* means language. The script too is called *Devanagari* - script of God. This means the knowledge that comes is coming from some higher energy. In this sense Sanskrit is the origin of other languages.

If suddenly something strikes me, like it struck Newton to say that an apple coming down means some energy is pulling that apple down. Why did no one think about it and yet he could? He could

think about it. Do you mean to say the apples were not falling before him? But his thinking process began to think, "why did it come down?" It occurred to him that something is getting pulled. The word "gravitation" appeared later. He called it as gravitational force. Do you mean to say there was a language first which called it gravity, or gravitational force and then Newton found it?

The language developed as the knowledge came. So the knowledge comes, the language develops. When you begin to understand something, you develop the language. Yoga was existing before Patanjali but it was scattered in several scriptures. But Patanjali developed the language. He codified it. In this sense, Patanjali too was a scientist. He did a lot of experiments and research work to put the whole of yogic science in the sutra form.

Therefore, we human beings of developed intelligence should not reject the subject just because it belongs to a foreign language. For me if English is a foreign language, to you Sanskrit is foreign language. But the subject matter is meant for mankind.

So if *Ayurveda*, Western medicine, yoga, come together they can do wonders. We should not be ignorant of it or make it an ego problem. If you take that earlier question regarding yoga for Indian and European women, it comes from our own ego. To say that "oh I am an Indian woman, you are a European woman." Does it make any sense? We are the same! Our problems are same. All of us want health. All of us want happiness. It is only our culture, outer appearance, language,

"The vedas believe that the whole world is one family."

and nationality that might be making a few differences. Do you remember I said the clouds are the same everywhere? You don't say this is an Indian cloud and that is an English cloud, no chance, it is impossible! The clouds are the same! The sky is same. So there is no difference. We only have to look into it. In which way we are treating through modern medical science, in which way we are treating through *Ayurveda*, and in which way we are treating through yoga. Now, the recent progress is that doctors have begun to recommend yoga. They say that when you have a heart problem, and when you have diseases like cancer or you have high blood pressure - do some yoga and meditation. Still this statement comes from ignorance though yoga is recognised. What is yoga and what is meditation? Are they two separate things? These two words are used as two separate methods. Is meditation something different from yoga? Then how did these two words come into existence - yoga and meditation? Yoga includes meditation.

I would like to say that yoga has to be the whole life style. Apart from the medicinal treatment on diseases, *Ayurveda* has to be known since it has its own value which categorises the human constitution very clearly and distinctly based on three humours namely *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* as well as three qualities *sattva*, *rajas* and

"We are the same! Our problems are same. All of us want health. All of us want happiness. It is only our culture, outer appearance, language, and nationality that might be making a few differences."



"... in the countries like Europe and America, in spite of having the same religion or the same background, there is a difference between the status of the women."

tamas. No other science has given this distinct constitution. Western medicine has made a great progress in the field of medicines and surgery. The subjective knowledge of yoga and *Ayurveda*, if intermingled properly with the objective knowledge of western medical science, can do wonders for human beings.

When teaching Indian and European women do you perceive any differences in their needs?

G **cetaji:** There are two ways to look at this question. All women have the same problems. Women's psychology is the same everywhere. As far as the lifestyle is concerned there are differences based on culture and custom. The Indian lifestyle, European or American lifestyle are changing and when you compare from one country to another you do find the lifestyles changing. As the environment changes, the requirements of the human being too change. This creates problems that may seem to be different and separate, but when you go to the root of the problems they are the same. Emotional problems, ageing problems, physical problems, for all women such problems are very similar.

But to some extent, as I say, the social norms and environmental conditions differ, even in the countries like Europe and America, in spite of having the same religion or the same background, there is a

difference between the status of the women. There is a difference as far as their freedom is concerned. In a similar manner, the Indian way of life might be showing some changes, but as far as women are concerned there is no difference. Women's problems are the same. So, while teaching yoga, I would say the question of the cultural background has to be considered.

For a long time when the country was not having Independence Indian women were under social pressure and stress. A fear complex was always present, though hidden. Now the women are coming out, there are quite a few women now who will boldly declare "We are doing yoga." But, in 1961, when I was practising yoga, very few women came forward to do yoga. When Guruji started in '36, some women preferred to learn from him because he was a young boy. They didn't want to learn from elderly men because they were shy and afraid to learn from men. They preferred an innocent boy to a grown-up man. Now, in modern times, you don't find 16 year old boys innocent anymore.

When I started teaching only a few women would come forward to learn. I had to go to their homes to teach, they never came out of their house to learn. If at all they wanted to learn they would take me to their bedroom to teach so nobody looks at them to see what they are doing, how they are doing. Dress was a big problem then, now it is not. Gradually the women started to form groups so they

could come together and learn: So like this the changes are occurring.

In Western countries women had much freedom. They could choose to follow any field of interest. They could pick up games. They had not to worry about dress. In this way Western women had much more freedom than Indian women.

Sometimes freedom makes one to lose sensitivity. Often the freedom is misused. Women should recognise their femininity, it has its own beauty and own vigour. They should not lose the femininity under the influence of freedom. If we recognise the quality of womanhood, I don't think there has to be any difference between Eastern and Western women. Basically we should not compare ourselves with men, rather we have to recognise our own potency, our own potential femininity. If we say that we are equal to men and that we can do everything that they do, then we lose our self-identity. There are certain things which as women we can do better than men and there are certain things that only they should do. Women now are exposed to wrestling, weightlifting, bodybuilding and so on. I'm not against it. Women are entering in every field and perhaps it is appreciated also. But still I feel on the other hand that we should recognise our own inner identity. I would call it a beauty. It's not the external body beauty, but it is femininity. We have to protect our femininity as men are protecting their masculinity. So this I would definitely say, that in yoga practice I have to make Indian ladies to come out of their shyness, timidity and fear complex. They

"Basically we should not compare ourselves with men, rather we have to recognise our own potency, our own potential femininity."

stick to their femininity, thinking that these are the qualities of femininity, and don't want to come out. In Western countries, women are courageous but want to equate themselves with men, consequently they are getting more exposed to masculinity than to their own femininity. I would say that Indian women should begin to pick up qualities such as vigour and courage and add to their femininity, and Western women should drop masculinity. Women have to be non-aggressively active. They should be calm having positive tolerance. Negative tolerance kills their individuality. Submission is a negative tolerance. In other words I think it is a question of balance. It is not a question of argument but a kind of balance both ways, so, if a woman is going towards masculinity I would say come back to femininity and if she is going too much towards femininity she should develop more masculine qualities. Take for instance if we lose the hormonal balance and that begins to show its changes on the outside, are we not afraid at that time? We definitely feel nervous if hormonal changes occur and lead us from femininity to masculinity when we don't want to. So this functional physiological problem shakes our psychology. Then it is only our duty to protect. While teaching yoga I perceive this point mainly. I don't want the performance of Western women going in a masculine way and I don't want Indian women to go in an unbalanced feminine way either. Men use their physical strength to perform *asana* or *pranayama*. Therefore their performance has a tinge of aggressiveness and ego. They should have the emotional feeling in practice. Women have to build up physical strength with out losing their emotional connection. They should not lose their softness. Indian women are soft, but their softness should not be at the cost of strength, and Western women are strong but they should not lose softness - stubbornness and sturdiness should be minimised.

"Women in Western countries, become nervous of menopause. Their problem of nervousness is quite different from the same problem for women in India, who too become nervous."

There is one more point. If the people are regularly in front of you, you are able to teach them with continuity, it is different to the situation when you go from place to place and teach them just for a few days, then you may find the difference in teaching. If I am coming to UK just to teach for four days, obviously my method of teaching has to change because in four days I have to convey and give maximum to both men and women. That teaching depends on what they have practised, what they have learnt. But when I have to teach only women, that too on a continuous basis, I will certainly see that the approach will be more feminine. On the whole I won't say that Indian women and Western women are different since their problems are the same. My teaching will be the same but I would certainly see which group lacks what and what sort of changes are required in teaching so that they are benefited.

The cultural difference sometimes projects the problem in a different way. For instance the menopause stage in women's life. Women in Western countries, become nervous of menopause. Their problem of nervousness is quite different from the same problem for women in India, who too become nervous. Quite a few Western women who tell me that now they are approaching menopause are afraid that their men may divorce them. The fear

that the family may break, that the husband may begin to dislike the wife and lose interest in her makes her situation worse. It's a fact which happens and there are quite a few whose family has been broken. The men chose younger women, whereas in India this is very rare to happen. This kind of fear may not exist. But, as far as the physiological, psychological and emotional problems are concerned all women are undergoing the same changes.

So when you are asking me the question about teaching Indian women and European women, as far as their need is concerned, there is no difference. Everybody faces some sort of pain and problem. Women's responsibilities, do not differ as such. Every woman faces menstruation and pregnancy. When they have to get married they are not sure whether the person they have chosen is right or wrong. It is a different type of emotional problem along with the fear complex. So I don't think as far as that is concerned there is any difference as such, but as far as the environment, family life, social life is concerned there is a difference. Therefore one needs to change one's mental set-up. The mental deliberation needs to be gravitating towards yogic culture. The yogic method does not differ whether one is an Easterner or a Westerner. For every woman there is the household work and

"I always feel that when they do some of the asanas and pranayamas they feel mentally peaceful, they get some inner strength and moral courage to face the world."

worries, there is always the responsibility in the house. You have to look after everyone, you have to take care of family members. Even if you are all alone, not married or divorced, you have to take care of yourself. You have to cook yourself, you have to get organised yourself, everything is there. If you have a family you have to look after the others also. The needs of women are similar, as the problems are. It is true that one cannot break the social norms or religious barriers easily, but one can adopt a yogic method to establish inner peace. I always feel that when they do some of the asanas and pranayamas they feel mentally peaceful, they get some inner strength and moral courage to face the world. If that happens whichever country you belong to, which religion you belong to, the question doesn't arise. Then women are safe. For

me, when I look in that way I feel, they can be safe. They can protect themselves.

When emotionally distressed the Western women immediately express themselves, whereas Indian women may not express their emotions so suddenly.

So do you think Western women are more emotional?

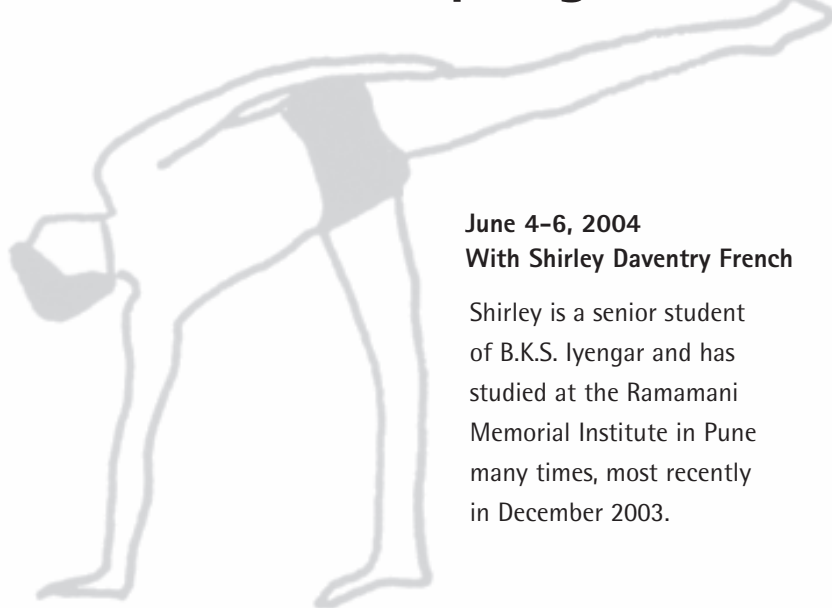
Geetaji: I won't say they are more emotional. Indians have more emotional tolerance compared to Western women.

Westerners express the emotions quickly and for Indian women it may take a little longer time to express. They want to hide these kind of problems to a great extent or solve them by pacifying themselves. Then they may come and tell but certainly they won't instantly say, "Oh! This is what

happened to me." But when it is unbearable then they will say, "OK, now I will tell you that this is what happened to me." But that doesn't make the problem to get diluted. Fundamentally the problem remains the same. So I will say that if they come to yoga, whether this group or that group, to whichever culture they belong to, it helps them, because emotional stability gives some courage to them, they build up their nerves to face all these problems.

Westerners are physically strong whereas Indian women will not be that strong. However emotionally they are strong. I think that both have to exchange this physical and emotional energy to have a perfect balance. Intellectually they are quite balanced. ॐ

The 20th Annual Retreat at the Saltspring Centre



**June 4-6, 2004
With Shirley Daventry French**

Shirley is a senior student of B.K.S. Iyengar and has studied at the Ramamani Memorial Institute in Pune many times, most recently in December 2003.



Registration will open for paid VYC members on March 15, 2004. If there are any spaces left, non-members may register by March 22, 2004.

Members' Price: \$325 for shared accommodation in the house,
\$285 to camp,
\$255 for commuters.

Non-members: Add \$30 to the prices above.

All prices include GST.

For more information please contact
Linda Benn at the Victoria Yoga Centre,
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K3
phone: (250) 386-YOGA (9642)
email: lbenn@islandnet.com



In our mailbox

Dear Leslie (office manager):

Given my line of work and my own nature, I have a fascination in watching interactions between people, whether it be at the airport, the train station, or the lobby of the Victoria Yoga Centre. In the latter instance, I am often amazed at the tact, the skill, and the warmth, with which your front desk staff deal with the myriad personalities they encounter, either on the phone, or in person.

As I'm sure they could tell you, they have probably encountered a large portion of the personality spectrum. It never ceases to amaze me how polite, helpful, and efficient they are, regardless of the individual with whom they are dealing.

As the "front line person," they are often the ones that give the first impression of the Yoga Centre, or the ones who can receive the brunt of an individual's angst. I've watched them trying to accomplish an update on the computer, answer the phone, and then have two individuals approach them at the desk and start talking at the same time. Your staff take it all in stride, and seem to do it with style and grace.

I just thought it worth letting you know.

– Michael Blades (A forever introductory 1 student)

To the Victoria Yoga Centre,

... This is a very special place and I feel so fortunate to be going to school in Victoria so I can take yoga at this wonderful centre! I honestly don't know what I'd do without it. Thank you for sharing the path of yoga with me... and the community.

– Nina Coverdale

Dear Editor,

How about a lesson in Sanskrit in the newsletter. I think if I knew the breakdown of the asana names then it would give me clues on what pose went with what name.

Thanks for the consideration.

– Diane Brubaker

Dear Diane,

Thank you for your suggestion. You have inspired us to do just that. Hope the article in this issue is helpful to you.

– G. Powell, Editor



Congratulations Christine and Bon Voyage!

Chris Dimofski has taken a new job and is relocating to Vancouver. We are all sad to see her go but I am very happy and excited for her as she moves on.

Three years ago I began working with Chris as her training teacher. Over these years I have witnessed her grow from a new teacher-in-training to a mature teacher and peer at our centre. Chris's official completion of the three year Iyengar Yoga Teacher Training program was recently honoured and she was presented with an enabling letter.

Chris engages well with her students – her ready smile and quiet confidence have encouraged many. She will remain a member of our teacher's group and will be back for those monthly meetings to maintain a connection with the community that has helped her foster much growth and maturity. I have enjoyed, and will continue to value, our association on this yogic journey.

Christine, I wish you all the best in your upcoming assessment this spring.

With love and light, Lauren Cox



SUMMER SADHANAS

"Sadhana" is a Sanskrit term which means dedicated practice or quest.

This Summer we will be offering a selection of 90 minute practices for six to nine days in a row.

June 28-July 3 (6 days)
July 5-10 (6 days)
August 23-31 (9 days)

Times for the Sadhanas: 6:30-8:00 am

See next issue for more details

Sanskrit Made Simple

– a study of asana names

by Marie Roulleau & Gwynneth Powell*

Can't quite tell *Urdhva Mukha Paschimottanasana* apart from *Prasarita Padottanasana*? Not sure what to do when the teacher calls for *Karnapidasana*? Not clearly visualising *Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana*? Fear not, help is on the way...

Two things will make identification of *asanas* (poses) easier. First you must know that those long Sanskrit words are in fact like strings of pearls. For example, *Urdhva Mukha Paschimottanasana* has 5 words in it: *Urdhva* (upward), *Mukha* (face), *Paschima* (West or backside of the body), *Uttana* (intense), *Asana* (pose). Learning to identify the smaller words within the long name makes it easier not only to recognize but also to start to pronounce. The second thing is that in English (as well as other languages) we use words that are distant cousins to Sanskrit.

LANGUAGES

The languages of the western world have developed from one original tongue. No written record exists of this mother tongue, but strong similarities between words in different western languages, called Indo-European languages, point to a common origin.

MARIE ROLLEAU IS A LONG-TIME STUDENT AT THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE AND MEMBER OF OUR SOCIETY. GWYNNETH POWELL IS CERTIFIED IN THE IYENGAR METHOD AND LIVES IN VICTORIA. SHE HAS BEEN TEACHING SINCE 1999, IS AN EDITOR ON THE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE AND LIAISON TO THE BOARD.

The oldest languages of the Indo-European family are Sanskrit (2000 B.C.), Greek (800 B.C.) and Latin (500 B.C.) French is a direct descendant of Latin, and about half of English words come from French. The Anglo-Saxon

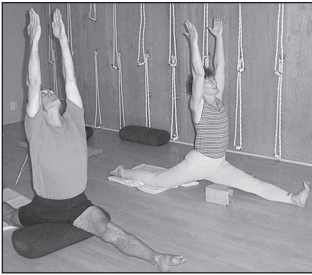
side of English, related to German, is also part of the big Indo-European family.

One day in yoga class I understood a very obvious link. The teacher said that *janu* meant *knee*. I recognised this immediately because in my mother tongue, French, the word for knee is *genou*, and is similarly pronounced like *janu*. In the Glossary of *Light on Yoga* I saw another strong connection.

Mrta is Sanskrit for dead or corpse. In French, *mort* means death or dead and then goes on into English to show up again in *mortuary* (a place for the dead).

THE NAMES OF ASANAS

The names of asanas are most commonly from four categories: anatomy, animals, sages and deities, and objects. Additionally, names of poses are further broken down into numbers and characteristics of the pose. As we get acquainted with some of these basic translations within the asana, then the longer names of asanas start to become decipherable.



Hanuman made great leaps across the ocean to find Rama's beloved Sita and then again to save his brother Lakshmana. In Hanumanasana the legs are stretched apart like one is making a great leap.

* With the assistance of Paul Sobejko who compiled a comprehensive list of Sanskrit yoga terms relating to asana from *Light on Yoga* (B.K.S. Iyengar, 1966) and *Yoga for Children* (Swati and Rajiv Chanchani, 1995).

ANATOMY:

1. Pada: foot/leg (pied in French means foot, while pedestrian in English denotes someone on foot)
2. Hasta: hand
3. Anguli: fingers
4. Anghusta: big toe
5. Janu: knee
6. Sirsa: head
7. Mukha: face
8. Karna: ear
9. Jattara: stomach
10. Anga: limb
11. Bhuja: arm
12. Sarvanga: whole body
13. Sava: corpse
14. Prana: breath/ life force
15. Paschima: west direction (back side of body)

16. Purva: east direction (front side of body)

ANIMALS:

- Svana: dog
Bheka: frog
Baka: crow
Ustra: camel
Go: cow
Bhujanga: snake/ serpent
Kapota: pidgeon/ dove
Kurma: turtle
Matsya: fish
Shalabha: locust/ grasshopper

OBJECTS:

1. Parigha: gate latch
2. Hala: plough
3. Vrksa: tree
4. Tola: scales
5. Tada: mountain

6. Setu: bridge
7. Nava: boat
8. Mudra: seal
9. Dhanu: bow
10. Danda: rod/ staff
11. Chandra: moon
12. Vira: hero
14. Asana: pose/ posture

NUMBERS:

1. Eka: one
2. Dwi: two, both (*dwa* in Polish, pronounced dva)
3. Tri: three (*trios* in French)
4. Chatur: four (*cztery* in Polish, pronounced ch-terry)
5. Ashta: eight

CHARACTERISTICS:

1. Adho: downward
2. Urdva: raised/upward
3. Utthita: extended, stretched.
4. Parivrtta: revolved
5. Baddha: tied/bound
6. Supta: reclining/sleeping
- 7: Uttana: intense stretch
8. Sthiti: stability
9. Upavistha: seated
10. Prasrita: spread out
11. Ardha: half
12. Salamba: with support
13. Nirlamba: without support
14. Kona: angle
15. Pida: pressure

SAGES AND DEITIES: **

1. Bharadva: a sage; also the father of famous archer, Drona, who trained the cousins who would later become rivals and fight the famous war that the Bhagavad-Gita was written about.
2. Garuda: was the king of the eagles; Garuda once provided transportation and carried Lord Vishnu to the aid of devotee Gajendra, who was in a life threatening situation.
3. Marichi: son of Brahma and grandfather of Surya the sun god.
4. Matsyendra: Lord of the Fishes; Shiva discovered a fish, who had completely learned his teachings of yoga. Shiva gave him divine form to then spread the knowledge of yoga.
5. Surya: Sun god
6. Virabhadra: the great warrior who sprang to Shiva's aid to seek revenge on his father-in-law.
7. Nataraja: one of the names of Shiva, the lord of the dance.
8. Hanuman: chief of the monkey army; one of Rama's greatest devotees who came to his aid. Hanuman made huge leaps across the sea- first to find Sita and then to save Rama's brother. ॐ

** There are some great stories of the sages and deities in *Light on Yoga*. For example, to find out more about the sage Virabhadra, look up the pose *Virabhadrasana* in the index, the history of that sage will be within the first variation of that pose *Virabhadrasana I* (and so forth for *Bharadva*, *Hanuman*, etc). For even more research on Indian sages and deities, find a translation of *The Mahabharata* (one of the great epics, in which the *Bhagavad-Gita* is contained).



Name
that
Pose

QUIZ

- a. three angle pose: _____
- b. reclining bound angle pose: _____
- c. the pose where you take your head to one knee; or where you stretch the head of the other knee: _____
- d. the pose where you hold the body stiff like a rod, with only your four limbs touching the floor (downward push-up position):

- e. downward face dog pose: _____
- f. the pose where you put pressure on the ears: _____
- g. the pose where the whole body is supported: _____
- h. headstand or head balance: _____
- i. one leg out to the side in supported shoulderstand:

- j. spreading the feet intensely pose: _____

(Answers on page 20)

Marlene Mawhinney

An all levels Workshop March 12-14, 2004

Marlene Mawhinney is one of Canada's most experienced teachers. Director of Yoga Centre Toronto, chair of the Professional Development Committee of the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association, Marlene has been to India to study many times and brings a depth of understanding to her teaching.

Times: Friday, 6:30 - 8:30pm,
Saturday, 10:30am -1:30pm,
3:00-5:00pm,
Sunday, 10:30am -1:30pm

Cost: Members \$175 + GST,
non-members \$205 + GST

Registration opens:
January 19 for members,
January 26 for non-members

Register at:
Victoria Yoga Centre
#202-919 Fort St.,
Victoria, BC V8V 3K3
Phone: (250) 386-YOGA (9642),
www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$10 cancellation fee.

Light on Questions

by Ty Chandler

Dear Ty,
I am a level 2 student at the Victoria Centre and
am curious about when it is appropriate for me
to move to the next level?

Thanks, Michelle.

These are the basic guidelines that the teachers at the VYC follow, but of course the student should consult with their teacher before moving to another level. I have compiled input from many teachers and will describe the classes from the Introductory Course through to Level 4.

The Introductory Course is four weeks long and is for those people who are new to Iyengar Yoga. The level is the same as in Level 1 class, and the course is offered for students who just want to try Iyengar style yoga, who may not be able to commit to eight weeks of classes, or who start halfway through a term.

Level 1 class is for all level of students with no previous experience of Iyengar Yoga. In Level 1, mobility is being gained and a sense of where the body is in space is being defined. It is recommended that the student take this course two to three times with at least two different teachers. The student should talk with their teacher when they are feeling they may want to move on.

You can go on to Level 2 classes when you understand the basic alignment of the standing poses, are stable in the standing poses (lifting the kneecaps regularly), and feel you could be challenged to hold the pose longer. You know how to set up for shoulder stand (*Sarvangasana*), and can stay in it for nearly five minutes. Sanskrit names for poses are becoming familiar.

Level 2 classes are for students who are ready for a stronger practice of the basic asanas plus the new and more challenging poses from the Level 2 syllabus (some poses from the Junior Intermediate syllabus may be introduced). There will be more emphasis on exploring the benefits and challenges of the inversions.

It is time to move on from Level 2 class if you are gaining stamina and stability in the poses. The lift of the sternum and length in the trunk is coming throughout the practice. Understanding of when and what props to use is becoming clearer. The inversions are stronger. If you are female in child bearing years you know how to practice the menstrual

sequence. A balance between effort and effortlessness is being explored and in Savasana you no longer fall asleep! A home practice has begun and the student starts to ask more questions, shows an interest in books, philosophy and even the development of the Yoga Centre. When a student is attending classes regularly and is showing devotion to the work, Level 3 is recommended.

Students must consult with a teacher before entering a Level 3 class. They have to be able to stay in shoulder stand for five minutes and in headstand (at wall if necessary) for three minutes. The syllabus of poses expands to the Junior Intermediate levels 1, 2 and 3. The student is working to strengthen and deepen, and there is a willingness to struggle and search within. Finer precision and alignment work is now introduced. Home practice is essential here to progress. A continued interest in yoga philosophy and *pranayama* is growing. A person could spend many years at this level. When inversions and their variations show more stability, the student shows maturity in working with their own body, and when their practice is deepening, then Level 4 is suggested.

At Level 4, a regular home practice is a must. The student here has evolved to the point where both the practice and deepened interest in yoga are now becoming a way of life. At this level one requires the strength to look within, increased dedication, perseverance, and a willingness to be involved in the community and work with a warrior spirit. This is a life-long class.

If you have questions about yoga, please send them to the front desk of the Victoria Yoga Centre attention Ty Chandler.

I would like to thank all the teachers who gave their input to this article. ॐ

TY CHANDLER IS CERTIFIED IN THE IYENGAR METHOD AND LIVES IN VICTORIA. SHE HAS BEEN TEACHING SINCE 1996 AND IS ON THE SCHOLARSHIP AND BURSARY COMMITTEE.



Teacher Training Paper

Yoga Sutra Study

by Christine Dimofski

*Assignment:
Identify the
key concepts
in Samadhi Pada
(sutras 1-51),
Sadhana Pada
(sutras 1-55),
and Vibhuti Pada
(sutras 1-7)*

The *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* are a collection of 196 aphorisms written down about 2500 years ago which define the path of yoga. They are divided into four *padas* (chapters). Note that sutras 8 of chapter 3 and onwards are not included in this assignment.

SAMADHI PADA

In the prologue of *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* (B.K.S. Iyengar, 1993), it states: “the first pada amounts to a treatise on dharma sastra, the science of religious duty. Dharma is that which upholds, sustains, and supports one who has fallen or is falling, or is about to fall in the sphere of ethics, physical or mental practises, or spiritual discipline.”

The first pada is intended for those who are highly evolved to help them maintain their advanced state of intelligence and wisdom. Patanjali looks at consciousness, its fluctuations, and how to still those fluctuations.

Sutra 1.2

“Yoga is the cessation of movement in the consciousness.”

The five movements of consciousness

- real perception/ correct knowledge
- unreal perception/ illusion
- imaginary or fanciful knowledge
- sleep
- memory

Practice and Detachment

Practice and detachment are the means to still the fluctuations of consciousness. Practice is the steadfast effort to still the fluctuations and renunciation is detachment from desires. The two balance each other.

God

Consciousness may be restrained by profound meditation upon God and by total surrender to God. God is represented by the symbol Aum. Meditation upon God with the repetition of Aum removes obstacles to the mastery of the inner self.

Obstacles to Mastery of the Inner Self

- Physical – disease, sluggishness
- Mental – doubt, carelessness, laziness, sense gratification
- Intellectual – living in a world of illusion
- Spiritual – lack of perseverance, inability to hold onto achievements

Four Additional Distractions to the Consciousness

- Sorrow
- Despair
- Unsteadiness of the body
- Irregular breathing

Sutra 1.33

“Through cultivation of friendliness, compassion, joy and indifference to pleasure and pain, virtue and vice respectively, the consciousness becomes favourably disposed, serene and benevolent.”

Alternative Methods of Calming the Mind

In addition to sutra 1.33, there are other techniques to keep the mind in a state of well-being

- Retaining the breath after exhalation to achieve a serene state
- Becoming totally engrossed, with dedication and devotion, in an object of interest
- Contemplating a luminous, sorrowless, effulgent light – the innermost core of the heart

- Contemplating on enlightened sages who are free from desires and attachments or by contemplating divine objects
- Recollecting and contemplating the experiences of dream-filled or dreamless sleep during a watchful waking state
- Contemplating on any object conducive to meditation, one that is auspicious and spiritually uplifting

SADHANA PADA

The second chapter is helpful for both the uninitiated and the spiritually evolved. Yet it is more for beginners, to guide them in how to begin their practice and how to work towards spiritual emancipation.

Sutra 2.1

“Burning zeal in practice, self study and study of scriptures, and surrender to God are acts of yoga.” This sutra inspires the three main paths of yoga:

- *Karma Yoga* – discipline of body, senses, mind
- *Jnana Yoga* – path of knowledge, study of self
- *Bhakti Yoga* – love of God, surrender to God

Kleshas (afflictions)

Five afflictions which disturb the equilibrium of consciousness:

- spiritual ignorance
- ego
- attachment to pleasure
- aversion to pain
- fear of death

Spiritual ignorance is the source of all pains and sorrows. Lack of spiritual knowledge is “mistaking the transient for the permanent, the impure for the pure, pain for pleasure, and that which is not the self for the self”.

SUTRA 2.16

“The pains which are yet to come can be and are to be avoided.”
Imprints of one’s actions are the seeds of future sorrows and pleasures, in this life

and in future lives. The cause of pain is identification of the seer with the seen and the remedy lies in their dissociation.

Prakriti (nature)

The three qualities of nature:

- *sattva* – luminous quality
- *rajas* – vibrant quality
- *tamas* – dormant quality

Koshas (sheaths)

The seer has five sheaths corresponding to the elements of nature:

- earth – anatomical sheath
- water – physiological sheath
- fire – mental sheath
- air – intellectual sheath
- ether – spiritual sheath

Yama and *Niyama* purify the anatomical and physiological sheaths.

Asana, *Pranayama* and *Pratyahara* divest the seer of mental sheath.

Dharana and *Dhyana* cleanse the intellectual sheath.

Samadhi frees the seer from all sheaths to experience freedom.

Ashtanga Yoga (eight-limbed union)

- *yama* (moral injunctions)
- *niyama* (personal observances)
- *asana* (posture)
- *pranayama* (regulation of breath)
- *pratyahara* (internalization of the senses towards their source)
- *dharana* (concentration)
- *dhyana* (meditation)
- *samadhi* (absorption of consciousness in the self)

The first five limbs defined

- *yama* – nonviolence, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, non-greed
- *niyama* – cleanliness, contentment, religious zeal, self study, surrender of self to the Supreme Self (God)
- *asana* – perfect firmness of body, steadiness of intelligence, benevolence of spirit
- *pranayama* – regulation of the incoming and outgoing flow of breath with retention

- *pratyahara* – withdrawing the senses, mind and consciousness from contact with external objects, and then drawing them inwards towards the seer

VIBHUTI PADA

The first 7 sutras of Chapter 3 define the last 3 limbs as the inner quest.

- *dharana* (concentration) – fixing the consciousness on one point or region
- *dhyana* (meditation) – a steady, continuous flow of attention directed towards the same point or region
- *samadhi* (complete absorption) – when the object of meditation engulfs the meditator, appearing as the subject, self-awareness is lost

Samyama

This is the integration of *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. ॐ

CHRISTINE DIMOFSKI HAS JUST COMPLETED
HER TEACHER TRAINING AT THE VICTORIA
YOGA CENTRE.



Student Intensive

August 23-27
9 am-12 pm

Learn how to establish and
deepen your practice

Level 2 experience required
See next issue for more details



publications for sale

Victoria Yoga Centre • 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K3 • 386-YOGA(9642)

BOOKS (all book prices subject to GST)

NEW: 30 Essential Yoga Poses – Judith Lasater (2003)	\$ 31.50
Back Care Basics – Mary P. Schatz (1992)	\$ 30.00
Health through Yoga – Mira Mehta (2002)	\$ 34.25
NEW: How To Know God: Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali – S. Prabhavananda (1953)	\$ 27.50
How to Use Yoga – Mira Mehta (1994)	\$ 21.90
NEW: Illumination: Aphorisms of B.K.S. Iyengar, price for members	\$ 7.48
NEW: Illumination: Aphorisms of B.K.S. Iyengar, price for non-members	\$ 9.35
Laminated practice sheets – Chris Saudek	\$ 8.15
Light on Pranayama – BKS Iyengar (1981)	\$ 31.00
Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali – BKS Iyengar (1993)	\$ 31.25
Light on Yoga – BKS Iyengar (1966, 1976)	\$ 33.50
Relax and Renew – Judith Lasater (1995)	\$ 30.00
The New Yoga for People Over 50 – Suza Francina (1997)	\$ 23.00
The Runners Yoga Book – Jean Couch (1990)	\$ 30.00
The Tree of Yoga – BKS Iyengar (1988)	\$ 19.00
The Yoga of Breath – Richard Rosen	\$ 23.50
The Woman's Book of Yoga & Health – L. Sparrowe, P. Walden (2002)	\$ 32.00
Yoga A Gem for Women – Geeta Iyengar (1983)	\$ 13.00
NEW: Yoga And The Wisdom Of Menopause – Suza Francina (2003)	\$ 24.25
Yoga for Children – S.+R. Chandani (1995)	\$ 13.00
Yoga for Pregnancy – Sandra Jordan (1987)	\$ 26.50
Yoga in Action: A Preliminary Course – Geeta Iyengar	\$ 15.00
Yoga Kurunta – Chris Saudek (2001)	\$ 22.00
Yoga the Iyengar Way – Silva, Mira, and Shyam Mehta (1990)	\$ 33.00
ON SALE: Yoga: The Path to Holistic Health – BKS Iyengar (2001)	\$ 25.00

AUDIO/VIDEO (All audio/video prices subject to 7% GST and 7.5% PST)

In Praise of Divine Mother – Swami Hridayananda (CD)	\$ 18.00
Introduction to Yoga – Patricia Walden (video)	\$ 29.00
Pranayama: The Art of Breathing – Felicity Green (2 audio tapes)	\$ 26.00
Pranayama: The Art of Breathing – Felicity Green (2 CDs)	\$ 34.00
Silence of the Spirit – Fr. Joe Pereira (audio tape)	\$ 10.00
Standing Poses: Upright and Inverted – John Schumacher (audio tape)	\$ 15.00
Yoga, A Basic Daily Routine – John Schumacher (audio tape)	\$ 17.00
Yoga Sutras of Patanjali – Sri Nagarraj/BKS Iyengar (2 audio tapes)	\$ 10.00

Congratulations

The following candidates achieved certification during the Junior Intermediate III assessment in Victoria, January 2004

Sheri Berkowitz,
Salt Spring Island, BC

Vicky Catchpole, Royston, BC

Lauren Cox, Victoria, BC

Andy Orr, Toronto, ON

Linda Shevloff, Hong Kong

Beverley Winsor,
St. John's, Newfoundland

Upcoming CIYTA Assessment Dates

June 18-20
Introductory I & II
Kelowna & Edmonton

Oct 15-17
Introductory I & II
Halifax

Junior Intermediate I
Toronto

Nov. 19-21
Junior Intermediate I
Vancouver

Please note:

The Introductory Level I & II Assessments are held annually the third weekend of June and the third weekend of October.



SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

for TERM 4, 2004

Term 4, March 1 – May 2 (8 weeks)
Note class break at Easter, April 6 - 12.
Some classes will be adjusted due to special workshops or holidays.

INTRODUCTION TO IYENGAR YOGA – 4 WEEKS

Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23 & Mar. 30, Apr. 6, 13, 20

Tues 7:00 – 8:30pm Karin Holtkamp

Mar. 3, 10, 17, 24 & Mar. 31, Apr. 7, 14, 21

Wed 6:30 – 8:00pm Britta Poisson,

LEVEL 1

Mon 12:00 – 1:30pm Lauren Cox

Mon 4:00 – 5:30pm Jo Anna Hope

Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm Ann Kilbertus

Tues 10:00 – 11:30am Leslie Hogya

Tues 4:45 – 6:15pm Melissa Worth

Tues 7:00 – 8:30pm Wies Pukesh

Wed 6:00 – 7:30pm Gwynneth Powell

Thurs 8:30 – 10:00am Linda Benn

Thurs 5:30 – 7:00pm Wendy Boyer

Thurs 6:30 – 8:00pm Jeannette Merryfield

Fri 10:30 – 12:00pm Linda Benn

Fri 5:00 – 6:30pm Gwynneth Powell

Sat 9:30 – 11:00am Corrine Lowen

Sun 10:30 – 12:00pm Ty Chandler

Sun 3:00 – 4:30pm Wies Pukesh

LEVEL 1 / 2

Wed 9:00 – 10:30am Ty Chandler

Wed 7:30 – 9:00pm Melissa Worth

Thurs 7:00 – 8:30pm Greg Sly



LEVEL 2

Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm James Currie-Johnson

Tues 10:00 – 11:30am Robin Cantor

Tues 5:15 – 7:00pm Leslie Hogya

Tues 6:30 – 8:00pm Melissa Worth

Wed 7:45 – 9:15pm Gwynneth Powell

Thurs 4:30 – 6:00pm Ann Kilbertus

Fri 9:00 – 10:30am Linda Benn

Fri 5:00 – 6:30pm Wendy Boyer

Sat 8:00 – 9:30am Corrine Lowen

Sun 9:00 – 10:30am Ty Chandler

Sun 4:30 – 6:00pm Wies Pukesh

LEVEL 2/3

Mon 10:00 – 12:00pm Lauren Cox

Wed 6:00 – 7:30pm Ty Chandler

LEVEL 3

Thurs 10:00 – 12:00pm Shirley Daventry French,
Linda Benn

Thurs 6:00 – 8:00pm Ann Kilbertus,
Leslie Hogya

Sat 9:00 – 11:00am Marlene Miller

LEVEL 4

Mon 5:30 – 7:30pm Shirley Daventry French
& Senior teachers

NOON HOUR CLASSES

Tues 12:00 – 1:00pm Jeannette Merryfield

Wed 12:00 – 1:00pm Wendy Boyer

Thurs 12:00 – 1:00pm Lauren Cox

Fri 12:00 – 1:00pm Ty Chandler

TIMED PRACTICE

Tues 5:30 – 7:00pm Ty Chandler

Fri 7:00-8:00am Robin Cantor

RESTORATIVE (registered and drop-in)

Wed 5:30 – 6:30PM James Currie-Johnson

PRANAYAMA Level 3 or 4 + teacher's permission required

April 29, May 6, 13, 20

Thurs 7:00 – 8:00am Shirley Daventry French

INTRODUCTION TO YOGA PHILOSOPHY

March 25, April 1, 15, 22

Thurs 5:00 – 6:00pm Leslie Hogya

FOCUS ON WOMEN

Fri 9:30am – 11:00am Robin Cantor

PRE NATAL YOGA

Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm Robin Cantor

PRE & POST NATAL YOGA

Sat 3:00 – 4:00pm Lauren Cox

55 & BETTER

Wed 10:30 – 12:00pm Leslie Hogya –
continuing

Fri 10:30 – 12:00pm Wendy Boyer –
beginners

SPECIAL NEEDS

Wed 4:30 – 6:00pm Shirley D. French,
Ann Kilbertus,
Leslie Hogya,
Lauren Cox

Thurs 1:15 – 2:45pm Linda Benn,
Ann Kilbertus

BACK CARE

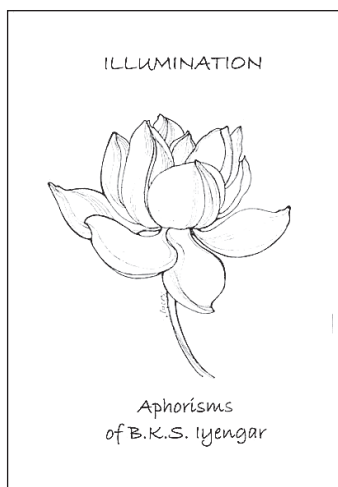
Mon 4:00 – 5:15pm Linda Benn

TY'S YOGA KIDS (Ages 10 – 14)

Fri 4:00 – 5:00pm Ty Chandler

HIGHSCHOOL YOGA (Age 14 +)

Fri 3:30 – 4:45pm Gwynneth Powell



*Illumination – Aphorisms
of B.K.S. Iyengar*
(Victoria Yoga Centre, 2003)

JAMES CURRIE-JOHNSON IS
CERTIFIED IN THE IYENGAR
METHOD AND LIVES IN VICTORIA.
TEACHING SINCE 1994 JAMES IS THE
REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF
TEACHERS IN OUR NATIONAL
ORGANIZATION.

Book Review

by James Currie-Johnson

Readers of the January/February newsletter will have seen the announcement that the Victoria Yoga Centre has just published the book *Illumination*. This slim volume of sutra-like sayings owes its existence first to B.K.S. Iyengar and then to a spontaneous effort by yoga teachers and students in Victoria.

It was Karyn Woodland who came up with the idea to publish this book to mark B.K.S. Iyengar's 85th birthday. Soon Shirley Daventry French put out an appeal for funds, Lauren Cox was drawing illustrations and Karyn was selecting quotes and doing the layout. Karyn tells me that the name for the book came up during a conversation she had one day with Britta Poisson. Lauren's Lotus flower drawing that is on the cover of the book is now being used on the Yoga Centre's tee shirts.

The aphorisms have been published before but never before in this attractive and convenient format. Yoga students have discovered these aphorisms in the past, often one-by-one or as part of a larger treatise. As a music lover I have always remembered one of the most oft-quoted aphorisms:

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

I remember hearing many of them repeated by yoga teachers, or discovering them in magazines, books, or web sites. They have always given me a shock of recognition, unveiling the essence of yoga. The final aphorism in the book speaks of *Samadhi* (illumination):

*The known is limited,
but the unknown is vast.
go to the unknown more and more.*

Together the aphorisms are an inspiration to all yoga practitioners. Having them together in this volume gives me an incentive to learn them by heart and use them more in my yoga teaching and practice. ॐ

Copies of *Illumination* are available
at the Victoria Yoga Centre. Prices:
\$7.48 + GST for VYC members
\$9.35 + GST for non-members
Cost for bulk orders of 10 or more is
\$8.00 + GST plus shipping and handling.

Thank you!

Thank you!

Thank you!

Rosemary Short and **Robin Wright**. Thank you also to the unknown donor who didn't leave her name and to anyone else who has donated since this announcement was put together.

Thank you to **Billie Essa** and the **Spicejammer** Restaurant for the delicious fruit and cheese platter.

To the following donors who contributed generously to Guruji's book *Illumination*:
Rosemary Barritt, BKS Iyengar Yoga Association, Lee Elliott, Debra Johnson, Yvonne Kipp, Marlene Miller, Setty Shoba,

Thank you to the whole community for helping with the national assessment by acting as cleaners, students, cooks and drivers. Thank you especially to Corrine Lowen and Robin Cantor for coordinating this event.

Thank you to **Karen Dayton** for her transcribing work.

Thank you to **Heather Hobbs** for organizing an information table at the Health Fair on January 24 and 25 and to all those who participated by donating their time.

Thank you to **Gwynneth Powell, Ty Chandler** and **Michelle Randalles** for representing the Yoga Centre at a recent food bank fundraiser.

Volunteers

Volunteers help with all kinds of things at the Victoria Yoga Centre. This column introduces some of the people who give a great deal to our community.

Editorial Trikonasana

by Jane Munro



Currently, the editorial position for the *Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter* is three-pointed, resting on a triangle of volunteers: Gwynneth Powell, Greg Sly, and Melissa Worth. Each produces two issues a year. As editor, they plan their issues, contact writers, collect copy, edit and revise as necessary, assemble photos and announcements, communicate with the graphic designer and the copy-editor, and deal with the printer. They work on a shared laptop loaded with earlier issues, unused articles and guidelines, and seek advice and support from the Newsletter Committee. Each learned how to do the job by shadowing a mentor. Now, they wedge editing into their full schedules, and dream of increasing their numbers.

For twenty-three years, the *Newsletter* has been written, edited, proof-read, and distributed by volunteers. Some of its earlier committee members laugh about sitting around a table to do the paste-up by hand. Six times a year, 600 copies go out to a widespread yoga community.

Melissa Worth encountered yoga at the age of ten when her older sister met and fell in love with Shirley's son, Adrian French. By the time she was sixteen, her father had put up a rope for her and she was doing poses at home a few times a week. Her practice lapsed while she studied Anthropology and English at university because she *got uncomfortable with the God-talk*. It was exactly that aspect of yoga which drew her back to classes. Now, Melissa *does yoga in some capacity every day*. This includes her own practice and service as editor, plus studying and teaching yoga. Between nine and five, she is a researcher for a provincial government office.

Greg Sly says his full-time job as trumpet-player in the Canadian Forces' Naden Band *is symbiotically paired* with his yoga practice and teaching. He's also re-building the house where he and his wife Carolyn live with their baby daughter, Jasmine. He

identifies *a theme of creativity* linking his various endeavors, from university studies in music and conflict resolution to a long-time interest in cooperative ventures and meditation—he once spent nine months at a commune/ashram in Belgium where studying the *Bhagavad Gita* first introduced him to yoga. For him, the editorial process is a mirror reflecting something you can work with. It helps him recognize how his mind behaves, and how he acts.

Gwynneth Powell, who bought a copy of *Light on Yoga* when she was fifteen, has a background in the care industry. Now, as a full-time Iyengar Yoga teacher, she educates people to care for themselves by teaching the path of yoga. She says she's *learned an incredible amount* by working on the *Newsletter*, from how to write an article that's not verbose, to how to help someone else write effectively. The editorship has given her another perspective on the whole system of yoga, adding a layer to what she gained through the teacher training program, the certification process, and her practice.

All three view their work in the position of editor as a gift, not a chore. Taimi Mulder is preparing to edit an issue this summer. How about you? ॐ

JANE MUNRO IS LONGTIME STUDENT AT THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE AND IS ON THE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE.

a.	tri-kona-asana = Trikonasana
b.	supta-baddha-kona-asana = Supta Baddha Konasana
c.	janu-sirsasana = Janu Sirsasana (also means 'head of the knee' stretches back)
d.	chatur-anga-danda-asana = Chaturanga Dandasana
e.	adho-mukha-svana-asana = Adho Mukha Svanasana
f.	karna-pida-asana = Karnapidasana
g.	salamba-sarvangha-asana = Salamba Sarvangasana
h.	sirsasana = Sirsasana
i.	parsva-eka-pada-sarvanghasana = Parsvaika Pada Sarvangasana
j.	Prasarita-pada-uttana-asana = Prasarita Paddotttanasana

ANSWERS TO QUIZ – SEE PAGE 13



Radha Yoga Centre

This year is the Radha Yoga Centre's 20th anniversary! Beginning in 1984 as Shambhala House, the history of the Radha Centre overlaps with that of the Victoria Yoga Centre, as many of the same people worked to create these two vital and authentic centres, where the Teachings are lived according to the lineages that we have inherited. The Radha Yoga Centre invites the members of the Victoria Yoga Centre to join us in our celebrations this year. Please check our website for events. www.radha.org (go to the Victoria listing)



Dream Workshop

Sunday March 21,
1-4 pm,
sliding scale \$20-\$30

Celebrate the return of spring by taking an afternoon to honour your dreams. Learn to understand the language of your higher self, and follow your inner guidance. Based on "Realities of the Dreaming Mind" by Swami Radha.

Updated edition of "Realities of the Dreaming Mind" available Feb.9! This book is a reference for working with your dreams that will last a lifetime. Inspiring and multi-layered guidance for those seeking something more in life.

Namaste!

Radha Yoga Centre • 1500 Shasta Place • 250 595-0177 • rycvic@island.net • www.radha.org

Scholarships & Bursaries



Member's Scholarships are available for all long workshops and intensives.

Please apply in writing at least one month prior to the workshop you are interested in. See Calendar on back page for dates.

Student Bursaries are available to all students presently enrolled in classes.

To subsidize your term fees please apply 3 weeks prior to term.

Applications and details for both are available at the reception desk.

Victoria Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street
Victoria, BC V8V 3K3

VICTORIA *yoga centre* Calendar 2004

MARCH

- 5** Friday Night Video 6:45 pm
- 6** Short Workshop:
Inversions with Gwynneth Powell
- 12-14** Marlene Mawhinney workshop
- 27** Teacher's Meeting
- 28** Short Workshop: What and How
to Practice, with Leslie Hogya

APRIL

- 2** Friday Night Gathering 6:30 pm
- 3** Timed Practice for Members 11:30am
- 24** Teacher's Meeting

MAY

- 14** Big, Big Practice
- 15** Short Workshop: Yoga Kurunta,
with Ann Kilbertus
- 22** Teacher's Meeting

JUNE

- 4-6** Salt Spring Retreat
- 28-Jul 3** Summer Sadhana

JULY

- 5-10** Teacher Training Intensive
Introductory Level
- 5-10** Summer Sadhana

AUGUST

- 16-20** Teacher Training Intensive
Junior Level
- 23-27** Student Intensive
- 23-31** Summer Sadhana



VICTORIA
yoga centre
SOCIETY

Membership and Newsletter Subscription

For a one year membership and newsletter subscription, please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to:

**Victoria Yoga Centre Society, c/o Karin Holtkamp,
202-919 Fort Steet, Victoria BC V8V 3K3**

Membership/subscription fee is \$32 (incl. GST),
renewable each January.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

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

☐ Receipt required

Membership benefits include 5% discount on
classes, free practice times at the VYC, timed
practices, early registration and discount on
workshops, borrowing privileges in our library,
eligibility to become a board member and
eligibility for scholarships for workshops.

May/June 2004



VICTORIA

yoga centre

NEWSLETTER



Self-study is a fundamental part of yoga which, like all yogic practices, gradually removes ignorance and clears a path to knowledge, so that we know when to act and when not to.

– Shirley Daventry French



IYENGAR YOGA

Teacher Training Intensives

July 5-10, 2004

**With Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus
and Linda Benn**

This six-day Intensive will focus on preparing teachers for assessment in Iyengar Yoga at Introductory Level I or II.

Leslie, Ann and Linda are experienced teachers certified at the Junior Intermediate III Level through the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association. They are qualified C.I.Y.T.A. assessors. All three are committed to assisting local and outlying yogis to become skilled Iyengar Yoga teachers. Preference will be given to C.I.Y.T.A. members in recognized Iyengar Yoga teacher training programs.

August 16-20, 2004

With Shirley Daventry French

This course is for certified Iyengar Yoga teachers who wish to prepare for assessment at Junior Intermediate Level I, II or III.

Shirley is a long-time student of B.K.S. Iyengar who has awarded her a senior teaching credential. She has been teaching yoga for thirty years and is one of North America's most experienced teachers in the Iyengar tradition. Shirley has been training teachers in Victoria and throughout Canada for many years.

In both Intensives there will be daily classes in asana and pranayama, the art and science of teaching and peer teaching.

As in previous years, Iyengar Yoga teachers from other countries are also invited to apply. C.I.Y.T.A. members will get priority.

Fees (incl. GST): Victoria Yoga Centre members \$535.00, Non-members \$567.10

Registration opens February 16, 2004.

To receive the application and registration forms, please contact:

Victoria Yoga Centre, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K3

Phone: (250) 386-YOGA (9642), or Ann: (250) 598-0976, or Linda: (250) 478-0757

Email Linda: lbenn@islandnet.com or Ann: stpatrick@entirety.ca

Sutra Workshop

**With Shirley Daventry French
October 1, 2004**

This evening seminar will provide an overview of the yoga sutras of Patanjali and explore practical ways of making use of them as a guide for daily living.

Going Deeper

**An Iyengar Yoga Workshop with Shirley Daventry French
October 2-3, 2004**

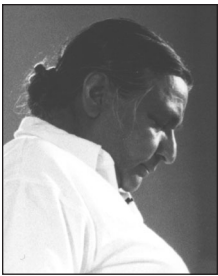
An opportunity for Level I, II and III students to work with senior teacher Shirley Daventry French to explore yoga in a deeper way. Also an opportunity for teachers to observe Shirley.

Shirley Daventry French is a long time student of B.K.S. Iyengar and has studied at the Ramamani Institute in Pune many times, most recently in December 2003.

See next issue for more info.



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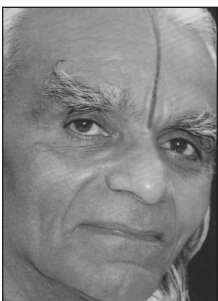
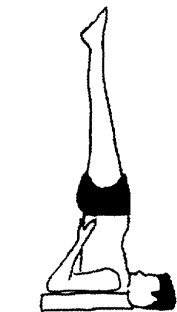
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Providing Harmony

by Jane Munro



Newsletter Advertising Policy (Adopted February 20, 2004)

In keeping with the mandate of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society Directors, 2004, to update, review and document policies and procedures, the newsletter committee submitted a policy which is a revision of the 1996 policy and has been adopted by the Board of Directors as follows:

1. Advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the newsletter of the VYCS.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar Yoga
3. Priority given to advertisements regarding:
 - VYC events
 - VYC sponsored events
 - CIYTA events
 - Radha House/ Yasodhara Ashram



VICTORIA yoga centre NEWSLETTER

EDITOR Gwynneth Powell

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Shirley Daventry French, Lauren Cox,
Karin Holtkamp, Greg Sly, Melissa Worth,
Jane Munro, Taimi Mulder, Susan Robinson,
Nancy Searing

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Ann Kilbertus, Linda Kusleika, Britta Poisson,
Gwynneth Powell, Melissa Worth

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SCANNING Taimi Mulder

BILLING Carole Miller

DISTRIBUTION Keiko Alkire,
Rosemary Barritt

MEMBERSHIP / MAILING LIST

Karin Holtkamp

PRINTING Hillside Printing

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

May 15, 2004

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of B.C., 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 Newsletter, published regularly by the VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY, provides current information on events concerning yoga in the Victoria area and the Yasodhara Ashram.

Send contributions, articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter:

202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3.

For information on activities and events, call 386-YOGA(9642) or visit our website: www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca.

Permission is hereby granted to reprint any of our material, except that copyrighted by the author or artists. When reprinting, please credit this Newsletter and send us two copies of the publication containing our material. Copyright material is only available with written permission.

The editor/newsletter committee hold the right to publish or edit all articles at their discretion.

The book *Tibet's Great Yogi - Milarepa* by W.Y. Evans-Wentz offers valuable insight into the demands of the yogic path for any serious student of yoga, and its depiction of the Guru-student relationship is of particular value to anyone considering becoming a teacher. This was one of about thirty books on the book list for a three month teacher training course which I attended at Yasodhara Ashram in the winter of 1976. Not only was it compulsory reading, but to complete the course work I had to submit a report on this book which would show that I had understood the main concepts it advanced. Further I had to demonstrate ways that they could be put into practice in my life. It was not merely an intellectual exercise!



SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH WAS AWARDED SENIOR CERTIFICATION FROM B.K.S. IYENGAR. SHE HAS BEEN TEACHING SINCE 1972 AND FOUNDED THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE IN 1976. SHIRLEY LIVES IN VICTORIA AND TEACHES WORLDWIDE.

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Milarepa was one of the greatest yogis to emerge from Tibet. In his view, intellectual development was not essential in the attainment of wisdom, and he taught that Right Knowledge was not to be obtained from books. In fact many great Tibetan and Indian saints have been illiterate. He pointed out that the yogic path is open to all who have the necessary application and are able to practice

self-discipline and mastery of the mind. In the words of Milarepa :

“The undisciplined mind is to be caught with the lasso of Singleness of Purpose, tied to the Pole of Meditation, fed with the Guru’s Teachings and watered from the Stream of Consciousness.”

In his early life Milarepa studied with a teacher of “the Black Art” and performed

some evil deeds, and by the time he changed his direction and arrived at the door of Marpa the Translator (also known as the Terrible Tempered Marpa) seeking to become his disciple, he had accrued considerable karma which he was seeking to assuage.

Marpa made him an offer. He would supply Milarepa with food and clothing in which case he would have to seek the spiritual teachings elsewhere, or Marpa would become his Guru and Milarepa would have to find food and clothing elsewhere. It was Milarepa’s choice to accept Marpa as his Guru.

Marpa inflicted many trials on Milarepa partly to test his sincerity but also as penance for his black deeds so that the law of karma could be obeyed. These trials included building various houses in different sites according to Marpa’s instructions, and then being instructed to tear them down and start again. During this lengthy period many others were initiated by Marpa into the spiritual teachings, but not Milarepa who had still to prove himself.

Milarepa’s suffering and despair are the subject of much of this book. He even contemplated suicide; but instead found the strength to continue. Dreams had foretold Milarepa’s greatness and Marpa was determined to purge him of his sins by bringing him to the edge of despair. Eventually,

deciding that sufficient penance had occurred, Marpa initiated Milarepa.

During his discourse to mark this occasion, Marpa made two significant points:

- (1) That is it quite right to try to obtain religious truths by every possible means.
- (2) Religious anger is a thing apart and in whatever form it may appear it had the same object - to excite repentance and contribute to the spiritual development of the persons involved.

All along Marpa had known that Milarepa was a worthy disciple, but the Law of Karma must be satisfied.

Did this mean that from there on Milarepa's life became easier? Read the book and find out; it is an interesting and inspiring story. Suffice it to say that this initiation was really the start of Milarepa's evolution to becoming one of Tibetan Buddhism's most revered teachers. Such heights are not easily attained.

Several things brought this book to my mind. One was a book I read recently written by a woman who claims my Guru as her Guru. It was an infuriating read because it was well written, well researched and gave valuable information and insight into certain traditions of yoga and interesting biographical details of Gururji's life. However, this was interspersed with dissatisfaction with the style and content of the classes (not advanced enough for her), many references to her prowess in yoga, and constant remarks about her special relationship to B.K.S. Iyengar which made me doubt her veracity. Reading about her reactions to the teaching she received, I did not think she understood what it meant to call someone your guru.

To a guru all disciples are special but rarely in the way we think we are. We come to him or her with our own karma in the same way as Milarepa came to his guru. As a result of this each one of us receives different treatment. On a personal level, Gururji and his family are very approachable and inclusive, and in some instances I felt this author betrayed their trust. From a journalistic angle, the views she expressed were open and honest in a fashion which is admired in the West. On the other hand, gurus work in mysterious ways, and a

disciple generally does better to keep this in mind and keep their speculations to themselves.

Then there is the problem that memory distorts events, something I have learned from my own family. Many a time I have sat around our family dinner table listening to my children telling tales of their childhood and thought to myself; whose children are these? Their memory of events is quite different from mine and Derek's, and often he and I disagree with each other. As students of yoga it is important for us always to remember this, that immediately after an

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event our mind starts to redefine it.

Swami Radha used to recommend a practice where we take a special event in our life and immediately afterwards write down our experience as we remember it; put this in an envelope and seal it. A week later take another piece of paper and once again write down your recollections of this event. Do the same a month later, and then after six months, and then a year later. Then open all the envelopes and compare what you have written.

Even when we have taken notes during an event, later these will be interpreted by our particular state of mind as we attribute meaning to them.

The second thing which prompted thoughts of Milarepa was that in a number of courses I have taught recently there have been a proliferation of sincere yoga teachers who have begun teaching with good intentions and a love of yoga, but little knowledge of the

subject they are teaching. Having arrived at the point where they were ready to deepen their study as students, instead they had catapulted into teaching. In my opinion, for many this is happening too quickly. At the appropriate time, when your personal practice and understanding of the yogic teachings have reached a sufficient level of maturity, then becoming a teacher can deepen your sadhana. In the yogic tradition, your sadhana has to be your first priority. Once this is well established, you have developed a basic understanding of the teachings and have established them in your own life, then –

In the yogic tradition, your sadhana has to be your first priority. Once this is well established, you have developed a basic understanding of the teachings and have established them in your own life, then – provided your teacher agrees – you are fit to begin the training.

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The idea that first you become knowledgeable and proficient in the subject before even considering becoming a teacher has gone out of fashion. In my own city, there are yoga centres advertising in the local paper and on the internet for students for their teacher training courses, and I know of many others with such minimal prerequisites that it would be laughable if it were not so disturbing.

Traditionally the right to receive the teachings had to be earned. I am not suggesting that we employ the rigour of Marpa to our selection process; rather that those who offer teacher training to students of whom they know little or nothing, to people untrained or raw in the practice of yoga, are offering little of value. That which you value you do not give away lightly. I understand that often this is done with good intentions, wanting to share something which has

delighted and benefited you, but it is also done in ignorance and – as Patanjali tells us – *avidya* or ignorance is the underlying cause of all other obstacles on the yogic path.

Third, and perhaps most distressing, is the use of the Iyengar name to describe your teaching without any regard for the wishes of the Master himself that you first become certified in his method, and then teach it without mixing in other styles. If you do not wish to do this then Gurujī requests that you remove his name – a request which is well within his rights in the tradition of yoga. Simple as this seems, there are those who find it impossible to respect Gurujī's wishes yet continue to earn their living under the banner of his name.

Here again, with some teachers this is done in ignorance and innocently because they are isolated and do not know of Gurujī's stipulation about the use of his name. With others it is done knowingly, arrogantly and in defiance, their own ambition over-riding the wishes of the teacher they purport to follow. Think about the karma that this engenders. Rather than adhere to Gurujī's request and either remove his name or fulfil his requirements, they prefer to blame those of us who speak up on Gurujī's behalf calling us rigid, narrow-minded and worse.

Even holding a certificate in Iyengar Yoga does not automatically denote a teacher of this method in good standing. For instance, a doctor who is struck off the medical register for some transgression is denied the right to practise medicine but he still holds his medical degree. There are laws about this. Yoga is beyond the law of man but not beyond the law of karma. In an attempt to monitor and designate those Iyengar teachers in good standing, Gurujī has registered a Certification Mark for graduates of his method which has to be renewed every few years by showing evidence of ongoing post-graduate education either in Pune or with senior teachers of this method who maintain their link to Pune.

The detractors of this process say that this is not the yogic way. The detractors of this process also generally maintain distance from Gurujī and Geeta, staying away from Pune

and not attending the conferences where they have taught in the West.

We have moved far away from Milarepa's days when a Guru was able to maintain close personal contact with his disciples who were expected to surrender to him completely or they would receive nothing. As with Marpa, they imposed severe limitations on how and when their pupils would receive the teachings. The guru decided if and when a pupil would begin to teach, in which case this would be done under close supervision.

Contemporary Masters of Yoga such as B.K.S. Iyengar have a difficult task. Their pupils are numerous and wide-spread. Not all who have learned from Gururji consider him their guru, of course; but in the yogic tradition any pupil who has received the gift of yogic teaching from a Master has a responsibility not to abuse this gift. For the Master it is a challenge to fulfil their obligation to their pupils and the yoga public by insisting that certain standards

are established and maintained, standards which are to be delineated by the Master and not through a free floating interpretation of their meaning.

B.K.S. Iyengar has stated his requirements quite clearly. To teach in his name first you must become certified by your national Iyengar association. A year later, after gaining experience as a certified teacher, you are granted a certification mark. This follows the practice of many professions such as medicine and law where there is a year of internship after graduation and not until its completion are they free to go out on their own. As I am married to a doctor I know something about the medical profession who, like those of us teaching Iyengar Yoga, are required to show that each year they have taken a certain amount of post-graduate training and upgrading.

What Gururji requires of those teaching in his name is not open to interpretation. He has made his expectations clear. No-one need employ the

name Iyengar to teach yoga, but if you do it comes with a price - that you listen and surrender to the living Master of that tradition.

Milarepa lived in the twelfth century and we are living in the twenty-first. The source of our yoga is India but we are living, practising and teaching in Canada with its own laws, customs and culture. Necessarily, there has had to be some accommodation for time and place. Gururji is aware of this. However, the principles of yoga have not changed from Milarepa's day to ours and, as I stated at the start of this article, present day students and teachers would gain valuable insight into the discipline of yoga by readying about the extraordinary life of Milarepa.

Having read this book and knowing something of the tradition of Gurur-disciple relationships has been of immeasurable help to me in pursuing and persevering on my own yogic path under the tutelage of B.K.S. Iyengar. ॐ

Cooking... Indian style

Khairon Quadir lives in British Columbia and is an excellent cook. She has given workshops in Indian cooking and was the head chef when B.K.S. Iyengar came to Vancouver in 1984, to Edmonton in 1990 and to Toronto in 1993. Subsequently, in 2001 she traveled with and cooked for Geeta Iyengar in Vancouver and Victoria. Permission was granted by Khairon to reprint here one of the recipes from her book.

Daal (method #1)

Ingredients:

- 1 C mung split daal (lentils)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ C toor daal or orange split daal (lentils)
- 4 C water
- 2 Tbs oil
- 2 whole hot peppers (optional)
- 1 large tomato crushed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp turmeric
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ginger crushed
- 1 tsp garlic crushed
- 1 tsp cumin coriander powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp green chillies crushed or red hot pepper powder (optional)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp garam masala
- 1 Tbs fresh coriander leaves (finely cut)
- 1 Tbs lemon juice

Method:

Wash lentils and soak overnight or at least for an hour.

Then cook lentils with all above ingredients for an hour or two on medium heat,

add water if necessary (except chopped fresh coriander and lemon juice

which should be added at the last moment) until the mixture is smooth.

Serve with steamed rice or rice cooked in coconut milk.



Geeta Iyengar on Pranayama

Geetaji Iyengar graciously and generously answered questions and offered additional guidance related to the teaching and practice of pranayama in an interview on Sunday, February 23, 2003 at R. I. M. Y. I. Also present were Stephanie Quirk and Sunita Parthasarthy. On behalf of the wider Iyengar Yoga student community, Judy Brick Freedman presented the questions and collated the information. Geetaji elegantly edited the information.



BANDHA

Jalandhara bandha is the first bandha to be taught. It is commonly done in all the sitting pranayamas. Whenever you are sitting it is a must. It is commonly referred to as “chin lock.”

It is always called jalandhara bandha, whether practiced during puraka (inhalation), antara kumbaka (retention after inhalation), rechaka (exhalation) or bahya kumbaka (retention after exhalation). The character and intensity of jalandhara bandha will change with each aspect of the breath. After inhalation, jalandhara has to be stronger and firmer. After exhalation, there should not be a sudden release of the upper chest. It slowly recedes down. After exhalation for bahya kumbaka, the chin lock has to be there though it is different. During uddiyana bandha and after retention when one releases the abdomen and inhales, there is jalandhara bandha throughout.

To assist jalandhara bandha, the eye bandage can be used between chin and chest in the following situations such as a flat or boney sternum, a very long or stiff neck, or for specific pain, weak chest, or hard throat.

And in the process it teaches how to lift the chest to the bandage. If people feel choked or the sternum remains collapsed even though the chin goes down and a gap remains, the bandage fills the gap. First see that the top of the sternum remains up. See whether the chin goes down and the sternum goes up. What is the gap which remains? Fill in that space. When you give the bandage, they begin to feel how they have to lift the chest to the bandage. The bandage acts as a “bone” for the sternum and not the bone of the chin. The purpose is to create a soft throat. It can be replaced, as Guruji has done with some people, with a soft small fiber or wooden brick. However, jalandhara bandha has not to be forced on the beginner pranayama practitioners. They have to learn to bring the head downwards. Their tendency will be to lift their head up and if the teacher asks them to hold the rolled bandage they tend to use force which disturbs their brain and eyes. So, jalandhara bandha has to be learnt gradually.

Also, she advised, as in *Light on Pranayama* (pl. 77), using a higher head support at times to promote the feeling of the chin lock. Always beware of hypertension and not to

force the neck muscles. The head has to be on the blanket in such a position so the neck is not tensed, as for a reclining small antara kumbaka. However, this is not jalandhara bandha.

Mula bandha's first stage is aswini mudra, gently lifting the anus. Students can be made aware of the anal mouth adjustment in aswini mudra in preparatory asanas, such as tadasana, uttanasana, adhomukhasvanasana, urdhva dhanurasana, sirsasana, sarvangasana on/off the chair, setu bandha sarvangasana, and others.

Most of the time, students will understand mula bandha in antara kumbaka. When you have a complete inhalation and then you retain the breath with jalandhara bandha, then take the awareness to the anal mouth region, only the anal sphincter, which you elevate. The grips have to be taught stage by stage. First the area has to be felt by the practitioner. Abdomen and vagina for ladies should not become hard. In sitting posture, if women come too far forward on the pubis, this hardens the vaginal area. So be on the buttocks. Also use the pubic plate extension to lift. For men, testicles should not be heavy.

Sometimes, Geetaji has taught mula bandha before sirsasana, lying down on a blanket rolled into a conical shape to support the tail bone, so the waist also extends to the tail bone region. If it is taught in sirsasana it is called aswini mudra. The feel of aswini mudra guides mula bandha in pranayama.

A mudra is a mild seal. A bandha is absolutely tied up and sealed. Guruji does not recommend mula bandha generally for the beginners and irregular practitioners, as it is among the personal practices.

BHASTRIKA

Bhastrika is taught after making physiological preparations, such as with ujjayi or viloma. It is never taught straightaway without having the background of practice of these two pranayamas.

It is taught in stages. First students have to listen to the sound. One starts in sitting posture with open nostrils and palms down to establish the rhythm and the co-ordination of



Ann Kilbertus teaching an introduction to Pranayama

the movement of the ribs and diaphragm with the exhalation, just one or two “blasts.” The teacher watches the height, width, and depth of the chest. The students can do one to three cycles to match Geetaji's sound. Correcting is most important. If the sound goes wrong, one is applying a wrong force. If they collapse the chest, the teacher should stop and say “Look at your chest. Look at my chest. Look at my abdomen,” etc. Show how the teacher does not drop the spine. Geetaji suggests imitating them. “I do not want this. This is what you do.” This gives them a better understanding. If they do it forcefully and too many cycles, it is the teachers' responsibility to see and check. If the sound is not correct or the head is thrown back and the shape of the chest is not maintained, do not increase the blasts. Do not harden the intercostals or other parts of the chest or go “kicking” the head. Later they can go to 6 – 8 cycles. This is stage I - LOP

Then bhastrika is taught as anuloma, with digital nasal control. There are two types

- 1) Inhalation through open nostrils and exhalation through one nostril - first right and then left. Few blasts on right and then few blasts on left.
- 2) Inhalation through open nostrils and exhalation through alternate nostrils.

1) Inhale through both open nostrils, though fingers may be very close to the nostrils. First begin blasting on the right:



inhale, exhale right, inhale, and exhale right. Every inhalation is through open nostrils and every exhalation through the right, digitally controlled left nostril closed. After the right it is the left. Inhale through both open nostrils and exhale left blast, with thumb closing the right nostril. Though the inhalation is through both nostrils, the fingers rest on the nose.

Be especially aware of when the sound varies with cold or sinus blockage. If one side is too blocked, the ears become hard, so students should not risk injury. We must take good care of eyes and ears. Bhastrika does not work when students are suffering a cold attack or a headache. If the nose is simply runny, students can practise bhastrika, or at the beginning or end of a cold.

As it comes, and the sound is well synchronized, students can do more, six or eight cycles of blasts.

2) Then comes alternate nostril: inhale through open nostrils and exhale through right nostril, then inhale through open nostrils and exhale through left nostril. These blasts are done on alternate nostrils though the inhalations are through open nostrils.

After these preparations for digital bhastrika, one can do LOP stage II in which both the nostrils are partially

closed and blasted by opening them partially. In stage III one closes the left nostril completely and uses only right nostrils for inhalation and blasting exhalation. After a couple of cycles one closes the right nostril and does only with the left nostril.

Then you do alternate nostrils with quick succession. Blocking left nostril, inhale through open right nostril, exhale blast right; inhale through open left nostril and exhale blast left, developing up to six or twelve pairs of blasts, when you are used to it. Geetaji has not taught this recently due to too many new students.

Then students could go to a bhastrika like nadi sodhana: inhale right, blast exhalation left, inhale right and blast exhalation left. This is the IV stage of bhastrika. However the sound of blasts changes when one does digital bhastrika. In most advanced bhastrika the sound becomes smoother. Guruji has not introduced this into the syllabus as such, but it is for those who are so advanced. Most of us have enough pranayamas to practice.

Thus, the whole programme of bhastrika is as follows:

1. Open nostrils blasts (stage 1)
2. Anuloma bhastrika:
 - a. Inhale open nostrils, exhale right (couple of blasts)

- b. Inhale open nostrils, exhale left (couple of blasts)
- c. Inhale open nostrils, exhale right, inhale open nostrils, exhale left alternatively (couple of blasts)
(These first two are stage I - fully open nostrils)
3. Nadi shodhana bhastrika (stage II)
Inhale through partially opened nostrils and exhale blasts through partially opened nostrils
4. Single Nostril Bhastrika (stage III)
 - a. Inhale through right, blast through right, left is blocked completely (couple of blasts)
 - b. Inhale through left, blast through left. Right is blocked completely (couple of blasts)
 - c. (Not in *Light on Pranayama*) Inhale through right, blast through right, inhale through left, blast through left (couple of blasts, alternate nostrils)
5. Alternate Nostrils Bhastrika
 - a. Inhale through right, blast through left (couple of blasts) (completes one cycle - surya bedhana)
 - b. Inhale through left, blast through right (couple of blasts) (completes one cycle - chandra bedhana)
6. Nadi Shodhana (stage IV) - Inhale through right, blast through left, inhale through left, blast through right (completes 1 cycle)

Bhastrika can also be taught to make students more sensitive after practicing digital nasal pranayama to promote understanding of why the nostrils are blocked.

Only for foggy, depressed, shaking, not concentrating, or distracted students, it can be done straightaway.

If you find the right nostril is blocked (not ears or the eyes swollen), then you could do a few blasts on the right to open the right nostril. But with the blasts one should not lose the sensitivity. The blasts are meant to develop the sensitivity. This would be for more advanced students.

Bhastrika is always followed by savasana, unless it is done only for a few strokes to clear out nostrils as mentioned above. The reason behind doing bhas-trika is to open the nostrils for the digital pranayama then savasana is not needed, but if it is done as the main pranayama then after bhastrika savasana is essential. The brain and chest have to come back to normalcy as far as its sensitivity is concerned in order to do the next pranayama.

ASANAS BEFORE PRANAYAMA

Asanas conducive for conditioning and regularising pranayama include tadasana, uttanasana, supta virasana, supta baddhakonasana, matsyasana, viparita dandasana on the chair, sirsasana (independent or rope), sarvangasana (independent or on a chair), setu bandha sarvangasana, ardha halasana, sometimes janusirsasana for head rest and heart rest, and viparita karani. Teachers can choose among these as time and circumstances permit. These asanas bring the freedom in the respiratory organs, sooth and quieten the nerves and brain, make one passively alert. One keeps the past behind and restrains from the future, remains in the present. One gets sattvika placidity more than tamasic dull silence. The body and mind are freshened and the scope of the breath increased.

LEFT HAND DIGITAL PRANAYAMA

Regarding using the left hand for digital pranayamas, it is permissible when there is some problem, like arthritis or a frozen shoulder and amputated arm. Also, students could sit with two hands in the mudra for digital pranayama. Though the right hand remain in pranayama mudra and the left hand remains in jnana mudra in the usual process of practice, often it is noticed that very few know the finger action in

pranayama mudra. In order to get accustomed to pranayama mudra students need to be taught to keep both the hands in pranayama mudra. Once their fingers are well educated, the teachers can ask them to release the left hand finger for jnana mudra.

GETTING UP FROM SAVASANA

Guruji has said that after long supine pranayama, when your back has gotten very heavy, you might roll to the left, roll to the right, maybe a second time until the sore back gets released. You might roll onto the tummy for a prone savasana or even do adho mukha virasana. But always get up on the right. (except in the case of an injury on the right i.e., shoulder, knee, or hip injury, then one has to get up from the left, but **NEVER** to just sit straight up). There is a reason for rolling onto the right, so that surya nadi, or pingala nadi will be active. Right side is considered as the auspicious side and keeps one active. The heart being on the left, the weight of the body is not thrown on that side when one gets up from the right. Traditionally it is said that one should sleep north/south by keeping the feet to the north and head to the south. The south is considered as the place of the ancestors (pitru-loka). Therefore, feet are not kept towards the south. By keeping the head to the south one shows respect to the ancestors who are no more with us. The earth goes rotating around its north south axis, where the east is in the forefront, the rotation is west-east. This affects the human beings too. Often we experience when we fly, if we go in the direction of the earth rotation, less is the jet lag than going against it. Similarly, if you get up from the right side being in a north south direction, you do not go against the earth's rotation. Obviously the nerves do not get shaken.

The sunrise is on the east, when you get up even early in the mornings turn right so you face east. This is to ask for

grace, bliss and blessings since the jnana shakti, intelligence, illuminative energy comes from the sun god. So when you sleep north/south, turn right - you face east.

Do not ask the beginners to use bolster from shavasana or shavasana-pranayama. Give them the feel of the usual traditional shavasana. The beginner students can lie flat, without a bolster or blanket to get the feeling of the chest movement. Later when you give them a bolster or blanket they get the feeling of the difference to vary the condition of their chest, head and brain in these two postures, with props and without props.

DURING MENOPAUSE

During menopause, some women perspire even sitting with jalandhara bandha. At this time, to avoid hot flashes, it is helpful to lie flat without a bolster or blanket under the chest. The prop support disturbs them often. Secondly, as one ages, the sternum and connecting ribs area may seem hard, dry, shortening and sinking. One finds lifelessness in this area. Really lengthening the sternum, as in viparita dandasana on a chair or setubandha sarvangasana on a bench, is important.

PRANAYAMA WITH OPEN EYES

For beginners or for patients in the medical classes, Geetaji starts by asking them to sit straight, with the eyes open, to feel the chest and when the head is down, to look if the chest is getting open or is sinking. Then after a while, students can close the eyes. This is to develop awareness.

When they keep the eyes open, they are taught to connect themselves with awareness to their chest and mind. They learn to be with themselves. With open eyes they are not allowed to see somewhere else, but rather their attention is brought exactly where it is required. When you ask them to close the eyes

they get disconnected from the body and mind. With open eyes they are not only connected to their body and mind but they begin to watch the interaction between the body the breath and mind.

Many a time you have to show them, "This is your chest; these are your ribs." Then they can identify the parts in the doing process though everyone knows where they exist.

When it is the general pranayama class, you can ask the pupils to do *supta baddha konasana*, *supta virasana*,

matsyasana along with *sirsasana*, *sarvangasana*, *setu bandha sarvangasana* preliminary to the practice of pranayama which prepares them physically, physiologically, psychologically and mentally. Then while doing pranayama, pupils find a good preparation from body and mind sensitivity to proceed further in pranayama.

However, when you concentrate only on pranayama, you may not go for asana but straightaway begin with pranayama. When you sit for pranayama, you are

disturbed physically and mentally even with simple household work, it is better to begin with *savasana* for ten minutes or so and then do sitting pranayama. By doing *savasana* in the beginning, the scattered mind and scattered energy which feels completely dispersed is gathered, channelled and centralised. It is a *savasana* done for *pratyahara*. Then you can proceed with pranayama. ॐ

Busy Day Practice*

by Leslie Hogle

Students often ask, "What can I practise when I have so little time?"

This short sequence covers some basic poses. You can use the opening five poses to create a cycle of *Surya Namaskar* (sun salutations) by doing numbers one to five and then going backwards from five through one.

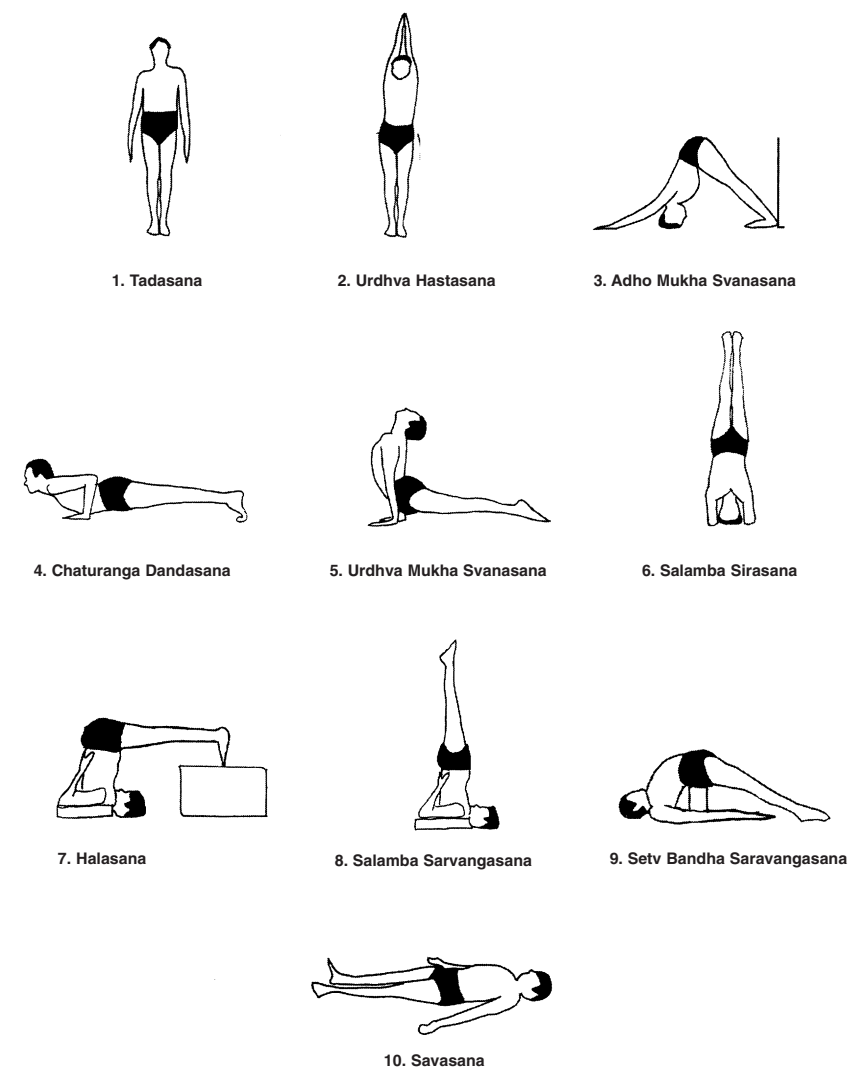
Only practise *Sirsasana* (headstand) if you have learned how to do it in class.

Always include at least one pose from the shoulderstand cycle at the end of any practice. There are three poses from that cycle in this practice, *Halasana*, *Salamba Sarvangasana* and *Setu Bandha Sarvangasana* (which can be done with heels on a block at the wall for support if your back is stiff). If you don't have time for all three, then choose one of them.

If some days you have more time then add standing poses before going upside down. After going upside down add twists and forward bends.

** This practice is recommended for levels 2 and up and should not be done by women during menstruation.*

LESLIE HOGLE IS CERTIFIED IN THE IYENGAR METHOD AND LIVES IN VICTORIA. SHE HAS BEEN TEACHING SINCE 1974.



Drawings from *Light on Yoga* (B.K.S. Iyengar, 1966) with thanks to Chris Lee who is currently living and studying in Pune, India.



Student Intensive

With Lauren Cox and Robin Cantor

August 23-27, 9am-12pm

Learn how to establish and deepen your practice

Prerequisite: Level 2 Iyengar Yoga experience

Ty and Robin are certified Iyengar yoga teachers who bring enthusiasm, dedication and humor to this five-day intensive. There will be two hours of asana including yoga kurunta, a timed practice, an introduction to pranayama and philosophical and spiritual discussions. A lunch at the Spice Jammer restaurant is included in the fee.

Fees: Members \$225 + GST,
non-members \$240 + GST

To register, drop in or call us at:

#202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K3

phone: 386-YOGA (9642)

website: www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$10 cancellation fee.

Practice (abhyasa) is the art of learning that which has to be learned through the cultivation of disciplined action.

Practice is a generative force of transformation or progress in yoga.

— B.K.S. Iyengar

SUMMER SADHANAS

This summer we offer a selection of 90-minute practices for six to nine days in a row.

“Sadhana” is a Sanskrit term which means dedicated practice or quest.

June 28-July 3 (6 days) \$90 + GST Teachers: Ann Kilbertus and Linda Benn

July 5-10 (6 days) \$90 + GST Teachers: Marlene Miller and Melissa Worth

August 23-31 (9 days) \$120 + GST Teacher: Lauren Cox

Time for the Sadhanas: 6:30-8:00am

For information on the teachers of the two 6-day Sadhanas please check for flyers or call for more info closer to the actual date.

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$10 cancellation fee.

Victoria Yoga Centre, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K3

Phone: (250) 386-YOGA (9642)



Annual General Meeting Reports

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE A NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION WHO DOES WHAT 2004

Board of Directors

President, Rosemary Barritt
1st Vice President, Connie Barker
2nd Vice President, Jim Riddell
Treasurer, Lori Wanamaker
Secretary, Joan Douglas
Past President, Leslie Hogya
Teachers' Group Liaison, Linda Benn
Scholarship, Amanda Mills
Building Maintenance, Jim Riddell
Newsletter Liaison, Melissa Worth
Lynn Langford, Corrine Lowen,
Ted Mather, Silvia Vilches

Newsletter Committee

Shirley Daventry French, Lauren Cox
Nancy Searing (Newsletter Advertising)
Gwynneth Powell (Board Liaison)
Greg Sly, Melissa Worth (Board),
Taimi Mulder, Jane Munro, Susan Robinson

Typing/Scanning Nancy Poole

Mailout Keiko Alkire, Rosemary Barritt

Publicity

Heather Hobbs (Promotion),
Karin Holtkamp (VYC Advertising),
Bonnie Light, Karin Dayton (distribution)
Charles Campbell (distribution)

Membership Constance Barker (Board)

Sales Drew Yallop

Communication

Melissa Worth (Web-site email, Board
Liaison)

Program Committee

Robin Cantor, Lauren Cox, Leslie Hogya,
Ann Kilbertus

Friday Night Gatherings Robin Cantor

Scholarship Committee

Wendy Boyer, Ty Chandler,
Amanda Mills (Board)

Library Janine Beckner

Special Needs Volunteers

Keiko Alkire, Jo Anna Hope, Debra
Johnson

Building Maintenance

Jim Riddell (Board), Sue Riddell (Props)

Web Page Monica Dimofski

Desk Volunteers

Hilary McPhail, Marion Ashton

President's Report

BY ROSEMARY BARRITT

With the effort and commitment of many people, 2003 was another busy and successful year for the Victoria Yoga Centre. There are things to report and people to thank. I would like to start by thanking our office staff. For new people coming to our centre the friendly faces at reception make for a pleasant introduction to the VYC, and our regular yoga students enjoy stopping to chat while waiting for classes. Thank you to Britta, Christine, Monica, Karin and Heather. We have received many verbal and written compliments about all of you.

The desk staff is guided by our manager Leslie, who volunteers many hours at the centre coordinating all areas from class scheduling to problem solving and the occasional emergency. Just recently, she was called at home early in the morning and told that water was pouring into Birch studio through a light fixture in the ceiling. The snow on the roof was melting and the drains had become clogged. Thank you Leslie, where would we be without you.

A big thank you to all our teachers especially Shirley Daventry French. Shirley, along with Linda Benn, Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus, Marlene Miller and Lauren Cox run the teacher training program and are mentors to our teachers in training. For them yoga never stops. Their dedication to Mr. Iyengar's methods of teaching yoga is passed on to our training teachers and in turn our students whose numbers keep growing and growing.

In the fall we organized a fund raiser, the purpose of which was to produce a book of Mr. Iyengar's aphorisms. The response was incredible; donations came in from around the world. In December Shirley went to Pune for Mr. Iyengar's 85th birthday and presented the book to him as

a gift. Thank you to all the members who participated, especially Lauren Cox and Karyn Woodland who did the layout and illustration. Mr. Iyengar was delighted with the book.

This time last year we were a little cramped for space and so when an area on the ground floor of our building came available the board of directors was asked to consider expanding. Although we had only been in our own space for 18 months, class waiting lists were growing and teachers were asking to teach more classes. After careful consideration the board decided to go ahead and in April 2003 we opened our 3rd studio. Thank you Constance Barker, Martha Chick, Doug Hart, Linda Benn, Leslie Hogya, Ted Mather, Amanda Mills, Jim Riddell, Sue Riddell, Corrine Lowen, Greg Sly and Drew Yallop.

I would like to say a special thank you to Martha Chick who has been our secretary for a number of years but is taking a break from board duties, we will miss you Martha. Also leaving the board this year are Greg Sly, Doug Hart and Sue Riddell. Thank you for the work you have done over the past year. Although they will no longer be on the board Greg will continue to be an editor for the newsletter, Sue has volunteered to look after the props and Doug has volunteered to run an early morning members practice. This is the commitment and spirit that makes our centre the success that it is.

The newsletter is a very important part of our society and the rotating editors with their team produce six issues a year. Our newsletter is enjoyed by members around the world, thank you to all involved in the production and mailing.

A year ago I took on the job of President of the Victoria Yoga Centre; thank you to everyone who has helped me along the way, it has been an honour and a privilege.

Vision 2008 Report

BY LESLIE HOGYA

In January 2003 we spent time envisioning where we are headed as a yoga centre.

Some of our goals set at that time and where we are now are as follows.

- 1. Plan and Design our Space** — We began this process, but it came to a halt because of budget restraints. However we did build a new studio in the space we acquired downstairs later in the year.
- 2. Policy and Procedures Manual** — Corrine, Connie, Greg and Melissa worked on a manual for board roles and responsibilities which includes a code of ethics and abbreviated Robert's Rules of Order. As we refine processes, we add them to this manual.
- 3. Board Retreat** — This was not held partly because of budget restraints.
- 4. Understanding our Customer Base** — Drew has helped research the kinds of people who are coming to our centre. We could do more here.
- 5. Higher Level of Practice** — We have more pranayama classes, Shirley gave a lecture on the yoga sutras and we are offering a philosophy class. We also have more practice times available and we bought a harmonium.
- 6. Public Events** — We have participated in events such as the City Green walking event, the Health Show in January at the Conference Centre and we had a table at Revenue Canada's Information Day. We have been invited to another walking event.
- 7. Community Outreach** — We had a student teacher from UVIC. We have Corrine and Robin going to the youth detention centre twice a month to work with kids who are in trouble. We have had different special interest groups come for classes, one group dealing with head injuries and another with epilepsy. Carole Miller has involved Shirley, Ann and I in teaching students who are taking yoga



Board of Directors 2004: Back row (L-R): Joan Douglas, Jim Riddell, Sylvia Vilches, Constance Barker, Lori Wanamaker-. Front row (L-R): Leslie Hogya, Linda Benn, Melissa Worth, Corrine Lowen, Ted Mather, Rosemary Barritt. Absent: Amanda Mills and Lynn Langford

for credit it the Phys. Ed. Dept at UVIC. More bursaries have become available, particularly for special needs students who are often on a fixed income. Our special needs classes are like a community outreach because they are subsidized by the centre.

Treasurer's Report

BY DOUGLAS HART

This past fiscal year has seen the Victoria Yoga Centre Society (VYCS) accomplish many positive changes.

Paid staff has expanded to include reception and office help, thereby freeing our generous volunteer community for other needed projects. Through the acquisition of Cedar Studio the VYCS is able to increase the number of evening classes. The VYCS also was able to increase the pay for our well deserving teachers and continue financing our scholarship and bursaries programs.

After observing the patterns of class registration it has been determined that the VYCS requires enough cash reserves from which to draw upon in lean times. For example this past summers enrol-

ment dropped off to such an extent the VYCS could not meet operating expenses based solely on income generated during that period. With this realisation the VYCS has increased the class fees to ensure the doors remain open through every season.

Accounting principles are the means by which the financial status and progress of our non-profit society is measured. The reports generated through these principles contribute to the successful planning, control and decision-making process. Accurate and timely information is essential. Therein lies my concern. Since the VYCS opened its own space in 2001 a variety of people have been involved in the accounting process resulting in a loss of continuity. I no longer have confidence that the financial information generated is always creating a true picture of our current situation at any given time. I strongly urge the new board pay closer attention to this process.

Submitted with this report are the income statement and balance sheet for the fiscal year November 1, 2002 to October 31, 2003. Financial reports are available for reading in the VYCS library.

Membership Report

BY CONSTANCE BARKER

We have been in our new Centre now since October, 2001.

This past year has seen many changes and challenges met by a committed group of teachers and volunteers, board of directors and staff.

Memberships are now maintained by Karin Holtkamp who ensures that the list is kept accurate and up-to-date on a regular and ongoing basis. As well, she ensures that labels are ready for the Yoga Newsletter mailout every two-months.

Memberships are \$30.00 plus GST and expire December 31 of each year. They continue to grow, due in part, to the added benefit of a 5% discount on all classes. As well, members receive the bi-monthly newsletter, free practice times, eligibility for scholarships, early registration and discounts on workshops, timed practices, borrowing privileges in the library and eligibility to become a board member.

Local memberships now number 283. International memberships can be found in India, Hong Kong, England, France, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. We also exchange newsletters with other Iyengar Yoga studios, provide honorary memberships to chosen individuals, and mail copies to the National Archives in Ottawa.

Students are encouraged to join the Victoria Yoga Centre to enjoy the many benefits and to be part of a growing and vital community.

Program Report

BY GREG SLY

The Program Committee met four times during the year to maintain the organization of special events well into the future, from present up to 2006. Our continuing aim is to invite those teachers for workshops who are in direct contact with Mr. Iyengar and/or

those who are closely following his teaching.

The offerings of our centre have grown. Besides many weekend and short afternoon workshops, we set dates for Friday Night Gatherings, teacher's meetings, the Salt Spring retreat, the Summer Intensives and the *Sadhanas*.

In addition to Shirley's October workshop, Going Deeper, which now includes a Sutras Workshop to start the weekend, she also gives a second annual workshop in January, at the Intermediate level, called The Heart of Yoga. The summer months are filled with three levels of week-long Intensives: one at the Junior Intermediate training level, one at the Introductory I/II training level, and a Student Intensive.

Some Highlights of the last year were:

- A workshop with Marie-Andree Morin in March.
- A return workshop with Felicity Green in April.
- A workshop with Faeq Biria in May who came with his deep knowledge gained from working with Mr. Iyengar for many years.
- A return workshop with Chris Saudek in October with a focus on the Junior Intermediate syllabi.

Teachers Group Report

BY LINDA BENN

This has been a successful and challenging year for the members of our teachers group. We have enough well-qualified teachers to offer over 50 classes per week at the centre in Victoria.

Currently our group has 43 members, mainly from greater Victoria but also from the Yukon, Queen Charlotte City, Prince George, Kelowna, Lasqueti Island, etc.

People doing teacher training with us are: John Anderson, Doug Bauer (Kelowna), Charles Campbell, Athena

George (Saltspring Is), Karin Holtkamp, Glenda Hingley, Linda Kusleika (Terrace), Jeannette Merryfield, Melissa Pereduhoff (Kelowna), Britta Poisson, Karyn Woodland, and Krisna Zawaduk (Kelowna). Teacher training is overseen by the Teacher Training Committee comprised of Shirley Daventry French, Marlene Miller, Leslie Hogya, Linda Benn, Sheri Berkowitz, Lauren Cox and Ann Kilbertus.

We are going to miss the cheerful presence of Christine Dimofski very much but we wish her well on her new adventure.

Marlene Miller tells me that the Peninsula Yoga Centre in Saanich is going very well since starting classes in September. As well as Marlene, Nancy Searing and Glenda Hingley teach there.

This summer we offered two well-attended Intensives for teacher training: July for Introductory level, August for Junior Intermediate level. In August there was a Student Intensive for keen students and those thinking about doing teacher training in the future.

During the year we have had monthly meetings and practices focussing on: the syllabus of asanas, anatomy, peer teaching, teaching beginner students, observation and correction, and insights from India. We have had some good discussions about philosophy including this month's discussion of the book, Hatha Yoga Pradipika.

Shirley Daventry French attended Mr. Iyengar's 85th birthday celebration in Pune in December. Shirley continues to be our ambassador as she travels throughout Canada, Great Britain, Hong Kong and the United States to teach workshops. In the coming year many teachers are going to India to study. The Yoga Centre offers scholarship support and in turn these teachers enrich the practice of Iyengar Yoga in the centre.

Several teachers have successfully prepared for assessment with the

national association: Introductory Level II was achieved by Gwynneth Powell. In January '03 Leslie, Ann and Linda achieved Junior Intermediate III and this January they were joined by Lauren Cox and Sheri Berkowitz. It is a great challenge to do an assessment. All our local candidates are grateful for the support and guidance given to them by the yoga community and in particular, Shirley Daventry French. Victoria Yoga Centre also hosted the Junior Intermediate III assessment in January '04. It was well organized by many volunteers. In 2004 approximately 10 of our teachers group will be going to assessment.

The annual AGM of C.I.Y.T.A. was held near Gimli, on Lake Winnipeg in June. Several of us attended either as members of the national board and/or as assessors. Again, the Yoga Centre gives financial assistance to those attending this very important meeting of teachers from all corners of Canada.

I know that the Yoga Centre teachers would like to express gratitude to the Board for the increase in teachers' fees received earlier in the year, as well as the class discounts that we continue to receive.

We also appreciate the friendly, competent staff and volunteers that make everyone feel so welcome at the Centre. We are grateful to those whose constant vigilance improves the way we operate, making sure that class lists are made, props are available, wall ropes are installed, floors are clean, bills are paid etc.

Again this year, I must particularly thank Leslie and Rosemary for overseeing the entire operation of the Yoga Centre, not only being able to see the large picture but also the small details that need to be constantly dealt with on a day to day basis.

Scholarship Report

BY AMANDA MILLS

Wendy Boyer, Ty Chandler and Amanda Mills (as Board Liaison) make up this committee.

The Scholarship Committee had a budget of \$6,000 for the fiscal year of November 1, 2002- October 31, 2003. There were 10 workshops and scholarships were awarded for all of the workshops. Some workshops had multiple scholarships and only 2 were not awarded, due to lack of sufficient applications. Four scholarships were also awarded for the Summer Sadhanas.

The B.K.S. Iyengar Scholarship Fund for the fiscal year receives its funds from the Celebration of Mr. Iyengar's birthday, on or about December 14th of the previous year. The funds raised from the December 2002 Celebration were \$1,877.28 with a carry over from the previous year to make the 2003 Scholarship Fund amount \$2,425.56. The Scholarships will be announced at the December 2004 Celebration and at the Annual General Meeting. The recipients of the B.K.S. Iyengar Scholarship Fund for the current fiscal year are: Gwynneth Powell, Lauren Cox, Melissa Worth, Ann Kilbertus and Nancy Searing, all of whom will be going to Pune in 2004. A scholarship was also awarded to Ty Chandler for attending a workshop in Vancouver in 2003.

The Bursary program is successful and the target of 5 bursaries per term has been met, with the bursaries being spread amongst all the classes.

Guidelines for applications for all scholarships and bursaries are available upon request.

Newsletter Report

BY GWYNNETH POWELL

The newsletter committee is made up of 2 advisors, Shirley Daventry French and Lauren Cox. There are three rotating editors: Melissa Worth, Greg Sly and Gwynneth Powell. Susan Robinson is our proofing editor and Karin Holtkamp is in charge of ads and announcements. The committee of nine completes itself with members Jane Munro and Taimi Mulder.

The committee is very excited about the upcoming year as we are presently working on a facelift for the Newsletter. We have taken our newsletter to graphic designer, Peggy Cady MGDC, who has agreed to work within our budget and to give us a more professional look. This will involve changing such things as the size of our publication, the name, as well as the overall visual presentation. The acting body to make final decisions are Shirley (or in her absence, Lauren), and no less than two of the editors: Gwynneth, Melissa and/or Greg.

We are still looking for teachers, teacher trainees or Iyengar students from levels 3 or 4 who have a strong commitment to the teachings and to this community to join our committee and in particular the rotating editorship.

As all 3 regular editors will be otherwise engaged this summer, Taimi Mulder of our committee has agreed to take on the editorship for one summer issue to fill in for us during our absence. ॐ





"Our bodies are like an open book; it's for us to read the book – this is the practice of self-study."

MELISSA WORTH IS IN THIRD YEAR TEACHER TRAINING AT THE VYCS AND TEACHES AT OUR CENTRE. MELISSA IS AN EDITOR ON THE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE, WORKS ON OUR WEBSITE COMMUNICATIONS AND IS ON THE BOARD.

Home is Where the Heart Is

by Melissa Worth

It was timely that when I arrived at the 3rd annual Heart of Yoga workshop with Shirley Daventry French that I had been thinking recently of *svadhyaya* or the form of study that takes us toward the understanding of the Self, this being one aspect of a sutra I am studying in the philosophy class here at the centre: *sutra II.44 Self-study leads towards the realization of God*. God, the soul, *Atma*, the divine, the spirit, the Self, *purusa*; these are all words to help us describe that part of our self which is infinite and unchanging. In the midst of a busy modern life, with all of its inherent noise and distraction, it is difficult to become acquainted with one's Self. In our practice, however, we can use *asana* as a spiritual tool: "The more we practise, the more we find our strength and, more importantly, we come to know our Self."

This weekend, the brilliance of Mr. Iyengar's work shone through Shirley in her teaching, as she has recently returned from his birthday celebrations in Pune. In her usual eloquence Shirley encouraged us, in the words of B.K.S. Iyengar, to "culture" our *sadhana* and begin to enter the abode of the Self in the seat of the heart – it's like coming home. Here are just some of her words to inspire us as we continue on the yogic path:

"You're never too old for yoga."

"You can use an asana as a spiritual tool; the body is a vehicle for this."

"Yoga helps us to view the events of our life with equanimity."

"One-pointedness – this is the Heart of Yoga."

"Young or old, you can culture your yoga and reach the pinnacle where the yogis reside."



"Be aware of the body, mind, breath until the boundaries between the three disappear and you become more your Self."

"The *samana vayu* resides in the abdomen – it benefits the spirit to keep this quiet. Then the *prana vayu* can open."

"Listen to your inner Self."

"Feel the intelligence in the legs, not in the head; sometimes this can be a liability"

"Stay in the pose long enough to get glimpses of the Self."

"When the various limbs, the various systems, the five senses, the *vayus* are balanced on the median line, harmony and stillness begins to come."

"Now that you have this fine balance, can you have a more reflective pose?"

"Moving away from the ego sense, there are glimpses of *atman*."

"Put the intellectual intelligence aside so that the body's intelligence may manifest itself."

"Hold on to that sense of your Self when coming out of a pose."

"Culturing our practice can happen through consolidation or by trying new asanas and challenging ourselves a little more."

"We don't have to hold on to our goals – they become a burden if you do nothing about them."

"Overcome obstacles – see them as opportunities."

"We have the choice to move toward the light or away from the light."

"The mind always looks for the easy way out – we avoid that which may arise from our consciousness."

"Focus on your struggle – staying with that which helps you to become more cultured in your practice."

"Take what comes, learn from what comes, dropping any attachments."



"The purpose of asana is to bring us more in touch with atma – our Self."

"If we try to force an understanding we sacrifice the process of understanding. If you are confused, let the confusion be there. Do this with an open mind."

"Often we say 'It tightens my neck'. It doesn't tighten your neck, **you** tighten your neck."

"Twists teach patience. They can't be hurried. If you do, you become bitter and twisted!"

"Our ego is here to be our servant, not our master."

"If there was no higher Self, why would we do selfless things?"

"Often we get hung up on our failures."

"Our bodies are like an open book; it's for us to read the book – this is the practice of self-study."

"Can you take the vibrancy in your practice and move it to the level of illumination."

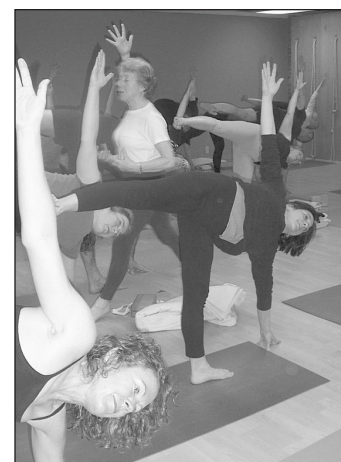
"If the goal is to know your Self, then for all of the years that you may live, you may pursue this goal."

"The body is a vehicle for the spirit, a necessary vehicle."

"Sometimes you have to go into uncertainty to find a better pose."

"Put the intellectual intelligence aside so that the body's intelligence may manifest itself."

"Gather all those aspects of your being on the thread of your breath."



"If you lose your balance in Ardha Chandrasana, what will happen? Nothing. Take a risk. It's better to open up and try to have the nectar in the pose."

"If the goal is to know your Self, then for all of the years that you may live, you may pursue this goal."



SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

for TERM 5, 2004

Term Term 5 May 3 – June 27 (8 weeks)
Note class break June 28 – July 4. Some
classes will be adjusted due to special
workshops or holidays.

INTRODUCTION TO IYENGAR YOGA – 4 WEEKS

May 4, 11, 18, 25 and June 1, 8, 15, 22
 Tues 7:00 – 8:30pm Karin Holtkamp
 May 5, 12, 19, 26 and June 9, 16, 23
 Wed 6:30 – 8:00pm Britta Poisson

LEVEL 1

Mon 12:00 – 1:30pm Lauren Cox,
 Robin Cantor
 Mon 4:00 – 5:30pm Jo Anna Hope
 Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm Ann Kilbertus
 Tues 10:00 – 11:30am Leslie Hoga
 Tues 5:00 – 6:30pm Melissa Worth
 Tues 7:00 – 8:30pm Wies Pukesh
 Wed 6:00 – 7:30pm Gwynneth Powell,
 Corrine Lowen
 Wed 7:30 – 9:00pm Jeannette Merryfield
 Thurs 8:30 – 10:00am Linda Benn
 Thurs 6:00 – 7:30pm Wendy Boyer
 Fri 10:30 – 12:00pm Linda Benn
 Fri 5:00 – 6:30pm Gwynneth, Britta,
 Karin
 Sat 9:30 – 11:00am Corrine Lowen
 Sun 10:30 – 12:00pm Wies Pukesh

LEVEL 1 / 2

Wed 9:00 – 10:30am Lauren Cox
 Leslie Hoga
 Thurs 7:00 – 8:30pm Greg Sly

LEVEL 2

Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm James Currie-Johnson
 Tues 5:15 – 7:00pm Leslie Hoga
 Tues 6:30 – 8:00pm Melissa Worth
 Wed 7:45 – 9:15pm Gwynneth, Corrine
 Wed 6:00 – 7:30pm Melissa Worth
 Thurs 4:30 – 6:00pm Ann Kilbertus
 Fri 9:00 – 10:30am Linda Benn
 Frid 5:00 – 6:30pm Wendy Boyer
 Sat 8:00 – 9:30am Corrine Lowen
 Sun 9:00 – 10:30am Wendy Boyer
 Sun 4:30 – 6:00pm Wies Pukesh

LEVEL 2/3

Mon 10:00 – 12:00pm Lauren Cox,
 Robin Cantor

LEVEL 3

Thurs 10:00 – 12:00pm Shirley Daventry
 French,
 Linda Benn
 Thurs 6:00 – 8:00pm Ann Kilbertus,
 Leslie Hoga
 Sat 9:00 – 11:00am Marlene Miller

LEVEL 4

Mon 5:30 – 7:30pm Shirley Daventry
 French & Senior
 teachers

NOON

Tues 12:00 – 1:00pm Jeannette Merryfield
 Wed 12:00 – 1:00pm Wendy Boyer
 Thurs 12:00 – 1:00pm Lauren / Wendy
 Fri 12:00 – 1:00pm Ann Kilbertus

INTRODUCTION TO PRANAYAMA

June 2, 9, 16, 23 Level 2 required
 Wed 7 – 8am Ann Kilbertus

PRANAYAMA (Level 3 or 4)

April 29, May 6, 13, 20
 Thurs 7 – 8am Shirley Daventry
 French

PRE NATAL YOGA

Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm Robin Cantor

55 & BETTER

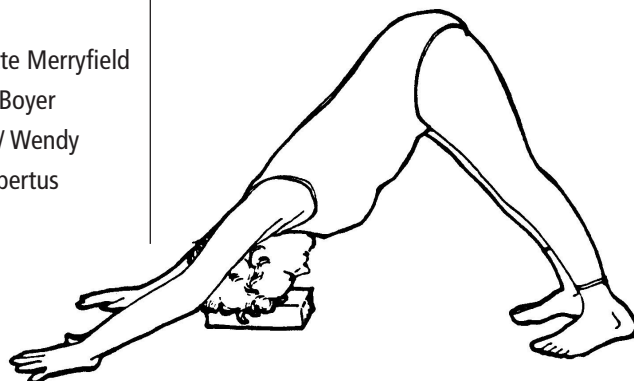
Wed 10:30 – 12:00pm Leslie Hoga -
 continuing
 Fri 10:30 – 12:00pm Wendy Boyer - Level I

SPECIAL NEEDS

Wed 4:30 – 6:00pm Shirley D. French,
 Ann Kilbertus,
 Leslie Hoga,
 Thurs 1:15 – 2:45pm Linda Benn,
 Ann Kilbertus

BACK CARE

Mon 4:00 – 5:15pm Linda Benn
 Wed 5:30 – 6:30pm James Currie Johnson



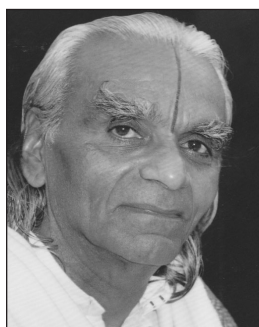
Light on Questions

by Ty Chandler

TY CHANDLER IS CERTIFIED
IN THE IYENGAR METHOD
AND LIVES IN VICTORIA.
SHE HAS BEEN TEACHING
SINCE 1996.

Dear Ty,
*Why is it that Mr. Iyengar, a.k.a. B.K.S.
Iyengar, a.k.a. Guruji, a.k.a. Yogachara
B.K.S. Iyengar is never referred to by his
first name?*

Sincerely, Your Student



Resources:

*A Concise Dictionary of Indian
Philosophy* (John Grimes, 1989)

Light on Yoga (B.K.S Iyengar,
1966)

Iyengar His Life and Work
(Timeless Books, 1987)

Thanks for your question; I am sure all the variations must look confusing at first. B.K.S. stands for Bellur Krishnamacharya Sunderraja. Mr. Iyengar was named Bellur Krishnamacharya after his father.

Bellur is also the village in Karnataka State where Mr. Iyengar was born on Saturday December 14, 1918.

Krishnamacharya is broken down into two meanings. *Krishna* is the most celebrated hero in Hindu mythology and was the eighth incarnation of the god *Vishnu*. *Charya* means a path of liberation; it is also called the path of the servant and its fruit is residence in the realm of God.

Sunderraja is the given name or first name as we would have it. Mr. Iyengar's family and friends might use this less formal title. Mr. Iyengar is referred to by his devoted students as *Guruji*, the 'ji' on the end of Guru denotes affection and respect. ॐ

Thank you!
Thank you!
Thank you!

To Alisa Kage-McCaig,
Marion Ashton,
Connie Barker,
Ty Chandler,
Leslie Hogya,
Jeannette Merryfield,
Britta Poisson and
Gwynneth Powell
who volunteered to help
out at the Health Fair
on January 24 and 25.

Upcoming CIYTA Assessment Dates

June 18-20
Introductory I & II
Kelowna & Edmonton

Oct 15-17
Junior Intermediate I
Toronto

Nov. 19-21
Junior Intermediate I
Vancouver

Please note:

The Introductory Level I
& II Assessments are held
annually the third weekend
of June and the third
weekend of October.

Short WORKSHOP

Yoga Kurunta (ropes)

With Ann Kilbertus

Saturday, May 15, 1-3pm

Pre-requisite: At least two terms
of Level 1 classes

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

Refunds will only be offered if you
space can be filled and are subject
to a \$10 cancellation fee.

BIG, BIG PRACTICE

Friday, May 14

Asana Practice 6-7:30pm

Potluck dinner to follow

Bring food to share

Everyone is welcome
to join us. Bring a friend,
your partner, a family member.

By donation, free for members.

Volunteers



Volunteers help with all kinds of things at the Victoria Yoga Centre. This column introduces some of the people who give a great deal to our community.

Providing Harmony

by Jane Munro

JANE MUNRO IS LONGTIME STUDENT AT THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE. SHE IS ON THE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Twenty years ago, Ann Kilbertus could not have lived—would not have liked—the life she lives today. No one could have told her: spend two hours a day practicing yoga, eight hours a week teaching yoga, and countless hours volunteering for CIYTA (Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association) and the Victoria Yoga Centre. Her life felt full. She loved the arts—grew up playing piano and guitar. Sang, studied drawing and painting, kept a garden, enjoyed nature. Connected deeply with friends and family, liked socializing. Was dedicated to her profession of Occupational Therapist.

Ann decided as a teenager to become an OT; this goal shaped her academic studies. In contrast, her passion for yoga arose less consciously and developed slowly. Twenty years ago she was looking for a “practice to sustain my body—and then I began to experience the effects of the practice—and then after a few years, Shirley asked me, had I ever thought of becoming a yoga teacher.” Last winter, Ann earned her Junior Intermediate III certification. Her husband comes to her Monday night class. She calls his support for her yoga “a huge gift—huge.” She’s been to India to study with the Iyengars three times, and is going for another six weeks this fall. “I’m the queen of leaves-of-absences from my OT job,” she laughs. Looking back, she frames her evolution with a quotation from Geeta Iyengar: “We try to hide ourselves from ourself. You cannot search the core of



being unless you are open to it. Improve your practice and philosophy will come automatically.”

Much of her volunteer work has been linked to supporting and improving yoga teaching. At the Victoria Yoga Centre, she’s been involved since their inception with the teacher training program and Special Needs classes. She says, “I don’t even separate my volunteer activities from the work of yoga—I just like the idea of doing what needs to be done.” This has included organizing materials for teacher training, coordinating workshops with guest teachers, and—early on—teaching yoga at the Y as a volunteer.

Nationally, Ann served as a regional representative for CIYTA and is now on its Professional Development Committee. At the last AGM she agreed to sit on CIYTA’s Board though she didn’t really have the time. Then, her husband phoned with the news that her request for a three-day work-week had finally been approved. Ann delights in the “synchronicity of external events cooperating with your evolution.”

“But, I guess I’ll never make the time to become a singer,” she adds, somewhat ruefully—“you can’t do everything.” Still, when her musician step-son visits, Ann gets right into the act—playing piano and singing: “I provide harmony,” she explains. That’s a niche she fills in her volunteer work, too. “Doing what needs to be done”—intuitively, humbly—finding ways to enliven, heal, support. ॐ

Scheduled Practice Space for VYC Members

Mondays 6-8 am • Tuesdays 6-8 am • Wednesdays 6-8 am and 1-4 pm • Sundays 12-3 pm

Schedule is subject to change

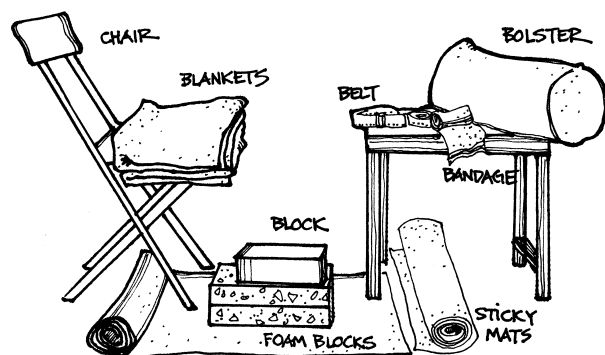
Please note:

- The supervising teacher is not there to teach or lead a practice.
- Bring your own practice sequence or find a sequence in one of the available books.
- The door may be locked, just knock loudly.

Yoga props for sale

Victoria Yoga Centre • 202-919
Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K3
386-YOGA(9642)

(All prices subject to 7% GST and 7.5% PST)



Blankets (White Cotton)	\$20.00
Foam Block	\$ 6.50
Wood Block - handmade in Victoria	\$25.00
Bolster - handmade in Victoria	\$55.00
Eye bags (Flax) - handmade in Victoria	\$10.00
Head Bandages	\$ 6.50
Sandbag - handmade in Victoria	\$20.00
Sticky Mat (Blue, Green, and Purple)	\$40.00
Sticky Mat (Half Moon)	\$32.00
Sticky Mat Second Hand (please check for availability)	\$10.48
Sticky Mats (Economy)	\$22.00
Straps (Regular)	\$ 6.00
Straps (Long)	\$10.00
T-Shirts Unisex price for non-members	\$27.00
T-Shirts Unisex price for members	\$22.00
T-Shirts Women's Cap Sleeve price for non-members	\$27.00
T-Shirts Women's Cap Sleeve price for members	\$22.00



Radha Yoga Centre

The Radha Yoga Centre would like to extend a special invitation to the members and students of the Victoria Yoga Centre to help us celebrate our twenty years in Victoria.

We will be presenting a special 20 anniversary summer event on the weekend of June 19-20. This event will include an open house with the opportunity to walk a grass labyrinth in the afternoon from 2-5pm, followed by a special Saraswati evening full of sacred theatre, music and dance, starting at 7:30. On Sunday morning at 10:30 we will offer the first part of the Rose Ceremony, and a special satsang that evening at 8pm with the second half of the Rose Ceremony. Bring two roses.

All events are free, donations welcome.

Please contact us at radha@uniserve.com
or call 595-0177 for more information.



VICTORIA *yoga centre* Calendar 2004

MAY

- 14** Big, Big Practice
- 15** Short Workshop: Yoga Kurunta (ropes), with Ann Kilbertus
- 22** Teacher's Meeting

JUNE

- 4-6** Salt Spring Retreat
- 26** Teacher's Meeting
- 28-July 3** 6-Day Summer Sadhana

JULY

- 5-10** Teacher Training Intensive
Introductory Level
- 5-10** 6-Day Summer Sadhana

AUGUST

- 16-20** Teacher Training Intensive Junior
Intermediate Level
- 23-27** Student Intensive
- 23-31** 9-Day Summer Sadhana

SEPTEMBER

- 6-12** Program Break

OCTOBER

- 1** Sutra Workshop with Shirley
Daventry French
- 2-3** Going Deeper Workshop with
Shirley Daventry French



VICTORIA
yoga centre
SOCIETY

Membership and Newsletter Subscription

For a one year membership and newsletter subscription, please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to:

**Victoria Yoga Centre Society, c/o Karin Holtkamp,
202-919 Fort Steet, Victoria BC V8V 3K3**

Membership/subscription fee is \$32 (incl. GST),
renewable each January.

Name: _____

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Country: _____

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

☐ Receipt required

Membership benefits include 5% discount on classes, free practice times at the VYC, timed practices, early registration and discount on workshops, borrowing privileges in our library, eligibility to become a board member and eligibility for scholarships for workshops.

July/August 2004



VICTORIA

yoga centre

NEWSLETTER



PHOTO: TIMES COLONIST / DEBRA BRASH

Going Deeper

An Iyengar Yoga Workshop
with Shirley Daventry French

October 2-3, 2004

An opportunity for Level I, II and III students to work with senior teacher Shirley Daventry French to explore yoga in a deeper way. Also an opportunity for teachers to observe Shirley.

Shirley is a long time student of B.K.S. Iyengar and has been to Pune to study many times, most recently in December 2003. She is looking forward to returning in December of this year.

The founder of the Victoria Yoga Centre, Shirley has been the driving force in making the Victoria yoga community one of the strongest and most viable in Canada. Students from across Canada and around the world have studied with her. In this special weekend, local students have the opportunity to learn from her in a workshop setting.



Saturday, October 2
11am - 1pm, 3-5pm

Sunday, October 3
10:30am - 1pm
1 -1:30pm refreshments
1:30-2:30pm debriefing for observers

Fees:
\$105 + GST for members
\$120 + GST for non members
\$ 75 + GST for observers

**Registration will open August 9, 2004
for members and August 23
for Non-members**

**Contact: Victoria Yoga Centre at
386-YOGA (9642)**

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

with Shirley Daventry French

Yoga in the tradition of B.K.S. Iyengar is soundly based on the ageless wisdom and practical philosophy contained in Patanjali's yoga-sutras.

The sutras are a series of aphorisms each containing a seed of truth. They provide a framework for living wisely, and are as relevant in the 21st century Canada as they were in ancient India.

This evening seminar will provide an overview of the sutras and explore practical ways of making use of them as a guide for daily living.

Friday, October 1, 2004
6:30-8:30pm

Fee:
\$35 + GST for members
\$40 + GST for non-members

**Registration will open
August 9 for members
and August 23 for non-members.**

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Newsletter Advertising Policy (Adopted February 20, 2004)

In keeping with the mandate of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society Directors, 2004, to update, review and document policies and procedures, the newsletter committee submitted a policy which is a revision of the 1996 policy and has been adopted by the Board of Directors as follows:

1. Advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the newsletter of the VYCS.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar Yoga
3. Priority given to advertisements regarding:
 - VYC events
 - VYC sponsored events
 - CIYTA events
 - Radha House/ Yasodhara Ashram



VICTORIA yoga centre NEWSLETTER

EDITOR Taimi Mulder

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

July 15, 2004

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of B.C., 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 Newsletter, published regularly by the VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY, provides current information on events concerning yoga in the Victoria area and the Yasodhara Ashram.

Send contributions, articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter:
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3.
For information on activities and events, call 386-YOGA(9642) or visit our website: www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca.

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The editor/newsletter committee hold the right to publish or edit all articles at their discretion.



This issue brings reflection upon India in all its tempestuous glory and the teachings of yoga from “emotional Indians” to “rational Westerners” (*Reflections*), a tale of a pilgrimage of the soul (Faeq Biria), your own practice, grammar, and a recipe to speed you on your way.

A short time ago I feared I had lost my dreams. So I made a list, old and new, past and present. And much to my relief the dreams were still there, matured perhaps, but alive and well, some explored - some not.

Shortly before that, I had met an individual with whom I felt a strong connection. While sailing in a weekend sailing regatta, he taught me how to fly a spinnaker and by his actions throughout the weekend he reminded me of how to be crew. He brought me straight home to myself – to a part of myself buried, almost forgotten, and lost. The only words to describe my feelings were intense relief and joy. This pervaded the entire weekend venture. Being a good crewmember is more than a job. It means being part of a team, being in place to do your assigned job, and being ready to willingly assist when needed. It means standing back and letting the other crewmembers do their jobs. It means being aware, listening, and adjusting your actions to be in balance with those around you. It does not mean taking over someone else’s task and doing it all yourself. It means always being prepared for the unexpected. Sailing is not about the individual – it’s about moving the boat through the water. In extremis, it’s about life and death.

Caught in a western interpretation of events I pondered the propriety of pursuing this connection. Concerns of what this individual might think, I might think, others might think, and of my own motivations swirled through my head. I admired his restraint, his ability to calmly hold back with equanimity and yet to be completely and immediately present when needed, no instructions given, no questions asked.

I’ve pondered my own practice of restraint.

Should I hold back and accept that brief glimpse of grace as encouragement to continue this practice in my daily life and let what will be occur without any further impetuosity – perhaps the less threatening path for a rational westerner? Or, should I enter this window of opportunity to learn as much as I can from this individual while time and circumstances permit – the far more threatening path of uncertainty and opening up, with no vision of where it may lead? Possibly nowhere!

Do I detect a thread of disappointment that my life may not change? As usual, when I start to go deeper into the questions the problem starts to transform and resolve itself. There may not be answers to these questions. However, editing this issue of the newsletter has uncovered a common thread of pilgrimages of the heart, practicing restraint as part of finding balance, ...of making God the median line. And I have begun to understand that is the thread to follow through the questions. Look where it got Faeq Biria – it can’t be all that bad! May this issue help you along the way, however big or small a step it may be. The dreams are still there. Uncover them. ॐ

The editor wishes to express her appreciation and gratitude to Gwynneth Powell, Shirley Daventry French, and Melissa Worth for their generous assistance and efforts in making this issue so straightforward to edit. Gwynneth, in particular, did a lot of footwork in obtaining material for this issue and in getting me organized. And, of course, there are all the other wonderful newsletter staff that this issue would not be possible without. Thank you all.

In E.M. Forster's novel *A Passage to India*, a central event is the trial of a young Indian Muslim doctor, Dr. Aziz, who is defending himself against vague charges of sexual impropriety. His accuser is a young British woman called, Adela Quested. The novel, written in 1924, is set in Colonial India of the post First World War period. The prosecuting council is British and the defending council Indian, a celebrated Cambridge educated lawyer. He is assisted by a young lawyer with strong pro-nationalist leanings. Like the defendant, both defence councils are Muslim and use this case as an opportunity to air their grievances against British rule with its rampant racial discrimination.

Another character who plays an important role in absentia in this court case is Mrs. Moore, an elderly English woman sympathetic to Indians and friendly towards Dr. Aziz. She was present on the outing where the alleged offence took place and the defence lawyers had hoped she would testify on his behalf. When they discovered she had left the country they accused the British of masterminding her departure. The young lawyer, Mahmoud Ali, becomes particularly distraught at this juncture and galvanizes first the Indians in the courtroom and then the crowd which has gathered outside with his resounding cry of Mrs. Moore's name and his demand that she



SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH WAS AWARDED SENIOR CERTIFICATION FROM B.K.S. IYENGAR. SHE HAS BEEN TEACHING SINCE 1972 AND FOUNDED THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE IN 1976. SHIRLEY LIVES IN VICTORIA AND TEACHES WORLDWIDE.

be brought back to attest to Dr. Aziz's innocence.

British director David Lean made a striking film of this novel in 1984 where this scene is masterfully enacted as Mahmoud Ali furiously storms out of the courthouse chanting "Mrs. Moore" repeatedly and emotionally, whipping the already heightened emotions of the crowd into a frenzy. Most of them

have no idea who Mrs. Moore is, but sensing a miscarriage of justice their anti-British sentiments are ignited and fuel a riot.

Probably many people in the Canadian audience thought that the two actors playing the Indian lawyers were overacting and the whole scene while amusing was grossly exaggerated. To my husband and I, having been to India, it appeared entirely realistic. In the heat, and congestion of India, emotions can become volatile and a restless crowd turn into a riot in a moment. In India crowds are everywhere. No Canadian who has not ventured far beyond their own country can possibly understand what it is like to live like this.

Once I read an account by the Canadian journalist Alan Fotheringham, of a train trip he made across China whose population is close to India's but in a far bigger country. He said it was similar to making the cross Canada trip on the old Canadian Pacific trains, except that every time you looked out the window you saw people. The same could be said of the train journey between Mumbai and Pune where there are few uninhabited stretches.

India has more than a billion people in a country roughly a quarter the size of ours. Add to this a heated climate both geographically and politically and you have prime ingredients for unrest.

In the heat, and congestion of India, emotions can become volatile and a restless crowd turn into a riot in a moment.

It was the recent Indian national elections which brought this scene from *A Passage to India* to my mind. First of all I marvelled at the orderly crowds of people waiting, as one news broadcast said, up to twenty four hours to vote. Then I admired the fact that they managed to pull it off with few untoward incidents and few protests or accusations of impropriety. There were over 5,000 candidates and 685 million potential voters! One Indian friend of mine says that while it is impossible in India to get any small task accomplished quickly, when it comes to something on a grand scale they mobilise their efforts and become very efficient.

In yoga it is always a question of finding balance.

The Congress Party received the most votes, and their leader is Sonia Gandhi, the Italian born widow of the assassinated former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The Gandhi family is dynastic, descended not from the Mahatma but from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, independent India's first Prime Minister. While not universally revered, the name Gandhi still pulls a lot of prestige. With Congress's success in the polls it was expected that Mrs. Gandhi would become Prime Minister in the new government but she refused. The scenes which I watched on television following this news reminded me of the court scene in the *Passage to India* film.

Many threatened suicide if she did not take this post. Mobs of people were shown on TV weeping and wailing. One man perched on top of a car holding a revolver to his head and threatening to shoot himself. The stock market had its steepest fall ever. Crowds of people

sobbed and begged her to reconsider. As someone said in a letter I received last week: you would have thought that she had said she was going to start World War Three instead of merely refusing to take office!

Not even the wildest stretch of my imagination could envision such scenes in Canada. Over ice hockey perhaps, but politics - never! Emotional Indians, rational westerners. Does this stereotype stand up? No, not entirely.

When I became seriously interested in yoga, my brother in London wrote to me that he had no time for these "cults of the irrational". This made me laugh because I was studying at Yasodhara Ashram where I was being given practices to balance my faculties of reason and emotion, so that I would become less emotional. In yoga it is always a question of finding balance. One of my favourite aphorisms of B.K.S. Iyengar is that "God is the median line", which is applicable in all aspects of life.

On one of my early trips to India, when few Indians took classes from Gururji at the institute or even knew there was a teacher of this stature in Pune, I was sitting in my hotel lobby waiting for a friend. An Indian business man sat down beside me and enquired what I was doing in Pune. Indians are friendly and generally interested in what brought foreigners to their country. When I told him I was there to study yoga, with an astonished look on his face he replied: "but you have such a nice rational society!" Again it is a question of that elusive balance. As the West, materially prosperous but spiritually impoverished, turned East looking for an alternative to their "nice rational society", many in the East were seeking to emulate us.

On the surface, many things have changed in both our societies since my first visit to India in 1979, but our history, our myths, our culture, our traditions, our climate, our population density ensure that we remain very

different. This makes it interesting and challenging for those of us who have seriously embarked on the path of yoga, to present the teachings of yoga undiluted and untainted as we have been taught in India but within our laws, customs and accepted modes of behaviour.

When Iyengar Yoga first began to spread in Canada, it was relatively easy to get a place in a class in Pune. When I first went I had only been studying Iyengar Yoga for three years although I had been practising yoga for ten. Fortunately for me my first teacher, Swami Radha, was as uncompromising as Gururji in her presentation of the teachings. She had told many stories of her learning from her guru, Swami Sivananda, so I had some sense that what awaited me in Pune was more than physical challenge.

In that era many women in the West had given up wearing bras, including me, and I had been told that as a courtesy to Indian tradition I should always wear one in class as well as modest shorts and t-shirts with sleeves. Today, despite the publication of a booklet called *Know Your Institute* containing information on their dress code, you see many woman in skimpy clothing showing a lot of bare flesh. I have not seen any of them thrown out or told to change. However, even in today's more liberal climate in India, I am sure that this type of attire is not approved of at the institute. How hard is it to put aside one's will and surrender to such a request?

Surrender plays a central role in yoga and it is this inability to put aside self will which causes many of the confrontations between the Iyengars and their students. Frequently it is impossible to find a rational explanation for what goes on, which doesn't stop us from trying. The interaction is personal and private between master and pupil, even though it may be taking place in public. Either you trust that the teacher is acting in the light, in which case you put up with

what you don't understand knowing that clarity may well dawn later. Or if you don't trust and respect that teacher then it is best to leave and look elsewhere.

This does not seem to happen so much with Indian students, perhaps because India itself forces one to surrender, but also because the spiritual dimension with its acceptance of divine will permeates the everyday life of most Indians I know. I have noticed from observing the Indian students, that when they are shouted at, pushed, pulled or prodded strongly, even fiercely, their self-esteem is not shattered, they don't fall back on righteous indignation. Rather they are grateful for Guruji's help and just get on with it.

The other day searching for something in my office I came across the group photograph from 1979. Of the large Canadian contingent at this intensive, only two of us are still travelling regularly to study in Pune: Ingelise Nherlan of Vancouver and myself. Many simply could not accept this form of yoga when faced with its reality; others went too soon before they had been taught the tenets of yoga.

These days there is a filtering system in place. Part of the reason for this is the sheer number of people who are studying Iyengar Yoga, and there are good teachers available worldwide; but another is to make sure that those who come are ready for the intensity of the teaching they will receive. International students wishing to study at the institute have to make formal application accompanied by a recommendation from a certified teacher with whom they are studying.

It is not merely the physical aspect of the work that is demanding; a student has to be emotionally stable, psychologically strong and be trained to a level where they can maintain their concentration sufficiently to listen, learn and follow instructions in an unquestioning way. In fact, it behooves you to have studied Patanjali's yoga-sutras, the Bhagavad Gita and other yoga texts

beforehand. Another prerequisite, in my opinion, is to be able to suspend judgment when what is happening makes no sense to you. Ideally a process of internal questioning and reflection has been going on for some time before you arrive there.

Eight years minimum of experience with a certified teacher is required now at the Institute before considering your application. They are not concerned with how flexible you are but that you have learned to take a good look at yourself in what Patanjali describes as an 'uncoloured' way (uncoloured by emotions), and are practising in a way

It is not the basic form of body which is the chief impediment on the yogic path but the state of mind, senses and emotions which inhabit that body.

which will bring changes. A strong but inflexible person will be becoming more flexible. A flexible but weak person will be developing more physical strength. All will be looking at those things in all aspects of life which weaken them – and doing something about it!

It is not the basic form of body which is the chief impediment on the yogic path but the state of mind, senses and emotions which inhabit that body.

Once, when watching a class in Mumbai, I saw some of Guruji's long-time students in postures whose external form would impress few in the West. Yoga Journal would not be seeking to put them on its cover! However, I also saw that those people had a serenity and self-

containment rarely seen in the West. Moreover, Guruji appeared to respect them and their practice.

One day during my second time in Pune, an American teacher and I were watching one of the general classes and he turned to me and said: "Aren't your students better than this?" This particular teacher was quite adept, the majority of students in that class were not, and I suspect this is how he was judging them. And in truth, at that stage in my yoga, I was thinking much the same. Sometimes it is difficult to look back without blushing at the arrogance and ignorance of those days.

By returning regularly, I began to learn that while there is a system within which we are trained to practise and teach, this cannot nor should be applied equally to all. The teachings do not vary but the means of transition does. Timing also varies from person to person. What we are given by Guruji depends on what we need for our spiritual development. We each come into his presence with our own karma. Why he shouts at this person, rebukes that person, calls another stupid even though they have a Ph.D. and are a very important person in their own country, at first seems to happen at random according to his mood.

Gradually I began to see there was little random about this. Guruji's students got what they needed not what they wanted.

Many students say that his anger and admonishments come from his human side, but I don't agree. I think this is his guru side, when the light emanates from him piercing through our layers of ignorance like a laser. Some call it abusive, and once Guruji addressed this saying that he is trying to put an end to our abuse of our body and ignorance of our self.

It became clear to me that there was no place for complacency or self-satisfaction in yoga. You cannot stand still on the spiritual path. A guru's duty is to turn you towards the light, to show you how you can remove the blinders

which obscure it. He will do his utmost to get you to discard everything which weakens you, which inevitably brings you face to face with some of your most cherished beliefs and attachments. He will make you feel more uncomfortable than you have been for a long time, and talk to you in a way you have not heard since school. As I stood among the Canadians and Americans in my first intensive in Pune, I thought to myself it was a tremendous help to have been educated in England. Praise was unknown and teachers treated us as ignorant creatures reinforcing this viewpoint in language which would not be tolerated in a Canadian school (or probably an English one) today.

In my observation, as a non-native, Canadians like to be nice and have difficulty with confrontation, a potent tool in Guruji's hands when faced with the ego of one of his pupils. I cannot confront my pupils in the same way, particularly beginners, because it is culturally unacceptable and they haven't given me the right. As students advance and continue to study with me I begin to demand more, and when they are training with me as teachers my demands intensify. Nonetheless, it is important to make demands of beginning students as well, or they will not be equipped to progress to a higher level. These demands may not make you popular, and consequently there is a high turnover of students at the introductory level.

Yoga is universal. Its principles do not vary. What does vary is the general environment and manner in which they are taught and learned. You cannot go into a class here in Victoria and behave as they do in India. Our approach must vary according to acceptable conduct in our own country. At the same time we have to remember that we are there to teach yoga not some watered down, pleasing to the students version which will make us popular. There is a system to be followed and any adaptations must fall within that framework.

*He will do his utmost
to get you to discard
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you face to face
with some of your
most cherished beliefs
and attachments*

To many, that seems inhibiting and restrictive; and it is, to the extent that we cannot advertise and promote ourselves as freely as those who follow no master, no tradition. It does bring a challenge into the business administration of our centre because we follow a prescribed path rather than a 'free for all' at the same time as other centres proudly offer classes in many styles of yoga - often the same teacher teaching several different styles. Rather than questioning this and recognising that no-one can be an expert in several styles of yoga, the casual student likes the variety. It is entertaining and a big drawing card for a lot of people. At first when we have no experience, we may have to shop around to find our true path, then having decided on one we must stay with it - even in the dry periods when progress is sparse or non-existent. Out of that fallow period there is often a spurt of fertile growth turning a novice into a mature student willing to surrender, trust the process and, like the Indian students, get on with it.

It is the longing for light which brings most of us to yoga, but like Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, we often find it too much to bear at first. Like him, we have work to do to prepare ourselves for its intensity. For those who persevere under the tutelage of a trained teacher, decide that a trip to Pune lies in

their destiny, make application and get accepted - grasp this opportunity. In all myths, to reach the goal the journey involves hardship and hazard. Amidst the noise, confusion, dirt, dust and crowds of Pune lies a prize well worth the effort.

My friend and colleague, Carole Miller, who accompanied me to Pune in 1982 made a classic statement at the end of her first class with Guruji. "Shirley" she said, "It's like having a baby. No-one can tell you what it's like!" ॐ

This year a steady stream of teachers from the Victoria Yoga Centre are making the pilgrimage to the Ramanani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune. As I write this article Lauren Cox and Gwynneth Powell are about to leave. Later this summer Leslie Hogya will study there followed shortly by Ann Kilbertus, Melissa Worth and Nancy Searing. I will be returning in December 2004. Other teachers have dates for 2005. May all be blessed as we are blessed.

Scheduled Practice Space for VYC Members

**Wednesdays 1-3 pm
Sundays 12:30-3 pm**

Early morning Members Practice times are cancelled for the summer.

Schedule is subject to change, please call 386-YOGA (9642) to check the schedule.

Please note:

- The supervising teacher is not there to teach or lead a practice.
- Bring your own practice sequence or find a sequence in one of the available books.
- The door may be locked, just knock loudly.

Cooking...Indian style

Khairon Quadir lives in British Columbia and is an excellent cook. She has given workshops in Indian cooking and was the head chef when B.K.S. Iyengar came to Vancouver in 1984, to Edmonton in 1990 and to Toronto in 1993. Subsequently, in 2001 she traveled with and cooked for Geeta Iyengar in Vancouver and Victoria. Permission was granted by Khairon to reprint here another one of the recipes from her book.

Peas and Potato Curry

Ingredients:

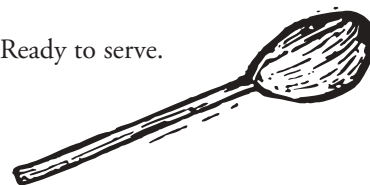
1 lb potatoes skinned and diced into small cubes
1 lb sweet peas (frozen or fresh)
1 large tomato crushed
1/4 tsp cumin/coriander powder
1/4 tsp garam masala
1/4 tsp ginger and garlic
1 Tbs lemon juice
1 whole green hot chilli for flavour (optional)
1 Tbs coconut powder
cilantro leaves for garnish

Method:

In a pan add oil and cook potatoes until half tender,
add tomatoes and rest of the ingredients (except peas),
cook for 10 minutes, and then throw in peas and cook for a couple of minutes.

Garnish with green coriander (cilantro) leaves.

Ready to serve.



IYENGAR YOGA

Teacher Training Intensives

July 5-10, 2004

**With Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus
and Linda Benn**

This six-day Intensive will focus on preparing teachers for assessment in Iyengar Yoga at Introductory Level I or II.

Leslie, Ann and Linda are experienced teachers certified at the Junior Intermediate III Level through the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association. They are qualified C.I.Y.T.A. assessors. All three are committed to assisting local and outlying yogis to become skilled Iyengar Yoga teachers. Preference will be given to C.I.Y.T.A. members in recognized Iyengar Yoga teacher training programs.

**Fees (incl. GST): Victoria Yoga Centre
members \$535.00, Non-members \$567.10
Registration opens February 16, 2004.**

To receive the application and registration forms, please contact: Victoria Yoga Centre, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K3
Phone: (250) 386-YOGA (9642), or Ann: (250) 598-0976, or Linda: (250) 478-0757
Email Linda: lbenn@islandnet.com or Ann: stpatrick@entirety.ca

August 16-20, 2004

With Shirley Daventry French

This course is for certified Iyengar Yoga teachers who wish to prepare for assessment at Junior Intermediate Level I, II or III.

Shirley is a long-time student of B.K.S. Iyengar who has awarded her a senior teaching credential. She has been teaching yoga for thirty years and is one of North America's most experienced teachers in the Iyengar tradition. Shirley has been training teachers in Victoria and throughout Canada for many years.

In both Intensives there will be daily classes in asana and pranayama, the art and science of teaching and peer teaching.

As in previous years, Iyengar Yoga teachers from other countries are also invited to apply. C.I.Y.T.A. members will get priority.

An interview with Faeq Biria: Part 1

Faeq Biria, director of the Centre de Yoga Iyengar de Paris, in conversation with Shirley Daventry French, Khairoon Quadir, Ann Kilbertus and Louie Ettling after a delicious Indian dinner at Khairoon's home in Vancouver, on May 9, 2003. It was Faeq's first visit to British Columbia where he gave workshops in Victoria and Vancouver.

Can you speak a little about your beginnings in the world?

Faeq: My family originally came from Kafkas, Caucasus, in the south of Russia, but I lived my childhood in Iran and Turkey. Mostly I was educated in Iran; and, because of the travels of my family, I lived a great deal of my childhood with my grandparents. I got my basic education that way.

And this was the grandfather who introduced you to yoga?

Yes, my grandfather was a yoga practitioner, and it was he who first introduced me to the practice of yoga. He learned yoga in the Caucasus; strangely enough in a Christian monastery which was where he had been sent for his education. There, from the monks, he learned the basics of the yoga along with herbal medicine, nature cures and lots of things of this kind; and that helped him to help me. I was a very sick child, a premature child, and because we were emigrating and fleeing from war, my mother got scared and lost her milk so I was not fed properly. This grandfather made something based on wheat and almond with which I was fed, but it seems that it was not enough. My body lost minerals and I developed a type of arthritis of the joints which was very painful. Doctors were unable to help and because I was suffering, my grandfather



... my grandfather promised me that if I practised the asanas, I would gain in health and become very intelligent. And I gained health! I don't say that I became intelligent, but I think that I became a good student.

tried his own techniques which worked and worked very fast.

Your introduction to yoga was from your grandfather. How did that interest develop?

It is really funny because I was mostly interested in meditation more than the practice. My grandfather meditated but

much more than him, my grandmother used to meditate long times, always finishing her meditation with prayers. I was very much interested and wanted more to practise with her rather than practise the asanas; but my grandfather promised me that if I practised the asanas, I would gain in health and become very intelligent. And I gained health! I don't say that I became intelligent, but I think that I became a good student.

How did you make your journey from Iran to France?

My grandfather was trained by Sufis, and in the Sufi tradition discovery of other countries and going to other places is part of their tradition. At a very early age, I was sent to nearby cities to visit. Later I was helped to visit Iran almost entirely. After that, I was sent to the West, to discover the West and eventually to study in a western country. My destination was England but when I reached Paris, something happened, I don't know what, and I stayed in Paris.

You were saying the other day that you didn't speak any French when you first arrived.

No, not at all! The fact was that I was mostly educated by my grandfather and, because I was sick, I was very irregular in school at first. Later, in some subjects I was very strong; in some subjects I was weak. When I discovered western literature, I began voraciously to devour

it. I read a lot. I remember some nights of the summer that I read the entire night. I read a lot of western literature and was particularly attracted by French literature.

On my way to England, I reached Paris. There, as I had some time before I was due in England, I decided to explore the areas in some of the novels that I had read such as *Les Misérables*, and *Le Rouge et le Noir*. Of course, I was hearing French people talking – I knew only a few words – and I thought, “Why not learn a little bit of French?” I knew that if I went to England and entered college I should learn another western language. I knew only eastern languages. So I thought I would learn French and that was the beginning. I was there one month and then I decided to go to university there, and that was all.

Did you know English at that time, too?

Yes, I knew the basics. At that time, as you know the teaching of languages in schools was not that good. We learned only a little writing and reading. But I had an Auntie who studied in America, who was a specialist in language education. She took me as guinea pig – to work all her techniques of language on me. So I had quite a good basis of the English language when I came to Europe. Later, of course, when I went to India and stayed there a long time, it improved a lot. But, I remember when that Auntie saw me after many years and we were talking English she got tremendous surprise at my accent, because it was not the accent that she taught me. It was a very Indian accent! In Paris I began to learn French, and I learned very fast because I decided to go school.

I grasped it from here and there, and when I had almost finished all my studies I decided to learn French correctly. When my scientific studies were over I went to the Faculty of Literature and studied French literature

And did you teach at the university in France?

Yes, yes. I taught Chemistry in the university for two years before going to India and little bit after returning. But when I came back from India things were very, very different, because that was the period when the computer entered into science and the science of chemistry got a tremendous evolution. I was feeling almost out; so I had the choice, either to go back and recycle myself or remain in the field of yoga. And things went in a way that I remained in yoga – which was not my aim originally.

You had become more involved with yoga while you were at university?

No, I took back the practice of yoga! When I was teenager the practice just stopped by itself because was I attracted by sports. and those movements I learned (in yoga) were very slow with the recitation of mantra and controlled breathing, so I stopped them. Then, when I was in university, I practised martial arts and discovered the role of concentration in martial arts. I began to meditate – Zen meditation. Through that, I went back again to practise yoga.

What kind of yoga was it, that you were practising then?

First, I took back what I knew before. The person with whom I studied Zen meditation was quite a good yoga teacher. Guruji met him once and loved him. Now he is now retired. So it was a quite strong practice of yoga.

Originally, when I was practising martial arts, I had a very good friend and we practised a lot together. We went crazy. All the time we were hitting each other. He had a girlfriend who was studying medicine and she told us, “You are crazy. You have to do something to calm yourself down.” She insisted that we practise yoga. I went to the club of

the university where I knew the yoga classes took place and watched through the top of a small window. When I saw how they were practising, I just ran away, thinking I would never practise this yoga. Then later, that teacher with whom I was studying Zen meditation, told me that he was giving a yoga day and invited me to join. I said, “No, no, no, no. Thank you very much.” But, he had lived in the East and he knew well the eastern tradition. He told me, “You are eastern, and an eastern Man doesn’t refuse what comes from the teacher. I am inviting you.” So I went to the yoga day, and discovered a very strong and energetic yoga because he studied with one Himalayan yogi. So, that encouraged me to go back very seriously.

And that was the route to India?

Well, no, that was not really the route to India. The route to India was more than a bodily search, it was a type of cultural search. I had studied philosophy and history of religions, and that led me to reconsider the origin and evolution of religions. Finally, I reached the idea that India is the original motherland of religious thought, and *Vedas* are the basic texts – the very first and oldest basic texts. So, because I was practising yoga and because for some strange reason I had about three months free in front of myself, I decided to go back to the land of yoga.

Meanwhile, just before that I met an Indian hatha-yogi who was in Paris. It was amazing because the people who were going to receive him had some problem; they knew me a little and they asked whether I would like to take care of him. I was amazed to observe the way of life of this noble man. I thought to myself “Okay I’m going to spend some time in India to see the land from where all these things are coming”, and I went for three months to India and that three months became almost two years. So that was the beginning.

And what brought you to study with B.K.S. Iyengar?

How I knew Gururji first was because this teacher with whom I was working said to me one day, “Listen. You are eastern and I am western. You must go to an eastern teacher.” He introduced me to an Indian yoga teacher who had been in Paris a long time. This teacher, when he saw me, said, “Okay you come and join my teacher training course”. It was not really teacher training but a type of very classified and systematic asana practice. One day, before the class a lady was sitting there going through *Light on Yoga*. She showed me that book, and I saw somebody doing very beautiful asanas. And the asanas were different from what we were learning at that time.

I remember looking at *Ardha Matsyendrasana* and thinking, “Why he is sitting on the foot instead of sitting on the floor?” I asked this lady, “Who is this man?” She offered to lend me the book saying, “He is a Portuguese, but he is very strong.” And the name of the Portuguese was ‘Iyengar’!

I took the book home, and read through the entire book. I was very much impressed by the beauty and the strong work. Nevertheless, I thought, I am learning yoga, I have to go and learn with an Indian guru. Why with this Portuguese? And I gave the book back. Then it happened that, after a few months, I went to a yoga day out of Paris with my teacher. Coming back I was given a lift by a gentleman, a lawyer. He was talking about his experience of different yoga days, and he said, “Ha! Recently Iyengar was here. It was something!” I said, “Ah, that Portuguese man!” And he turned towards me, “Portuguese? What are you saying? No one can be more Hindu than him!”
[laughter]

Then I regretted, really regretted thinking Iyengar was Portuguese, I didn’t consider the value of his work. This man told me that there was one

I knew that if you search too much for a guru and you don’t find one, it means you are not ready to have a guru. That was disturbing!

place in Paris where I could get his book. This was Sunday evening and Monday morning, I was there in front of that bookshop, waiting for them to open the door. I bought the book, and on Monday evening I had my first class with *Light on Yoga*. God alone knows what was the spread of my legs, what was the turning of the legs, but I tried.

Before going to India, I enquired where could I find B.K.S. Iyengar? Somebody told me Mysore; so I thought to myself, “Okay. When I am in Mysore, I will go to see B.K.S. Iyengar”. When I reached Bombay, I visited an ashram where a lady was talking about “Iyengar this... Iyengar that...” I told her I had tried to find his address in Mysore but could not. And she said “No, no, no! Not Mysore! He is just close to here, in the city of Pune.” Pune was not really in my program, but the next morning, I packed quickly and prepared to go to the city of Pune but there was a railway strike. I had just dropped in from France. I didn’t have any idea about India. I went down the road and I began to do *auto-stop* [hitchhiking-ED], and one *camion* came – and this truck took me to the suburb of Pune. From there I got a rickshaw and found the institute.

Gururji was not there but I met Geetaji, and told her that I had come to study. And Geetaji told me, “No, you cannot. You must come at the beginning of the month”. It was then the twenty-third of that month. So I said, “Can I have one or two classes because I have to go to south India”; and she told me, “You will not understand anything. You must come at the beginning of the month”.

I left for the south of India, and that travel went on and on and on, and I never came back to Pune. The last part,

when I was in Bombay, I wanted to return to Pune but I couldn’t extend my visa; so I left India after almost two years and returned to France without meeting Gururji.

In India I had met Swami Vishnudevananda, who had an ashram in Val Morin, and we had very good connection. I received a letter from him inviting me to go to his ashram in Canada, and decided to go and see what would happen. There, I met a very nice lady who invited me to visit her in her home in the southern U.S. I was in great need of somewhere to focus and concentrate, and this lady had a friend who, when she heard that I was there searching for quietness and to be alone, told me she had a house in the forest far from everyone which she was not using. She offered it to me, and I went to that house; a beautiful wooden house in the forest and with a very tiny road and away from everywhere. I lived there practising and thinking about all the research I had done and yet I didn’t grasp it. I had met really old yogis, great yogis. I studied with them. I learned with them. With all honesty I was feeling that they were all wonderful people, but that alchemy was not happening. Something was wrong. I studied tradition. I knew that if you search too much for a guru and you don’t find one, it means you are not ready to have a guru. That was disturbing!

One day I was lying on the edge of the pool under the sun and went in for a drink of water. I saw that among the books in this house was *Light on Yoga*. I don’t know why but I took that *Light on Yoga*, looked through it and thought, “Definitely this man has something that others haven’t. There is something in his practice that the others haven’t got”. But

I was unable to see what it was. Within a split second, my decision was taken. I called my friend and told her I was leaving. I took the first train back to New York, flew to Paris, then took the first aeroplane back to India.

So, I went to Pune, entered the institute and went to see the man who was secretary at that time. I told him, "I am coming for classes", and he said, "There is not any room in the classes". "Geeta told me, 'Come the first of the month', and I am here". Then he went out and came back and said, "Come". I went, and Geeta was standing on the small balcony of their house and she said, "When did I tell you to come the first of the month?" I told her, "Two years and half ago". [laughter] And she couldn't hide her laughing, you know. Then the secretary said, "You have to have the application. No room." I watched Geeta and said, "It is okay if you don't give me any classes, but I came really for this. And if you don't give me, I will go back to France and I will be very sad." Geeta said, "So go in!", and I went inside and this man came and told me that they were giving me two classes for the month. The second Saturday of the month and the fourth Saturday of the month were my classes! I think she was trying to see whether I was really serious.

I went to the class and it was one of the first beginners classes taught by

Shah; but the program was given by Guruji - a strong practice for beginners. It began with five minutes of *Supta Virasana*, then all the standing poses, five minutes *Sirsasana*, basic forward bends, *Bharadvajasana* I, then *Sarvangasana* five minutes, *Halasana* five minutes, *Setu Bandha* five minutes, go home! Quite intense! Shah was teaching under Geetaji's guidance, and she was going here and there correcting. *Adho Mukha Svanasana* also was there because I remember I was in dog pose with my leg just a little bit bent. I heard Geeta from other side, "That leg is bent!" And I received a slap on the back of my knee from one of the helpers. Seeing the structure of the class flowing, I thought, "Ah! But this is yoga! This is yoga!" I was so happy, I went back to my hotel room and I was so excited that, believe me or not, I had a shower and thought, "Ho, ho, ho! I am going to forget all of these things. Let me do again." So I did our entire class again. The entire class! God alone knows how I did the poses, but I did them. Then after that, I ate something and went to bed. Impossible to sleep! It was that joy, you know, that I was floating in the air. Around three o'clock in the morning, unable to sleep. I got up and did the entire class again!

Because it was two weeks before I had another class, I went outside of the Pune to one place that I knew, settled



PHOTO: ROB WALKER, 2003

Faeq Biria showing some finer details of Marichyasana III with Marlene Miller, VYC teacher.

there, and did that same program three times a day. Morning, noon, evening! Morning, noon, evening!

After one month in that class, I dared to ask, "Can I have another class?" And I was told that it was impossible. Shah, who was a really good teacher, talked with them, and they said, "You can also do the advanced class and pranayama class." "I don't know how you want me from beginner to jump in on advanced class?" They said, "That's all. That's only way we can take you." So I went to the advanced class and I met B.K.S. Iyengar. ॐ

END OF PART I

Many thanks to Byron Smith of Victoria, BC, who transcribed the tape, and Shirley Daventry French, who edited the interview.

BKS Iyengar

is in the list of the world's 100 most influential people compiled by TIME magazine. The list is split into five categories, each with 20 names – Leaders and Revolutionaries, Builders and Titans, Scientists and Thinkers, Heros and Icons, Artists and Entertainers. Yoga instructor BKS Iyengar is included in the Hero's and Icons category which also mentions Nelson Mandela, Aung San Suu Kyi and the Dalai Lama amongst others.





In our mailbox

To all at the Victoria Yoga Centre—

Thank you very much for granting me a generous bursary for this term's classes. I am very appreciative and I respect the fact that accessibility is a priority at the VYC.

Namaste.

—from a Level 2 student

Feb. 25/2004

To: The Manager, Victoria Yoga Centre

I would like to express my gratitude for the physical and emotional healing I experience during, and following, my Thursday afternoon Yoga classes.

We have a variety of ailments in our group, and each of us receives the care that we need. My heart-felt admiration and gratitude to a very caring, professional staff and their dedicated assistants.

— Sincerely, Kathleen R.

Hi!

I am a former student of the VYC who moved to Barbados about a year ago. I have just recently re-started my yoga practice here and am compelled to write to say thank you.

I feel I was given the best possible foundation for yoga practice by the Victoria Yoga Centre. The personal attention you give your students helps each person understand what they are doing and why things are the way they are. The precision and attention to detail I learned while studying with the fabulous teachers there has enabled me to walk into a new situation with confidence and experience. I know just how to turn my feet out, what it means to “suck up my knees” and how to “soften my gaze” in order to relax into a pose.

I may have spent a lot of time getting the basics down while I was in Victoria, but I have built a very solid foundation on which to continue to study and improve.

What I am saying is that not every yoga centre has the teachers, atmosphere and level of personal instruction that the Victoria Yoga Centre offers. But thanks to you, I am able to take what I learned and move forward in a new situation.

I will always be thankful for the education I was given and for the love of yoga that will last a lifetime.

*Namaste,
Nina Moroso*



Illumination - Aphorisms of B.K.S. Iyengar

(Victoria Yoga Centre, 2003)

Available from
the Victoria Yoga Centre

Prices:
VYC members: \$7.48 + GST
Non-members: \$9.35 + GST
Bulk orders of 10 or more:
\$8.00 + GST plus shipping
and handling.

Yoga Centre T-shirts for Sale



The lotus flower drawing, by Lauren Cox, from the cover of *Illumination - Aphorisms of B.K.S. Iyengar* graces the front of our new T-shirts

Red or black T-shirts Women's Cap Sleeve

non-members	\$27.00
members	\$22.00

T-shirts Unisex

non-members	\$27.00
members	\$22.00

(All prices subject to 7% GST and 7.5% PST)

Sanskrit Grammar 101

by Photini (Phofi) McCullough

*In understanding the names of poses it helps to know how to link the words together to solve the following equation:
Paschima + Uttana + Asana = Paschimottanasana*

As a sequel to the article 'Sanskrit Made Simple' by M. Roulleau and G. Powell in the March/April 2004 *Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter*, I take the liberty to introduce some grammar to integrate the article and attempt to make Sanskrit simpler still. I noticed a parallel between Sanskrit and Greek, my native language, and I confirmed my observations with the grammatical rules in *Introduction to Sanskrit*, Part One written by Thomas Egenes, (Delhi: Banarsidass Publishers, 1989), pp. 90, 167-170.

The grammatical pattern I noticed involved *sandhi*, or how the words join to create a new word.

Let us take the word *Paschimottanasa*. It comprises three words, as the previous article says: *paschima*, *uttana*, and *asana*. How do these three words combine in order to create the new word 'Paschimottanasana', which rolls melodiously in the mouth? It is done with the grammatical rules that control the vowels. They are as follows:

Grammatical rule no 1: When there are two words and the first word ends in a vowel and the following word starts with the same vowel, then the vowel stays the same. e.g. *Uttana + Asana = Uttanasana*. The two 'a-s' become one 'a'.

Grammatical rule no 2: When there are two words and the first ends in a vowel and the following word starts with a

different vowel, then the vowel changes completely. e.g. *Paschima + Uttanasana = Paschimottanasana*. The final 'a' and the initial 'u' become 'o'.

Grammatical rule no 3: When there are two words and the first ends with the vowel 'a' and the following word starts with the vowel 'e', then the 'e' changes to 'i'. e.g. *Mukha + Eka Pada = Mukhaikapada*, as in *Triang Mukhaikapada Paschimottanasana*.

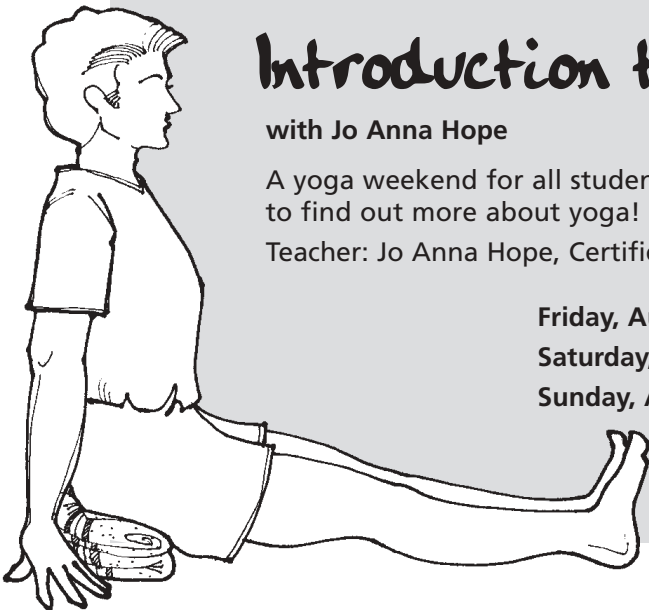
Grammatical rule no 4: When there are two words and the first word ends in a vowel and the following word starts with a consonant, then the two words join together without any change. e.g. *Parsva + Konasana = Parsvakonasana*, as in *Utthita Parsvakonasana*.

A language is a living thing and as such, it evolves. It evolves according to a specific rhythm. It is this rhythm that creates the smoothness and the flow of speech. Patanjali, besides yoga, gave us grammar for the clarity and purity of speech. That is why we chant in the invocation:

"Yogena cittasya padena vacam"

(To purify the mind (*citta*), purify the consciousness, Patanjali gave the science of yoga (*yogena*) to us. To purify our use of words (*pada*) and speech (*vaca*), he gave a commentary on grammar to us, so that our use of words and way of speaking is clarified, distinct and pure.) ॐ

PHOFI LIVES IN KELOWNA B.C, HAS BEEN A TEACHER AT THE KELOWNA YOGA HOUSE SINCE 2000, AND A LONG-TIME STUDENT OF MARGARET LUNAM AND THE IYENGAR METHOD.



Introduction to Iyengar Yoga

with Jo Anna Hope

A yoga weekend for all students. Beginners, here is your chance to find out more about yoga!

Teacher: Jo Anna Hope, Certified Iyengar Teacher

Friday, August 27 6:30 - 8:30 One hour class, orientation
Saturday, August 28 11 am - 1:30 pm
Sunday, August 29 10 am - 12:30

Cost: VYC members: \$100
Non-members: \$125

For Best Results Take up Your Own Practice

by Gwynneth Powell

For two years now our centre has been providing a Members' Practice space for our members to come and practise in allotted time slots on certain days of the week. It's different than being in a class. In an Iyengar Yoga class the teacher is there to teach us how to practise. At Members' Practice the host is not there to teach, but rather to do their own practice. However, as a host, he/she does have additional responsibilities of opening up the studio, welcoming and guiding the first-timers or those with questions towards practice sequences in the books. I began the Sunday afternoon practice space almost two years ago and it has grown. Now Doug, Wendy, and Karin share the hosting of five weekly times for practice.

Although sometimes there may only be two people and other times there are twelve, the room always seems full of life. Members of levels one to four are simultaneously involved in their own practice. Upon entering, one usually sees a medley of standing poses, balancing poses, forward bends, back bends, twists, inversions and rope work. And from time to time you hear the buzzer go off as a ten minute headstand comes to an end. On the quieter side, there are always restorative poses in process. Some restorative poses are part of an active practice, while some are part of a full restorative session being done that day for headache, menstruation, physical or mental exhaustion. Some members utilize the entire two or three-hour time slot, while others come in to do a one hour practice, or even less sometimes. No matter how long they practise, the great thing is that they've made time to come to their mat that day.

As a teacher I've had many questions from students who are feeling unsure of

GWYNNETH POWELL IS CERTIFIED IN THE
IYENGAR METHOD AND LIVES IN VICTORIA.
SHE HAS BEEN TEACHING SINCE 1999.

what to do between their weekly or twice-weekly classes. Some appreciate the opportunity of coming to the centre to do their practice while others would rather be at home. Either way, when beginning to practice on your own, it is normal to feel confused and a bit awkward. Something my teacher Shirley has said is: "it's better to have questions and uncertainty while practising than to not practise at all". Another thing Shirley has encouraged is that when you set out to practise, do so with an unwavering determination and a willingness to face uncertainty.

When I first began on my own at home I put together what had inspired me in my first few classes and I did the same sequence of poses every day. Then, bit by bit, as I continued with classes and was learning new poses and new ways to work with props that enabled me to go deeper into poses, I'd add what I could remember. Eventually, I was able to remember more than I could do in the allotted half hour before work and so my practice began to vary a little from day to day. And once or twice a week, I began to stay on my mat longer so I could practice all I knew.

Within the Iyengar Yoga method there is a creative aspect when it comes to putting your own practice together which appeals to some but not all. And sometimes it just takes time. There are many books with suggested practices and I found the books helpful in referencing when to do a certain pose in relation to another pose. Whether you use them for reference or you follow them occasionally or always, there are many sequences

available at the centre in the form of books and handouts. Some practices have actual photographs while some have diagrams. There are other sequences that are lists that are written out in Sanskrit, which may either be an excellent way to learn Sanskrit or a frustration, depending on your nature. And for your convenience, on our website there is a 20 pose diagrammed sequence that you can print.

Sometimes the hardest part is just to get on your mat. You can follow a book, or you can challenge yourself to use your recall of class work. Once you get on your mat though take the time you've set aside, be patient with yourself and even though you may not know exactly what to do, or what to do while in the pose, just do what you remember. Even if you recall only a few poses, do those and repeat them several times. This may be where your practice begins and that will be great! Be content with your willingness and knowledge on that particular day and be happy that you're practising. Practice is a lifelong journey; as you keep coming to your mat it will have the chance to evolve. The wise teachers of yoga from 2500 years ago up to present day keep telling us that only with keen, uninterrupted practise, will the goal of yoga be close at hand.

Following are the responses to a questionnaire I mailed out to some of our members who have been coming regularly to the practice space. Here are their answers to the most often asked questions of those just beginning to practice. Due to space the newsletter is printing an abridged version of their responses.

Happy practising everyone!

PRACTICE SPACE QUESTIONNAIRE

1 How do you know 'what' to practise?

GARY WONG My practice varies. If I had problems in my last class or I learned something new I'll come to the practice with a specific set of poses to work on, or else I'll do a complete practice. If I need a restorative practice, I'll follow the 'Headache Sequence' available at the studio.

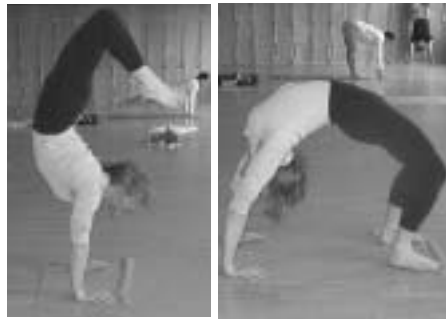
ADIA KAPOOR I've been keeping a running list of challenging poses that I encounter in my classes. When I get to practice on Sunday, I look back at the list and try to practice what I've been writing down. I add poses to round out my practice. And then there are times I just base my practice on my energy level.

MARIE ROLLEAU Often I practice what I recently learned in class so I can explore that further. Sometimes I see my comrades in poses that look appealing. Just like monkey see, monkey do, I am inspired to integrate them in my practice.

PAUL SOBEJKO Over time, I've developed a bit of a routine which I tend to follow more or less. Essentially, it is an eclectic collection of what I've been doing in classes, some things I read in books and advice from other people.

CHARLES CAMPBELL When I started out I would just follow one of the set practices from one of the books. More and more though what I practice depends on what I feel I need that week. Sometimes I practice with emphasis on a particular part of the body (i.e. a hamstring practice).

TY CHANDLER Considering every fourth week is devoted to the menstrual practice, I design my practices similar to the classes in Pune. Week 1 – standing poses. Week 2 – forward bends, be it standing, seated or inverted forward



Ty in Urdhva Dhanurasana from Adho Mukha Vrksasana



Gary in Utthita Trikonasana



Paul doing Pindasana in Sarvangasana;



Our host, Doug, in Jathara Parivartanasana



Marie (left) in rope Sirsasana and Adia doing rope 1

bends. Week 3 – backbends. This is the primary focus of the first 3 weeks. Twists and inversions are included throughout these weeks and inversions make up 30-

40% of the practice. I also use this time to consolidate what I have learned in class that week.

2 How do you know how to sequence the poses together?

GARY I've asked my teacher! I also ask other teachers at the centre before or after class in the lobby. Usually, I do standing and sitting poses first and end with inversions and corpse pose. I also follow my notes from previous classes and workshops.

PAUL I don't! I just try to recall instructions from classes, or what I've read in books.

CHARLES I often repeat sequences that I can remember from class. The more I do that, the more sequencing starts to make sense and the easier it is to group poses and make transitions between groups. Working with fewer poses and closely related poses, and doing more repetitions is helpful.

TY I have learned how to sequence from my teachers, and from studying texts. I have also learned how to sequence by improper practice and feeling this disturbance in the body.

3 Do you have a favorite book or handout that you refer to when practising?

GARY *Light on Yoga* (B.K.S. Iyengar, 1966); *Yoga the Iyengar Way* (Mehta, 1990); 'Timed Practice' sheet from the Yoga Centre.

ADIA *Light on Yoga*, because sometimes I can't remember from looking at the Sanskrit name what a pose looks like!

MARIE There is, among many books available for consultation in the Arbutus studio, the big book, [formally known as *The Path to Holistic Health* (B.K.S. Iyengar, 2001)] that suggests many

sequences to help with various conditions. I find them easy to follow.

CHARLES The big book is great when I'm working on a specific problem. I do the menstrual sequence and include a couple of inversions when I really need a rest. Also, the "level 2 practice" that came out in one of the newsletters several months ago is a good general practice.

TY Workshop notes; the practice sequences at the back of *Light on Yoga* and the Big Book.

4 Why do you come to Members' Practice instead of practising at home?

GARY I find it difficult to focus on the practice with two young kids at home.

ADIA My space isn't always ideal; I must turn off the phone, roll up the carpet, get out the props and sweep and clear a space at the wall. This, all in order to make my place ready and then my cat sits on me in Savasana. It's hard to focus with her around!

MARIE The dedicated studio space helps me perform the most difficult asana; the well known 'get-the-mat-out-asana'. Seeing others practice is the first push. I especially like seeing the teachers in the most amazing, gravity-defying poses, live! It makes me realize how much ground there is to cover for the adventurous and determined on that path.

PAUL It is inspiring to practise asanas in a bright studio with a nice hard-wood floor, plenty of wall space and the rope-walls. And there are plenty of props, blankets, chairs and benches, so I can do poses which would not be possible at home. It feels good to be with a group of people who are doing the same thing. There is a nice atmosphere at the practice space that encourages one to be quiet and respectful of fellow practitioners, and to concentrate efforts on one's own practice.



Charles using ropes for Dwi Pada Viparita Dandasana 9

CHARLES I have a daughter and a son and to find a quiet two hours at my house is near impossible. Even when I have the space to myself, it can still be difficult to put aside all the other things that need doing and make the mental space for my practice.

TY It is a sacred space that invokes the spirit of yoga. Being around people who support the spiritual practice helps me stay connected. It is inspiring to see people of all levels come together to practise. There are hundreds of techniques used in asana practice in the Iyengar method. It is good to be reminded of them and to learn new ones.

5 What are some of the differences between taking a class and having your own practice?

GARY I view class as a time to learn new concepts or to get corrections and refinements of familiar poses. I treat practice as a time to get a deeper understanding of the poses.

ADIA Regular home practice can help me work on the poses I need to open up my body. Going to class once or twice a week cannot do the same thing.

PAUL Taking a class is in some ways easier because the teacher will tell me what to do; I don't have to think, I just do and after the class I feel pretty good. Doing one's own practice can require planning and a greater amount of self-discipline. Sometimes I lack discipline in that often I don't do as much as I would in class.

CHARLES Practice requires more mental self discipline. It is easy to rely on a teacher to determine the sequencing, give instructions and corrections and to set the pace. The responsibility for these things becomes your own when you practise. To correct yourself you have to use your own eyes – external & internal. In your practice you get the opportunity to fall over without anyone watching.

TY Classes are extremely different from practice. Classes are external, a time to receive teachings, for discussion, to focus on one particular area, to be challenged by a teacher, to go deeper and to find newness.

When I began practicing on my own, my level of interest and intensity was less than it was when I was in class. This has been one of the most profound learnings for me – how can I create that amount of interest when I am on my mat alone. Over time I have seen this gap narrow.

6 Anything else you'd like to add?

GARY Much gratitude to the centre that makes it possible for me/us to practice there.

MARIE I love it. I think it's one of the best benefits of membership at the yoga centre. Many thanks to the teachers who organized it and keep it going!

CHARLES It's a relaxed supportive space.

PAUL It's great that the practice space exists, and that more time-slots are becoming available. Maybe I'll even show up early in the morning one of these days! ॐ

Member's Practice is reserved in the Arbutus studio Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from 6-8am, Wednesday from 1-4pm and Sunday 12-3pm. Contact the front desk to become a member of the Victoria Yoga Centre.



Student Intensive

With Lauren Cox and Robin Cantor

August 23-27, 9am-12pm

Learn how to establish and deepen your practice

Prerequisite: Level 2 Iyengar Yoga experience

Lauren and Robin are certified Iyengar yoga teachers who bring enthusiasm, dedication and humor to this five-day intensive. There will be two hours of asana including yoga kurunta, a timed practice, an introduction to pranayama and philosophical and spiritual discussions.

Fees: Members \$225 + GST
 Non-members \$240 + GST

To register, drop in or call us at:
#202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K3

phone: 386-YOGA (9642)

website: www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$10 cancellation fee.

Practice (abhyasa) is the art of learning that which has to be learned through the cultivation of disciplined action.

Practice is a generative force of transformation or progress in yoga.

— B.K.S. Iyengar

SUMMER SADHANAS

This summer we offer a selection of 90-minute practices for six to nine days in a row.

“Sadhana” is a Sanskrit term which means dedicated practice or quest.

June 28 - July 3 (6 days) \$90 + GST Teachers: Ann Kilbertus and Linda Benn

July 5 - 10 (6 days) \$90 + GST Teachers: Marlene Miller and Melissa Worth

August 23 - 31 (9 days) \$120 + GST Teacher: Lauren Cox

Time for the Sadhanas: 6:30-8:00am

Register for 2 sessions and receive a 10% discount.

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$10 cancellation fee.

Victoria Yoga Centre, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K3

Phone: (250) 386-YOGA (9642)





SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

for TERM 6 and 7, 2004

TERM 6

May 3 – July 5 – Aug 8.

Note class break June 28 – July 4

Some classes will be adjusted due to
Intensives or holidays.

LEVEL 1

Mon 12:00 – 1:30pm	Robin Cantor
Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm	Nancy Searing
Tues 5:00 – 6:30pm	Melissa Worth
Tues 7:00 – 8:30pm	Britta Poisson
Wed 6:00 – 7:30pm	Corrine Lowen
Wed 7:30 – 9:00pm	Jeannette Merryfield
Thur 8:30 – 10:00am	Linda Benn
Thur 5:30 – 7:00pm	Wendy Boyer
Fri 10:30 – 12:00pm	Linda Benn
Sat 9:30 – 11:00am	Corrine Lowen

LEVEL 1 / 2

Wed 9:00 – 10:30am	Leslie Hogya
Sun 9:30 – 11:00am	Wendy Boyer
Fri 5:00 – 6:30pm	Wendy Boyer

LEVEL 2

Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm	James Currie- Johnson
Tues 5:30 – 7:00pm	Leslie Hogya
Tues 6:30 – 8:00pm	Melissa Worth
Wed 7:45 – 9:15pm	Corrine Lowen
Wed 6:00 – 7:30pm	Wies Pukesh
Fri 9:00 – 10:30am	Linda Benn
Sat 8:00 – 9:30am	Corrine Lowen

LEVEL 2/3

Mon 10:00 – 12:00pm	Robin Cantor
Thur 5:30 – 7:15pm	Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hogya

LEVEL 3

Thur 10:00 – 12:00pm	Linda Benn
Sat 9:00 – 11:00am	Robin Cantor

LEVEL 4

Mon 5:30 – 7:30pm	Marlene Miller
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NOON

Tues 12:00 – 1:00pm	Jeannette Merryfield
Wed 12:00 – 1:00pm	Wendy Boyer
Thur 12:00 – 1:00pm	Wendy Boyer
Fri 12:00 – 1:00pm	Wendy Boyer

TIMED PRACTICE

Thur 7:00 – 8:30pm	Melissa Worth
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PRE NATAL YOGA

Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm	Robin Cantor
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55 & BETTER

Wed 10:30 – 12:00pm	Leslie Hogya / Wendy Boyer–continuing
Fri 10:30 – 12:00pm	Wendy Boyer – level I

SPECIAL NEEDS

Thur 1:15 – 2:45pm	Linda Benn, Ann Kilbertus
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(*no class week of Intensive.)

BACK CARE

Mon 4:00 – 5:15pm	Linda Benn
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FAMILY YOGA (Adult plus child, age 6 – 9)

Tues 5:00 – 6:00pm	Wendy Boyer
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TERM 7

Aug 9 – Sept 5. Fall Term I starts a week
after Labour Day, Sept. 13

Some classes will be adjusted due to
Intensives or holidays.

LEVEL 1

Mon 12:00 – 1:30pm	Karin Holtkamp
Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm	Linda Benn
Tues 7:00 – 8:30pm	Britta Poisson
Wed 6:00 – 7:30pm	Corrine Lowen
Wed 7:30 – 9:00pm	Jeannette Merryfield
Thur 8:30 – 10:00am	Linda Benn
Thur 6:00 – 7:30pm	Wendy Boyer
Fri 10:30 – 12:00pm	Linda Benn
Sat 9:30 – 11:00am	Corrine Lowen

LEVEL 1 / 2

Wed 9:00 – 10:30am	Lauren Cox
Sun 9:30 – 11:00am	Wendy Boyer
Fri 5:00 – 6:30pm	Wendy Boyer

LEVEL 2

Tues 5:30 – 7:00pm	Lauren Cox
Wed 7:45 – 9:15pm	Corrine Lowen
Wed 6:00 – 7:30pm	Wies Pukesh
Fri 9:00 – 10:30am	Linda Benn
Sat 8:00 – 9:30am	Corrine Lowen

LEVEL 3

Thur 10:00 – 12:00pm	Linda Benn
Sat 9:00 – 11:00am	Lauren Cox

LEVEL 3/4

Mon 5:30 – 7:30pm	Senior Teachers
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NOON

Tues 12:00 – 1:00pm	Jeannette Merryfield
Wed 12:00 – 1:00pm	Lauren Cox
Thur 12:00 – 1:00pm	Wendy Boyer
Fri 12:00 – 1:00pm	Wendy Boyer

55 & BETTER

Wed 10:30 – 12:00pm	Wies Pukesh/ Wendy Boyer–continuing
Fri 10:30 – 12:00pm	Wendy Boyer – level I

TIMED PRACTICE

Thur 6:00 – 7:30pm	Wies Pukesh
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LEARN THE ROPES

Tues 7:00 – 8:30pm	Lauren Cox
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FAMILY YOGA (Adult plus child, age 6 – 9)

Tues 5:00 – 6:00pm	Wendy Boyer
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Classes / Teacher / Times are subject to
change. If a teacher is unable to teach a
qualified teacher will take their place.

Oxford English Dictionary

The word Iyengar is in the latest edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*.
The entry is:

Iyengar

noun [mass noun] a type of hatha yoga focusing on the correct alignment of the body, making use of straps, wooden blocks, and other objects as aids to achieving the correct postures.

- ORIGIN named after B.K.S. Iyengar (born 1918), the Indian yoga teacher who devised this method. ॐ



For maximum flexibility and versatility this summer, purchase one of the Victoria Yoga Centre's Summer Sizzler Passes. Come to any class at your level from July 5 through to September 5.

Use four passes in a week or stretch it over the months of July and August! These passes are for experienced students ONLY.

New to yoga? Please sign up for a level one class.



VYC Summer Sizzler Pass

12 half hour
segments
for **\$48** (+GST)

Save up to \$12

Come to:
Six 1 hour classes
or
Four 1.5 hour classes
or
Three 2 hour classes
or
mix it up!

VYC Summer Sizzler DELUXE Pass

24 half hour
segments
for **\$88** (+GST)

Save up to \$26

Come to:
Twelve 1 hour classes
or
Eight 1.5 hour classes
or
Six 2 hour classes
or
mix it up!

Scholarships & Bursaries



Member's Scholarships are available for all long workshops and intensives.

Please apply in writing at least one month prior to the workshop you are interested in. See Calendar on back page for dates.

Student Bursaries are available to all students presently enrolled in classes.

To subsidize your term fees please apply 3 weeks prior to term.

Applications and details for both are available at the reception desk.

Victoria Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street
Victoria, BC V8V 3K3

YOGA



publications for sale

Victoria Yoga Centre • 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K3 • 386-YOGA(9642)

BOOKS (all book prices subject to GST)

Back Care Basics – Mary P. Schatz (1992)	\$ 30.00
Health through Yoga – Mira Mehta (2002)	\$ 34.25
NEW: How To Know God: Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali – S. Prabhavananda (1953)	\$ 27.50
How to Use Yoga – Mira Mehta (1994)	\$ 21.90
NEW: Illumination: Aphorisms of B.K.S. Iyengar, price for members	\$ 7.48
NEW: Illumination: Aphorisms of B.K.S. Iyengar, price for non-members	\$ 9.35
Laminated practice sheets – Chris Saudek	\$ 8.15
Light on Pranayama – BKS Iyengar (1981)	\$ 31.00
Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali – BKS Iyengar (1993)	\$ 31.25
Light on Yoga – BKS Iyengar (1966, 1976)	\$ 33.50
Relax and Renew – Judith Lasater (1995)	\$ 30.00
The New Yoga for People Over 50 – Suza Francina (1997)	\$ 23.00
The Runners Yoga Book – Jean Couch (1990)	\$ 30.00
The Tree of Yoga – BKS Iyengar (1988)	\$ 19.00
The Yoga of Breath – Richard Rosen	\$ 23.50
The Woman's Book of Yoga & Health – L. Sparrowe, P. Walden (2002)	\$ 32.00
Yoga A Gem for Women – Geeta Iyengar (1983)	\$ 13.00
NEW: Yoga And The Wisdom Of Menopause – Suza Francina (2003)	\$ 24.25
Yoga for Children – S.+R. Chandani (1995)	\$ 13.00
Yoga for Pregnancy – Sandra Jordan (1987)	\$ 26.50
Yoga Kurunta – Chris Saudek (2001)	\$ 22.00
Yoga the Iyengar Way – Silva, Mira, and Shyam Mehta (1990)	\$ 33.00
ON SALE: Yoga: The Path to Holistic Health – BKS Iyengar (2001)	\$ 25.00

AUDIO/VIDEO (All audio/video prices subject to 7% GST and 7.5% PST)

In Praise of Divine Mother – Swami Hridayananda (CD)	\$ 18.00
Introduction to Yoga – Patricia Walden (video)	\$ 29.00
Pranayama: The Art of Breathing – Felicity Green (2 audio tapes)	\$ 26.00
Pranayama: The Art of Breathing – Felicity Green (2 CDs)	\$ 34.00
Silence of the Spirit – Fr. Joe Pereira (audio tape)	\$ 10.00
Standing Poses: Upright and Inverted – John Schumacher (audio tape)	\$ 15.00
Yoga, A Basic Daily Routine – John Schumacher (audio tape)	\$ 17.00

Weekend Health Workshop



Coming
November 5,6,7, 2004

Look for details
in the September/
October 2004 issue

Upcoming CIYTA Assessment Dates

Oct 15-17
Junior Intermediate I
Toronto

Nov. 19-21
Junior Intermediate I
Vancouver

Greg Sly for the beautiful signs for the Arbutus, Birch and Cedar studios with their names carved in their corresponding woods.

Doug Hart who has been volunteering to supervise the members early morning practice space.

New Volunteers:

Mike Maclelland for helping **Jim Riddell** with maintenance and errands.

Chris Parsons for prop tidying on Tuesdays.

Wayne Unger who came to our board meeting and talked to the board members and teachers about security at the Victoria Yoga Centre.

Thank you!
Thank you!
Thank you!

Monica Dimofski, Hilary McPhail, Alisa Cage McCaig, and Marion Ashton who volunteer in the office Friday afternoons and Sunday. We no longer have paid staff at those times. More volunteers for these shifts would be appreciated.

To all those that volunteer in the Wednesday and Thursday Special Needs classes. We would not be able to run these classes without all of the volunteers that fetch, carry, lift and hold on. You are terrific, **Susan Hart, Tatiana Schneider, Diana Brooks, Debra Johnson, Keiko Alkire, Wendy Boyer, Jo Anna Hope, Nathan Bernshaw, Karin Dayton, Rosemary Barrit.** ॐ



Radha Yoga Centre

The Heart of the Matter

an intimate retreat exploring the Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga
with Swami Lalitananda

October 23-28

at Yasodhara Ashram

Retreat to the mountains for this five-day intensive that will lead you to the heart of Hatha Yoga. Discover a receptive listening space within, reflect on matters of the heart and open to your own wisdom and potential. Swami Lalitananda, *ascent* columnist, will guide you through a practice of asanas blended with written reflection, to build a bridge between the honest response of the body and the intuitive level of mind.

course fee \$950, including tuition, accommodation and meals

attendance is limited to 25 people

for more information call 1.800.661.8711 • www.ascentmagazine.com

The Radha Yoga Centre would like to send a special thanks to all those who supported our 20th Anniversary Celebration. We are now closed for the summer and will re-open in September for classes. We'll see you then!

VICTORIA *yoga centre* Calendar 2004

JUNE

28 - Jul 3 6-Day Sadhana

JULY

5 Term 6 begins
5-10 Teacher Training Intensive
Introductory Level
5-10 6-Day Sadhana

AUGUST

7 Term 7 begins
16-20 Teacher Training Intensive
Junior Intermediate Level
23-27 Student Intensive
23-31 9-Day Sadhana
27-29 Introduction to Iyengar Yoga

SEPTEMBER

6-12 Registration Week
13 Term 1 begins
25 Teacher's Meeting

OCTOBER

1 Sutra Workshop with
Shirley Daventry French
2-3 Going Deeper with
Shirley Daventry French
15-17 Junior Intermediate I Assessment
Toronto
23 Teacher's Meeting

NOVEMBER

5-7 Health Workshop
19-21 Junior Intermediate I Assessment
Vancouver
27 Teacher's Meeting

DECEMBER

12 Light on Yoga Workshop



VICTORIA
yoga centre
SOCIETY

Membership and Newsletter Subscription

For a one year membership and newsletter subscription, please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to:

**Victoria Yoga Centre Society, c/o Karin Holtkamp,
202-919 Fort Steet, Victoria BC V8V 3K3**

Membership/subscription fee is \$32 (incl. GST), renewable each January.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

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

☐ Receipt required

Membership benefits include 5% discount on classes, free practice times at the VYC, timed practices, early registration and discount on workshops, borrowing privileges in our library, eligibility to become a board member and eligibility for scholarships for workshops.

September / October 2004



VICTORIA

yoga centre

NEWSLETTER

Learning requires humility.

Learning requires strength.

Learning requires patience
and tolerance.

Learning requires devotion.

Learning requires hard work
and above all.

Learning requires the grace
of a Guru and the Lord.

Lord Hanuman is the
embodiment of all these
qualities and as sadhakas
we always seek his grace
and blessing.



Going Deeper

An Iyengar Yoga Workshop
with Shirley Daventry French

October 2-3, 2004

An opportunity for Level I, II and III students to work with senior teacher Shirley Daventry French to explore yoga in a deeper way. Also an opportunity for teachers to observe Shirley.

Shirley is a long time student of B.K.S. Iyengar and has been to Pune to study many times, most recently in December 2003. She is looking forward to returning in December of this year.

The founder of the Victoria Yoga Centre, Shirley has been the driving force in making the Victoria yoga community one of the strongest and most viable in Canada. Students from across Canada and around the world have studied with her. In this special weekend, local students have the opportunity to learn from her in a workshop setting.



Saturday, October 2
11am - 1pm, 3 - 5pm

Sunday, October 3
10:30am - 1pm
1 - 1:30pm refreshments
1:30 - 2:30pm debriefing for observers

Fees:
\$105 + GST for members
\$120 + GST for non members
\$ 75 + GST for observers

Registration is open

Contact: Victoria Yoga Centre
at 386-YOGA (9642)

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

with Shirley Daventry French

Yoga in the tradition of B.K.S. Iyengar is soundly based on the ageless wisdom and practical philosophy contained in Patanjali's yoga-sutras.

The sutras are a series of aphorisms each containing a seed of truth. They provide a framework for living wisely, and are as relevant in the 21st century Canada as they were in ancient India.

This evening seminar will provide an overview of the sutras and explore practical ways of making use of them as a guide for daily living.

Friday, October 1, 2004
6:30 - 8:30pm

Fee:
\$35 + GST for members
\$40 + GST for non-members
Registration is open.



2 Reflections

by Shirley Daventry French



6 An interview with Faeq Biria: Part II

by Shirley Daventry French



11 Sadhana: The Aspiring Sadhaka

by Chris McCann



13 Delving into the Yoga Sutras

by Leslie Hogya

15 Yoga History

A Teacher Training Paper

by Christine Dimofski and Nancy Searing

18 Schedule of Classes

Newsletter Advertising Policy (Adopted February 20, 2004)

In keeping with the mandate of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society Directors, 2004, to update, review and document policies and procedures, the newsletter committee submitted a policy which is a revision of the 1996 policy and has been adopted by the Board of Directors as follows:

1. Advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the newsletter of the VYCS.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar Yoga
3. Priority given to advertisements regarding:
 - VYC events
 - VYC sponsored events
 - CIYTA events
 - Radha House/ Yasodhara Ashram



VICTORIA yoga centre NEWSLETTER

EDITOR Greg Sly

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Shirley Daventry French, Lauren Cox, Karin Holtkamp, Greg Sly, Melissa Worth, Gwynneth Powell, Jane Munro, Taimi Mulder, Susan Robinson, Nancy Searing

DESIGN / PRODUCTION Cady Graphics

PHOTOGRAPHY Cover Photo: Harper Collins and Soni Studio, Pune; Leslie Hogya, Rob Walker, Gwynneth Powell, Britta Poisson

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ILLUSTRATIONS Lauren Cox

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BILLING Carole Miller

DISTRIBUTION Keiko Alkire, Rosemary Barritt, Krista Strawczynski

MEMBERSHIP / MAILING LIST

Karin Holtkamp

PRINTING Hillside Printing

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

September 15, 2004

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of B.C., 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 Newsletter, published regularly by the VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY, provides current information on events concerning yoga in the Victoria area and the Yasodhara Ashram.

Send contributions, articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter: 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3. For information on activities and events, call 386-YOGA(9642) or visit our website: www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca.

Permission is hereby granted to reprint any of our material, except that copyrighted by the author or artists. When reprinting, please credit this Newsletter and send us two copies of the publication containing our material. Copyright material is only available with written permission.

The editor/newsletter committee hold the right to publish or edit all articles at their discretion.

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

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

“Are you afraid of Mr. Iyengar?” The questioner, who had no personal knowledge of Mr. Iyengar, added that she had heard so many stories about his violence and abuse -



SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH WAS AWARDED SENIOR CERTIFICATION FROM B.K.S. IYENGAR. SHE HAS BEEN TEACHING SINCE 1972 AND FOUNDED THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE IN 1976. SHIRLEY LIVES IN VICTORIA AND TEACHES WORLDWIDE.

slapping, hitting, hurting students, etc.

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

“Iyengar the Cruel.”

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

“Iyengar the Cruel,” written by Mark Harelik, was first published in the newsletter of the B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association of Southern California which is where I saw it and it is so good it has been reprinted in many other newsletters. In one, I noticed the title had been changed to Iyengar, the Fire of Compassion. Obviously my student was not the only one put off by the original title. I must admit that when I first saw it, it jolted me and I began to read the article defensively, ready to refute more unjust allegations about Mr. Iyengar, only to be pleasantly surprised and delighted at the respectful tone and the many insights contained therein about the nature of the yogic path and in particular what it is like when that path leads you to a truly great teacher.

If the title of the article deterred you too or you simply did not get around to reading it, do so now (it appeared in our June 1995

As this issue is being prepared for print, there are no less than six VYC teachers either leaving for, presently there, or returning from their pilgrimage to the Iyengar Yoga Institute (RIMYI) in Pune, India. They are there, some again, and some for their first time, to study yoga with B.K.S. Iyengar, his daughter Geeta and son Prashant.

While we eagerly await the waves of light that will return bearing our teachers and colleagues, we have their archived experience to draw upon to tide us over. From the March/April 1996 issue of the Newsletter we now reprint Shirley’s Reflections upon what especially the first-time travelers to Pune might anticipate, as they have prepared their body and soul for the journey. — Ed.

newsletter, and is archived in our library at the VYC). –Ed.

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

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

The confrontation came the second day of class when I did not understand and therefore did not respond to one of his instructions. He stood in front of me loudly repeating this instruction and almost pulled off my shorts in exasperation to make sure I understood exactly in which direction to move my pelvic rim. I learned something important about Virabhadrasana II and at the same time struggled with my pride and ego as tears, which I was trying very hard not to shed, pricked my eyes. One of my friends, who was standing directly behind me, reached out to give me a consoling touch, but I pushed her away. I needed to be left alone to struggle, because a very clear question had arisen: did I want to cling to my pride, or did I want to learn?

What exactly had happened to me?

*A moment arose
in which he could
teach me to replace
a harmful action with
a beneficial one. Isn't
this something to
be grateful for?*

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

Why did I have to struggle? Why was I not instantly grateful? Because I had been taken in by the very limiting idea so prevalent in North America, that no criticism should be offered unless it is positive. In his article, Mark Harelik says that we have developed a culture that revolves around our self-esteem. This leads us to depend upon our teachers to build our self-respect, which will necessarily be very fragile because it comes from without and not from within, dependent on others' support and approbation and when that external support is withdrawn, self-esteem crumbles. A Master of Yoga will encourage you to develop your inner strength and build your self-esteem from inside out by looking within and

discovering your true self, the Atman. Yoga asanas are one means of creating pathways to this Higher Self. Provided you practise and don't allow these pathways to become overgrown, they are always available wherever you are and whatever external pressures you face.

Difficulty in accepting criticism makes it awfully difficult to learn. This is not to suggest there should be a licence to go around saying anything which comes to mind, as happened in the sixties' encounter groups. Nor do I support the system in which I was educated in England, where constant criticism was offered with heavy doses of sarcasm by teachers wielding a great deal of power over their hapless pupils. But direct criticism offered in a manner uncoloured by emotions is a most precious gift which is a great boost to learning. If we are able to receive this criticism uncoloured by our own emotions, we do not have to learn everything the hard way - and learn we must, in this life or the next.

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

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

The inability to be criticised in any way makes it difficult to change.

For instance, in class a student has their knee bent in Uttihita Trikonasana.

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

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

Before I went to Pune this past winter, I had been having a problem in my upper back over one of my costovertebral joints. I could work through it in my practice and it would improve for a while and then return. I kept asking myself, "What am I doing to myself that creates this pain?" I looked at my posture and breathing, got some clues, but could not get rid of the problem. In Pune, two or three days into the course, Mr. Iyengar took me out of the crowd in Tadasana and stood me up on the platform with my back to the class. We had been working very strongly into the legs and one or two others had been up there before having their leg action closely scrutinised. I stood there working my legs to the very maximum; only to have Guruji put his fingers directly over the trigger point in my upper back and say: "She has a problem, longstanding. She has pain here" and then, looking

directly at me: "Isn't it?" "Yes Guruji, for several months." He pointed out the difference between the skin on that side and the other, said that if I didn't remedy this I would develop arthritis and then he showed me several ways of working to create a more healthy environment in that part of my body.

Thereafter, in class after class, as he passed by me I received a slap or kick (depending on whether I was standing on my feet or my head) in that area. I was not allowed to forget or ignore the challenge facing me and for that I am truly grateful.

Now I am home, has the pain gone? No, it still comes and goes. There has been no miracle. Sustained change rarely comes that easily. Guruji has shown me the work I have to do. It's up to me. Sometimes when Guruji has worked with someone in pain, they will say afterwards: "It still hurts" and he will respond: "Ah, but did I make your big pain a smaller pain?" Greed has to be put aside. In my case, the quality of my pain

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Shirley teaching Dwi Pada Viparita Dandasana

has changed; it is the pain of instability rather than the pain of complete blockage and in some ways more painful on many levels. An area, hitherto dead, has come to life and while positive, this is also very disturbing. I must develop strength to support the opening so that I can keep it open and there is no need to close up again.

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

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

No, I am not afraid of Mr. Iyengar - rather of my own ignorance! ॐ



NOVEMBER 5 - 7, 2004

Friday November 5

6:30pm- 8:30pm **Yoga for Vitality** Lauren Cox

Saturday, November 6

11am - 1pm

session a
session b
session c

Women and their Cycles
Yoga for Men
Menopause and Beyond

Ann Kilbertus
Greg Sly
Marlene Miller

Lunch (A light lunch is provided)

Key Note Speaker

TBA

3pm - 5pm

session d
session e
session f

Knees
Stress and Headaches
Necks and Shoulders

Marlene Miller
Linda Benn
Ann Kilbertus

Sunday, November 7

12 noon - 1pm

Spiritual Connections
Yoga for Equanimity

Leslie Hogya

1 - 3pm

Asana Practice
to boost the immune system

REGISTRATION

Opens September 7 for members,
September 20 for non members.

FEES:

\$185 + GST members
\$205 + GST non members

CHOOSE ONE WORKSHOP TOPIC
for Saturday am and one topic for Saturday pm

CONTACT:

Victoria Yoga Centre at 386-YOGA (9642)



Friday Night Gatherings

Everybody is welcome to join us.
Bring a friend, your partner
or a family member.

OCTOBER 15

6:30pm practice

7:30 pm teachers demonstrate
use of the ropes

Followed by potluck supper
and anniversary cake!

Meet the teachers – A Third
Anniversary Celebration

Bring food to share



NOVEMBER 19

Asana practice: 6:30 pm

Potluck dinner: 7:30 pm

Thank you to Volunteers

Bring food to share



An interview with Faeq Biria: Part II

Faeq Biria, director of the Centre de Yoga Iyengar de Paris, in conversation with Shirley Daventry French, Khairoon Quadir, Ann Kilbertus and Louie Ettling after a delicious Indian dinner at Khairoon's home in Vancouver, on May 9, 2003. It was Faeq's first visit to British Columbia where he gave workshops in Victoria and Vancouver.



...I went to the advanced class and I met B.K.S. Iyengar.

What year was that, Faeq?

Late seventies.

And how many people were in the classes? Were they full?

There were quite a lot of people, but they became less and less because it was becoming very hot. I stayed until the closing of the institute [each year the Institute closes in the hot season for a month - *Ed*]. Even in the hot month of April, Gurujī was teaching classes. They were all such strong classes he used to teach.

I remember the first time I saw Gurujī in person, I thought, "Oh, he is not tall". I couldn't believe that this great yogi could be small. Then within one second, that idea vanished. I had to walk in front of him to take a yoga mat, and I was unable to do it. I was thinking that it would be better if the earth opened and swallowed me up. I was wanting to become invisible in front of him – so much I was impressed.

My question was, "I have been with many great yogis all of whom demanded that I train as teacher. By politeness, I kept quiet, because that was not my aim. What will happen?"

Would you like to say something about how it developed for you from there, into teaching?

The first time, when I was traveling in India, I went to study with some great yogis. They were giving me teacher training, but that was really not on my mind because I was happy with what I was doing. I loved my subject of researching chemistry. It was quite disturbing. Once I had the famous Anandamayi Ma's darshan. I tried to get a private darshan and they were not giving, but finally they accepted, because I had a vital question and it would be a very short question. My question was, "I have been with many great yogis all of whom demanded that I train as teacher. By politeness, I kept quiet, because that was not my aim. What will happen?" And she didn't answer anything. She just made an amazing beautiful smile, and blessed me. I came out thinking, "I don't know what will happen, but whatever will happen will be for the best."

On the last day, when I was leaving Pune, I went to tell goodbye to Gurujī. He told me, "You are sincere and I love

you, but you must wait." I didn't put any meaning on those words "You must wait". I told myself, you must understand this is a long path and you are on it. Then, after that, I went home and I practised a lot. Really a lot!

Then it happened that some of my old friends, saw all the changes in my life, and said, "What type of yoga?" "I don't know. It is so different." And then they said, "Show us!" So I met this group of friends, and made one and later two classes for them. And, of course, very soon I went back to Pune. I told Gurujī that I had two small groups of my own personal friends; and he said, "Then you must come to medical class and learn how to handle the cases". So, I went to the medical class. For those first years, regularly I went to Pune and I studied with Gurujī six months, six months, six months. He told me to observe him from morning till evening without losing one second. Then slowly, slowly, I was happy. I began to understand that my love for scientific research was a type of egotistical love. I was doing this research finding new things, and it was creating a type of inner-elation in me. But, when I was teaching these people, they were walking out of the class and their faces were glowing. They were coming sad, tired, tense. They were going out happy, glowing, relaxed. I was having the experience of another type of pleasure, and that encouraged me to become a yoga teacher.

When was the first time you traveled with Guruji?

In October 1982, Guruji had a very short trip to London, just to bless the beginning of the London Institute. Since 1976 he had not come back; then in April 1984 he decided to return to the western countries. Before, I had insisted and requested many times, but each time he said, “No, I will not be coming.”

Then – I will never forget – it was in September 1983 that I was in Pune. I always used to go early morning to open the windows. Guruji was always the first to arrive. One day, he entered, did just one rope and all of the sudden turned towards me and said, “I am coming!” It was so surprising, I said, “Where? Where?” “To your place.” I couldn’t even talk. At noon I talked with Pandu [the secretary at the Institute today - *Ed.*]. “Guruji wants to come. What I have to do? Do you know when he is coming?” From the moment that he decided to come back to the West, I had the very, very great privilege to travel with him ‘till the last time that he came.

And that was a quite revelation because between the student and teacher there is a type of love which happens. We see first quickly the things in that person that we love and create that reaction of love. We see always the defects and different things later. One very amazing thing that would surprise me: the more I knew Guruji, the more I saw him closely, the more I was admiring him. Because I saw that here was a man that on the outside of his life acts as a simple, humble human being, as you know. But inside, he keeps always that majesty, that divinity, that greatness. And that was really something for me to see, and to discover, and to admire. That was really wonderful.

In 1986, I traveled a lot with Guruji, almost three months all over Europe. At that time I felt really that I am his disciple. That I would like to follow the vision and ways of this man hundred percent without any question.

In the workshop in Victoria, you talked about pratipaksa bhavana. For our readers, could you elaborate on this?

In Chapter II, Patanjali says that when deviant and unwholesome thoughts present themselves and misratiocination takes place, one should counter them by cultivating the opposite principles. The best elaboration of *pratipaksa bhavana* is Guruji’s description in *Light on Yoga Sutras* (II.33) as he goes further than classical commentators, and advocates the use of discrimination, awareness and self-analysis to counter these unwholesome thoughts. The basic idea is that you cannot always counteract things directly, and sometimes we have to counteract them indirectly.

The example I gave was that if temptations or wrong thoughts come to you, and in that situation you are unable to get rid of them and at any moment you may succumb to them – then you must change the situation. And I gave a very simple example. If you are sitting, stand up. If you are inside, go out. If you are not doing anything, go and do the headstand. That is *pratipaksa bhavana* in a very simple way. In the yoga practice, of course I gave examples. For instance, in *bharadvajasana* I, I told when you see the structure of the pose, you see that the back buttock is going up. We have to press it down to the floor so that it doesn’t go up; but if we only press that buttock down to the floor, we block the entire structure of the twisting. I have learned from Guruji that instead of pushing that back buttock down, lift the front buttock up. Make like you are lifting that front buttock up inside of the trunk, and you all experienced how you were getting that balance and how the body was turning freely. So, that, is an experience of *pratipaksa bhavana* in the practice of the asanas.

I sincerely advise everyone to go through the commentary of this sutra which is a masterpiece.



Personally I believe that most often there is only one way of doing the right thing, and thousands of ways of doing the wrong thing.

What are your thoughts about the current yogic scene? The commercialization that is happening in yoga - especially in North America.

No, everywhere in the world!

Also in France?

Yes, but it takes a different form. In America they are very strong in making websites, and publicity and computers, etcetera. So maybe we are seeing more of theirs. Other places have other presentations and forms to which we are more accustomed. But I was telling you that once I was talking with Prashant, and he was saying that this has been always existent. If we go back into the texts, in the first *kandha* (canto) of *Bhagavata-purana*, in one of the better known



Faeq Biria teaching Ustrasana.

puranas the *Shrimad-Bagavatam*, there is the beautiful story of the cow and the *dharma*.

There is a king called Pareekshit who is out walking, and there is a cow coming. And that cow has only one leg instead of four. The king is very surprised to see this cow walking with difficulty on one leg. He stops and says, "Who are you, and why you are walking like that?" And the cow says, "I am the *dharma* in the *kali-yuga*". The king asks, "Why do you have only one leg?" And the cow says, "The legs that I lost are those of austerity, purity and compassion, and I have to balance on this troubling leg which is *satya* – the truth". So, the *dharma* in the *kali-yuga* lacks *tapas*, purity and compassion, and even the *satyam* is trembling and difficult to stabilise. The king finds this cow very interesting and begins to talk with him putting lots of questions. They talk about the characteristics of the *kali-yuga*. One of these characteristics is that the really spiritual people, *brahmanas*, priests, God people, yogis, all of them, will leave

their practice and go to business to get better money. And some un-yogic and un-spiritual people will come to spirituality for the same reason – to make money. Even in the old centuries when these texts were written, these ideas were there, that any moment, the yogis may succumb to the idea of getting money and commercialization of the subject. This has been always existent.

Personally I believe that most often there is only one way of doing the right thing, and thousands of way of doing the wrong thing. And I don't think that with the practice of yoga, we have the time, and even any mission of standing and going to fight the wrong. I don't believe really that yoga says that you have to go to fight the wrong. Yoga says, do the right and do it in the best way. Spread that right way of doing things. By doing the right thing, then the wrong will escape away and vanish by itself. This is my understanding.

So how does that practically translate in France, say? You have a teacher training

program, where you thoroughly train students, and it takes a long time for them to become a teacher. And probably in France, as there are here, there are courses that turn out teachers in four-weeks or a weekend...

Yes, absolutely...

Some of the young teachers here, who have years of training find it frustrating, somebody wants a yoga teacher and they employ this hastily "certified" yoga teacher, whereas, these uncertified Iyengar yoga teachers have much more training.

Well, that is the choice of the people. I remember once – it was the same tour of Gururji's in 1986, in the city of the Toulouse, in the south of France – he was giving question and answers to a very big public. There were hundreds of people, and somebody stood up and said, "Sir what do you think about all these factories that produce yoga teachers everywhere?" And Gururji answered, "Well, Sir, when there is a

demand, then the factories, they produce.” And he was telling in the way that if there are people without any discrimination who go to any teacher without checking whether this teacher is seriously trained, whether he has really something to share or not, then those teachers will have a market to teach.

If somebody wants to become yoga teacher with four weeks of the training and somebody else wants to become yoga teacher with five years of the training, that is completely different. Just recently, they have published a yoga magazine in Iran, and Guruji gave me a copy. In it I read about a discussion between teachers explaining all the different styles, and when they reached the Iyengar method they wrote that this is the most difficult method to get a certificate to become a teacher, because thousands of hours of practice, study and learning are required. And I thought that that was very good. At least they acknowledge that to become an Iyengar yoga teacher one must be seriously involved in the practice, learning, and teaching.

That is good. Here in one of the newspapers, not too long ago, they did a survey of all the different kinds of yoga. And they had three columns: ‘Easy’, ‘Moderate’ and ‘Difficult’, and Iyengar yoga was in the ‘Easy’ column.

Easy to do? Or easy to get the certificate?

No. No, not about teacher training. Easy to do!

Easy to practice?

Yes. Isn't it interesting?

It depends on which teacher that journalist went to. Just recently I was talking with a teacher who told me he was teaching a restorative class for beginners and he wanted to ask me how I taught restorative classes to fresh beginners. First of all, what we teach to beginners is already restorative, by itself. Secondly, beginners are not taught all the techniques to use in a real restorative class. But, it depends on the teacher. If a student comes in without any discrimi-

nation and we consider him as an invalid, and give everything with supports and furniture; of course that will be an ‘Easy’ yoga class. And it will not be good. Guruji was telling about two years ago that he invented all these supports and materials to help us; so that, when we are tired we are still able to practice, or when there is a problem, we can practice with support to come out of the problem. But now he feels sad that we have become so lazy that for our entire practice, we are using all the time the material, material, material to get the pose, which – you have been in his classes – was not his way of doing.

Not at all.

One day he told us, I will throw all this material out. ॐ

END OF PART II

Many thanks to Byron Smith of Victoria, BC, who transcribed the tape, and Shirley Daventry French, who edited the interview.

In the Light of Yoga

**a special benefit workshop in celebration of
the 86th birthday of Yogacharya B. K. S. Iyengar**

Sunday, December 12, 2004, 1 pm - 4 pm

Fees: \$45 + GST members
\$55 + GST non members

To register, drop in or phone Victoria Yoga Centre
202 - 919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC
(250) 386-YOGA (9642) www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$10 cancellation fee.

All proceeds from this workshop go to the B.K.S. Iyengar Scholarship Fund which assists teachers, training teachers and committed students to attend classes at the institute in Pune.



Sadhana: an Overview

Leslie Hogle

LESLIE HOGLE IS CERTIFIED IN THE IYENGAR METHOD AND LIVES IN VICTORIA. SHE HAS BEEN TEACHING SINCE 1974.

In Sanskrit *Sadhana* means Practice. This summer we offered three early morning practice sessions for six to nine days in a row. The purpose of a *sadhana* is to get one into the habit of doing a daily practice, or deepening of practice already begun. It takes time for some to develop the habit of practicing yoga at home. Repeating a pattern over time helps create a new habit.

Coming to the yoga centre every morning from 6:30 to 8:00 is a daunting thought for some. But once begun, participants say they really enjoyed it and found they had more energy throughout the day. Others said they were tired in the evening and began going to bed earlier as the week progressed.

In a *Sadhana* there is traditionally not a lot of detailed instruction, but a building of understanding through practice over the week (or more) of classes.

This past spring, I offered a workshop on *What and How to Practice*. This was a short session, and was meant to give students some tools to develop a practice. These tools are the understanding of sequencing, and building a balanced practice on one's own. In preparation for my workshop, I delved into some of B.K.S. Iyengar's writings for words of inspiration. In *70 Glorious Years*, I found this:

The tenacity to stick to regular practice is very important.

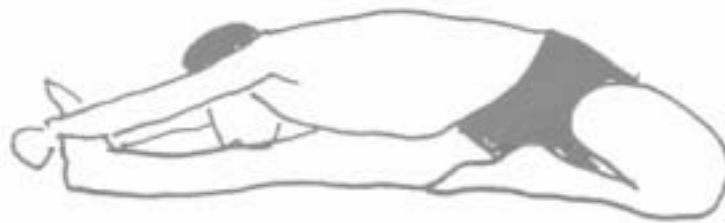
Practice with faith
Practice with courage
Practice with zest
Practice with understanding
Practice uninterruptedly
and reverentially.

– B.K.S. IYENGAR

In the last issue of this newsletter Gwynneth Powell interviewed several regular users of our practice space. One spoke of the most challenging of poses, the *get out the mat asana*. At practice times, there is a room with mats, and people doing their practice. This time is for you, our members, to encourage you to do your practice in a supportive atmosphere. Join us. Practice times are currently on Wed. and Sunday afternoons. ॐ

(Note: Dates and times of practice subject to change, check out the schedule through the front desk.)

Short WORKSHOPS



Inspirations from India

TBA

Saturday, November 20, 11am - 2pm

Fees: \$45 + GST members
\$50 + GST non members

Fifty Plus

With Leslie Hogle and Wendy Boyer

Saturday, November 27, 3 - 5:30pm

Fees: \$30 + GST members
\$35 + GST non members

Fifty Plus

With Leslie Hogle and Wendy Boyer

Saturday, February 27, 1 - 3:30pm

Fees: \$30 + GST members
\$35 + GST non members

To register, drop in or phone Victoria Yoga Centre,
202 - 919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC
(250) 386-YOGA (9642) www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be
filled and are subject to a \$10 cancellation fee.

Sadhana: the Aspiring Sadhaka

Chris McCann

How was I going to do an hour and a half of standing poses after a half an hour bike ride, then go to work, and ride home to two young children?

I have not been as dedicated to Yoga as I want to be so I figured a six-day Sadhana would help me grow a home practice.

Due to other obligations early mornings are best for me. Previously I had enjoyed early morning practices but they had started at 7:00am and the only way for me to make it to the Yoga centre by 6:30am was to bike. That added about half an hour each way; the hour and a half practice turned into a two and a half hour adventure each day. Survival mode might be necessary.

Monday arrived and I was excited to get started. I made it in time and got to my mat. Melissa said we were going to focus on standing poses today. Knowing standing poses are some of the more physically challenging poses for me, my heart dropped. How was I going to do an hour and a half of standing poses after a half an hour bike ride, then go to work, and ride home to two young children? It turned out 'survival mode' was definitely needed. Nevertheless, I made it home that night and slept like a baby that night.

Tuesday morning I woke up sore, and found it was raining. Excuses on why I shouldn't make it began flowing through my mind. It was like those cartoons with a devil on one shoulder and an angel on the other. After what seemed to me a great act of will, I decided to go.

By Wednesday I was still a bit sore, but generally I felt great. I was adjusting to the early mornings and enjoying the practice. However, the ride home that night put an interesting perspective on things. I was just over half way home when a bee flew down my throat and stung me. After an ambulance ride and a visit to the hospital, I decided it was God's way of saying rest. So Thursday I took it easy to let the swelling subside.

Friday I was back at it and was humbled by a morning of relaxing forward bends. Saturday was the last day of the course and



Setu Bandha Sarvangasana



Salamba Sarvangasana from Setu Bandha

we focused on Pranayama and some quieter poses as preparation. This was a welcome conclusion to a very busy week.

I would like to thank all the teachers that help plant and nurture the seed of Yoga within me. During the Sadhana I learned many things, not least of which was determination and a willingness to accept things for what they are. My home practice still needs some work but I now have a better understanding of what I should practice. I still have a long way to go and I am happy I can travel that path with the support of the VYCS. ॐ



In our mailbox

SPECIAL NEEDS AT YVC

Dear Ann,

Just a little note to say thank-you for all you, Leslie and the many assistants have done for me during the Special Needs sessions. The care and attention given to each person is remarkable and speaks of a dedication to service in love "second to none".

Anyone who attends knows there is no competition except with oneself, that the basis of each movement has a spiritual dimension. May your creative endeavor bring you continued joy and your students, a way of life that makes this world a better place.

*Blessings on everyone!
Gratefully, Sister Mary, SSA*

My experience with yoga has been quite a journey. I had taken yoga for nine years when I had a heart attack, followed by a stroke a month later. I was 40 at the time. Everything stopped. I couldn't walk, couldn't talk, my brain was damaged so that I was unable to read. But, with my mind I could start the journey again. More important, I could remember my life with yoga.

The place where I now do yoga is the Victoria Yoga Centre. When I was told by my occupational therapist that she was a yoga instructor, she suggested I go to the VYC. Now she is my yoga instructor, and her name is Ann Kilbertus. This was my first experience with a Special Needs class, 2 1/2 years ago. Ann is a wonderful person who touches my heart. Other instructors who have sincerely helped me have been Leslie Hogya,



Ann Kilbertus and a volunteer applying therapeutic yoga in Special Needs Class

Linda Benn, and Britta Poisson. Volunteers have also been extremely helpful with their time and knowledge. Taking yoga at the Centre has been a positive part of this journey.

Debra Page, May 2004

To all at the Victoria Yoga Centre,

Thank you very much for granting me a generous bursary for this term's classes. I am very appreciative and I respect the fact that accessibility is a priority at the VYC.

*Namaste.
from a Level 2 student*

Illumination - Aphorisms of B.K.S. Iyengar

(Victoria Yoga Centre, 2003)

Available from
the Victoria Yoga Centre



Prices:

VYC members: \$7.48 + GST

Non-members: \$9.35 + GST

Bulk orders of 10 or more:
\$8.00 + GST plus shipping
and handling.

Delving into the Yoga Sutras

Leslie Hogya

The afternoon of the first day of the VYC's 2004 Summer Intensive for Introductory

Teachers began with a session on the Yoga Sutras. Ann led us in chanting sutra II 29, which lists the eight constituents of Astanga Yoga and we began to discuss and explore the first two: the *yamas* and *niyamas*.

Yoga is a spiritual practice that begins with the *yamas* and the *niyamas*. The understanding of these philosophical principles is absolutely fundamental to the practice of yoga. It is like having water for swimming lessons, a tennis court for playing tennis, it is the golf green to a golfer. The *yamas* and *niyamas* form the ground from which we proceed into the world of yoga. It is impossible to entertain thoughts about wanting to be a teacher without this understanding. Not that we ever know



all there is to know. Yoga has subtle nuances; the meaning of Sanskrit terms are not always easy to understand. There is always more to learn, to unravel and uncover in the many layers of meaning within each

aphorism. Sanskrit contains words for mind, for consciousness, not found in the English language.

We divided into groups and each group was given one of the *yamas* to define and present in skits, which had us in turns laughing and being touched. These explorations helped us all deepen our understanding of the *yamas*.

Friday's assignment was for everyone to link one *yama* with a *niyama* and prepare to present it to the group.

Athena began on Friday with a cooperative group poetry writing session. Everyone participated and

produced collective poems on *aparigraha* (non-greed) and *santosa* (contentment). Here are some examples of the poems that emerged.

Poem 1

Mine yours ours
Peace one aum
Freedom to move
Blissful
Friends family
Ocean

Poem 2

Hermit
Cave
Forest
Happy peaceful icecream
Yes and no
Fun! Yippee!
Shaving
Truth
Kindness
Sigh
Smile

Poem 3

Non attachment
Freedom
Peace

Ahh -breathe

Freedom
Blue
Haaaaa.
Lightness
Freedom
Warmth
Joy
Embrace

Yvonne Kipp explored these concepts and more in an inspired and vibrant dance. As a teacher in this process, I am always awed by the variety



Learning the Chant and... Chanting the Yoga Sutras



of presentations that come to us. There is such creativity amongst us all. Here are the thoughts reflected in Yvonne's dance:

The Dance of the Yamas and the Niyamas

Everything is in everybody. The one stitch that I drop will affect the entire tapestry. I carry all the negative yamas myself. Those Rishis, thousands of years ago, knew the universal truths that are alive today.

Ahimsa Satya Asteya Bramacharya Aparigraha. To chant these deepens the resonance of absorption.

How am I violent? I can widen my eyes in terror at the horrors in Londonderry and Sarajevo yet how am I carrying the seed of anger and hate racism and judgement, in me? Kindergarten children are taught to be polite and say "excuse me" when passing by someone, yet when in a crowded dressing room "Excuse me" might mean

"out of my way, I'm coming through ready or not." Anyone know 'road rage'? Unloving, negative thoughts about fellow travellers lead me to a path of pain and despair.

What of truth? Do I question myself for the truth of who I am? I deny my Self, hide behind a mask, covering my radiance, assuming that my presence has no effect on the group, withdrawing, lurking in my dark corners, wallowing in illusion and false fronts.

How do I steal from my world? Walk away with that pen from the store, use someone else's milk in the 'fridge, "they won't mind," photo-copying poetry from the book in the library, one that Munro's Bookstore has on sale. It is in the details that the strands of threads bind us with strength, love and forgiveness.

"Oh just one more piece of that delicious watermelon at the party." I have already had five; stuff it in you never know when you will see the likes

of such ripeness again. Hoarding seeds and socks and buy, buy, buy. After all Value Village is cheap, more stuff, more and more, the price is right, can't let it go, can't be without. Precious, oh precious, where is my precious?

In the inspired wisdom of Patanjali there is the antidote. The wisdom does not abandon us at the gate of ourselves there is a path directed to enlightenment. There is a way out of hell. Clean up my act. Be content. Be passionate about the Practice. Study myself and Surrender to God.

We have been blessed with these Teachings at this time of the evolution of the human spirit. We owe such a debt of gratitude to Gururji our beloved, inspired Teacher who has devoted his life to opening these ancient Teachings for us all to experience and know. ॐ

— Namaste. Yvonne.

Coming in April 2005!!

Ingelise Nherlan

Ingelise Nherlan is a dynamic and inspiring teacher. She has studied yoga for 30 years and was awarded a Senior Intermediate Teaching Certificate by her teacher B.K.S. Iyengar. She has studied directly with the Iyengars in the Institute in Pune, India several times.

Look for details in the
November December 2004 issue

Scheduled Practice Space for VYC Members

Wednesdays 1-3 pm

Sundays 12:30-3 pm

Schedule is subject to change,
please call 386-YOGA (9642)
to check the schedule.

Please note:

- The supervising teacher is not there to teach or lead a practice.
- Bring your own practice sequence or find a sequence in one of the available books.
- The door may be locked, just knock loudly.



A History of Yoga

Kriya, Tantric, Kundalini and Hatha Yoga...
in 2000 words or less

by Christine Dimofski and Nancy Searing

Assignment:
Present an overall history of Kriya, Tantric, Kundalini and Hatha Yoga clarifying the pre-classical, classical, and post-classical eras.

Vedas and Upanishads

The roots of yoga can be found in the Pre-Vedic era, approximately 4000BC. Evidence was found to indicate that spiritual seekers were taking part in purifying, healing, meditative and other ascetic practices. Yogic thought continued to grow through the time of the Indus civilization, around 4000-2000BC. Artifacts from that time show yogic symbols and postures. The nucleus of future yoga was formed, approximately 2000-1000BC. At this time the *Vedas*, which were the sacred canons of Hinduism, the oldest of the major world religions, explored various yogic themes and practices. The *Vedas* are books of knowledge. They contain all types of knowledge from offering prayers, to astronomy, math and medical knowledge. Many elements of Tantric Yoga are found during the Pre-Vedic and Vedic periods. One of the volumes of the *Vedas*, the *Rig Veda* describes the 'serpent queen' of Kundalini Yoga.

In approximately 800BC, the *Upanishads* were written. They are the teachings of spiritual seekers who were exploring the possibility of yoking or having union with the divine source. The *Upanishads*, which form the end portion of the *Vedas*, were esoteric teachings open only to the few who passed the many and severe qualifications to participate in the practice. The method of the *Upanishads* is one of dialogue between the teacher and the pupil. *Kundalini* and the *chakras* are described in great detail in the *Upanishads*. Yoga is spoken about in the *Katha Upanishad*.

Philosophical Hinduism looked at ways in which the *atman* (soul) could escape the birth-death-rebirth cycle and achieve liberation. It was understood that until a state of union with God is achieved, one would continue to be reborn. Some of the yogic philosophy that was being developed at that time is reflected in the following ideas: "Thou art that", "I am the Absolute", "all that is the Absolute", "what we are seeking is at the core of our nature" and "there is one reality beyond the mind and senses, that is the true self".

All the orthodox schools of Indian philosophy claim the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* as their source.

Bhagavad Gita

Near the end of the pre-classical era, approximately 300BC, the most famous yoga scripture, *The Bhagavad Gita* was written. It focuses on the three-fold path of Karma Yoga (selfless action), Bhakti Yoga (devotion) and Jnana Yoga (wisdom).

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali give yoga its classical form. The *Sutras*, written about 200AD, described how through the practice of Astanga Yoga (the eight limbs) the practitioner could gain spiritual enlightenment. The *Yoga Sutras* are divided into four *padas*. "Pada is a footstep and it is also the ground which is covered by the footstep. Patanjali intends us to understand that his word does not merely indicate the steps to be followed but also the ground to be covered in [one's] journey to understand [one's] innermost self, the *atman*". (Asian Philosophy)

Kriya Yoga

The second *pada* of the *Yoga Sutras*, Kriya Yoga, the yoga of action, gives us the practical disciplines needed for spiritual success. It seeks to remove the psychological afflictions of the mind. The means to achieve this removal are through the eight limbs: *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, and finally *samadhi*. The *Yoga Sutras* give yoga its position as one of the six philosophical viewpoints of Hinduism.

The Sanskrit term tantra signifies continuity which includes continuity between: body and mind; internal and external realities; and man and the divine.

Tantric Yoga

The post-classical era saw the method develop for awakening Kundalini power. It began with the blossoming of Tantrism (500-1000AD) and the promotion of the thought that through the body one can gain spiritual awakening. Tantric practitioners developed Hatha Yoga practices (900-1000AD) to prepare the body for the awakening of Kundalini energy. The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, written in 1350AD by Svatmarama, indicates that Kundalini Yoga is the main stay of Tantrism and Hatha Yoga.

Tantrism or Tantric Yoga describes a specific type of teaching that grew out of Hinduism and Buddhism around 500 AD. The Tantric tradition is one of the most misunderstood branches of Indian spirituality. This is especially true in the West, where *tantra* has mistakenly been identified as the yoga of eroticism and sex. The Sanskrit term *tantra* signifies continuity which includes continuity between: body and mind; internal and external realities; and man and the divine. *Tantra* also means to weave, to expand, to spread. Tantric Yoga is seen as a comprehensive system of knowledge and wisdom that includes ritual, *mantra*, visualization and Hatha Yoga, and recognizes the whole world as a completely interwoven unity. It is not easily

defined because it comprises a very wide spectrum of sometimes contradictory beliefs and practices. However, it is one of the fundamental dimensions of Hinduism, which emphasizes the cultivation of divine energy and creative power. *Tantra* believes that the spiritual divinity is not distinct from the realm of human existence but inherent in it.

Tantra gives respect to women and the divine female Shakti, believing that the whole world is created by the divine intimate dance between Shakti, the energy, and the divine male Shiva, the seed. *Tantra* sees the body as a microcosm of the whole universe and that the body is the vehicle by which enlightenment can be gained. By purifying the body through tantric practices, it becomes ready to awaken the female energy in a person (kundalini) and thereby gain enlightenment. Tantra is therefore associated with Kundalini Yoga.

Tantric Yoga states that we are born many times and that this cycle is interrupted only at the moment of enlightenment, and that the chain of rebirth is determined by the moral quality of our lives through the action of *karma*. While spiritual illumination brings a wide array of powers, tantric thought believes that there is a tendency to exploit these powers both for spiritual and material purposes. The philosophy of Tantric Yoga includes the belief that sexual energy is an important reservoir of energy that should be used wisely to boost the spiritual process rather than block it through orgasmic release.

While scriptural knowledge is thought to be required to understand the complex science of Tantric Yoga's practices, it places an emphasis on firsthand experience and bold experimentation. Because of the powerful and complex nature of tantric practices and its ability to unbalance you physically and mentally, its practice should be undertaken only under the guidance of a competent master or guru.

Hatha Yoga grew out of tantrism as the realization developed that the body needed to be prepared, through the physical practice of *asana* and *pranayama*, to handle the powerful awakened *kundalini* energy. Hatha Yoga origins are traditionally connected with the 10th

century master, Gorakshanatha. Mr. Iyengar says in *Astadala Yogamala* (vol.12) that God is one but his names are many. The same applies to yoga, it is one but labeled by different names (Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, etc). He goes on to say that “there are innumerable paths to take to reach the mountain peak, but all paths lead to the zenith of spirituality.”

Hatha Yoga

Georg Feruerstein says in his *Yoga Dictionary* “Hatha Yoga was originally a liberation teaching and served a spiritual purpose of self-realization. Self-realization, or enlightenment, is the goal of all traditional forms and branches of yoga. It consists of awakening to one’s essential identity, which is the eternal, omnipresent self.”

Hatha means to be devoted, to hold closely or firmly. It means willpower, resoluteness and perseverance. *Ha* stands for *purusa* (the seer or self) the sun, the breath (*prana*). *Tha* stands for *prakrti* (nature), the moon, the out-breath (*apana*), consciousness. Therefore, yoga means the uniting of *purusa* with *prakrti*, consciousness with soul, the sun and the moon, *prana* with *apana*.

Ha and *tha* also stand for the right and left sides of the body. The balance and union of these two sides is Hatha Yoga. It also means the union of the body with the mind and the mind with the body. Hatha Yoga, as presented in the text *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* is a science that deals with moral, physical, philological, mental, intellectual and spiritual aspects for humans.

Mr. Iyengar says that Hatha Yoga relieves the felt and hidden pains which free the mind from the clutches of the body. The mind, thus freed, is able to follow the channel to its source and to be in communion with that same source. Hatha Yoga is considered by some to be physical. Mr. Iyengar responds to this by saying that this physical yoga, which is ridiculed by some as “gymnastics” is his *dharma*, his religion. He quotes the *Bhagavad Gita* (III.35) “Better is one’s own *dharma* though imperfectly carried out than the *dharma* of another carried out perfectly. Better is death in the fulfillment of one’s own *dharma*, for to follow another’s *dharma* is perilous.”

Kundalini Yoga

The word *kundalini* is derived from a Sanskrit word *kundal* meaning coiled up. *Kundalini* is considered to be the primordial dormant divine female energy present in three-and-a-half coils at the base of the spine in the sacrum, like a serpent, and therefore it has been called, ‘The Serpent Power’. *Kundalini* is awakened through various yogic practices and the practitioner seeks to move the *kundalini* energy up through the chakras to the center at the crown of the head. There the *kundalini* energy merges with the omnipresent divine energy.

The 7 *chakras* are energy centers of the subtle body. They are located as follows: base of spine, genitals, solar plexus, heart, throat, forehead (third eye), and top of head. The awakened *kundalini* transforms the physical body into a divine body in which every single cell becomes conscious. Enlightenment brings cellular illumination to the physical body.

The union of *kundalini* with the supreme divine can be seen as the union between God (i.e. supreme consciousness) and Goddess (i.e. the serpent power, which is a manifestation of the supreme energy). The result of this union is ecstasy or *samadhi* and self-realization. The awareness of the presence of this primordial energy *kundalini* within the human body was considered by the sages and saints to be the highest knowledge. *Kundalini* energy is there to nourish, to heal and look after and to give an individual a higher and deeper personality. *Kundalini* power is absolute purity, auspiciousness, chastity, self respect, pure love, detachment, concern for others and enlightened attention, to give infinite joy and peace to an individual. ॐ

NOTE: The information in this article has been gathered and borrows heavily from a variety of sources including *Yoga Journal* articles, particularly *The Hatha Yoga Family Tree*, by Todd Jones (Winter 2000); numerous internet sources including *The Yoga Dictionary* by Georg Furersteiin, and the many works of B.K.S. Iyengar.



CHRISTINE DIMOFSKI HAS COMPLETED HER TEACHER TRAINING AT THE VYCS AND LIVES IN RICHMOND. NANCY SEARING HAS ACHIEVED HER INTRODUCTORY LEVEL II CERTIFICATION AND LIVES IN SIDNEY.



SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

for TERM 1 Fall 2004

Term 1 September 13 – October 31

Term 2 November 1 – December 19

Some classes will be adjusted due to special workshops or holidays. (Note: Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus and Melissa Worth will be in India for part of Term 1. There will be qualified substitute teachers for their classes)

INTRODUCTION TO IYENGAR YOGA – 4 Weeks

Tues 7:00 – 8:30pm Karin Holtkamp

LEVEL 1

Mon 12:00 – 1:30pm Lauren Cox

Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm Ann Kilbertus

Tues 10:00 – 11:30am Leslie Hogya

Tues 5:00 – 6:30pm Melissa Worth

Tues 7:00 – 8:30pm Wies Pukesh

Wed 6:15 – 7:45pm Gwynneth Powell

Wed 6:30 – 8:00pm Britta Poisson

Thur 8:30 – 10:00am Linda Benn

Thur 5:30 – 7:00pm Wendy Boyer

Thur 6:30 – 8:00pm Jeannette Merryfield

Fri 10:30 – 12:00pm Linda Benn

Fri 5:00 – 6:30pm Gwynneth Powell

Sat 9:30 – 11:00am Corrine Lowen

Sun 10:30 – 12:00pm Ty Chandler

LEVEL 1 / 2

Wed 9:00 – 10:30am Ty Chandler

Wed 7:30 – 9:00pm Melissa Worth

Thur 7:00 – 8:30pm Greg Sly

Sun 4:00 – 5:30pm Wies Pukesh

Mon 6:30 – 8:00am Chris Lea

LEVEL 2

Mon 4:00 – 5:30pm Jo Anna Hope

Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm Greg Sly

Tues 10:00 – 11:30am Robin Cantor

Tues 5:15 – 7:00pm Leslie Hogya

Tues 6:30 – 8:00pm Melissa Worth

Wed 7:45 – 9:15pm Gwynneth Powell

Thur 4:30 – 6:00pm Ann Kilbertus

Fri 9:00 – 10:30am Linda Benn

Fri 5:00 – 6:30pm Wendy Boyer

Sat 8:00 – 9:30am Corrine Lowen

Sun 9:00 – 10:30am Ty Chandler

LEVEL 2/3

Mon 10:00 – 12:00pm Lauren Cox

Wed 6:00 – 7:30pm Ty Chandler

Wed 6:30 – 8:00 am Chris Lea

LEVEL 3

Thur 10:00 – 12:00pm

Term 1 Shirley Daventry
French, Linda Benn

Term 2 Linda Benn

Thur 6:00 – 8:00pm Ann Kilbertus,
Leslie Hogya

Sat 9:00 – 11:00am Marlene Miller

LEVEL 4

Mon 5:30 – 7:30pm Shirley D. French
& Senior teachers

ALL LEVELS

Sat 11:00am - 1:00pm Chris Lea

NOON

Tues 12:00 – 1:00pm Jeannette Merryfield

Wed 12:00 – 1:00pm Wendy Boyer

Thur 12:00 – 1:00pm Lauren Cox

Fri 12:00 – 1:00pm Ty Chandler

TIMED PRACTICE

Tues 5:30 – 7:00pm Ty Chandler

Wed 5:00 – 6:00pm Corrine Lowen -
Term I only - Drop-in

LEARN THE ROPES

November 4, 18, 25, December 2

Thur 5:30 – 6:30pm Greg Sly

INTRODUCTION TO PRANAYAMA

Level 2 required.
October 20, 27, November 3, 10

Wed 7:00 – 8:00am Ann Kilbertus

INTRODUCTION TO PRANAYAMA

Level 2 required
October 7, 14, 21, 28

Thur 5:00 – 6:00pm Leslie Hogya

PRANAYAMA

Level 3 or 4 + teacher's permission required.
September 16, 23, 30, October 7

Thur 7:00 – 8:00am Shirley D. French

INTRODUCTION TO YOGA PHILOSOPHY

Term 2 November 4, 18, 25, Dec. 2

Thur 5:00 – 6pm Leslie Hogya

WOMEN'S CLASS

Tues 11:30 – 1:00pm Robin Cantor

PRE NATAL YOGA

Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm Robin Cantor

PRE & POST NATAL YOGA

Sat 3:00 – 4:00pm Lauren Cox

55 & BETTER

Wed 10:30 – 12:00pm
Continuing Leslie Hogya

Fri 10:30 – 12:00pm
Level 1 Wendy Boyer

Fri 4:30 – 6pm
Level 1 Wies Pukesh

SPECIAL NEEDS

Wed 4:30 – 6:00pm
Term 1 Shirley D. French,
Lauren Cox

Term 2 Ann Kilbertus,
Leslie Hogya

A & C Lauren Cox

Thur 1:15 – 2:45pm Linda Benn,
Ann Kilbertus

BACK CARE

Mon 4:00 – 5:15pm Linda Benn

Wed 5:15 – 6:30pm James Currie
Johnson

TY'S YOGA KIDS (Ages 10 – 14)

Fri 4:00 – 5:00pm Ty Chandler

HIGHSCHOOL YOGA (Age 14 +)

Tues 4:15 – 5:15pm Gwynneth Powell

Linda Poole and **Janine Beckner** for helping serve and clean up at the Introductory Teacher Training Intensive dinner in July.

Monica Difmofski for volunteering to help with timed practice at the July Intensive.

Britta Poisson who is often doing "one more thing" either before or after her official work time!

Thank you!
Thank you!
Thank you!

All those who volunteered to promote the Victoria Yoga Centre at the Moss Street Market:

Rosemary Barritt, Jennifer Blais, Jason Bowers, Coral Grant, Heather Hobbs, Alisa Kage-McCaig, Britta Poisson, Claire Wallace, Sandy Wallace. ॐ

Shirley Daventry French is a longtime student of B. K. S. Iyengar and has travelled to India many times to study with the Iyengars, most recently January 2003. Shirley's significant understanding of the teaching comes through in her direct approach.

Giving workshops at both the national and international levels, her dedication to the art and science of yoga is apparent. With a unique personal perspective, Shirley brings traditional yoga philosophy and psychology to the forefront of her teaching.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE PRESENTS

The Heart of Yoga

**An Intermediate Workshop
with Shirley Daventry French**

January 28-30, 2005

**For Levels 3 and 4 students or Level 2 students
who have completed at least 2 terms**

**Friday, January 28, 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Saturday, January 29, 11 am - 2 pm, 3:30 - 5:30 pm
Sunday, January 30, noon - 3 pm**

**Fees: \$185 + GST members
\$205 + GST non members**

**Registration opens
December 8, 2004
for members,
December 13 for
non members**

**To register, drop in
or phone
Victoria Yoga Centre
202, 919 Fort Street
Victoria, BC**

**(250) 386-YOGA (9642)
www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca**

**Refunds will only be offered if
your space can be filled and are
subject to a \$10 cancellation fee.**

Scholarships & Bursaries



Member's Scholarships are available for all long workshops and intensives.

Please apply in writing at least one month prior to the workshop you are interested in. See Calendar on back page for dates.

Student Bursaries are available to all students presently enrolled in classes.

To subsidize your term fees please apply 3 weeks prior to term.

Applications and details for both are available at the reception desk.

**Victoria Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street
Victoria, BC V8V 3K3**

VYC Employees Honoured



Employees of the VYC were treated to a luncheon in celebration of their contribution to our community

Upcoming

IYAC

Assessment Dates

- 2004 Oct 15-17, 2004
Junior Intermediate I
Toronto ON
- Nov 19-21, 2004
Junior Intermediate I
Vancouver BC
- 2005 June 17-19, 2005
Introductory I/II
Courtenay-Comox BC
- Oct 21-23, 2005
Introductory I/II
London ON
- Dec 9-11, 2005
Junior Intermediate I
Montreal QC
- 2006 Jan 20-22, 2006
Senior Intermediate I
Toronto ON

Congratulations

The following candidates achieved certification during the Introductory I/II assessments in Kelowna and Edmonton, June 2004

Introductory II

Lynne Bowsher, Winfield, BC
Wendy Boyer, Victoria, BC
Shannon Cameron, Toronto, ON
Wies Pukesh, Victoria, BC
Val Speidel, Vancouver, BC
Magee Spicer, Prince George, BC
Melissa Worth, Victoria, BC
Kathy Cook, Hong Kong
Leslie Corcos, Hong Kong
Bridget Donald, Vancouver, BC
Samantha Lopeter-Lloyd, Medicine Hat, AB
Beena Parekh, Toronto, ON
Greg Sly, Victoria, BC
Nancy Searing, Sidney, BC
Jesse Tong Chow Tip, Hong Kong

Introductory I

Corrie Vorlauffer, Richmond, BC

Sadhana

with Corrine Lowen

December 20 - 24, 2004
6:30 - 8 am daily

Fees: \$75 + GST members,
\$85 + GST non members

Registration: October 18 for members,
October 25 for non members

To register: Drop in or phone Victoria Yoga
Centre, 202 - 919 Fort Street,
Victoria, BC

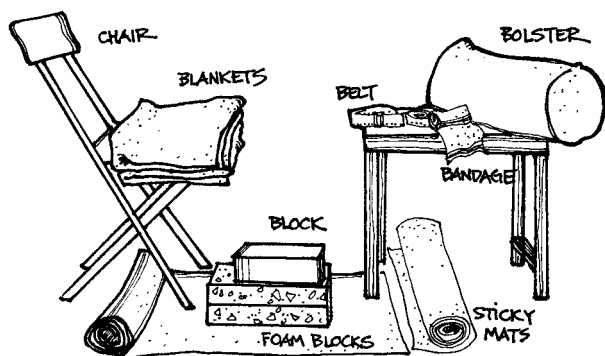
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)
www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca

Refunds: will only be offered if your space
can be filled and are subject to a
\$10 cancellation fee.

Yoga props for sale

Victoria Yoga Centre • 202-919
Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K3
386-YOGA(9642)

(All prices subject to 7% GST and 7.5% PST)



Blankets (White Cotton)	\$25.00
Foam Block	\$ 6.50
Wood Block - handmade in Victoria	\$25.00
Bolster - handmade in Victoria	\$55.00
Eye bags (Flax) - handmade in Victoria	\$10.00
Head Bandages	\$ 6.50
Sandbag - handmade in Victoria	\$20.00
Sticky Mat (Blue, Green, and Purple)	\$40.00
Sticky Mat (Half Moon)	\$32.00
Sticky Mat Second Hand (please check for availability)	\$10.48
Sticky Mats (Economy)	\$22.00
Straps (Regular)	\$ 6.00
Straps (Long)	\$10.00
T-Shirts Unisex price for non-members	\$27.00
T-Shirts Unisex price for members	\$22.00
T-Shirts Women's Cap Sleeve price for non-members	\$27.00
T-Shirts Women's Cap Sleeve price for members	\$22.00



Swami Radha in Rishikesh, India, 1955



Radha Yoga Centre

Sacred Dance Workshop

Let the sacred movements of prayer dance open your heart to the Light within. Experience devotion as a natural expression of the physical body.

Saturday Oct. 9 & Sunday Oct. 10, 1-4pm

\$30 for one day, \$50 for both, sliding scale available

You are welcome to attend one or both sessions.

Dreaming Mind, Reflective Body

Our dreams are an invitation to listen to our own inner wisdom and to act on what we know. This workshop provides the tools to understand your dreams and to apply what you have learned in a practical and gentle way.

Saturday & Sunday November 6 & 7, 1-4pm

\$50, sliding scale available

The Heart of the Matter

The *ascent intensive* workshop with Swami Lalitananda at Yasodhara Ashram is coming up soon, October 23-28. Discover the language of your heart through the hatha yoga practice of Hidden Language.

Phone 1-800-661-8711 for more information.

VICTORIA *yoga centre* Calendar 04-05

SEPTEMBER 2004

- 6-12** Registration Week
- 13** Term 1 begins
- 25** Teacher's Meeting

OCTOBER 2004

- 1** Sutra Workshop with Shirley Daventry French
- 2-3** Going Deeper with Shirley Daventry French
- 15** Friday Night Gathering 6:30 pm
- 15-17** Junior Intermediate I Assessment Toronto
- 23** Teacher's Meeting

NOVEMBER 2004

- 5-7** Yoga for Health
- 19** Friday Night Gathering 6:30 pm
- 19-21** Junior Intermediate I Assessment Vancouver
- 27** Teacher's Meeting
- 27** Short Workshop: Fifty Plus with Leslie Hogya and Wendy Boyer

DECEMBER 2004

- 12** In the Light of Yoga Workshop
- 20-24** Sadhana with Corrine Lowen

JANUARY 2005

- 28-30** Heart of Yoga with Shirley Daventry French

FEBRUARY 2005

- 11** Friday Night Gathering 6:30 pm
- 27** Short Workshop: Fifty Plus with Leslie Hogya and Wendy Boyer



VICTORIA
yoga centre
SOCIETY

Membership and Newsletter Subscription

For a one year membership and newsletter subscription, please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to:

**Victoria Yoga Centre Society, c/o Karin Holtkamp,
202-919 Fort Steet, Victoria BC V8V 3K3**

Membership/subscription fee is \$32 (incl. GST), renewable each January.

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

☐ Receipt required

Membership benefits include 5% discount on classes, free practice times at the VYC, timed practices, early registration and discount on workshops, borrowing privileges in our library, eligibility to become a board member and eligibility for scholarships for workshops.

November / December 2004



VICTORIA

yoga centre

NEWSLETTER



Respects
to Guruji

on his 86th birthday,
December 14, 2004



In the Light of Yoga

a special benefit workshop in celebration of
the 86th birthday of Yogacharya B. K. S. Iyengar

Sunday, December 12, 2004

1:00 – 2:30pm All Levels asana practice led by Ann Kilbertus

2:30 – 3:30pm Restorative practice led by Leslie Hogya

3:30 – 4:00pm Refreshments

Teachers The teachers: Ann and Leslie are accomplished teachers in the Iyengar Yoga tradition. They have both travelled to India to study at the source of this practice many times: Ann recently returned from a month's study this September and Leslie was also there this past summer for 6 weeks. Both are presently teachers in the Victoria Yoga Centre's Teacher Training Program.

Fees: \$45 + GST members
\$55 + GST non members

To register, drop in or phone Victoria Yoga Centre
#202 - 919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC
(250) 386-yoga (9642)
www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled
and are subject to a \$10 cancellation fee.

All proceeds from this workshop go to the B.K.S. Iyengar
Scholarship Fund which assists teachers, training teachers and
committed students to attend classes at the institute in Pune.

Dear Yoga Centre members,
In this season of Light, we celebrate our teacher B.K.S. Iyengar's
birthday. If you cannot attend the workshop, please consider making
a donation to the scholarship fund in his name. The Yoga Centre
helps send our teachers or qualified students to study from the source
of the teachings at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in
Pune, India. This involves a great deal of expense on the traveller's
part.

Please come to the workshop or, if you cannot come, please donate to
this fund and we will issue a tax receipt.

Namaste, Leslie Hogya

Birthday wishes from the VYC



Dear Guruji,

December 2004 marks your 86th birthday. We are pleased to
send you our warmest greetings from Victoria in Canada on
this auspicious day.

Around our yoga centre there is evidence of your work.
Photos of you in your practice grace our walls and inspire us on
the path of yoga. Your books, which line the library shelves and
sit in each studio for quick reference, provide us with clarity
and guidance. In our lobby we have hung a framed copy of the
letter you sent when we opened our centre which contains your
beautiful words of encouragement.

Our teachers work together to learn your method. Teachers
attend classes with each other specifically those of our senior
teacher, Shirley Daventry French. We come together at our
teachers' meetings once a month to explore the practice of yoga
and study together as we prepare for certification.

The centre will mark your birthday with a special workshop
in your name. Proceeds from this workshop contribute to a
special scholarship fund that allows us to provide assistance to
anyone from our community who is able to study at the
Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute.

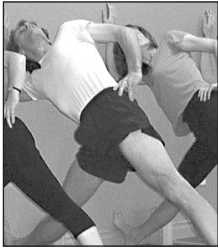
On occasional Friday evenings we hold Video Night at
which the centre shows one of the many videos we hold in our
library. This is another way in which we spread your work.
Students can only be inspired when watching you teach and
practise.

The sounds of AUM and chanting to Patanjali fill the
centre at the start of our classes as we honour the tradition of
yoga as taught by the sutras. Our teachers and students read
and study your translation of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and
Shirley is offering a special sutra workshop this fall.

Your dedication and hard work in the promotion of yoga
inspires us to learn, to grow and to teach.

Love from the Victoria Yoga Centre teachers and students

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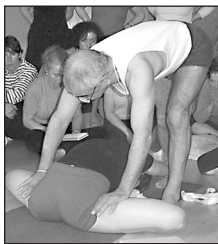


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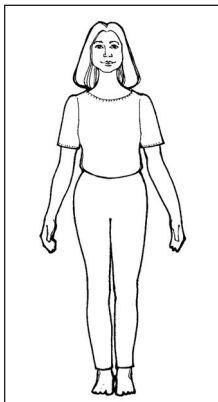
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Newsletter Advertising Policy (Adopted February 20, 2004)

In keeping with the mandate of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society Directors, 2004, to update, review and document policies and procedures, the newsletter committee submitted a policy which is a revision of the 1996 policy and has been adopted by the Board of Directors as follows:

1. Advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the newsletter of the VYCS.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar Yoga
3. Priority given to advertisements regarding:
 - VYC events
 - VYC sponsored events
 - CIYTA events
 - Radha House/ Yasodhara Ashram



VICTORIA yoga centre NEWSLETTER

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

November 15, 2004

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of B.C., 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 Newsletter, published regularly by the VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY, provides current information on events concerning yoga in the Victoria area and the Yasodhara Ashram.

Send contributions, articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter: 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3. For information on activities and events, call 386-YOGA(9642) or visit our website: www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca.

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The editor/newsletter committee hold the right to publish or edit all articles at their discretion.



SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH WAS AWARDED SENIOR CERTIFICATION FROM B.K.S. IYENGAR. SHE HAS BEEN TEACHING SINCE 1972 AND FOUNDED THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE IN 1976. SHIRLEY LIVES IN VICTORIA AND TEACHES WORLDWIDE.

*The end of discipline is the beginning of freedom
Only a disciplined person is a free person.
So-called 'freedom' is only a licence to act
and do as we like.*

B.K.S. Iyengar

Last summer, in London, I attended a performance of Swan Lake by the Bolshoi Ballet in the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. This was one of the highlights of a leisurely and nostalgic journey through France and the UK to celebrate Derek's and my fiftieth wedding anniversary. For both of us theatre going was a part of our youth. As a child living in London I went to West End theatres several times a year with my parents, sitting in good seats: stalls or lower circle. My school would take us to performances of classic plays like Shakespeare and Shaw, generally in the cheaper seats of the upper circle. Later as a young adult I queued up to get a seat in "the Gods" the highest balcony from which one peered down at a distant stage through binoculars if you had the money to free them from their restraint in front of your seat. There were many protocols attached to getting seats in the Gods which were in high demand by the impoverished youth of postwar London. One of them was to rent a folding stool early in the day which had a number on it and which spent the day in this queue in lieu of you. A certain time before the performance you had to claim your stool or forfeit your place.

I saw some great plays and musical shows in this manner, and through my acquaintance with Derek occasionally got to sit in the best seats in the house. He spent the clinical years of medical school at Charing Cross Hospital just off Trafalgar Square, and at the last minute nearby theatres would often send unsold tickets to the hospital for the use of

the staff. From time to time Derek would phone me to say he had two tickets and was I free; in which case we would find ourselves casually dressed sitting among very smart people, some in evening dress (people dressed up for the theatre in those days!)

Nowadays, one of the first things we do when we arrive in London is to check the theatre listings and decide which shows we would like to see. This year, discovering that the Bolshoi's visit coincided with ours, we grasped at the opportunity to see one of the world's premier ballet companies. "You won't be able to get tickets at this late date!" was the discouraging comment I heard from several people, despite which I tried and succeeded.

The concierge in the apartment building where we were staying managed to get us two good seats albeit one behind the other, which was not a great inconvenience as we are not in the habit of holding a conversation in the midst of a performance. This ballet was outstanding. I would have sat anywhere to see such discipline, elegance and beauty - not to mention the grandeur of a great opera house and the music of Tchaikovsky!

One notable moment for me was when the prima ballerina playing Odette/Odile pirouetted on the point of one foot so many times I was almost out of breath. Such strength and stamina! Such grace and dignity! Such authority and artistry! And possibly I was the only person in the audience whose eyes were glued on the kneecap of the supporting leg which did not waver one iota. Her mind, firmly maintaining its awareness in that

knee, did not fluctuate for a second, and next morning in my yoga practice there was an increased awareness of my own legs as I went through a series of balancing postures.

Discipline! This was my foremost impression of the Bolshoi. It formed the basis for all the artistic expression and creativity which was so much in evidence there on that stage. At the same time you know that from the most accomplished soloist to the junior members of the corps de ballet (which was outstanding), they will all be practising at the barre the next day. There is no time in a renowned ballet company to rest on your laurels; just as there is no time for such complacency on the yogic path. Only discipline will sustain a level of excellence.

Recently I taught at an educational retreat centre which among its many courses offers yoga taught by a variety of teachers some of whom, like myself, follow a particular tradition, and others who draw from a variety of methods. They have some licence that those of us with a guru or master have forfeited. With no-one to answer to, no formal structure to adhere to, these teachers can pick and choose from various teachers and teachings as they see fit. *Mix and match!*

Is there a problem with this? Don't you get the best of all worlds? Or is there the possibility that this sum of parts adds up to little of value?

One problem which arises from time to time is that having no disciplined tradition of their own to adhere to some teachers dismiss Iyengar Yoga as rigid and militaristic. I learned of just such an incident recently. It was the disciplined, dare I say 'militaristic', precision of the Bolshoi corps de ballet which made it so effective.

Non-specific yoga classes are frequently described as *Hatha Yoga*, often as traditional Hatha Yoga. Do they know that Hatha Yoga is a complex and very specific discipline including practices rarely taught in North American yoga classes such as *dhauti* (internal cleansing including swallowing a wet cloth, and rectal cleansing)? It also includes *neti* which involves putting a fine thread into one nostril and pulling it out through the mouth. Sometimes Iyengar Yoga students describe their work as Hatha Yoga in the tradition of

B.K.S. Iyengar. Mr. Iyengar himself does not encourage this although some of the practices do overlap. Similarly with *Raja Yoga*, this includes various practices we follow in Iyengar Yoga: such as *kriya yoga*, the yoga of action and the eight fold path of *astanga yoga*: *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*.

For years, Gururji resisted the tendency of his students to use the term Iyengar Yoga, but as his work grew worldwide he finally surrendered, allowing us to make this distinction, and enabling those who sought this path to find a trained teacher.

Iyengar Yoga is by no means the only disciplined path in Yoga. All Yoga systems involve discipline on the part of teachers and students.

The purpose of an Iyengar class is not to entertain but to enlighten, and the light often illuminates that which we do not wish to see.

Iyengar Yoga is a progressive discipline. An authentic Iyengar Yoga teacher cannot teach anything which comes into their mind. If you are teaching an introductory class and find that most of the students have good strong flexible bodies you do not suddenly jump to intermediate or advanced poses. If you are teaching an introductory class and an experienced student comes because this time fits into their schedule, you do not suddenly abandon your introductory students. A truly experienced student can learn even from the most basic work, and an advanced pose without advanced awareness is nothing!

There will always be some students, displaying a singular lack of awareness, who dismiss the work as too easy, become bored and go off to somewhere else which entertains them better. And such students are better off elsewhere. Others complain it's too hard or are uncomfortable to have attention drawn to their physical, mental and emotional limitations and unwilling to take any personal responsibility for this. The purpose of an Iyengar class is not to entertain but to

To anyone who has had the good fortune to be taught directly by B.K.S. Iyengar or his foremost disciples: his daughter Geeta and son Prashant, it is inconceivable that you would not be challenged to the utmost on all levels.

enlighten, and the light often illuminates that which we do not wish to see.

This imposes a discipline on a yoga centre such as ours because we cannot nor do we want to teach solely to please and retain students, although certainly we do not wish to drive them away. All of us who teach at the Victoria Yoga Centre are focused on presenting the teachings of yoga according to the Iyengar tradition as systematically, cleanly and clearly as possible. This principle cannot be compromised. At the same time our classes are varied because of the different personalities of the teachers. A sense of humour is an essential ingredient on the spiritual path and our classes are full of laughter as well as effort.

Because of their training and the flexibility of this method, skilled Iyengar teachers can teach introductory asanas in a variety of ways to maintain interest and challenge the stronger students while adapting for those who are less able. Ideally, and B.K.S. Iyengar expects no less of us, demands will be made of all students to work to the maximum. A foundation is laid down for the challenging work which inevitably lies ahead.

To anyone who has had the good fortune to be taught directly by B.K.S. Iyengar or his foremost disciples: his daughter Geeta and son Prashant, it is inconceivable that you would not be challenged to the utmost on all levels. The only way to avoid this is to miss classes or close off completely. Guruji does not waste his energy with those who come with attitude and remain

unwilling to surrender. I have seen him try to penetrate many a student's protective armour, pride or arrogance, and I have seen tremendous transformations in students who initially had nothing good to say about him. Guruji does not give up easily, but there has to be a chink for the light to enter.

One student who was in a group I took to Pune some years ago, stopped attending the *pranayama* classes, held daily at that time, because she said they were not advanced enough for her. Instead she did her own practice in her hotel room. How sad to cut yourself off from so much wisdom, experience and learning.

In another Canadian intensive, where Geeta was the teacher, one man missed many of the classes - both *asana* and *pranayama* preferring to spend his time having other ayurvedic treatments and massages. When he was in class he stood alone in a back corner making the statement that he was not really one of the group. On the last day, as Geeta was taking students with health problems and showing us how to work with these problems, she threw out a question. This man answered, the first time his voice had been heard in class. Geeta paused, looked at him and said, "Now he speaks!", then

ignoring his comment went on with her teaching. It saddened me because there had been a waiting list for this course and he had taken up a place which someone else would have valued.

This man's lack of attendance in class did not prevent him from returning to Canada and quickly appending to his bio. the statement that he had studied with the Iyengars in Pune. Be very wary of the biographical claims which appear on many yoga websites and brochures. In the yoga world there is a lot of cachet to the Iyengar name, but a statement such as "has studied Iyengar Yoga" could mean a class or a term and not necessarily with a trained Iyengar Yoga teacher.

It is for this reason that B.K.S. Iyengar brought in assessment and certification, and latterly a certification mark denoting those whose certification is in good standing. There are many people around with medical or law degrees who are not licensed to practice; similarly there are those who hold certificates in Iyengar Yoga because at one time they adhered to its principles and precepts, but who have gone off on their own track. They will not hold the Iyengar Yoga Certification Mark which is required of all teachers one year after they have been certified. To continue with the analogy of law and medicine, the first year is like articling or interning. From here on to maintain your good standing you have to do a minimum number of hours of postgraduate study each year which, for higher levels of certification, includes study in Pune.

Critics of certification say that it is taking the creativity and spontaneity out of the teaching, but in our experience at

Talented teachers abound, but B.K.S. Iyengar is a genius. There is a saying that "Talent does what it can: Genius does what it must!" Such souls are rare.

the Victoria Yoga Centre the exact opposite is true. Like the Bolshoi, systematic thorough ongoing training built on a disciplined regular practice forms a foundation from which true artistry can flower, and even those who are destined to remain journeymen teachers will teach a good and even excellent class if they follow the structure set down by those who have ventured further along the yogic path.

Talented teachers abound, but B.K.S. Iyengar is a genius. There is a saying that "*Talent does what it can: Genius does what it must!*" Such souls are rare. Recognising this, Swami Radha, herself a spiritual teacher of great stature, had this to say about Mr. Iyengar after her first meeting with him which, incidentally, took place in Victoria.

"On a personal level I have not met anybody of a combination that is so unique – generosity, kindness, and also the very fierce and demanding teacher that I have seen when watching him in class; who knows precisely what he is

doing, and (how) to penetrate most of the things that we here pass by." And she ended her speech by addressing those privileged to study with him directly: "All of you here, who have much more and much longer contact with Mr. Iyengar: don't listen only with your ears - listen with your intuition. You might never hear this much wisdom with so much concern and so much compassion again!"

And in Pune in 1997, Geeta Iyengar (one of the world's outstanding contemporary spiritual teachers) exhorted a group of Canadian students to pay careful attention to all Gururji said and did because "*you will not see his like again for hundreds of years!*"

Despite this there are those who proclaim their affiliation to Gururji even though they have not been near him or his close disciples for decades. It is easier to have a spiritual master whom you never actually face in person. This leaves you free to interpret their teaching in any way you like. But this is not the

freedom which Patanjali speaks of in his yoga-sutras, which is summed up succinctly by B.K.S. Iyengar in the following aphorism and the one quoted at the beginning of this article:

Extension means creation of space.

Space leads to freedom.

Freedom brings precision.

Precision leads to perfection.

Perfection is truth.

Truth is God. ॐ

TIME TO *Renew*

This is a reminder that the
VYC membership
expires on
December 31, 2004.

The membership subscription fee is
\$32 and renewable each January.

Membership benefits include:

- 5% discount on all classes
- free practice times at the VYC
- timed practices
- having the option of getting the newsletter mailed to you
- early registration and discount for workshops
- borrowing privileges in our library
- eligibility to become a board member
- eligibility for scholarships for workshops and intensives.

To renew your membership, please fill in the membership subscription form on the back page of this newsletter.

Sadhana

with Corrine Lowen

December 20 - 24, 2004

6:30 - 8 am daily

Fees: \$75 + GST members,
\$85 + GST non members

Registration: October 18 for members,
October 25 for non members

To register: Drop in or phone Victoria Yoga
Centre, 202 - 919 Fort Street,
Victoria, BC

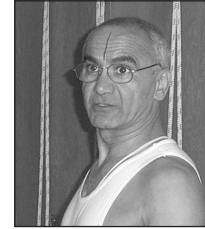
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)
www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca

Refunds: will only be offered if your space
can be filled and are subject to a
\$10 cancellation fee.

An interview with Faeq Biria:

Part III (final)

Faeq Biria, director of the Centre de Yoga Iyengar de Paris, in conversation with Shirley Daventry French, Khairoon Quadir, Ann Kilbertus and Louie Ettling after a delicious Indian dinner at Khairoon's home in Vancouver, on May 9, 2003. It was Faeq's first visit to British Columbia where he gave workshops in Victoria and Vancouver.



What are your ideas about how to train teachers? A philosophy of teacher training?

Well, the basis of the training in Iyengar yoga – at least at the beginning level, is that teachers they are not allowed to do therapy and special classes. They are trained to teach basic *asanas* and basic *pranayama*. So the first thing that is required from the teacher trainee is to learn and to understand and to practise those things himself. Originally, the training is a type of – I don't know the word in English, in French I call it artisanal. *[At the craft level—ED]*

An apprenticeship!

Yes. In the works of art, there is not any training really. Though they try to make courses of jeweller training, training of this, training of that, but the real training is when people begin in the shop of the jeweller by sweeping first, by cleaning later, by bringing the things out, by spending hours and days watching the master, by scratching slowly, slowly, slowly in this way. Gradually they learn and eventually they become a teacher. But in our day, it is not possible. Originally, students would stay twelve years or more with a guru to learn something. In our day it is impossible. Gurujī's method is so well systematized and so well condensed. He settled that we go regularly [to study] with him, we learn, we come home, we practise, and we go back. And this, a little

bit balances that lack of being for long time with the master.

The philosophy of teacher training, when I train teachers, is more than formation of a teacher: I think of it as transformation. [The French word 'formation' translates into not only 'formation' but also 'education, training.'—ED] If the student who is in teacher training gets that transformation, then he can bring something very special to others; but if he doesn't and remains in the state of formation, then he will transmit only the techniques. 'Till the moment that you get a flash of light yourself, you cannot lighten others. Something must come to you first before you can give that fragrance to others. So, in the teacher training, we teach them *asanas* and *pranayamas* like everywhere you are doing according to the pattern, and we make them practises. We do a lot on self-study. Of course, it is not in the field of our Gurujī's method to call the student everyday and ask, what they did, what they didn't do. Gurujī never did that with us, and we are not allowed to do that with our students. But I give out papers, and they write about their

evolution - how much they practised, learned, read, taught, even how much time and energy they wasted; a regular *svadhyaya* (self-study) every month. They have to calculate their practice and write this down. And, we watch, but not as critics; we watch as trainers to see whether they are really feeling it or not. And we question, how much do you feel that you are resolving your own problems? How much are you progressing in *asana*? How much are you progressing in *pranayama*? How much do you feel that your health is improved? All these questions we put and it is for them to be able to see the transformation in themselves. And, I humbly think that since we introduced these things – of course all of them were with Gurujī's approval – it gives much better results. Now, it goes more with the idea of the transformation than formation.

One of the things that is frequently debated is the whole concept of certification. What is the best way of really testing the student? You've already given some answers like seeing the progress of the person. But what about

'Till the moment that you get a flash of light yourself, you cannot lighten others. Something must come to you first before you can give that fragrance to others.'

the actual certification examination?

Gurujii didn't use the word "examination", and this is very meaningful. He uses the word "assessment". And I am sure that Shirley heard many times from Gurujii, "In the first assessments be generous". So, his idea of assessment is more than examination or blocking or putting a wall in front of the people. It is to help them to become aware of their weak points. Our work as assessors is to help them get rid of those weak points, to show them how to strengthen those weak points, and help them have a better vision, better progression. This is not an exam. This is a type of evaluation with the help of four or five pairs of mature eyes. This is what I understand to be the true idea of Gurujii about assessment.

That doesn't mean that we call the people and offer the certificate on a silver tray. No, an Iyengar certificate is tremendously respected all over the world, and it is up to us to preserve that respect. But the way that we work towards a certificate is not like an examination in school. It is more to help that person in his evolution.

And how does that change when the teacher is more senior?

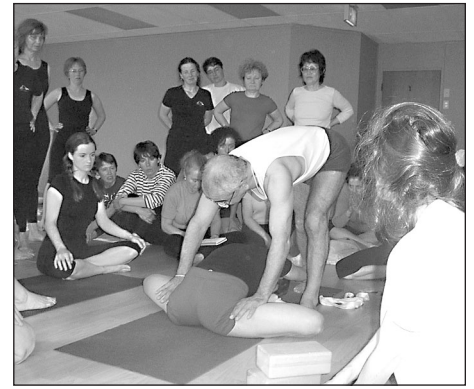
Well, lots of things are expected in the higher levels, but I trust tremendously Gurujii's teaching. Gurujii is a very ethical person and he talks often about ethics, but he hasn't that inquisitive way of coming to see who is doing what – who is practising, who is not practising. However, he has the eye to see who is practising and how that person is practising. And a hundred percent I believe that the practice of this Iyengar system is done in a way that the evolution and the transformation of the person also goes along with that. At the beginning for me, this was a type of theory that I was guessing. But Gurujii wrote in his *Light on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras*, and later on in one of the articles he added himself while editing *Astadala*

Yogamala, that the principle of the *yamas* and *niyamas* settles in the yogi twice. At the beginning, we have to respect the ethical things – like when we are children, we don't know what is lying what is not lying but are told "you must not lie". And if you lie, there is a punishment. So, we know that we must resist the temptation to lie. Later on, what happens – some people they continue to lie and some people they don't lie anymore. In the practice of yoga at the beginning what happens, the principles of the *yama* and *niyama*, we have them or don't have them, but we try to respect them. When the practice progresses, when we are settled in the practice of *pranayama* and we reach the experience of *pratyahara* – then *yama* and *niyama* flow from inside. No longer are they something that we instill from outside. They flow from within, from the source by themselves. This is the evolution which happens as the practice advances, and which must happen for a more mature level of practice.

And that's more complex to assess. Not for Gurujii, of course. Gurujii can assess that maturity easily.

At this level it is more complex to assess. But I believe that when we assess we can see if a person is mature in their practice. He may not be getting this asana because he has a stiff body or that asana because he has an especially flexible body, but what he is able to get is coming through with maturity. By repetition, by conscious repetition, by aware repetition the philosophical principles of yoga have developed in that person.

Let me tell you very honestly, I think that whomever doesn't correspond philosophically to that level, there is something wrong in their practice. Either they are not practising, or they are practising in the wrong way, or there are the components of the practice which are lacking. Because my own experience is that when you practice regularly as Gurujii



advocates and formulates, it is difficult but somehow it is the easiest way. Lots of things in the mental, ethical, moral levels that we struggle to settle within ourselves – with the practice of the Gurujii's method they just settle by themselves!

The other day you spoke of the teachers at your Institute in Paris who have established a special teachers' class. Would you say a little more about that?

Yes, at the centre in Paris, all teachers are coming out of the same teacher training and, at the basic levels, follow the same program; so when the student is going from one class to other class, he is not lost. For example, in the beginners' levels the new asana which must be introduced in one class, is the same in all classes in that week. The same asana is introduced and explained by different teachers; so if a student goes from one class to other, he can just continue his evolution without any problem.

Once teachers move beyond basic teacher training and become more advanced, they slowly develop their own

methods, which is very good. But development of one's own methods of explanation and analysis means that sometimes one also develops wrong notions and nobody is there to correct this. This is why, now Pune insists that from junior on the teachers must visit Pune regularly, in order to go back to the source. When we go to the source, we think, "Ah! This thing, I didn't understand before! Oh, this was wrong," or, "No. They are explaining now this point in this way." And we have to explain it this way, you follow? That is, what we call recycling of the teachers or a mis-à-jour – bringing them up to date.

So, every month [in Paris] there is an intermediate class, which is taught by one teacher and all other teachers, they come and watch that class. Then, after that, they sit comfortably and all of them discuss the class of that teacher. What points they found that were good and interesting. What he explained well. What was very good to learn and what points they don't agree [with] and, according to them could be explained in another way. Or maybe, according to them, it was wrong. The senior teacher coordinates the discussion. For example, just recently there was a very good teacher who taught. They watched, they came out and told, "Congratulations. Technically the class was excellent. Explanations were wonderful. But you were not seeing your students at all." This teacher was unable to see more than two students at the same time. So, the discussion was about how we must develop the observation skill to control the entire class. And I think this is very helpful.

Do they teach in a regular class, a class of students that would be there all the time? Or do they teach each other?

Yes, that is a regular class which is going on, and one teacher comes and teaches the program of that class. We have created the same thing in the teacher training, but that is a false class which

we make just for that purpose. Yes, they come to the real class; and Guruji advises that. He says always that the senior teachers must go to the class and observe and help the junior teachers. Whenever I am there, I go, for example, at the bottom of the class and practice and listen to the class. After that, if there is something, I call the teacher and discuss it with him. It is not to my understanding to catch the teacher and criticise in front of the students - unless you see that the student teacher is giving something that the students are going to injure themselves. But this will not happen with the training of the teachers if they are teaching in their own level. Outside the class, in a friendly way, it is better and I think it works better.

It's getting late, but maybe before we close... This has been, not your first trip to Canada, but your first trip to western Canada. Have you anything you would like to say to us before you go? And, most of all, what we'd like to say to you is – When are you coming back?

Well, you know, talking about this part of Canada is difficult because one of my best friends is training here and it may look like I am offering flowers to my friend. But, the first thing is the mentality of the people, that innocence and inner purity and will to learn touched me tremendously. Really, it was a very great pleasure to come here and to work with you. I felt at the heart of the Iyengar family. This was my feeling concerning *maitri, karuna* - friendship, compassion.

What I really admired was seeing the long work which has been done here. I felt from the very beginning that senior teachers here, they did a very long work with compassion, with love, and it is now bringing its fruits. It was very good to see. The touch is there – the very deep touch is there; and I am feeling that now even the senior-most teacher, if she retires or if she remains, there is no going back.

My feeling was that Guruji planted the first tree. The senior teachers, who first went to Pune took branches off that tree, brought them back and planted them. In this part of Canada, I feel that tree is so well planted and well-cared for, and the branches, and the leaves, and the fruits they are so healthy that it is going to become a gigantesque tree. This is my impression, with all honesty. And I really congratulate all of you for this work.

We have been very moved by the work you have given us.

Well, whether it is coming from you or from me, we know – all of us – that it comes from the source. It is Guruji's work. We are nothing but we are trying to be the channels of his teaching. This is what you did, and what I am trying to do, and what all of us in turn, are wanting to do.

Once I told Guruji, "It is not difficult to be a teacher in the Iyengar method". In other fields we have to think how to be a teacher; but in the Iyengar method he gave such a great example. If we are humble enough to follow his example, then automatically everything will go well.

We are blessed, indeed. Thank you.

Thank you – for the love, affection, and hospitality of the community here. It was an unforgettable stay for me. It was really a joy to share this time with all of you. Please don't forget to put this in your newsletter. Each and every one, according to their temperament, offered a flower of love and affection to me in each moment. It was really very much touching. ॐ

END OF PART III

Many thanks to Byron Smith of Victoria, BC, who transcribed the tape, and Shirley Daventry French, who edited the interview.



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE PRESENTS

The Heart of Yoga

**An Intermediate Workshop
with Shirley Daventry French**

January 28-30, 2005

**For Levels 3 and 4 students or Level 2 students
who have completed at least 2 terms**

**Friday, January 28, 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Saturday, January 29, 11 am - 2 pm, 3:30 - 5:30 pm
Sunday, January 30, noon - 3 pm**

Fees:

\$185 + GST members

\$205 + GST non members

Registration opens:

Dec. 8, '04 - members,

Dec.13, '04 - non members

To register,

drop in or phone

Victoria Yoga Centre

202, 919 Fort Street

Victoria, BC

(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca

Refunds will only be offered
if your space can be filled
and are subject to a \$10
cancellation fee.

Shirley Daventry French is a longtime student of B. K. S. Iyengar and has travelled to India many times to study with the Iyengars, most recently January 2003. Shirley's significant understanding of the teaching comes through in her direct approach.

Giving workshops at both the national and international levels, her dedication to the art and science of yoga is apparent. With a unique personal perspective, Shirley brings traditional yoga philosophy and psychology to the forefront of her teaching.



Friday Night Gatherings

Everybody is welcome to join us.
Bring a friend, your partner
or a family member.

NOVEMBER 19

Asana practice 6:30pm

Potluck dinner 7:30pm

By donation

Free to members

Bring food to share

AGM

**Saturday,
February 5, 2005**

Yoga Practice: 4 – 5pm

Meeting: 5 – 6 pm

followed by potluck

All members are welcome!

REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEERS

**Promote Iyengar Yoga
in your neighbourhood!**

The Victoria Yoga Centre
seeks Karma Yogis to distribute
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in Greater Victoria,
on a regular basis.

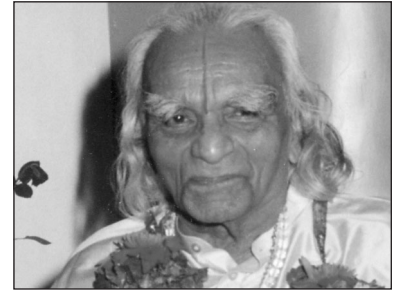
For more information,
please contact
the front desk
(386-9642).



A Birthday Tribute to Geetaji

nayamatma balahinena labhyah
the Self is not realised by a weakling

– Mundakopanishad III, 2.4



Geeta S. Iyengar is the distinguished daughter of an illustrious man. Her relationship with her father is unique not only because she is the firstborn child of B.K.S. Iyengar and his late wife, Ramamani, but because her father is also her Guru. Under his tutelage, Geeta has become an outstanding spiritual teacher in her own right.

Graced with such an auspicious birth, Geeta has grasped her opportunities in the spirit of the above quotation of which she is the embodiment. Despite health problems from childhood, Geeta has persevered and continues to persevere to overcome the obstacles she faces on her personal spiritual path. Living, as she herself puts it, in the light of her father, she is realising her own potential as she serves as a mentor to thousands of pupils of Iyengar Yoga worldwide. Without question, Geetaji is no weakling.

Like her father, Geeta's compassion and generosity know no bounds. Like him, she is a direct, honest and demanding teacher. Like him, she is strong, focused and has dedicated her life to Yoga. Living this life in the light of Yoga, she has become a beacon of light

herself for thousands of pupils who have not had the opportunity to study with Gururaj. For those of us who have been privileged to be his direct students, Geetaji has helped us build on the foundation he gave us and which shaped our lives. Always she is clear, and makes sure that we also are clear, that he is the Master and she is his disciple. Her loyalty and devotion are constant.

Each year as Gururaj's December 14th birthday approaches, we plan a special celebration to honour him and show our appreciation of his life and work. Geetaji's birthday falls a few days before Gururaj's on December 6th and, in accordance with her wishes, is usually marked quietly without ceremony. However, this year Geeta has agreed to teach a special course in honour of the occasion which will be preceded by her birthday and ended with Gururaj's. Hundreds of international students will be travelling to Pune for the occasion to honour Gururaj as he attains eighty six years of age, along with his foremost disciple as she marks her sixtieth birthday.

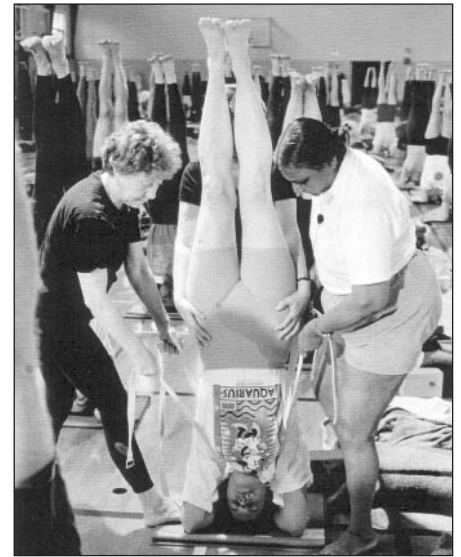
We have been blessed in Victoria by the physical presence of Gururaj in 1984 and Geetaji in 2001. We continue to be blessed and inspired on a daily basis by their spirit, their distinguished and exemplary lives, and the light from Pune which illuminates our path.

Gururaj and Geetaji, on behalf of all your students in Victoria, please accept congratulations with deepest love, gratitude and respect

Shirley Daventry French

Gururaj and Geetaji, on behalf of all your students in Victoria, please accept congratulations with deepest love, gratitude and respect.

Like her father, Geeta's compassion and generosity know no bounds. Like him, she is a direct, honest and demanding teacher. Like him, she is strong, focused and has dedicated her life to Yoga.



When I think of Geeta, I think of the word devotion; devotion to the art of yoga, to her father, who is Guru to thousands around the world, to her family, to the work of the Institute, and to her writing.

She daily teaches large demanding classes with 50 or more people, always with such fine linking and sequencing of the asanas. She orchestrates these classes with seeming ease. Three times weekly medical classes are also under her supervision. Again 50 or so people are following their own unique list of poses and many helpers are scurrying to move props, or help stretch a back with scoliosis. On top of the problems presented, she must also supervise the helpers, telling us what to do, and how to do it. Her *pranayama* classes are truly inspiring.

People from around the world consider her their teacher, and write to her with medical or personal questions. She responds to this correspondence often with hand written letters. I am awed by her tireless efforts for the cause of yoga. In her own right, she is a master teacher.

Leslie Hoya



I have been blessed to have studied with Geetaji on two occasions, most recently at RIMYI. She has helped me work on specific medical problems with compassion and generosity. She has been a steady and knowing guide, providing clarity and encouragement to know myself within and without - this is yoga. Much love and gratitude to Geetaji on her 60th birthday!

Melissa Worth

Whenever one of us has had the opportunity to study at the Institute or elsewhere with Geeta Iyengar our roots in yoga have grown deeper. For many years Geetaji has been putting her enrichments of clear instruction, organized practices and specific ways with asanas for women into our system of Yoga. In taking the time to appreciate her in writing, I wish to mention the sage understandings that Geetaji has given us around the stiffness and difficulties of menopause. That these challenges for the practitioner can be met with the mobilizations of repetitions and with certain specific practices help many now and will be available for generations to come. I have much gratitude for you, Geetaji at this time of your "marking 60." I appreciate the depth and refinement of your teachings.

Sheri Berkowitz

It is a great honor and privilege to be expressing gratitude to Dr. Geeta S. Iyengar on the occasion of her 60th birthday.

Geetaji has tirelessly dedicated her life so that all who touch the path of yoga with her build in integrity as human beings. Geetaji demonstrates the Yamas and Niyamas clearly to us in her daily life and in this has helped all her students live in their most noble virtues.

Congratulations Geetaji, and thank you,

Namaste, Ty Chandler



"The depth and clarity of Geetaji's teaching comes from her own journey within. She has the amazing ability to convey this richness, which allows an individual to gain glimpses into their own unrealized potential for spiritual depth."

Whenever I experience a pranayama class with Geetaji I think to myself, this is why I have travelled all these miles to be here in Pune. As I write this I have been back in Canada less than 48 hours, and there is so much to assimilate and digest after four weeks at the Institute.

The depth and clarity of Geetaji's teaching comes from her own journey within. She has the amazing ability to convey this richness, which allows an individual to gain glimpses into their own unrealized potential for spiritual depth.

When doing the invocation to Patanjali I hear Geetaji's words, "...humble the brain and keep the lift of the chest to open the heart." The invocation has to come from here. She guides the class this way at the beginning of most of her sessions and firmly takes us towards an inner intelligence that does not have to do with the thinking brain. It is clear that this is not easy process. Geetaji is obviously well traveled in her own depths. Through her own work and under Guruji's Light, she has given me tools to make my own way and to watch the subtle changes that occur.

Her sequences and linking are masterful and I am most grateful for the opportunities I have had to experience the gifts of her teaching.

Many blessings to Geetaji on the occasion of her 60th birthday.

Ann Kilbertus



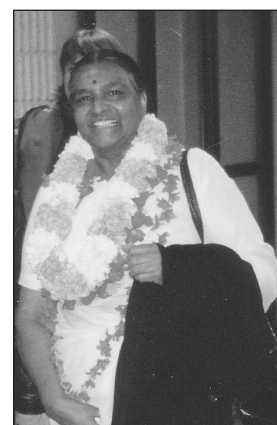
Commitment and dedication are the first words that come to mind; and then, visually, the picture of Geetaji on my wall taken at the Vancouver Conference. Geetaji, your keen observation followed by putting into practice and place what you see has brought, and continues to bring, clarity and depth to my yoga practice and into my teaching. When I have had the fortune to study under your guidance in both India and Canada, the wisdom in your teaching has always left me inspired and enthused to continue on this yogic path. It is with much gratitude that I thank you for the most wonderful touch you have had on me and in my life. It is a joy to celebrate your 60th year, Happy Birthday.

Marlene Linda Miller

Geeta was to be arriving in a few days; everyone was talking about her visit while waiting to go into class. I had decided to go to the airport to meet her with a group of people from the Yoga Centre. It had been mentioned that in India it was the custom to give people a flower garland on their arrival. This appealed to me so the next morning I looked around my garden to see if I had any suitable flowers. It was spring and the Azaleas were in full bloom. I got a needle and thread and sat in the warm spring sunshine and threaded purple azalea flowers into a garland **for a woman I had never met but whose teachings had influenced my life in a very positive way.**

Thank you Geeta, and Happy Birthday

Rosemary Barritt



Geetaji arrives in Victoria in May 2001

I am grateful to Geeta for making the practice of yoga asana accessible to women in all stages of life. The restorative poses bring wholeness to any practice.

Namaste, Karyn

Dearest Geeta...

I have studied some of the transcripts of your classes and lectures on women's issues. Up until my 2 month course in Pune this past summer, I was reliant on these recordings for my studies in this field. **Your devotion to the health of women touches my life almost every day, both as a practitioner and as a teacher of women.** I look forward to reading more of your words and to seeing you again in class. May your birthday be a joyous occasion.

Sincerely, Gwynneth Powell

Dear Geeta,

My teacher, Shirley Daventry French, is always reminding her students that we have a duty to ourselves to make the maximum effort to understand and carry out the directions of our spiritual teachers. They are given in our best interest - for the sake of our self, our Higher Self.

Whenever I am met with challenges, whether in my practice, teaching, or life, I always hear your voice: "Is it not your duty? Then whose duty is it?"

Geeta, your devotion and service to Guruji and the teachings of yoga is an inspiration. Because of your passion, many have benefited from yoga, including myself. Thank you for keeping the light of yoga alight!

Thank you for helping us along the spiritual path!

Happy Birthday Geeta!

With gratitude, Lauren Cox

I recall vividly the anatomical and philosophical depths that Geetaji took a gymnasium full of yoga aspirants to, seeing all and working compassionately, constructively, with our individual and collective shortcomings. It was astounding. How is it possible that I saw the extension of my *trikonasana* front leg as a direct embodiment and reflection of my unencumbered self?

As my teacher training continues I need only think of the crystal clarity of her self-knowledge for inspiration.

With great respect, admiration, and affection, Happy Birthday Geetaji!

Greg Sly



**Illumination
- Aphorisms of B.K.S. Iyengar**
(Victoria Yoga Centre, 2003)

This beautiful book was produced by the VYC for Mr. Iyengar's 85th birthday celebration. Get yours today.

Available from the Victoria Yoga Centre



Geeta, your devotion and service to Guruji and the teachings of yoga is an inspiration. Thank you for helping us along the spiritual path.

Short WORKSHOPS

Coincidences from India With Chris Lea

Saturday, November 20, 1:30-4:30pm

Fees: \$45 + GST members, \$50 + GST non members

Chris has recently returned from having spent a year in Pune studying at the Institute with the Iyengar family.

Come join him as he shares with us some of the insight from his studies and work during his time abroad.

Fifty Plus With Leslie Hogya and Wendy Boyer

Saturday, November 27, 3 - 5:30pm

Fees: \$30 + GST members, \$35 + GST non members

Fifty Plus With Leslie Hogya and Wendy Boyer

Saturday, February 27, 2005, 1 - 3:30pm

Fees: \$30 + GST members, \$35 + GST non members

To register, drop in or phone

**Victoria Yoga Centre, 202 - 919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC
(250) 386-YOGA (9642) www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca**

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$10 cancellation fee.

In and around the Ramanai Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute

Pune, 2004

LESLIE HOGYA

The monsoons were late this past summer in Pune and the rest of Maharashtra State, but the day I arrived the rains decided to come along with me. I watched out the train window from Mumbai (formerly known as Bombay) as we climbed into the western Ghats, the rain pouring down into the waiting fields. Men and women were working under brightly coloured tarps, water sluicing off the individual little tent shapes hanging from their backs into the rice paddies.

Various food-stuffs were being hawked up and down the isles, and the first class steward took orders for baked beans on toast and other tasty morsels which would then be cooked up in the little kitchen at the front of the car.

A propitious meeting with Motus, who works at the Institute and was sitting a few seats ahead of me in the train, was a good omen. We had a nice chat and he helped me get to my hotel for the first night in Pune.

Early the next afternoon, I went to the Yoga Institute and Motus was there so I could sign in for classes for the month of August and part of September. I went down to the library to greet Mr. Iyengar and there he was at his desk. He



received my greetings from Victoria with a nod and smile, "Yes, yes, I know."

He never calls me by name, so I am never sure if he remembers me from one visit to the next, but obviously he does. A while later he spoke about his project in Bellur, his home village. He knew the Victoria Yoga Centre had made a donation to this project (the money order would have to be returned with me because the trust was still waiting for permission to accept foreign currency). So he not only knew who I was, but that I had quite a lot to do with the Victoria Yoga Centre.

One of his dreams has been to bring the benefits of yoga to rural areas, so it

was a natural fit that he began to fulfill this dream in Bellur, in Karnataka State where he spent his first years. A temple he commissioned to Patanjali is being finished on land adjacent to the village, and he will attend the ceremony to sanctify the temple in October, 2004. He is very pleased about this, and spoke at length about the ceremony to take place, and kinds of food that would be served. All in the village will be fed that day!

Mr. Iyengar is awe inspiring at 86 as he still maintains a long and busy schedule each day. He usually arrives at 9 a.m. in the studio for practice and puts himself into many variations of *viparita dandasana* (a back bend) and holds each for long minutes, up to 15 to 20 minutes from my observation. I often arrived about the time he did and when I finished around noon, he would usually be deep into *savasana* with up to 100 pounds of weights positioned on his legs, or still in the midst of *kapotasana* on a stool. After a short break for lunch, he holds court down in the library where he attends to correspondence, holds meetings with visitors, or works on future manuscripts. I spent many afternoons in the library where anything might happen – or nothing happens except we all sit quietly while he reads and works at his desk.

One day Pandu, the secretary, came down with a portable phone, and soon it was evident that Mr. Iyengar was being interviewed. An *Outlook Magazine* reporter was calling from Delhi. They were putting together a special issue for Independence Day, August 15, about how the country might have been if certain things had or had not happened

*I often arrived about the time he did
and when I finished around noon,
he would usually be deep into savasana
with up to 100 pounds of weights
positioned on his legs, or still in the midst
of kapotasana on a stool.*

in the fifty plus years India since independence from the British. At one point he said into the phone, "If they had followed my plan, they wouldn't have needed a Health Ministry." He also expounded on the fact that the health benefits are just on the gross level and the real benefits of yoga are at the emotional and intellectual levels; this is where yoga is really important.

Stephanie Quirk, a long time student of Guruji's and now resident of Pune, is usually at work at her computer station in the library and I inquired if she needed a hand with anything. Soon, I was pouring over three immense photo albums, which contained all 602 photos from *Light on Yoga*. The photos had been reprinted at Guruji's request in 8 1/2 by 11 inch format so they would be available in the library for study. In *Light on Yoga* some of these photos are quite small and some details are difficult to see.

Stephanie had typed out labels for each photo, and it was necessary to cut the labels out and tape them below the appropriate pictures. Corrine from France was going through the albums with *Light on Yoga* at her side to make sure the labels were accurately depicting the exact photo. As she was soon returning to Paris, I continued on with this task. This allowed me an incredible opportunity to study the photographs and descriptions in *Light on Yoga* of each pose in a way I had never done before. Like all Iyengar teachers, I refer to *Light on Yoga* constantly to verify I am doing the pose as described in the book. A new appreciation for the immensity of the task filled me. I wondered who would have the patience to do this today without modern day technology.

One day, as Emelia from Italy, Judi Mirus from Edmonton and I were at work on this project and exclaiming over these pictures, we began asking Guruji some questions. It took three years to complete the entire 602 photographs because he had to first become just as knowledgeable as a professional photographer, to understand

On my last morning in Pune, I came to say goodbye to him. I found him in his practice at the trestler, and approached him, telling him I was leaving. "God Bless you" he said, "And all those in Canada." With those words echoing in my ears, I prepared to fly out of India and across the world to my home.



Melissa, Ann and Leslie in Pune, India

how to get the best angle, light values and clarity of expression.

Take some time and open your copy of *Light on Yoga*, and take a closer look at the artistry conveyed in the pictures. We also discussed with him the variation in quality in different editions. The original 1965 edition has the clearest photographs with sharpest contrast. The new 2001 Edition is also interesting because of the way the photos are grouped. Go to the library, compare editions, notice the consistency, quality and clarity of the photographs for yourself!

Another day in the library, Rajvi from Mumbai was at work on her lap top, and

gave Guruji a manuscript to peruse. It is a new book he is writing on yoga for cricket players! When a pro cricket player showed up at his desk, a long discussion ensued on how to use the arm correctly to throw the ball from a yogic point of view. I know nothing about cricket, so am not even sure of the proper word for the ball! One chapter, however, will be of interest to all traveling yogis on how to cope with jet lag and still be able to perform on arrival.

On another occasion in the library with Rajvi, Guruji started talking about the difference between *hanumanasana* and *upavista konasana* (seated wide leg pose).

He had Rajvi performing these poses in the space beside his desk in her jeans. He was saying it is more likely to injure the hamstring in upavista konasana than hanumanasana (in which one leg goes forward and one goes back, something like the splits). I decided I must not be challenging myself sufficiently in upavista konasana and sure enough in his practice a few days later, I watched him work his legs wide and wider, and decided I had much more to learn about this pose (as is the case in any pose where

I see him practicing!).

As the library time ends and evening classes begin, many days Guruji returns to the studio and practices for a few more hours on the side of the room while the class is in session. From that vantage point, his eagle eyes scan the class and he makes corrections of our poses.

Some days these corrections were given to us with the help of his granddaughter Abby. He would tell her how we must improve our pose, and she would come to the platform and show us.

On my last morning in Pune, I came to say goodbye to him. I found him in his practice at the trestler and approached him, telling him I was leaving. "God Bless you," he said, "and all those in Canada." With those words echoing in my ears, I prepared to fly out of India and across the world to my home.

I arrived home with deep gratitude to Guruji and his family for the blessing of his and their teaching. Life is a balance. ॐ

April 15-17, 2005

Ingelise Nherlan

FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 11:00 am – 1:30 pm, 3:00 – 5:00 pm

SUNDAY, APRIL 17, Noon – 3:00 pm

Fees: \$190 +GST for members | \$210 +GST for non-members

Ingelise's teaching and practice progresses from the point of view that all learning is deepening our present knowledge, and exploring that which still remains to be discovered. Her teaching is a blend of careful asana work, thoughtful yoga philosophy and a generous dash of humour.

Yoga Bliss – Wedding in our community

Three couples were united over the summer.



Melissa and Byron



Doug and Anna



Robin and Jim

"Allowing The Little To Expand"

Walk behind Glenda Gain—along Meares Street, heading for the Victoria Yoga Centre—and what you'll see is a slender, upright woman wearing stylish jeans. It won't occur to you that her steady gait is a remarkable accomplishment, though you may notice she holds a cane in one hand.

In 1981, a car crash fractured and dislocated Glenda's cervical 4-5 vertebrae, resulting in spinal cord injury and paralysis from her shoulders down. She spent nine weeks in flat traction and then it was a ten-month process to get back on her feet. Her right side remains paralyzed and that leg has to be supported by a bracing system; her left side is compromised; and she suffers from an energy deficit.

Before the crash, Glenda taught math, movement and special education. Then, she moved with her husband and two young daughters to a spectacular acreage near West Kootenay Lake where they ran a horse-boarding ranch. Glenda sees that time—of bringing up kids, managing the business, being active in the community and supportive of people who were riders there, as "the world of the big."

Now, she says she lives "in the world of the little." She made a decision to not mourn the passing of her big world, but to use its loss "to expand the small"—to increase her appreciation of what's within her present scope. While she misses the snowy mountains and her friends in the Kootenays, she delights in the gardens now outside her window. "Looking at raindrops on holly gives me a surge of joy."

She'd always been active—undergoing rigorous training in ballet, racing dinghies, hiking, and cross-country skiing—and so understood the need for physical discipline and repetitive practice. She values having a teacher able to steer her endeavors into productive paths. Ballet taught her to focus in on her body. With these experiences to guide her, Glenda deliberately began a process after her accident of working very hard at physical recovery.

When she left her marriage and moved to Victoria four years ago, she started yoga. She sensed it would provide a more integrated approach to healing than physiotherapy could, and enjoyed the permission it gave to turn her focus inward. Coming to Special Needs classes, and eventually also the Back

Care classes, she was met with "an exceptional sense of loving openness and acceptance" from the teachers and volunteers. "I was encouraged to work on *my* path without it being *the* path."

She says she can't leave her "debt of gratitude to the volunteers" as an abstract statement. "When you don't feel your foot

The challenge is not just moving freely across a room. "My work is to stay in the present." Yoga has helped her with that focus.

or leg, you have to trust it's there. My fabulous volunteers had to hold me and support me for everything. Then, all of a sudden, I started to realize I'd learned. They helped me through the early patterning, weaned me off total support to medium support, and recognized when I needed to do the struggle on my own."

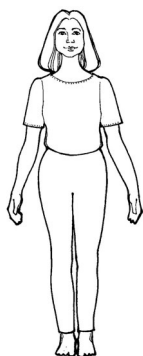
The challenge is not just moving freely across a room. "My work is to stay in the present." Yoga has helped her with that focus. Although painful, it leaves her feeling happier and stronger. She says, "it's not just yoga, it's those teachers—the tradition of yoga that's come down through the teachers—their embodiment of the personal struggle—seeing it practiced in front of my eyes."

Glenda says, if she didn't have pain or discomfort, she wouldn't know her feet or legs or arms are there. But, she refuses to see her situation as tragic, or herself as heroic. She insists that she's just done what anyone would do. Linda Benn speaks of Glenda as an intelligent and inspiring student who—with patience, observation, and skillful adaptations—works within her limitations and gradually expands and consolidates her capabilities.

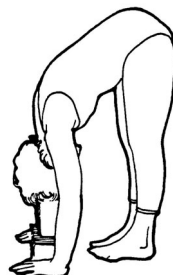
Glenda asks, "Did you overcome that barrier because you figured out a different strategy, or because your body let you do it?" Can we always say which it is? Maybe both happen together—if we're present and focused and allow the little to expand. ॐ

Asanas Before Pranayama

In our May/June issue we printed an interview of Geeta S. Iyengar in which she answered questions about pranayama. Here is a series of quick reference drawings to help practitioners prepare for doing pranayama.



1. Tadasana



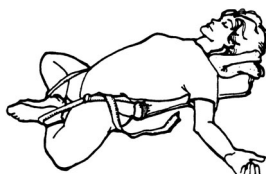
2. Uttanasana



3. Supta virasana

Asanas conducive for conditioning and regularising pranayama include *tadasana*, *uttanasana*, *supta virasana*, *supta baddhakonasana*, *matsyasana*, *viparita dandasana* on the chair, *sirsasana* (independent or rope), *sarvangasana* (independent or on a chair) *setu bandha sarvangasana*, *ardha halasana*, sometimes *janusirsasana* for head rest and heart rest, and *viparita karani*. Teachers can choose among these as time and circumstances permit. These asanas bring the freedom in the respiratory organs, sooth and quieten the nerves and brain, make one passively alert. One keeps the past behind and restrains from the future, remains in the present. One gets sattvic placidity more than tamasic dull silence. The body and mind are freshened and the scope of the breath increased.

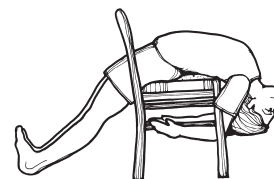
Drawings by Lauren Cox



4. Supta baddhakonasana



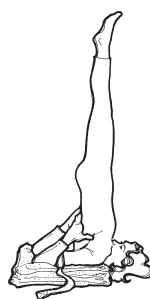
5. Matsyasana



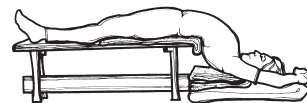
6. Viparita dandasana on the chair



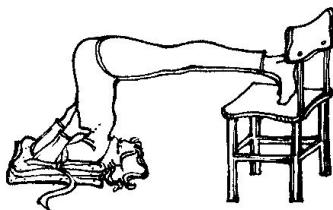
7. Sirsasana (or using ropes)



8. Sarvangasana (or on a chair)



9. Setu bandha sarvangasana



10. Ardha halasana



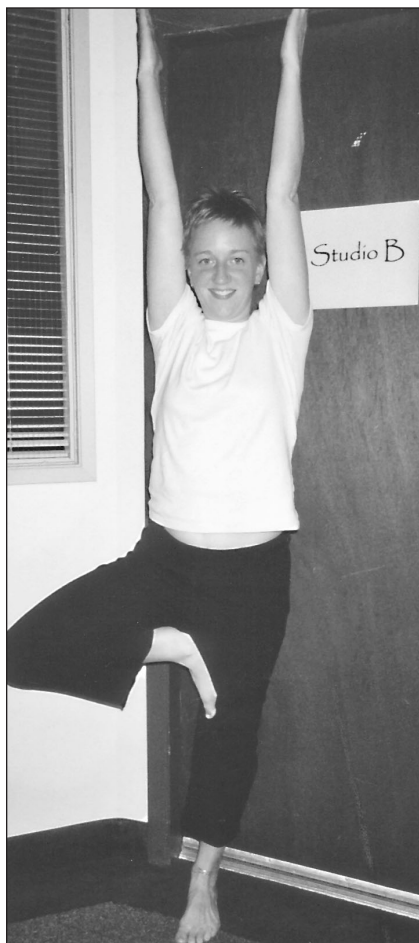
11. Janusirsasana



12. Viparita karani



In our mailbox



Heather growing in vrksasana.

June 12 2004

**Dear Victoria Yoga Centre Board,
Staff and Teachers,**

I first came to the Yoga Centre just under two years ago. At that time, I was still reeling from the adjustment of returning home after having spent a year in extremely remote regions of Guyana, South America. I was feeling very disillusioned with our society's drive to consume and felt awash in confusion as to where I could fit in. Feeling drained, confused and very sad, I found myself in James' restorative class at the Y. Only a month or two later, I discovered the Victoria Yoga Centre and applied for the position at the front desk. I remember being in search for a sense of community, and I found one.

I am grateful to have found this community and to have met so many of its members through my participation as front desk staff. It is a friendly, warm and inviting place to be and my interactions with people at the front desk have, for the most part, been pleasant, interesting and infused with laughter. It's not often that one is able to find a working environment in which the atmosphere is so positive.

Though I may not have had the opportunity to work with you directly, or participate in an asana class with you, each of you has contributed to building this Yoga Centre community and to imparting the teachings of Yoga to students like me. For this, I am grateful to all of you.

In such a short time, Yoga has played an integral role in my life and particularly in challenging me to study myself. As I delve deeper into my new role as a social worker, Yoga has also become part of my professional practice and a vital tool in maintaining my own holistic wellness in a stressful field of work.

It amazes me how my recent social work practice has been connected to Yoga. I have been privileged to observe a transformation in one of my clients who, only a few months ago was extremely agitated, angry and unwell. Having recently spent time at Swami Radha's Yasodhara Ashram, this same individual is embarking on a spiritual path that has given them the tools to quit smoking, quit using all other drugs, develop a strong sense of self-worth and commit to a daily asana practice and reading of Yogic texts. It has been inspiring to engage this individual in conversation about his healing journey.

I want to thank you all for the support and encouragement I have received in my weekly interactions with you. I want to thank you for the compassion you all show by passing on what you have learned along this Yogic path. I look forward to continuing to be a member of this community and I wish you all the best.

*In gratitude,
Heather*

Mark your calendar!

Salt Spring Retreat

with
Shirley Daventry French

June 3, 4 and 5, 2005

Watch for details in the
January February 2005 issue



SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

for TERM 2 Fall 2004

For up to date information on the class schedule check www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca

Term 2 November 1 – December 19

Some classes will be adjusted due to special workshops or holidays.

INTRODUCTION TO IYENGAR YOGA – 4 Weeks

Tues 7:00 – 8:30pm Karin Holtkamp

LEVEL 1

Mon 12:00 – 1:30pm Lauren Cox
Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm Ann Kilbertus
Tues 10:00 – 11:30am Leslie Hogya
Tues 5:00 – 6:30pm Melissa Worth
Tues 7:00 – 8:30pm Wies Pukesh
Wed 6:00 – 7:30pm Gwynneth Powell
Wed 6:30 – 8:00pm Britta Poisson
Thur 8:30 – 10:00am Linda Benn
Thur 5:30 – 7:00pm Wendy Boyer
Thur 6:30 – 8:00pm Jeannette Merryfield
Fri 10:30 – 12:00pm Linda Benn
Fri 5:00 – 6:30pm Gwynneth Powell
Sat 9:30 – 11:00am Corrine Lowen
Sun 10:30 – 12:00pm Ty Chandler

LEVEL 1 / 2

Mon 6:30 – 8:00am Chris Lea
Wed 9:00 – 10:30am Ty Chandler
Wed 7:30 – 9:00pm Melissa Worth
Thur 7:00 – 8:30pm Greg Sly

LEVEL 2

Mon 4:00 – 5:30pm Jo Anna Hope
Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm Greg Sly
Tues 10:00 – 11:30am Robin Cantor
Tues 5:15 – 6:45pm Leslie Hogya
Tues 6:30 – 8:00pm Melissa Worth
Wed 7:45 – 9:15pm Gwynneth Powell
Thur 4:30 – 6:00pm Ann Kilbertus
Fri 9:00 – 10:30am Linda Benn
Fri 5:00 – 6:30pm Wendy Boyer
Sat 8:00 – 9:30am Corrine Lowen
Sun 9:00 – 10:30am Ty Chandler

NEW in term II

- All levels drop in at 5:00pm Wednesdays with Britta – use your flex pass
- Family yoga with Wendy Boyer on Thursdays at 4:30pm
- Yoga for kids ages 7:00 - 11:00am on Saturdays with Chris Lea
- Learn the ropes with Greg Sly Thursdays 5:30 - 6:30pm
- Special rate for members who take both of the early morning classes, 6:30 - 8:00pm on Mondays and Wednesdays

LEVEL 2/3

Mon 10:00 – 12:00pm Lauren Cox
Wed 6:00 – 7:30pm Ty Chandler
Wed 6:30 – 8:00 am Chris Lea

LEVEL 3

Thur 10:00 – 12:00pm Linda Benn
Thur 6:00 – 8:00pm Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hogya
Sat 9:00 – 11:00am Marlene Miller

LEVEL 4

Mon 5:30 – 7:30pm Shirley D. French & Senior teachers

ALL LEVELS

Sat 11:00am - 1:00pm Chris Lea

DROP IN

Tues 12:00 – 1:00pm Jeannette Merryfield
Wed 12:00 – 1:00pm Wendy Boyer
Wed 5:00 – 6:00 pm Britta Poisson
Thur 12:00 – 1:00pm Lauren Cox
Fri 12:00 – 1:00pm Ty Chandler

TIMED PRACTICE

Tues 5:30 – 7:00pm Ty Chandler

LEARN THE ROPES

November 4, 18, 25, December 2

Thur 5:30 – 6:30pm Greg Sly

INTRODUCTION TO YOGA PHILOSOPHY

Term 2 November 4, 18, 25, Dec. 2

Thur 5:00 – 6pm Leslie Hogya

WOMEN'S CLASS

Tues 11:30 – 1:00pm Robin Cantor

PRE NATAL YOGA

Mon 7:30 – 9:00pm Robin Cantor

PRE & POST NATAL YOGA

Sat 3:00 – 4:00pm Lauren Cox

55 & BETTER

Wed 10:30 – 12:00pm
Continuing Leslie Hogya
Fri 10:30 – 12:00pm
Level 1 Wendy Boyer
Fri 4:30 – 6pm
Level 1 Wies Pukesh

SPECIAL NEEDS

Wed 4:30 – 6:00pm Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hogya, Lauren Cox
Thur 1:15 – 2:45pm Linda Benn, Ann Kilbertus

BACK CARE

Mon 4:00 – 5:15pm Linda Benn
Wed 5:15 – 6:30pm James Currie Johnson

YOGA KIDS (Ages 10 – 14)

Fri 4:00 – 5:00pm Ty Chandler
Sat 1:00 – 2:00pm Chris Lea

HIGH SCHOOL YOGA (Age 14 +)

Tues 4:15 – 5:15pm Gwynneth Powell

FAMILY YOGA

Thurs 4:30 – 5:30pm Wendy Boyer

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Krysia Strawczynski regularly prepares the newsletters for mail-out single handedly.

Coral Grant, Karin Holtkamp, Vicki Robichaud, Rosemary Barritt and Jeannette Merryfield assisted at the front desk the first week of Term I.

Mike McLellan picked up blankets at Scrubbies.

Constance Barker washed head bandages.

Rosemary washed straps and bolster covers and brought all the mats and blankets to Scrubbies and picked up quite a few.

Linda Benn prepared the class schedule.

Melissa Worth, Karin Holtkamp, Monica Dimofski, Charles Campbell, Wendy Boyer and Rosalyn Grey put their best yoga poses forward to promote the centre in ads for the VYC.

Bruce Cox, who is always constructing beautiful and functional items that improve the work and practice spaces in the centre. ॐ



Radha Yoga Centre

Free introductory classes at the Radha Centre

Swami Radha's style of yoga is gentle, practical and devotional. Come for a free class to try it for yourself. On **Saturday January 8** we will be offering free classes in Hatha Yoga, the Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga, Kundalini and Dreams. Please call 595-0177 or email radha@uniserve.com for more information.

**ascent magazine is offering
an amazing deal for first time subscribers
– just \$10.80 for a year's subscription!**

This is offered through a group rate at the Radha Centre. Please call to sign up for this introductory offer.

Dreaming Mind, Reflective Body

The body is the bridge between the world and the unconscious mind, reflecting the inner reality outwards. Working with a dream, we explore how it is brought to consciousness using the body as a reflective tool. Dreams are asking us to listen to our inner wisdom, to make a change. This workshop provides the tools to understand your dream, and apply what you have learned in a practical way.

**Saturday & Sunday
November 6 & 7, 1-4pm \$50
sliding scale available**

VICTORIA *yoga centre* Calendar 04-05

NOVEMBER

- 5-7** Yoga for Health – Be Healthy, Stay Healthy
- 19** Friday Night Gathering 6:30pm
- 19-21** Junior Intermediate I Assessment, Vancouver
- 20** Short Workshop: Coincidences from India with Chris Lea
- 27** Teachers' Meeting
- 27** Short Workshop: Fifty Plus with Leslie Hogya and Wendy Boyer

DECEMBER

- 12** In the Light of Yoga Workshop
- 20-24** Sadhana with Corrine Lowen

JANUARY 2005

- 22** Teachers' Meeting
- 28-30** Heart of Yoga with Shirley Daventry French

FEBRUARY

- 5** AGM 4 pm
- 26** Teachers' Meeting
- 27** Short Workshop: Fifty Plus with Leslie Hogya and Wendy Boyer

MARCH

- 19** Teachers' Meeting

APRIL

- 15-17** Weekend Workshop with Ingelise Nherlan
- 23** Teachers' Meeting



VICTORIA
yoga centre
SOCIETY

Membership and Newsletter Subscription

For a one year membership and newsletter subscription, please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to:

**Victoria Yoga Centre Society, c/o Karin Holtkamp,
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3**

Membership/subscription fee is \$32 (incl. GST), renewable each January.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

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

☐ Receipt required

Membership benefits include 5% discount on classes, free practice times at the VYC, timed practices, early registration and discount on workshops, borrowing privileges in our library, eligibility to become a board member and eligibility for scholarships for workshops.