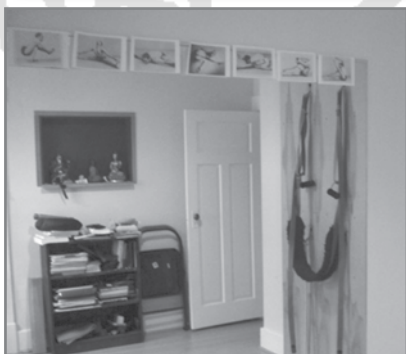
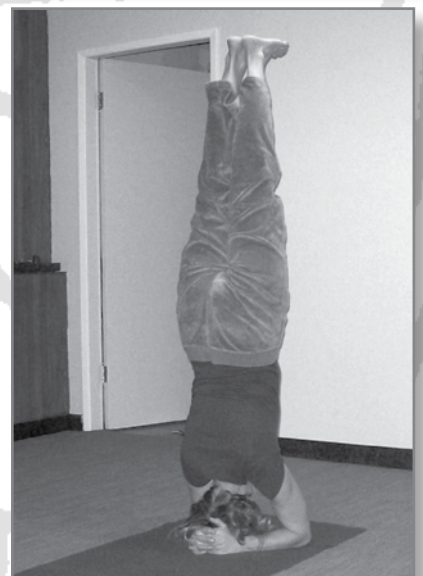




IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2010



*Home and away practice areas
and prop storage*

The 26th Annual Retreat at the Salt Spring Centre

June 4 -6, 2010
With Shirley Daventry French

This is your opportunity to attend the annual retreat on beautiful Salt Spring Island and participate in a weekend of Iyengar Yoga with Shirley Daventry French.

Fees: IYCV Members
\$340.00 + GST – shared accommodation
\$310.00 + GST – camping
\$285.00 + GST – commuting

Fees: Non-members
\$375.00 + GST – shared accommodation
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\$320.00 + GST – commuting

To register, drop in to or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
250 386-YOGA (9642)

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.



IYENGAR YOGA

Teacher Training Intensives

Fees for each course:
\$595.00 CDN + GST IYCV members
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Registration now open.
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July 19-24, 2010

With Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus

Introductory I & II Syllabi for uncertified Iyengar Yoga teachers

This six-day course will build your understanding of teaching Iyengar Yoga based on the foundation of a good practice. Peer teaching, *pranayama*, philosophy and anatomy will be included. Leslie and Ann are experienced teachers. Both have Senior Intermediate I certification and are qualified I.Y.A.C. assessors. They are involved in teacher training in Victoria as well as in outlying areas of British Columbia and in Yukon communities.

Preference will be given to members of I.Y.A.C. and those planning to do their assessment in the near future.

August 9-13, 2010

With Shirley Daventry French

Intermediate Junior and Senior syllabi for certified Iyengar Yoga teachers

This intensive offers the opportunity for certified teachers to refine teaching and practice at their current level of certification, and to prepare for assessment.

Shirley is a direct student of B.K.S. Iyengar who awarded her a senior teaching credential. She 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.

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

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE APRIL 20, 2010

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IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the *Society 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 Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Newsletter, published regularly by the IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA SOCIETY, provides current information on events concerning Iyengar yoga in the Victoria area.

Send contributions, articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter: 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3.

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

Newsletter Advertising Policy

(Adopted February 20, 2004)

In keeping with the mandate of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria 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 IYCV.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar Yoga
3. Priority will be given to advertisements regarding IYCV events, IYCV sponsored events, and IYAC events.

REGISTRATION:

Drop in: 202-919 Fort Street,
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Phone: (250) 386-YOGA (9642)

Please visit our website:

www.iyengaryogacentre.ca for full information on classes and workshops.



“News” plays an important role in my household. My husband and I are both avid newspaper readers, and watch the news on television or listen to it on the radio each day if possible. I grew up with a father who was a member of the British press employed by a Fleet Street agency who travelled all over the world on assignments. In the Second World War he was a Press Officer attached to the R.A.F., spending time in many trouble spots. During the war the BBC radio news provided a lifeline between people on the home-front and those on active service. All news, written or broadcast, was heavily censored as were personal letters; but we became adept at reading between the lines. Any news was eagerly sought and often feared.

When my yoga teaching branched out into other communities and other countries, I was surprised to stay in a number of households which did not get a daily newspaper or watch TV news—even before the advent of up to the minute news on the internet. Having grown up with a world view, I was astonished by how little interest many North Americans showed in what was going on in the world beyond this continent. One of the delights of having a satellite dish is that we can watch BBC World News daily and get a perspective which encompasses the globe. Listening to this news enriches many of my days, as does reading Canada’s excellent newspaper *The Globe and Mail*.

Today, print newspaper readership is declining in North America, Australia and Europe while growing 1.1% worldwide, mainly due to increases in Africa and Asia¹. At the same time the actual reading of news reports increased, because of online editions. A paradigm shift has taken place leading to the demise of many print editions of North American newspapers and forcing all others to consider what steps they must take to survive.

Last weekend, our local newspaper published a column about this situation entitled “Finding quality amid the online cacophony”, which discussed the need for news organizations to confront this paradigm². The writer, Ian Haysom, works in both print and television news. He is a witty and engaging writer whose perspective is always interesting. At first I was depressed with what he wrote about the diminution of intelligent informed news in the face of “live chats” online; but towards the end of his column, two paragraphs reassured me somewhat. They provide an analogy for what is going on in the yoga world today.

The first of these paragraphs reads:
All mainstream media, though having their struggles right now, will have a future if they provide compelling and relevant content. You can get news to people instantly. But there’s more to news than speed. There’s also a continued appetite for context, good storytelling, great writing, superb images and combative journalism.

¹ World Association of Newspapers, Power of Print Conference in Barcelona Spain, May 2009

² *Finding quality amid the online cacophony* by Ian Haysom: Victoria Times-Colonist, Saturday, January 9, 2010

Yoga has developed into a mass market over the last decade and this has created a paradox.

Yoga has developed into a mass market over the last decade and this has created a paradox. Some schools of yoga have become more professional. At the same time there is much out there that is being called 'yoga' but has little to do with the yogic tradition of selfless service, devotion and knowledge of the self. Most teachers are getting at least some training these days, which was not the case when I first began teaching. However, a big problem is that much of this teacher training is being offered to students with superficial knowledge of yoga and no personal practice. This is in stark contrast to the Iyengar method where a regular practice is a pre-requisite to entering teacher training as is a minimum of three years of weekly classes with a certified Iyengar teacher.

There seems to be a lack of understanding that teaching and practice are separate entities, inter-related but with a different purpose and focus. As Gururji says: *when I practise I am an introvert, when I teach I am an extrovert.*

B.K.S. Iyengar has had much to do with the positive spread of yoga. Cited by *Time* magazine as one of the one hundred most influential people in the world, he may be recognized as a dean of the yoga establishment now, but he was considered an outsider and even a rebel for much of his life. He had to struggle without recognition, driven by his conviction that yoga was his life's work. He practised and explored within himself. He did not rush things to become popular or to make money; in fact he nearly starved. Never ambitious to acquire students but eager to teach those who approached him for help, he offered great teaching with superb artistry. He had full faith in the efficacy of his subject. A shy man in many ways, he was determined nonetheless to combat ignorance both within himself and those fortunate enough to become his students.

The second paragraph, which brought Ian Haysom's article to its conclusion, strengthened my faith that the yoga I have practised for nearly forty years under the direction of B.K.S. Iyengar will prevail through this current period of yoga madness: *While we in the mainstream media have to keep looking for more innovative and relevant ways to deliver news to the consumer and listen harder to the needs of our*

There seems to be a lack of understanding that teaching and practice are separate entities, inter-related but with a different purpose and focus.

various customers, we will thrive and survive if we remember that above all, above everything, above all the flash and glitz and glitter ... is great content.

In Iyengar Yoga, without a shadow of a doubt, we have really great content—a refined and practical exposition of yoga developed by a superlative teacher and practitioner over seventy-five years of practice.

How to adhere to the principles established by our teacher and still pay the rent? How to hold the attention of people with short attention spans long enough for them to glimpse the high quality and potential of Iyengar Yoga? These are questions which hover at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria as we observe the yoga market being swamped with classes taught by barely trained teachers, and the many hybrids of yoga arising in the community. To paraphrase the title of Ian Haysom's article, how can we maintain quality amidst this veritable cacophony of yoga.

When I began practising yoga, a common concept was that it was some mysterious mumbo-jumbo involving weird practices which had little place in a 20th century Christian community. In fact the first classes offered at the Y were not even called yoga but 'psycho-physical exercises'. The word 'yoga' replaced this rather awkward title quite quickly; at which time some people stepped forward saying that a Hindu practice such as this had no place in a Christian organization.

Yoga classes at the Y survived, although meetings had to be held with staff and directors to assure them that no-one was trying to convert anyone to Hinduism, and that Hindus have no tradition of conversion in the way Christianity does. Yoga, we assured them, could be practised by people of all faiths, and Jesus Christ could well be considered a great yogi. This did not go over too well with fundamental Christians, and we quickly learned to practise discretion and economy of speech.

Other odd things happened. Once we were asked to be sparing with our use of the word 'awareness' which apparently upset some people; then there was concern over chanting, resulting in our being rationed to three *Om*'s.

The journey from these early beginnings to where we are now at the Iyengar Centre of Victoria has been circuitous. Lord Siva has been called upon many times to help us remove obstacles placed in our way, as we established a core of teachers and students committed to the work of B.K.S. Iyengar. The inspiration to persevere in the face of difficulties has come and still comes from Mr. Iyengar. In his *yoga-sutras*, Patanjali states that the goal is near for those who are supremely vigorous and intense in practice. B.K.S. Iyengar is such a person, and he demands a great deal of us as he does of himself.

Through many of the past ups and downs, I longed for yoga to become popular and accepted by society at large. Well, it has happened, and I find much of what is going on distasteful and discouraging. However, I understand that times change and we must be open to innovation so we can keep the spirit

of Iyengar Yoga alive and attract a new generation to these priceless teachings. But it has to be done with adherence to the principles of yoga and in the footsteps of our Gururji.

In my French lessons recently I was interested to learn that the verb *vulgariser*, when translated into English, means to popularize or to coarsen. Can yoga retain its refinement as it becomes more and more popular? As Hamlet said, "*that is the question!*"

What gives me hope is that when so much of society is becoming coarse and superficial we still have uplifting music, opera and theatre, fine art, brilliant scientific discoveries, technological marvels, great literature and poetry. Throughout history, during wars, famine, plagues, people have found the courage to do selfless acts. Even some victims of the holocaust from whom the Nazis endeavoured to strip all human dignity preserved their dignity by using their minds as a spiritual tool. An inspiring read on this topic is *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl.

Some years ago, the late Mary Dunn, an esteemed American Iyengar teacher, used classical music to illustrate how

easily things can get adulterated. For instance, if we took the music of Bach but didn't like some part of it so we changed it to suit ourselves, and then someone else came along and changed it some more, a time would come when no-one would know what Bach sounded like—unless someone had the foresight to retain the original manuscripts. She felt, as I do, that the original manuscripts of the work of Mr. Iyengar are precious and worth keeping.

In each human being there is something which, when awakened, turns us away from mediocrity towards refinement and excellence. Mary Dunn, a devoted student of Gururji, knew this. Whether Ian Haysom has any interest in yoga at all, I do not know, but he appears to have faith that in his profession of journalism, great content will prevail. At the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria we are looking at ways to be innovative and relevant to attract students, and to do this without compromising our ethics and principles. We are clear that we offer a great product: Yoga in the tradition of B.K.S. Iyengar. ॐ



March 25, 2010
3:00 – 5:00 pm
Arbutus Studio
Cost: \$20,
free for children

Feel free to wear your favorite hat!

PLEASE JOIN US for our THIRD ANNUAL

HIGH TEA FUNDRAISER



Welcome to our third annual High Tea Fundraiser at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria. This is THE event where we raise funds to purchase new props for the Centre. Enjoy a variety of delectable teas with scrumptious homemade sweets and savories.

The tea will be followed by a slide show presentation by Melissa Worth with images from her visits to Pune, India and the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute.

A Conversation between Swami Radha and B.K.S. Iyengar – Part II

(Part I printed in Winter 2009 Newsletter)

Swami Radha: I am presently writing a book on yoga from the psychological viewpoint. In your book you had a small paragraph in the introduction: “We must see that we live in the world with many other creatures.” That sentence gave me, finally, the clue. I have always been interested in symbolism; I would sit by my lily pool and watch the goldfish and reflect on what it means to be a fish in the water. I searched for information on all the various animals and other life forms for which the *asana* are named, even when I felt I knew the meaning from my own practice.

I came across many delightful legends and stories, such as the conversations of the king Milinda and the Sage Nagasena about the tortoise, one of the animal names used in hatha yoga. Nagasena tells the king about the five special qualities symbolized by the tortoise. For example, when there is danger and temptation, the aspirant should dive to the bottom of deep meditation and hide himself until the temptation is over. He should protect himself by drawing in his senses as the tortoise draws in its limbs for protection. These symbolic stories are easily understood by Westerners, so I have searched for anything I could find.

I also used the same technique I used in the *kundalini* book [*Kundalini: Yoga for the West*] of asking people to write on a paper to clarify their thoughts. What does the fish mean to you? What does the tortoise mean to you? What does it mean to stand on your head?

During the last three weeks I was at the *ashram* in Rishikesh, Gurudev Shivananda said, “Now that you have seen some of the *asana*, show me six of them.” I showed him what I had been practicing, and he said, “Now, what is the psychological meaning?” I was stunned. I hadn’t even heard about this. So I started to think about it, and said, “If I can twist my body in so many ways, my mind can certainly twist in as many ways.” So one thing followed another, and he said, “Now, what would be the mystical aspect?” I didn’t even know where to look! So I went to the swami who was teaching hatha yoga, and he said, “What are you talking about?” I went to another one who said, “I am only devotional, I don’t do hatha yoga anymore.” So I went back to Gurudev and I said, “You have to give me one example so I know where to search.” And he gave me the example of the mystical meaning of standing on the head, and that put the whole thing together, learning to become my own opponent, and looking at things from

Reprinted from Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter, June 1992 Issue. Originally published in the Spring 1982 issue of Ascent, the Journal of Yasodhara Ashram. The conversation took place at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Institute in Pune. This conversation was recently reprinted in Astadala Yogamala, Vol. 5 (2005). The collected works of B.K.S. Iyengar are to be published in eight volumes of this series – lectures, articles, letters, and question and answers, etc. There are many standard texts available for techniques of asana and pranayama, but the philosophical basis, insights and tips are widely scattered. Therefore, Patxi Lizardi, Faq Biria, Geetaji and John J Evans came up with the idea of collecting, rationalizing, amplifying, organizing, and editing Guruji’s miscellaneous works under his supervision.



Guruji and Swami Radha talking at Radha House in Victoria – 1984.

the opposite end; but also the insight of what is termed “nectar and ambrosia”. Now I help people to discover the psychological message: “If you can’t do the *asana*, what is the reason? Are you stiff-necked?”

Mr. Iyengar: First of all, as the practitioner of yoga we should know that though the *asana* is performed by the body, its boundary is not the body but beyond it. The body is merely an instrument for the practice of *asana*. Suppose you are doing *urdhva hastasana*; you stretch your arms and fingers. When you stretch your arms mechanically as physical action, you do not witness the arms totally or all the fingers or the disturbance that takes place in the legs. You just lift your arms over the head and get carried away. Your legs do not remain steady; your mind does not reach the stretched arms. When you become totally aware of the arms, the intelligence too has to reach there, as it is the connecting link between you and your arms. When you stretch, the intelligence also has to take the shape of the arms. Suppose you have stretched your fingers, you stretch them only longitudinally. When I stretch, I see whether my awareness is touching the inner and outer edges of the fingers evenly; I see whether with my extension and expansion of the fingers on the back, the front and sides, I become aware of my fingers totally. This way, I not only send a psychological message but also a mystical or spiritual message to the entire body while doing *urdhva hastasana*.

While doing the *asana* we need to build up consciously an intellectual layer, which has to run parallel to the physical body. I see while stretching my arms whether the layer of the skin, arm, is surrounded by intelligence or not and touch the arms with intelligence. While doing *asana* I create eyes everywhere to witness my movements, actions, adjustments and feel my presence everywhere. Then do you consider this awareness physical or beyond it? We know the feel of touch. In yogic practice we develop the feel of touch from outside in. For example, in *urdhva hastasana*, I touch my arms everywhere evenly not only from outside but inside as well.

Similarly, when I am teaching the *asana* I say, “The feeling in upper arm, the feeling in lower arm, the feeling in the inner and outer arm should be the same.” At the same time, I see that they keep the feel of touch evenly in the legs also. We have eight directions: north, east, west and south as well as

*As the practitioner of yoga
we should know that though
the asana is performed by the body,
its boundary is not the body
but beyond it.*

northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest. We also have top and bottom. So in our body, we have ten directions as God has created. When we do each *asana* we have to penetrate all these ten directions, then a unity is built up within. Then your body, mind and intelligence penetrate everywhere evenly.

Swami Radha: I’m glad we have that on tape! [Laughter]

Mr. Iyengar: This is how the *asanas* have to be done. I tell my students in the classes, “People say to concentrate on a lamp, to gaze at it, and call that spiritual practice. I say, Look at your toe. Why do you make your right toe longer and big and your left toe small?” This way I build up intelligence in them. But intelligence does not come by looking at a lamp. It may strain the eyes without bringing positive results. There is a torch of intelligence within you. Each *asana* has to be done in such a way that the torch of intelligence within is switched on, and use that light while performing the *asana*. Just by standing on head the mystical aspects do not come. When you rest on the crown of your head, do you know what the crown of the head is? Often while doing *sirsasana* resting on the head, people are aware only of the front part of the head and the balance of the body and not of the crown of the head and therefore the intellectual awareness touches the frontal body while the back of the body remains in the state of insensitivity. The fear of losing the balance blocks the intelligence. Therefore, one loses the logic of resting the crown of the head to run parallel to the arches of the feet. Now, I should explain to you that the middle of the arch is the crown of the foot. If a line is drawn from the centre of the head to the centre of the foot, these two points should be in a single thread from the head to the arches of the feet. This single connecting thread from the head to the arches of the feet is the intelligence. The two heads – the crown of the head and the middle of the arches of the feet – are like the south pole and the north pole. They have to be evenly balanced in *sirsasana*. This is the spiritual or mystical root of *sirsasana*. By this alignment the consciousness cannot waver and it takes the shape of *sirsasana*. Many people, when they do *sirsasana*, don’t know where their right leg is, where their left leg is, whether the head is straight or tilted, whether their feet have gone backwards or forwards. If one performs and removes these wavering movements of the body and mind, then it covers the five sheaths of body, senses, mind, intelligence, consciousness and the *purusa* [Self].

Swami Radha: No, they only find out, “I can stand on my head for three minutes, or half an hour.” That is what is important to them – competition. “I can stand longer than you can.” Do you sometimes read the reports about the results of new scientific experiments?

Mr. Iyengar: I don't have time to read. I consider myself lucky if I find half an hour in a day to read. Even after the hard work in running the classes my mind still goes on working, "What can I do to help that student?" I am essentially a practical man who believes in practice rather than a 'theoretical' man.

Swami Radha: I am asking you this because many people feel that the ancient teachings are contradicted by the new scientific findings. Yet if one takes the time to study, one discovers that it is just a reinterpretation, and not necessarily a contradiction at all.

Mr. Iyengar: For example, when we talk of nuclear energy, now the theory has a chance to change towards growth. We speak of oxygen going into the lungs. I ask, "What is *prana*?" The atom has now been broken into several particles – neutrons, protons, and electrons. All of them are in our system. All of this nuclear energy is contained in the gross atmospheric air. How is that energy consumed into our system? That is what is known as *prana*, which the early yogis explained to us through the techniques of *pranayama* so we could understand. To a very great extent we can bring the teachings and modern science together.

Certainly, scientific discoveries have substantiated the ancient wisdom of the yogis and sages and I am sure a day will come to see that old wisdom appearing in new formats.

Share the Learning

**Saturday afternoon April 10,
from 2:00 – 5:00 pm**

INDIA SERIES

Join us for the final part of the workshop series with teachers who have recently attended monthly public classes and practice sessions at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Institute in Pune, India.

The sequences and understandings which come directly from the source are tremendously valuable. For this reason, we've decided to share these with ongoing students at the IYCV. Each session will build from the previous one.

April 10, 2010 – Level 2 & above with
Marlene Miller (in Pune in Feb/10)

Fees - for members: \$45
- for non-members: \$50

*Our practice has to be dynamic
and reflective. Then only we know
how yoga works on our body,
mind and intelligence.*

Swami Radha: But then you must have read about these things! [Laughs]. Otherwise you couldn't explain that right now.

Mr. Iyengar: I do read, but not as one must. But I often think when I am teaching. I don't say that I never read at all, but the opportunity is very rare.

Take the case of *pranayama* again. You know how a magnet attracts iron filings. Now, we all agree that if we develop a good respiratory system by *pranayama*, our blood contents are normal or better than normal, which changes the chemical properties of the system. Unfortunately, no proper explanations are given for this. This is where I want the scientific members to discover the reason for change by making use of yoga practitioners like me to investigate.

Just as the magnet has the power to clasp the iron filings, in *pranayamic* breathing there is a great receptivity in all the fibres of our lungs. In regular deep breathing there is tension since one just sucks and fills the air into the system. In *pranayamic* breathing there is no tension. As there is no tension, the fibres go into a receptive state. As they are receptive, the energy that is drawn in goes in all the avenues, right up to the tip of the bronchial. This energy is like the iron filings. Like the magnets hold on to the iron filings, all the cells act as magnets, which absorb energy and hold it. Regular deep breathing cannot do this; the energy is discharged immediately. Medical science has still to discover what I am saying. Today they may not even think about that but in some years' time they may say, 'Yes, this is the effect of *pranayama*.' No one who is doing research at present can tell the difference between *pranayamic* breathing and deep breathing. I say it is the nuclear energy, not oxygen alone that is absorbed through *pranayama*. And that changes the chemical quality of the blood.

Let's take another example – bone cancer. Blood transfusions are given to the patients, yet they do not know why the bone marrow is not manufacturing enough blood. Why do people get bone cancer? The supply of blood to the bones is not sufficient which brings about the cancer.

Suppose the muscles and the bones are woven together in all our presentations in the *asana*; then how can bone cancer occur? The muscle is feeding the bone marrow and the bone marrow not only feeds the muscles but also the bones. This way there is an interchange taking place and bone cancer cannot occur. The transfusions are not necessary.

Yet this type of study is not being done at all. Instead the only thing being studied is: "What is the blood pressure when they are in *salamba sirsasana*, and when they come down from *salamba sirsasana*?" It is just a kindergarten test going on. Who wants to know this? When the doctors study some of my students, they find that after *salamba sirsasana* their blood pressure comes down. In other systems of practice the blood pressure does not lower but on the contrary it shoots up. So instead of studying to find out what is the difference in the way my students and others are performing the *asana* when the results are different or opposite, they say that the *asana* doesn't lower the blood pressure. This is what science has to find out: why there are changes here, and no changes there? Is it on account of the differences in the performance of the *asana* or what?

Some years ago I sent one of my students to help diabetic patients in one of the hospitals in Mumbai. I gave the list of *asana* and told him, "Don't tell the patients anything, just make them do the *asana*! And now they are so improved that they have no food restrictions at all except the amount of calories per day. They can even eat sugar if they want to, provided they do not exceed the correct number of calories. Science must find out why some people have been given so many restrictions on how they should live, and others in the same conditions have not been given any restrictions but asked to practice yoga instead, and its effect is the same.

"Let the cell do its job fully and satisfactorily before it dies!" This is what the practice of *asana* teaches us. I have told the doctors very often but they don't understand. They can't even think!

In pranayamic breathing there is a great receptivity in all the fibres of our lungs.

Swami Radha: But then why is it that some of the yogis that I have met in the Himalayas did not get well in spite of their practice of *asana*?

Mr. Iyengar: The reason is that they don't know how to perform and how to attend to the various parts simultaneously and how to interpenetrate. These things are not observed and followed in their practices.

Swami Radha: You think that is the clue.

Mr. Iyengar: That is the only clue. For example, if a person is having liver trouble, and you ask him to reach the liver in *sirsasana*, he cannot, whereas I can work exactly on the liver alone in that *asana*. I have worked on my own in that way. Now, how do you work the liver? You know how to work the biceps and how to work the triceps. But how do you work the liver? It should expand, it should contract, it should rinse and it should have lateral movements. There are certain adjustments through which you pressurize or depressurize the organic body. We must learn to think organically. Then we can penetrate directly into the organs themselves.

Swami Radha: What is the influence of the mind on the liver?

SUMMER SADHANA

July 6 - 11, 2010

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

6:30 - 8:00 am
with Robin Cantor

This 6 day Sadhana is the perfect opportunity to further develop and deepen your practice.

Members \$115 + GST Non Members \$125 + GST

The 1-1/2 hour Saturday class is open as 'drop-in'
to ALL students of Level 2 and higher:
\$15.00 + GST

Registration NOW open. Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$15.00 cancellation fee.



Mr. Iyengar: What can we say? Unless the mind goes there, how can we influence it? So many people do *sirsasana*; are they aware of their feet? Are they aware how the bottom of the foot is working? They do not penetrate their intelligence at all in any areas when they do *salamba sirsasana*. They stand on their heads without the sense of the feeling. If you ask me, I can tell you what is happening in each and every area of the body when I do *sirsasana*. A great deal of inner attention is required. It means the mind has to play the major role in activating not only the liver but all the other organs. If not attended, one feels heavy and dull in mind.

Student: So in interpenetration, the cells of the muscles, bones and blood all exchange?

Mr. Iyengar: Exchange – yes, it is known as the feedback system in the modern terminology. This was known to us in the olden days. You see! The whole body, what we call the physical body or *annamaya kosa*, is penetrated by mind and energy – *manas* and *prana*. So the liver for instance is not only of muscles but it is a vital organ. We can enrich it with *prana* by acting on it properly by extending, contracting, etc. The action cannot happen unless the mind goes there. When we act applying the mind, then the avenue of blood circulation too changes. So do not think that *asana* is pertaining to only *annamaya kosa*, but there is a great inter-connection between *annamaya kosa*, *manomaya kosa* and *pranamaya kosa*.



Come to the Friday Night Gathering

March 12, 2010, 6:30 pm

We are pleased to announce that our guests for the evening will be visiting from The Salt Spring Centre.

Join us for an evening of Kirtan (chanting).
Please bring a vegetarian dish to share at the Potluck Dinner to follow the Kirtan.

Suggested donation: \$10.00 to go to
The Salt Spring Centre and their Orphanage Project.

There is no physical level, no mental level, and no emotional level; for me everything is one.

Swami Radha: When I have met people who do not have this conviction, I have been as honest as I can that hatha yoga *asana* can really take care of healing. What I have done is give people a purpose for living. I ask them, “You want your life to be spared, but if you keep on living in the same old way, there is no reason why your life should be spared. In order to live, you must give something back to life, and have a different respect for the gift of life. Do something selflessly.” Sometimes I have said, “You tell me you have a garage full of tools. Take the kids off the streets and show them how to do something!”

Mr. Iyengar: Yes, constructively using their life! I learnt yoga to gain health but God had his plans and made me take yoga to fellow human beings for the betterment of society, and many of my pupils follow the same.

Swami Radha: Yes, and anyone who could accept that is still alive.

Mr. Iyengar: Yes, I know, because when the cells are cultured gradually the mind also becomes healthy. This helps one to approach health from inside and creates zeal in them to help others.

Swami Radha: So you are saying that the diseased part can be approached and developed from opposite ends.

Mr. Iyengar: Yes, yes. We have to work and face the diseased part sometimes with friendliness and compassion or with compassion and admonition. Neglecting the afflicted part is not the right approach.

Swami Radha: All right, I understand. Are you developing more *asana*?

Mr. Iyengar: I keep developing this art for the simple reason that if we neglect our *sadhana*, then the veil covers from inside and shakes the very being. Hence, the practice of *asana* and *pranayama* is a must when one has begun. If you take your lamp and cover it with a blanket, the light is restricted in that area. If I don't do the *asana*, I feel my intelligence getting restricted. It cannot have clarity or go out into the vastness. The intelligence needs to expand. When I refer to intelligence I mean the constant flow of conscious awareness. I cannot stop my practice, because if I don't practice, then I will have to live on yesterday's memory to explain to you. But if I am practicing I can give you what I am feeling today, and not of yesterday. The practice awakens the memory and gives a new look to it.

Then one needs not look back to the past. Memory belongs to the past whereas today's feel or experience is present therefore communication would be fresh.

Swami Radha: When you said more practice...

Mr. Iyengar: It is not merely more practice, it is the interpenetration of mind and intelligence to steady the inner depth of this mortal body as the inner body is a very mysterious body.

Swami Radha: Another level, no?

Mr. Iyengar: There is no other level. There is only one form, one level, you know. There is no physical level, no mental level, and no emotional level; for me everything is one. I have not demarcated the levels. I say instead, "How much can I interpenetrate? Can my intelligence still interpenetrate more than it is interpenetrating now?" I use the word 'interpenetrate', remember that in my *asana* practice, my body penetrates externally and my intelligence penetrates internally. I test these two penetrations to remain one from end to end. This is why I want to keep on practicing with further intensity so that *prakrti* reveals itself more and more. Intensity should increase. In the early days, I practiced to get maturity and wisdom. Having acquired them, now there is no doubt now. I am practicing to study where it would lead me. With this maturity and wisdom, ail trials and errors have come to an end and I practice watching for new wisdom and light.

Actually, I practice for the sake of practice alone. The other type of my practice is to find out ways and means for the sake of those who come to us with their problems and seek solutions. I question myself to find ways so that I can help them and bring relief to their problems. I have to recreate their defects in my body, in my mind, to know how to help them in order to relieve their problems,

Swami Radha: But you do not identify with it?

Mr. Iyengar: Why should I? If I identify myself with the defects of others, I am lost. First I imitate to identify their weaknesses. I imagine the problem in me and then work on myself to find a solution. Due to my deep discriminative force, I find the answer. In a way I imitate their problems and work with my intelligence and see what changes occur, which gives me clues to handle.

Swami Radha: When you identify with someone else, don't you lose your own identity?

Actually, I practice for the sake of practice alone.

Mr. Iyengar: No. I do not lose my identity. As an actor plays different roles, I presume and act. Imitative identity is quite different from factual identity. I act as the father acts and observe as a witness. Here, identifying does not mean I become someone else.

Swami Radha: [Laughs] All right, now I understand how you use the word.

Mr. Iyengar: I am a witness. I am identifying as a witness.

Swami Radha: [Laughs] Good. Many people identify to the point where they cannot help. I knew that wasn't what you meant.

Mr. Iyengar: No. I have to identify for myself exactly what is happening. One needs to identify the defects. So I identify and become a witness and an actor at the same time. I am observing and I am acting. [Chuckles] So this is another type of practice.

First I always experiment on myself before I tell others. I don't experiment on others. That would be very unfair. If I don't experiment on my own body, and I say to you, "Try this", it is only an inference, not an experience. I have to be sure that what I say works exactly. If it works with me, I know it will have a greater impact on someone, because my body is very sensitive. This is what I mean by practice. But there are no layers in my practice. I never create layers. The moment I create layers I am creating compartments.

Swami Sivananda: You two are so alike. Everybody who has met you told us that the two of you must meet, because you are so similar.

Swami Radha: Well, we did. [Laughter] Yes, I understood what you said. But sometimes we need to use such terms for clear communication.

Student: Do you ever work specifically with medical problems?

Mr. Iyengar: Yes, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays we take only medical problems. Some genetic problems, children, adults, everybody!

In one of my classes in Mumbai there was a boy who had a bamboo spine or ankylosis of spine and was completely curved. All the doctors had seen him and could do nothing. I worked on him, and now he has improved to such a degree that if you see pictures of him when he started you cannot recognize him. After two years of training with me he went to his doctor who had been treating him for twenty years, and the doctor said, "Where is your brother who had that stoop?" He could not recognize his own patient! My student replied, "I am the same man" and his doctor said, "No, no! How can you become so straight now? This is impossible!"

In my classes I have students with all kinds of problems. Even cancerous students who have been operated on come to the classes, because they have absolutely no energy at all. How much energy I am giving them! My practice has helped with problems in my own case. If you see me working in the classes, I should have varicose veins all over my body.

Swami Radha: Why should you?

Mr. Iyengar: Because the people I teach in my classes weigh from 200 to 300 pounds, yet I just throw them like birds, while teaching the *asana*.¹ [Laughter]. It is not a joke! So much strain to lift, so naturally there is a lot of pressure, yet no varicose veins are visible due to my practice.

Sometimes students grip my legs so hard you can see the blood coming out of their grip. In my life I have had to face all these things. Sometimes if I am teaching and I am too strong, women would pinch me with their long trimmed nails, which are

¹ Guruji while teaching in the group class used to help all the students whether women, men, heavy, hefty, aged, young, diseased, disabled, to do *viparita chakrasana* and even he used to lift heavy weight people like a flower so that they do not feel their own weight.

poisonous. I show them the marks and say, "Is this the way to treat me? I do it for your good!"

Swami Radha: Do they do this because of their fear and anxiety?

Mr. Iyengar: There may be a fear. They do not know how to get the balance. Members in the class are many. As I have to move to help all, I cannot patiently wait. Secondly, if I do not handle to the degree that is needed, it becomes ineffective. My way of teaching is special and unique. I pay not only the personal attention but also I see that whatever action, movement and work is expected in that particular *asana* to be effective, I work to get that effect. Therefore I use my body as a prop for them. To remove this strain on me I do *sirsasana* and *sarvangasana* every day without fail. This is why I have no broken capillaries, no varicose veins. Otherwise I would surely have them by now.

Swami Radha: Do you have any failures, people you can't help?

Mr. Iyengar: I am not God. I may fail for the first time, but I use that knowledge as a progressive knowledge. Then, when



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SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH is a direct student of B.K.S. Iyengar who awarded her a senior teaching credential. She has

been teaching Iyengar Yoga for thirty-five 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.

LESLIE HOGYA has been studying yoga since 1972. Leslie has travelled to Pune many times, holds a Senior Intermediate I level of certification, and is part of the assessors' team for Canada.

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someone comes with the same identical problems, I give relief where I failed for the first time.

Student: Why are the failures? Are they beyond help, or won't they help themselves?

Mr. Iyengar: It is difficult for me to make any general statement. People who have got some troubles will have a negative approach to life throughout. To make them positive takes a long time. Some expect quick results and get disappointed. Some do with fear, or due to the pressure of family members remain non-co-operative. So I do not consider this as a failure. They have no willingness or patience or tolerance to continue.

You see that some cases seem beyond help; it is not true. There are quite a few ascending diseases. In some the basic health itself remains problematic. Some are born with diseases. In such patients if there is a positive approach and willingness, then even if there is not a complete cure they can arrest the disease from ascending. People want to swallow the pills but are not ready to put positive and subjective efforts to improve.

Swami Sivananda: It is the mind, not the body.

Mr. Iyengar: You cannot demarcate the body and mind. A patient as a sufferer will not be able to demarcate at all because he or she is in agony.

The fear of nervousness complicates it a little bit more. The mind expresses its fear through the body. You cannot tell the patient that you are treating the mind since the patient is in pain. The negative approach is not expressed only by the mind but by the body also. Hence naturally, we can't just treat the mind alone. We treat the person as a whole. Before we treat the disease, we have to treat the person, which is very difficult. It is not like psychoanalysis where the psychologists ask you what you have suffered from and all. We have to hit the mind directly through the body while teaching. I don't allow anyone to repeat the same complaints over and over again. I tell them that I have heard enough! I start saying, "Now, just do", and I start! [Laughs].

Swami Radha: I am speechless...

Mr. Iyengar: Yoga can do wonders, definitely! Provided you know each and every fibre of your body – in each *asana*, how it works. It is tremendous reflection in action. It does not mean quietly sitting in the *asana*. You have to dynamize inside. Our practice has to be dynamic and reflective. Then only we know how yoga works on our body, mind and intelligence. Later we can decide what to give and what not to give to the pupils and the patients.

Hatha yoga is a completely revolutionary subject. It revolutionizes the practitioner. Probably God made me practice with divine

*Hatha yoga is a completely revolutionary subject.
It revolutionizes the practitioner.*

dedication and study hard and made me an instrument for removing the prejudices about this art.

Swami Sivananda: What prejudice?

Mr. Iyengar: The prejudice that hatha yoga is only physical and that it has nothing to do with spiritual life. People have equated the practice of *asana* with physical practice; I have shown the path how to reach through the body, the mind and the soul.

I never go to any seminars or never hold any seminars. I never advertised or indulged in propaganda. Yet I say that I have a good number of sincere followers today and that is enough for me. You will see that all my pupils become very sincere. They are integrated, sincere and whatever little they know, they teach honestly. That is what I have given them. I am happy that I have created a very good purpose in my students. Whether they reach God or not is immaterial; the seed sown in them is very, very good, and so I am very happy. No pupil of mine hides in the art of teaching. That is how I have given. So there is no dissatisfaction for me! [Laughs].

Swami Radha: When people came back from their training here, I asked them, "How was he?" They replied, "He's tough!" I said, "Then he is a good teacher." One of my students said, "I don't know if I could have taken all this if I had not been to the *ashram*." I understand, because my students tell me that I'm tough. Yoga is very demanding – I demand a lot from people, otherwise it's not worth it.

Mr. Iyengar: Yes! I too say to people, "I never invite anyone. When you have come on your own, you have to just obey. There are two ways left to the students. Either they have to learn with me or they have to get out!" There is no middle path for me or for them at all. That is the problem with me. I am merciless to the mind and merciful to the body and soul! [Great laugh]. That is why people say, "He loses his temper, he gets very angry, he hits!" I say, "Yes, I do so in order to tame the mind."

Student: Mr. Iyengar, you said you are going to stop your classes in 1983?

Mr. Iyengar: I am not stopping the classes. I said that I am going to stop the three-week intensive courses, because people exploit these courses, saying, "I have been to the intensive, now I can teach." I have told them from now on that they can come to the general classes or even the beginners' classes, in order to see that they are unfit to be even in the beginners' classes.

That is how I want to teach them so that the pride vanishes and humbleness comes. That is the only way to teach humility, there is no other way. [Chuckles]

The local people from Pune in the morning classes today also said, "Guruji is very tough!" I said, "Where am I tough? I am laughing and talking, where is the toughness? When I can do it why can't you?" So I follow them, I make them do yoga with me, so that I can ignite inspiration in them. I never sit on a platform with special dress of a Guru. I wear my yoga dress. If I am there I am there totally so I create interest. I tell them, "No guru is coming next to you to do yoga. I am the only one who does practice next to the pupils." Twenty times I may show each *asana* to twenty people, standing next to them, so that they can learn and can compare to find out what they are lacking. I say, "See my alignment, see your alignment. Where is your head and where is mine? How is your hand and how is mine? Where is my leg, where is my chest? How much have I lifted? So when I can do it why can't you learn?" But I don't say, "Do it this way. It's all right for today. Tomorrow you will get more." Tomorrow will never come, who knows? I may not be here tomorrow, so why should I wait for tomorrow? [Laughs]. So I pour out encouragement, which appears tough.

Swami Radha: Yes, you have strong principles indeed! Do you make any discrimination in regard to realization between men and women? Indians have sometimes said to me, "You can't do this because you have to be born a man."

Mr. Iyengar: No, no! Soul has no difference. It is the mind which differentiates. So do not heed what you hear, as it is not true.

Swami Radha: Why would they say that?

Mr. Iyengar: The idea must have spread at a latter period. In the earlier period great women had far more wisdom than men, and they also were the teachers for many, many men, which we cannot forget. The present modern way of talking is quite different. They say that the man has the aggressive power, the will power, and the women are poor in will power. But this is all imaginary, you know. For the honest person, it makes no difference in self-realization whether one is a woman or a man.

Moreover whether man or woman, child or old, the principles of *karma* do not differ. Nobody is excused from wrongdoing and everyone has the rights to derive the fruits of right and wrong doings. Yoga is an open path to all to cleanse the body, mind, senses, intelligence, I-ness and consciousness.

Those who differentiate man and woman in the field of art, science and philosophy, for me are ignorant. ॐ



IN OUR MAILBOX

The Students, Teachers & Staff Members of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, Canada

Dear friends,

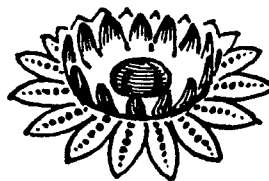
Thanks a lot for your letter of December 2009 wishing me "A Very Happy Birthday" for my 91st birthday. I am sure, as I look at my present health, it may be celebrated well.

Thank you for praising me through the play called 'A Luminous Life'. I am sure the determined will of an unknown poor uneducated boy could take to yoga and present it to the world which is appreciated as a lively method for both body and mind.

May God bless you in your efforts this year also and may the celebration bring the needed health for deserving students to get the benefit of it.

My love and affection to one and all.

Thanking you. Yours affectionately,
B.K.S. Iyengar



Bhramari Pranayama: The Humming of the Bee

by Karyn Woodland



Question: What do bees and breath have in common (apart from the fact that each begins with the letter 'B')?

Answer: Both are essential to life.

How long can you go without taking a breath? Maybe a minute? Or maybe you practise *pranayama* regularly, and are able to retain the breath for longer. Still, humans cannot live long without breathing.

And now the question is arising, how long could we live without bees? Not long, say some scientists who are studying the recent phenomenon of “colony collapse” of the honeybee population. If bees became extinct, insect pollination would all but cease, and there would not be enough food. Human life would be in jeopardy. (See sidebar on Cultivating Native Bees.)

Bhramari (**bruh**-muh-ree) *Pranayama* is a life-giving practise.

“*Bhramara*,” says B.K.S. Iyengar in *Light on Pranayama*, “means a large black bumble-bee and this *pranayama* is so called because during exhalation a soft humming sound like that of a bumble-bee is made.”

“The best time to perform [*Bhramari*] is in the silence and quiet of the night,” Guruji continues. “The humming sound induces sleep and is good for persons suffering from insomnia.”

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* says, “With regular practice of this *pranayama* bliss arises in the yogi’s heart.”

(See sidebar for further benefits.)

“Clues” for Practising *Bhramari Pranayama*

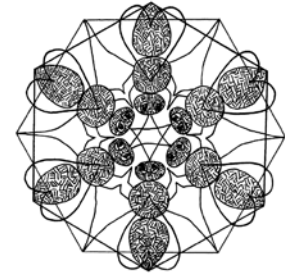
When Geeta was in Penticton two years ago, she said, “*Bhramari* is there for the Introductory. You have to know the *Bhramari*.” She also gave “clues,” as she put it, on how to practise, which I have paraphrased below. For a more in-depth and comprehensive look at the practise of *Bhramari* and other *Pranayamas*, see the DVD (available in the library): *Sadhana with Dr. Geeta S. Iyengar*, Penticton, BC, 2008.

Busy as a bee. Bees are industrious, seemingly tireless workers collecting pollen for the Queen. Paradoxically, *Bhramari*, (all *pranayama* in fact) must be practised not from a place of busyness, but from a place of relaxation. Geeta says *Bhramari* can be practiced sitting or lying down; with or without *jalandhara bandha*. *Light on Pranayama* also gives instructions for practicing *Bhramari* in *sanmukhi mudra*, which is how Shirley often teaches it. This variation of *Bhramari* is for experienced students.

Geeta begins, “*Bhramara* means bee. The bee goes to the flower to collect the honey from the flower. It makes a sound and this sound has been taken up by the yogis of olden days, to know in which way you can use the sound for breathing.”

“*Bhramari* is the sound that comes through the breathing passage, through the throat region.”

“There is an upper throat, middle throat, and base of the throat. First you have to use the top throat; then middle throat; then lower throat. You have to touch the upper level of the voice, then go to the lower level of the voice.”



Till the Soil – Prepare the Foundation

Just as gardeners work the soil, digging in compost, and then plant particular flowers to attract bees to their garden, we must likewise prepare the body to invite the nectar of *Bhramari*.

Geeta’s instructions for sitting for the Invocation are equally applicable, I think, for sitting *pranayama*.

“Keep your spine well lifted ... Keep your shoulders rolling back. Extend the sides of the neck. Lengthen the front body... Draw the shoulder blades in. Centre chest will lift up. Head straight. Neck straight ...

Slow soft inhalation. Slow soft exhalation. With the breath, support the body. Inhalation has to support the anterior body to ascend. Posterior body has to remain full. Spine absolutely supporting the height of the body ...

While exhaling, do not drop ... Close your eyes completely. Look within. Allow the eyes to recede deeper back ... The frontal brain should not hit the forehead wall. Frontal brain towards the back brain ...

Both the sides of the neck elongate evenly. Widen the shoulders. Connect the back of the chest to the front of the chest, especially the center dorsal to the front middle chest. That’s the area which you have to penetrate from the interior region at the back of the dorsal. Do not just keep lifting the front of the chest ...

Direct your presence inward. Come to the very core of your being. Remain quiet. Silent. Passive. Watching the smooth flow of the breath.

The area behind the back, exactly behind the heart region - take that to the front of the body... The spine has to be activated from the posterior spine to the anterior spine, so that the energy stored inside is utilized...

Allow the brain to recede. Allow the eyes and ears to go deeper inward...

With inhalation ascend... Slowly exhale, so the body doesn't suddenly collapse. Slow soft smooth inhalation. Slow soft smooth exhalation...

Direct your presence inward. Come to the very core of your being. Remain quiet. Silent. Passive. Watching the smooth flow of the breath.

To some *Bhramari* doesn't come unless they do *jalandhara bandha*. So, first with *jalandhara bandha*.

Sit in a simple position, *swastikasana*. Head is down. Do not force the chin to come right up to the chest.

Head down. Inhale."

***Bhramari* is Done on Exhalation**

"You cannot do *Bhramari* on inhalation. Only on exhalation. *Ujayii pranayama* is the fuel, is the fire.

Quality depends on the lengthening of the breath.

Whenever you are activating your body you exhale and do the action on the inhalation. Action is done with the inhalation, but before that there has to be exhalation.

Exhalation is an outgoing process. When I talk I exhale. It is a throwing out process ... the sound comes out. Only when I stop do I inhale.

When you say "*namaste*" you exhale. Then you inhale. Anything you speak will be exhalation.

That's why a yogi should not speak too much. If you go on for the whole day, talking, talking, talking, energy is gone. When to speak? How much to speak? To whom to speak? And what to speak?

Listen to the sound that has to come in *Bhramari Pranayama* ... It is done without tensing the intercostal muscles. You have to open the chest but they should not be over-puffed."

Cultivating Native Bees



Bees. There is much myth and mystery surrounding these tiny, vital creatures, as anyone who has read *The Secret Life of Bees* (or seen the excellent movie with Whoopi Goldberg) knows.

The sound of the bee buzzing through the garden in summer is as sweet as the honey it provides. However, parasitic problems in the beehives are contributing to record die-offs of bees. This threat of 'colony collapse' of the European honeybee, upon which we have to come to rely, is motivating a movement towards repopulating North America with bees indigenous to our region.

For us on Vancouver Island, that is primarily the Mason Bee and the Blue Orchard Bee. These native bees are less susceptible to the parasitic problems. It is easy to encourage them in your garden.

Native flowers (such as asters, lupines, penstemons) are the best attractors for native bees.

We began putting mason bee houses in our garden about five years ago. A mason bee house looks a little like a birdhouse, but with small singular holes to hold the tiny bee larvae. Some houses come complete with larvae, which hatch out when the weather warms.

With our glorious summer and warm fall I found a multitude of indigenous bees buzzing through the lavender right up to mid-November. ॐ

THE PARTNER OF ONE OF OUR METCHOSIN YOGA STUDENTS CULTIVATES NATIVE BEES AND BUILDS MASON BEE HOUSES (FOR AROUND \$30). IF YOU'D LIKE TO ADD SOME MASON BEE HOUSES TO YOUR GARDEN, CONTACT TOM LEAHY: LEAHYBROWN@SHAW.CA

Addressing Problems

Geeta asks, "Is there anyone who is not getting this sound? Ann has brought up this question to me.

Do not make the chin lock so strong you have to force the exhalation.

If your spine is not erect, if you drop your chest ... your spine is collapsed when you try to make a sound, the chest sinks further down. That leads to a fear complex ...

Your spine has to be erect...

If the sternum is going inside, that will not help you. It will bring shakiness to the body. Lift your dorsal into the body. Open the dorsal from the back to the front ... the west has to come to the east. Don't press the spine from the front to the back. You will be wrong ...

Correct yourself. Use your intelligence. If the spine is sinking, support the back.

Do without *jalandhara bandha*. This can be done even lying down.

Vibrate the larynx. There is a direction from the back to the front as it is coming.

If you try to do something with the larynx, it won't. You have to keep it relaxed.

If you start from the lower throat, the next inhalation comes in a gasp. The inhalation after *Bhramari* has to come smoothly."

Cautions and Contraindications

"Some people have to be excluded," says Geeta. "The proper capacity must be there. When the breathing is not sufficient, it can create problems.

If you've had a heart attack *Bhramari* is difficult. You need healthy lungs, healthy chest.

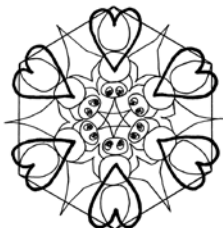
High blood pressure is okay – unless you try to force.

Benefits of *Bhramari Pranayama*

- immediately relaxes the brain
- reduces stress and anxiety
- helps cure migraines
- helps alleviate high blood pressure
- clears and vibrates the throat
- invigorates the thyroid gland increasing metabolism
- balances hormonal secretion
- triggers serotonin release
- helps balance blood sugar
- helps oxidize fats in the body
- good for those with Alzheimer's disease
- cultivates a deep connection with the flow of life
- expands joy

If you have a cough, do not do *Bhramari*."

"Get used to inversions," Geeta advises, "like *sirsasana*, *halasana*, before you start *pranayama*." ॐ



The Bhramara

by Jayne Jonas

The light in the studio was bright and cheerful slanting through the room from the entry door side encasing Geeta's area of practice. By this time of the morning, the studio had begun to feel comfortable with the rhythm of energy established by all the practitioners.

Nancy and I were practicing more in the center of the room between the pillars between Geeta and B.K.S..

As I was trying to gain comfort in my *supta virasana* practice I started to hear a very loud humming noise – very distracting loud humming. Even though there are many loud and distinct noises that crash into the studio from life lived on the Hare Krishna Mandir Road, which is the where the RIMYI Institute in Pune is located, this noise stood out from the rest. It was alarming in its distinct ongoing hum. It didn't sound like any number of the maddening building noises that erupt from the street, or the honking of the myriad horns. No, this was something very different. Organic – living – close by ...

And there next to Geeta, in her space, was a gigantic bee. The biggest, blackest, hairiest bee I had ever seen or heard. I nudged Nancy so she also could see what I had seen. We both looked at the bee,

And there next to Geeta, in her space, was a gigantic bee. The biggest, blackest, hairiest bee I had ever seen or heard.

Geeta, one another, and then decided in complete silent agreement to wait and see.

But the questions arose. What do we do? Will it hurt Geeta? Should we tell Geeta? Surely, she hears it too? What will Geeta do? And then we noticed Stephanie Quirk walk over to Geeta to speak with her. Geeta deftly, with a brief curt toss of her head motioned to Stephanie to let the bee out of the window. Stephanie, the whole time talking with Geeta, walked over to the bee and let it out the window. Simple, the giant beast regained its freedom. Whew!

Since it was *pranayama* week at the studio, I thought this beast was an omen of what was to come.

HMMMMMM. ॐ

Scholarships & Bursaries

Members' Scholarships are available for all long workshops and intensives.

Please apply in writing prior to the workshop in which you are interested.

Scholarship applications for Weekend Workshops are due one month prior to the workshop. Scholarships for Special Events and Intensives are due two months before the event.

Student Bursaries are available to all students presently enrolled in classes. To subsidize your term fees please apply three weeks prior to term.

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

**202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)**

Summer Sadhana 2009

by Melissa Hadley

August 31 – It has been eight weeks since the first day of Robin Cantor's 6-day Sadhana (July 6-11, 2009), and I continue to stretch physically, intellectually, and spiritually with her teachings. This *Sadhana* week expanded my understanding of yoga's promise and practice and I am particularly grateful for the pairing of daily readings with the *asanas*. With thanks to Robin for her love and wisdom in shining the light on yoga, I offer a few excerpts from my journal during the *Sadhana* in honour of this journey.

July 6 – Robin begins the session with selected readings from *Light on Astanga Yoga* (B.K.S. Iyengar, 1999). The phrase "The sorrows which are yet to come can be avoided" (Patanjali) snaps me to attention. I first interpret this as building strength and flexibility through the practice of *asana*, but there is more. Mr. Iyengar presents yoga as a process of cleansing and eradicating bad thoughts and wrong behaviour in our past and cultivating new behaviours and imprints to shape our future. Our *asanas* centre on standing poses – we focus on the rooting in footwork, engagement of muscles, alignment of bones, and the freedom that comes from correct posture. Clear intention, understanding, focused effort, restraint, coordination in breath, body, mind – I can see that all are necessary for right action.

July 7 – Today's reading touches on our ever-present mental and/or physical activity and the five afflictions that motivate all action: ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion, clinging to worldly life. Our *asanas* focus on forward bends, and the consequent introspection brings me face-to-face with Ego (Why doesn't



my head make it to the floor in *prasarita padottanasana* today? Everyone else is down there!) and Aversion (How long do we have to hold *paschimottanasana* –

isn't it over yet?). As I work with today's body in these poses, I consider the phrase "The fruit of the action may be experienced immediately or delayed" and

I feel my body shift and open, shift and relax, and my mind begin to calm. A significant breakthrough – I am beginning to allow the poses to work on me.

do my best to let go the judgment and forcing, and re-focus on breathing. In the space created by letting go, I begin to taste a glimmer of release.

July 8 – Fascinating readings on the relationship between *Purusa* (human being, soul), *Isvara* (God, supremacy, glory) and *Prakrti* (nature, universe)! Mr. Iyengar says that unless one knows the interrelationship between the *Prakrti* and the *Purusa*, *Sadhana* doesn't make any sense.

Today's *asanas* give physical expression to the concept of interrelationship and our need to combine knowledge, mindful effort, non-gripping, and breathing. We practice balance in standing, sitting, lying, and inversion *asanas*. I observe how each element contributes to the level at which a pose can be achieved and try to address my biggest challenge – separating the sites of action (legs, arms) from the sites of quietness (abdominals, throat). I can see that a practice targeting perfection in one aspect only (e.g., the external form of *asana*), does so at the expense of the full practice “to destroy the impurities of body, mind, and consciousness” and the ultimate goal of yoga – to unite with God, or the Universal Soul.

Two take home messages from today's practice: 1) to trust in my efforts to change myself and undertake these efforts with a positive attitude; 2) to deepen and enrich my *asana* practice by incorporating philosophical and spiritual readings.

July 9 – The discussion of *Purusa* and *Prakrti* continues. “Yoga generates energy for overcoming obstacles so that the disparity between the seer (*Purusa*) and the seen (*Prakrti*) is removed ... The seer looks into the mirror of the seen and sees his own reflection.” Complicated constructs! My mind simplifies these to the need for discrimination and good judgment to move the consciousness out of the grip of worldly desires and towards freedom.

Our *asanas* centre on twists and backbends. I do my best to bring intelligence from each pose into the next, trusting Robin's sequencing to awaken the dull places in my body, and following her suggestion to breathe as if my ribs were gills – expanding sideways, opening my back body. I feel my body shift and open, shift and relax, and my mind begin to calm. A significant breakthrough – I am beginning to allow the poses to work on me.

July 10 – Today's readings address the meaning of *Sadhana* – not simply practice, but dynamic, multi-faceted effort with attention on self-realization. Mr. Iyengar refers to *Sadhana* as spiritual food, noting that the depth of the *Sadhana* increases with the understanding of the student. I see this in my personal practice and in successive *Sadhanas* (this is my third).

Today's *asanas* are restorative, allowing space and time for the learnings of the past four days to settle into our cells. With the support of slant boards, chairs, and bolsters, we open our chests in preparation for *pranayama*. Our humming bees (*Bhramari*) feel like a



vocal group hug; the reverberations continue after the sound is gone.

The gift of these five mornings extends beyond the mat—I take a different me into the larger world and I see the benefits of my practice expanding into other aspects of my life. In simple ways, I am already realizing the fruits of the promise in the phrase that caught my attention the first morning—“The sorrows which are yet to come can be avoided.” ॐ

Member's Practice

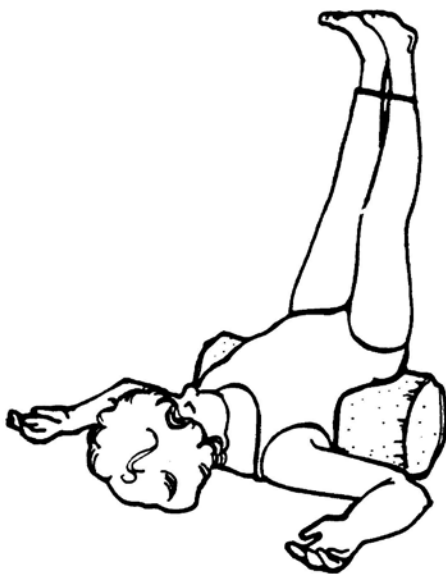
This is intended to be a new regular item in the newsletter – where a member presents one of their practices. Please contribute! It doesn't have to be a long practice – it could be your “15 minutes before running out the door practice”; it could be your “hotel room practice”. If you find the energy to record and submit, the newsletter editor will try to fit into an upcoming column. A picture or two of you and your practice area would be a nice complement to the practice sequence.

To get this started, here is my *One hour, after walking the dog practice*, focusing on knee and hip openers.

Del Meidinger – September 26th

1 & 2. *Adhomukha svanasana* (downward dog) and *adhomukha virasana*, knees apart, stretched forward: 2 x; about 1 minute each.

3. *Supta tadasana* (mountain pose, lying on mat): then hook thumbs and raise overhead, to floor. 2 x – one minute each thumb hooking.



4. *Supta pavanmuktasana* (wind-releasing pose!): on back, holding knees to chest, head on floor.

5. *Ardha supta pavanmuktasana* (half wind-releasing pose): Still on back, one leg into chest, the other leg straight and in *tadasana*: 2 x each side.

6. *Jathara parivartanasana variation* (spinal twist on back). On back, legs bent at 90 degrees, shins parallel to floor, arms outstretched from body at shoulder height: roll legs side to side, 10 x.

7. Still on back, legs bent and tightly crossed, bottom leg foot on floor, roll first one way and then the other to get a twist.

8. *Vajrasana* (sitting on heels): arms in *parvatasana* (fingers interlocked, palms outward, stretched overhead): 2 x, one for each interlocking (15 seconds each holding).

9. *Vajrasana* (sitting on heels): arms in *garudasana* (eagle): 2 x, one for each interlocking of arms (30-40 seconds each holding).

10. *Parsva vajrasana* (sitting on heels, twist): twist to each side, one arm over leg, palm down, other on floor behind sacrum; 15 seconds each side.

11. *Virasana* (hero, sitting on floor, or support, between feet): one minute meditative state.

12 & 13. *Virasana* (sitting between feet): arms as in 8 and 9 – *parvatasana* and *garudasana*.

14. *Parsva virasana* (sitting between feet, twist): twist to each side, one arm over leg, palm down, other on floor behind sacrum; 15 seconds each side.

15. *Upavista konasana* (wide angle seated forward bend): sitting with sit bones well supported on blankets or foam blocks; 3 minutes, mostly meditative state;



one set of arm variations in 8 and 9 – *parvatasana* and *garudasana*.

16. *Upavista konasana* (wide angle seated forward bend): sitting on blankets or foam blocks; twist and hold foot; 45 seconds each side, 2 x each side.

17. *Baddha konasana* (bound angle pose): sitting on blankets or foam blocks; 2½ minutes sitting; then 2 minutes with wooden block between feet at narrowest; then 1½ minutes with block at widest (along length).

18. *Virasana* (hero, sitting between feet): one minute meditative state to release knee.

19. *Adhomukha vrksasana* (full arm balance): against wall; 30 seconds.

20. *Salamba sirsasana* (headstand): 2 minutes.

21. *Niralamba sarvangasana* (unsupported shoulderstand against wall, on bolster, back to wall): 2 minutes.

22. *Viparita karani* (inverted lake posture): slide off bolster from #21, into this pose for 2 minutes, or as long as you like! ॐ

Starting a Yoga Practice

by Leslie Hogya

The intention to start a yoga practice can be like setting New Year's resolutions; sometimes all the best intentions fall away in a short time.

Begin by finding a few props. A mat helps define the space for your practice. When I began yoga, we didn't use any props. There were not even the yoga mats we have today at in the yoga studio. There was nowhere to buy props. In later years, when mats became commonly used, I bought one. (In fact, I still have it; it is pale green and shredding badly.)

A mat can move from one physical space to another. A mat can travel as needed. It isn't very big and can be rolled up and stored easily. It is also relatively inexpensive as far as equipment goes; think of a computer, an iPod, a canoe, or even tennis racket.

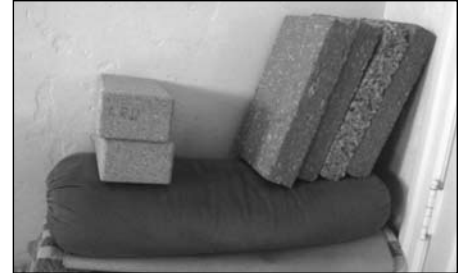
A strap is the next thing to acquire. Then blankets; I found my first blankets at a garage sale, the iron hard wool army blankets of a past generation.

Next comes the question: what to practice? As a first step, begin to stand straight, and use a wall to check for a straight back. Start to sit up without slouching, and one day the slouch will feel all wrong.

Yoga practice is also about how we are in the world; building patience, friendliness, compassion, and joy. (See *Light on the Yoga Sutras*, by B.K.S. Iyengar, Chapter one, Verse 33).

Taking time to breathe with awareness is part of practice. Before doing *pranayama* practice, just begin with observation, bringing your mind to focus on the length and depth of the breath.

Finding the right time for an *asana* practice can be one of the biggest challenges in a busy life. Dedicating a certain amount of time everyday is a habit to cultivate. The time of day has to fit into your schedule. I like to practice early in the morning whenever possible, before other duties begin. When I had a school



teaching job, I had to be at school very early, and so in those years, late afternoon worked better for me. But, yoga is done everywhere. When you find yourself standing in a long queue, take a moment to stand up straight, look at the people around you with friendliness, and watch your breath go in and go out. That is the integration, and the continuation of yoga practice. ॐ



Student Intensive

With Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler

August 30 – September 3

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

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

Learn how to establish and deepen your practice.

All levels

Lauren and Ty 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: \$235.00 + GST for IYCV members

\$260.00 + GST for non-members

Registration is now open

To register, drop in or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria:
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee.



Thank you to the following people for their kind donations to the Centre's library: **Phofi McCullough, Cindy Rogers, Iain MacLean, Wies Pukesh, and Lori Webber.**

And to **Carol Jenkins** for her expert labelling of student handouts in the library.

To the many people who worked together to ensure a marvelous celebration of the **91st Birthday of B.K.S. Iyengar**: **Lauren Cox** – the main organizer, **Lucie Guindon** for leading the practice, **Soo Ham** for the technical work in showing last year's performance piece, **Charles Campbell** for the loan of his projector and speakers, **Bruce Cox** for providing technical support, **Ty Chandler, Tia Benn, Matthew Balchin** and **Chris Simmons** for leading kirtan and for the 91 aums, **Sue Riddell** for her memorable carrot cake, **Corrine Lowen** and her partner **Don** for picking up the savories and finding extra plates, **Karin Dayton** for providing finger foods,

Karyn Woodland for set up and clean up, **Johanna Godliman** for being the chai wallah and cleaning up, **Jane McFarlane** and assistants for laying out the mats and for cleaning up, **Jane McFarlane** for filming last year's performance which was shown at the event; **Wendy Boyer** for taking care of the front desk, **Dave Emery** for hanging lights, **Shirley Davenport French, Leslie Hogya, and Marlene Miller** for sharing stories and readings and those many, many people, who helped out in the seemingly small ways which equally contributed to the beauty and success of the occasion.

Thank you to those numberless volunteers who willingly sweep after regular class.

Thanks to **Judy Atkins** for assuming the position of librarian and for helping to proofread the newsletter.

Jane McFarlane for cleaning the Centre and **Wendy Wimbush** for cleaning over the Christmas break.

Thank you to the following people for distributing flyers and schedules throughout the community all year: **Laura Johnston, Janine Beckner, Karin Dayton, Diana Cole, Laura Anderson, Britta Poisson, Carol Newton, Jill Moran, Gary Wong, Jeannette Merryfield, Denise Meyers, Emma Richards, Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins, Maureen Doyle, Laure Newnham, Adrienne Elsen, Tina Phillips, Donna Williams, Boni Hoy, Shauna Johnson, and Elaine Davies.** They are an important component in the promotion of our Centre, and a special thank you to **Jeannette Merryfield** who coordinates the distribution volunteers.



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE OF VICTORIA
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:

**Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Society,
c/o Hilary McPhail, 202-919 Fort Street,
Victoria BC V8V 3K3**

Membership/subscription fee is \$40.00 + GST,
renewable each January.

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E-mail: _____

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

☐ Receipt required.



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

2010 CALENDAR

MARCH

- 5-8 Neeta Datta Workshop
- 12 Friday Night Gathering – Kirtan
- 12-15 Intermediate Junior I/II Assessment – Toronto
- 25 High Tea Fundraiser
- 27 Teachers' Meeting

APRIL

- 10 Share the Learning
- 24 Teachers' Meeting

MAY

- 12-16 Geeta in Portland, OR
- 20-23 IYAC AGM in Calgary, AB

JUNE

- 4-6 Salt Spring Retreat
- 11-13 Introductory I & II Assessment
- 12 Teachers' Meeting

JULY

- 5-10 Summer Sadhana
- 19-24 Intro Teacher Training Intensive



AUGUST

- 9-13 Intermediate Teacher Training Intensive
- 25-29 In the Footsteps of Patanjali Workshop
- 30-Sept 3 Student Intensive

SEPTEMBER

- Sept 3 Student Intensive continues
- 24 The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali
- 25-26 Going Deeper workshop
- 30-Oct 3 Stephanie Quirk – Winnipeg, MB

OCTOBER

- Oct 3 Stephanie Quirk continues
- 30 Teachers' Meeting

NOVEMBER

- 27 Teachers' Meeting



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

N E W S L E T T E R
S U M M E R 2 0 1 0



*Vrschikasana – sculpted in the likeness of
B.K.S. Iyengar on the walls of the RIMYI Institute*

INSIDE – EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH B.K.S. IYENGAR



IYENGAR YOGA

Teacher Training Intensives

Fees for each course:

\$595.00 CDN + GST IYCV members

\$645.00 CDN + GST non-members

Registration now open.

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www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

July 19-24, 2010

With Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus

Introductory I & II Syllabi for uncertified Iyengar yoga teachers

This six-day course will build your understanding of teaching Iyengar yoga based on the foundation of a good practice. Peer teaching, *pranayama*, philosophy and anatomy will be included. Leslie and Ann are experienced teachers. Both have Senior Intermediate I certification and are qualified I.Y.A.C. assessors. They are involved in teacher training in Victoria as well as in other areas of British Columbia and in Yukon communities.

Preference will be given to members of I.Y.A.C. and those planning to do their assessment in the near future.

August 9-13, 2010

With Shirley Daventry French

Intermediate Junior and Senior syllabi for certified Iyengar yoga teachers

This intensive offers the opportunity for certified teachers to refine teaching and practice at their current level of certification, and to prepare for assessment.

Shirley is a direct student of B.K.S. Iyengar who awarded her a senior teaching credential. She 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.

As in previous years, Iyengar yoga teachers from other countries are invited to apply; however, I.Y.A.C. members will be given priority.

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee.

The 26th Annual Retreat at the Saltspring Centre

June 4 -6, 2010

With Shirley Daventry French

Fees: IYCV Members

\$340.00 + GST

– shared accommodation

\$310.00 + GST – camping

\$285.00 + GST – commuting

Fees: Non-members

\$375.00 + GST

– shared accommodation

\$345.00 + GST – camping

\$320.00 + GST – commuting

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Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.

SUMMER SADHANA

July 6 - 11, 2010

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

**6:30 - 8:00 am
with Robin Cantor**

This 6 day Sadhana is the perfect opportunity
to further develop and deepen your practice.

Members \$115 + GST Non Members \$125 + GST

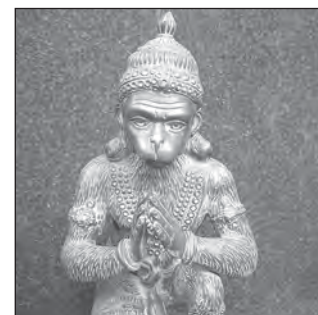
**The 1-1/2 hour Saturday class is open as 'drop-in'
to ALL students of Level 2 and higher:
\$15.00 + GST**

Registration NOW open. Refunds will be offered only if your space
can be filled and are subject to a \$15.00 cancellation fee.

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Hanuman, the monkey god

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE JULY 19, 2010

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IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the *Society 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 Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Newsletter, published regularly by the IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA SOCIETY, provides current information on events concerning Iyengar yoga in the Victoria area.

Send contributions, articles, photographs (high resolution), drawings, information or suggestions to: the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3.

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Newsletter Advertising Policy

(Adopted February 20, 2004)

In keeping with the mandate of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria 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 IYCV.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar yoga
3. Priority will be given to advertisements regarding IYCV events, IYCV sponsored events, and IYAC events.

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Please visit our website:

www.iyengaryogacentre.ca for full information on classes and workshops.



I KNOW THE PATH; it is straight and narrow.
It is like the edge of a sword.
I rejoice to walk on it.
I weep when I slip.
God's word is: He who strives never perishes.
I have implicit faith in that promise.
Though, therefore, from my weakness
I fail a thousand times,
I will not lose faith

– M.K. Gandhi

In the last two issues of this newsletter we ran a two-part conversation between two yoga masters: B.K.S. Iyengar and Swami Sivananda Radha. In this issue we are pleased to include a recent interview with Guruji Iyengar conducted by local yoga student, university professor, published author and poet, Jane Munro, who has recently returned from Pune. The interview and Jane's foreword speak for themselves. My purpose here is to write about the incredible gift of learning from a guru or master teacher.

In 1984 when Guruji visited Victoria, Swami Radha came here specially to meet and welcome him. Speaking in his honour at an evening banquet in the presence of the Mayor and various dignitaries, Swami Radha described how she had come to visit Mr. Iyengar during her last trip to India and then, addressing him as Guruji, said:

*There is a saying about the difference
between a good yoga teacher and a guru,
that a teacher points you towards the Light
whereas a guru is the Light.*

"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 the class; who knows precisely what he is doing to not only a millimeter but a fraction, and (how) to penetrate most of the things that we hear pass by. (Others) don't have enough power. There's not enough behind it that will catch and really penetrate to a level of conviction that will change our lives; and this is what it is necessary to do. Our lives have to be changed; we have to ask the question over and over again 'what do we live for', and all 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 so much compassion again."

Old students of Guruji, familiar with his idiosyncratic way of speaking, and the power and consistency of his teaching will, as Swami Radha encouraged, listen or, in this case, read above and below, behind and between the lines using their intuition to help them discover gems of wisdom derived from seventy six years of uninterrupted *sadhana*.

Newer students not used to his familiar cadence and the vernacular of Indian

English may not at first understand some of what he has said. Older students too will not necessarily understand right away, but will have developed the practice of reflection which allows this teaching to be absorbed in its own good time.

Many years ago, after I had been to see Swami Radha to discuss a major problem in my life, I came away disappointed because she had not answered my question. I spoke about this to one of her close disciples who laughed and said: she doesn't answer your question—she answers *the question!*

For many years now I have been fortunate to receive guidance from B.K.S. Iyengar. His letters are read and reread again and again as I reflect on their meaning and relevance in my *sadhana*. There is a saying about the difference between a good yoga teacher and a guru – a teacher points you towards the Light whereas a guru is the Light. For many years of his teaching career Guruji resisted this honorific, finally surrendering to an international tide of students who had begun to address him in this manner.

One of my favourite teachers of yoga, long dead but leaving a legacy of some fine teaching, is Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). In his book *Raja Yoga*, having stated that everyone wants to experience truth for himself, he goes on to say:

“This truth has been preached by sages of all countries, of all ages, by men, pure and unselfish who had no motive but to do good to the world. They all declare that they have found certain truths higher than the senses can bring us, and they invite verification. They ask us to take up the discipline and practise honestly. We must work faithfully, using the prescribed methods, and light will come.”

B.K.S. Iyengar is such a sage. In his books, his classes, his letters, his discourses, his interviews and, if you are so fortunate, face to face, he invites us to take up the discipline of yoga, practise honesty and work faithfully using the methods he has prescribed so that light will come.



*In Natarajasana – dedicated to Lord Siva, Lord of the dance
– B.K.S. Iyengar holds his arm high with sword like precision.*

Not all are grateful. In the time I have known Guruji I have seen many students abuse his generosity and use what he has given them to build themselves up, create their own lineage. Once, at a convention, I watched horrified as one of his earliest students from Europe abused him on a platform before hundreds of people. Guruji sat there with dignity and grace, not responding but ‘turning the other cheek’. Others have maligned Guruji in writing and teaching and gatherings, purporting to understand better than him how to practise yoga. And I am sure of one thing – if those people were ever to regret their actions and go to Guruji seeking to bridge the chasm they have created, he would welcome them with open arms. I have seen that happen too.

At the start of this article I quoted Mahatma Gandhi who compares the spiritual journey to walking on the edge of a sword. Guruji has been perfecting this tricky feat of balance for many decades with courage and tenacity. He has never lost faith!

On behalf of all of us in Victoria, I thank him for sharing some of his wisdom with us. ॐ

Being Within and Without

An Interview with B.K.S. Iyengar

October 28, 2009

by Jane Munro

Introduction

Perhaps I should set the scene for this interview, and say a word about my transcription.

The interview took place on October 28, 2009 in the library of the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute. I'd been in Pune for a month, one of a flock of students attending classes and practice sessions. From nine to noon, B.K.S. Iyengar would be in the yoga hall with us, doing his practice, so I'd had a chance to observe him daily. And, I suppose, he'd also seen me, though we'd only exchanged a few words. In preparation for this interview, I'd honed five questions and printed them out on two sheets of paper. Guruji had been very busy, but finally on this afternoon he had time to look at my questions. I handed the papers over, expecting that—if he were willing to speak to them—he'd set a time for me to return. Guruji scanned the first page, looked up, and said "Yes." It was clear he meant, *go ahead. Now*. Luckily, I'd brought my digital recorder.

He sat at his usual desk with me opposite him. There was no great distance between us. Our conversation was comfortably intimate though not at all private. We looked directly into each other's eyes. I was nervous but calmed down. Other people were waiting to see him. Stacks of paper sat before him. I didn't know how long he'd have for me, so—at first—felt the need to rush through my questions. That was not how he chose to proceed; he continued to speak to my first question, ignoring subsequent questions, until he felt satisfied with his answer. As you'll see, I had interjected others. Gradually, he incorporated his responses

*It was a remarkable experience.
I'd guessed it would be interesting;
what I didn't anticipate was that
I'd find his attention, in and of itself,
a blessing.*



B.K.S. Iyengar

to those further questions into our conversation. I, slowly learning to relax with him, began to listen at a deeper level.

It was a remarkable experience. I'd guessed it would be interesting; what I didn't anticipate was that I'd find his attention, in and of itself, a blessing. I think his power to see into others comes from his extraordinary self-mastery and self knowledge. That afternoon, I was the one receiving his gaze and insight.

Something about this was exhilarating. I think the closest I can come to describing it is to say

I felt an awareness flowing through him warm my heart and lift my spirit. It was freely given—an open inquisitiveness and engagement. In the interview, he speaks of the consciousness developing rays, as does the sun. I felt like a plant on a sunny day—nourished and better able to grow.

I am not a yoga teacher, just a student. But, I felt Guruji paid as much attention to my questions as he would to those of someone with whom he'd worked for years. What mattered was getting as close as he could to conveying his own truth—to getting the "infinite subject" of his experience, spiritual in character, into the "finite" restrictions of words. He said the cells in his body, though they lack words or language, send him messages, talk to him. He said his practice is guided by the discipline of listening to what can't be put into words; that his cells chant prayers and send him petitions. In this way, he said, they bring life to the dark and unholy parts of his body. What follows from this is that the parts of the body which are holy are those brought into the light, heard, and known by the mind. Is this not fascinating? I could extend from it to say—what mattered to him was to make the obscure and confusing places in his answers to my questions "holy." Knowable. Alive. Able to grow. And to do this in the vehicle of English.

B.K.S. Iyengar—author of who-knows-how-many books, honoured world-wide—works at a small, chipped table just inside the entrance to the institute's library, downstairs from the reception area, bookstore, and offices. His desk is next to the landing. While we talked, various people came and went.

At one point, a woman brought him a cup of tea. He sits on a wooden arm chair that has a folded sheepskin and a flattened blanket on its seat. A light bulb, encircled by a wide aluminum shade, hangs above his papers. They were stacked in front of him in two piles, including the book manuscript he was working on. Students sat at nearby tables doing their own reading and writing. A librarian worked at a further desk. The library is quite narrow and modest in size, crammed with tables and chairs. Locked bookcases with glass windows line its walls. He works there daily from 3 pm to 6 pm. As far as I can tell, this is the setting in which he has written his books. It's also where he deals with correspondence and speaks with visitors.

Now, about the text which follows. In transcribing this interview, I made the choice of leaving it pretty much verbatim, skipping only interjections like “uhh huhh” and “yes” and some mentions of laughter which sound normal when heard but become distracting in print. Here and there, I've added a comment or a footnote. In a few places, I tightened it up by cutting some redundancy. I did consider “cleaning up” the interview more fully. That might have made it easier for a reader to follow. But, had I formalized it in this way – Englished it – I feared something of its warmth and immediacy might have been lost. Worse: you would have met the text through the imperfect lens of my interpretation. I wanted to preserve both the feel of talking with this extraordinary man and exactly what he said. My hope was to give you access to the experience – place you in the library beside the others there that afternoon – so you might hear this interview and listen to B.K.S. Iyengar with the ear of your heart.

Finally, I would like to thank Shirley Daventry French, my senior teacher, for writing to Guruji to ask him to grant me this interview, and Margot Kitchen, another senior Canadian teacher, who gave me generous support and encouragement while I was in Pune.



The Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute

The Interview, Part One

JM: Thank you very much for being willing to do this. It means a great deal to me, and it will mean a lot to the Iyengar Yoga Center *Newsletter*. We have many students who read it.

BKS: Yes. I'll try my best. I'm not an all-knower. I'm a student, after all. I may be a little advanced.

JM: You are just a little advanced.

BKS: Art isn't finite, but our practices are finite, so naturally it's not so easy to speak on an infinite subject by a mortal body. By a mortal intelligence.

JM: Yes – well, I think you have had many years of practice at doing this.

BKS: That's the only thing I can say all of. [laughter]

How he can be “within” and also “without” at the same time

JM: In the month that I've been here, I've been astonished by your ability to carry on your practice in the midst of everything that's going on. One day I was in the hall and you were practicing – you were deep in your practice – and you noticed a student whose blood pressure was going up, and you called out, and there were people who went and helped him. So you notice all of this “without” while you are deep “within.”

BKS: Well, by looking at them and their practices, the message comes to me that ... ah, something is going wrong, and I have to correct them.

JM: How can you help students learn this ability to be within, and also without, at the same time?

BKS: Well, you see, it's not so easy. It's a long process. Anyone who starts in the beginning cannot reach that level at all. Even for me, I'll make a guess, it's taken fifty or sixty years to go within and to be looking out. So my intelligence would be looking in, but my eyes will be looking out. So intelligence is also an eye, it is an intellectual eye, so I use the intellectual eye inwards and the visual eye on students while they are practicing, so I do both the things at the same time.

JM: It's astonishing. It astonishes me.

BKS: So, I don't get disconnected from my practices.

JM: I can see that you don't.

About humility and confidence, as well as being “within” and “without” at the same time

JM: And this brings me to my next question which is, I've been very moved by your humility – that you are right there with us, practicing as we are. I'm very moved by this.

Comment: *As you'll see, Guruji ignores this new question, even after I reiterate it, and continues his response to my first question. In what follows, he's still speaking to the first topic.*

BKS: See, anyone who comes to practice in the beginning, they'll only go for external benefits. Exterior benefits only, because the mind is close to the senses of perception; the mind tries to satisfy according to the dictates of the senses of perception and the organs of action. So it will take long to reverse, to make the mind take a U-turn: for the senses of perception, which may take time, but at least while students are practicing, even though they may be novices, they will tell you that when they practice, automatically the senses of perception go in, so when they go in the mind goes in. So as the mind goes in, we have got the external body and the internal body. Internal body is the mental body, where their intelligence, their consciousness, their ego – or I-maker, or I-ness, whatever you may call it – is stored, all the interior parts of the outer body. So the mind plays a dual role. It has to satisfy the senses of perception, and at the same time, it wants to satisfy the self. By the practice of asanas, the dual mind becomes the single mind. So that takes a longer time.

JM: Yes. I'm also struck, because not all yoga teachers, unfortunately, have humility....

Comment: *Once again, my nervousness has prompted me to push ahead, but he's not deflected and carries on speaking to the first question.*

BKS: There are two types. You people do not understand; perhaps you will today. They call it meditation. But reflection – actually, reflection is meditation. So as I reflect, so I am meditating; but for the observers, they think that I am practicing the postures for my health, or something like that. That's their opinion, but they cannot enter into my soul to find out how my self did, the years when I am doing it

JM: Yes, that's true.

BKS: So for me, meditation is complete. My practice is completely reflection, or reversing the agents of the self to be close to the self.

JM: Reversing the agents of the self to be close to the self....

BKS: That is, from the senses of perception. The body, the senses of perception, all systems of the body: mind, intelligence, consciousness should draw close to the center of the body.

*Heart is not the seat of the ego at all;
head is the seat of the ego.
And heart is the seat of humility.*



B.K.S. Iyengar speaking with some of his many students and visitors outside.

JM: And that also provides you with the humility I see?

BKS: Naturally. You see, humility comes from the heart. Actually, the head is the seat of the ego. Heart is not the seat of the ego at all; head is the seat of the ego. And heart is the seat of humility. And those who will practice yoga, if they know how to keep the head, because the mind is exactly in the middle of the two hemispheres of the brain, so if one starts seeing, not from the hemispheres of the brain, but from the center of the brain, which is the mind, which connects the two hemispheres of the brain, the two hemispheres of the brain come under control. And, at that time only, one subjectively experiences what humility is: it cannot be taught.

JM: That's very interesting. What is the balance then, between humility and confidence?

BKS: Confidence is where maturity has set in. Confusion would be there for everything. So when the confusion is removed by the thinking process, corrected, naturally the confidence comes. So when the confidence comes, with that confidence you develop clarity. Through clarity you develop maturity. Through maturity you get wisdom. Through wisdom you practice. [laughter]

So there's a process to what I say. First we begin to develop intellectualism. For any beginner, confusion will be there, so that's why they all work: to get clarity. And slowly, slowly, when that comes, then they practice through their wisdom, by their maturity: what is missing? what is not missing? what is correct? what is not correct? how to correct where the intelligence does not flow at all in the body? – there are lots of dark areas in the body.

You see we have got several sheaths – *kosas*, we call them – and we have seven *kosas* actually, not only the five called *annamaya*, *prana-*

*maya, manomaya, vijnanamaya, anandamaya. Anandamaya is the fifth kosa; that means it will be citta, because the kosas are going to contribute to Nature. But what about beyond Nature? So, beyond Nature, is the Soul. So we have to think of that also. So the connecting link between the citta – between the consciousness – and the Soul is the conscience, so that is the sixth sheath of the body, which nobody pays attention to. It is the lost difference between consciousness and conscience.*¹

A culture which is information rich and attention poor, and more about being “within” and “without” at the same time

JM: Our culture is so information rich and attention poor. It seems as if this is becoming more and more the situation.

BKS: Because we have not distinguished the consciousness and conscience. According to yogic science, as we have got senses of perception, we also have a sense of judgment. It comes from the conscience, known as *antahkarana* – we can call it *antahkarana*: there is a word for it – so the one which connects the *citta* with the Soul is the *antahkarana*. We call it *dharmendriya*.

JM: *Dharmendriya*?

BKS: Sense of virtue. Patanjali explains in the fourth chapter

what is called *dharmameghab samadhih*. The mind should reach that state of intelligence that virtue should flow like the torrential rains.²

JM: That would be wonderful.

BKS: But that people cannot understand, but he has said it. So that's enough for us to think. We may not be able to reach that, but it is possible, if one goes on working, that one can experience that virtuous state in their *sadhana*. After maturity, to practice means it is virtuous *sadhana*. To practice is to reach the righteous life. So when you reach the righteous life, then that righteous life has to change into a virtuous life [laughter] and that is the effect of *sadhana*.

JM: That's wonderful. But what about those of us prone to information gathering and learning “about”?

BKS: Information gathering is a view. Then they end up only with views. But how – how to bring understanding to views: true or not? You have to put into practice. Is it not?

JM: Yes. It's true.

BKS: So that the moment you put into practice – and this is what Patanjali also said – verbal analysis and reasoning should meet together, and then there is judgment. Right judgment

¹ He has written about the *kosas* at length. See, in particular, B.K.S. Iyengar, *Light on Life: The Yogic Journey to Wholeness, Inner Peace, and Ultimate Freedom*, Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2005.

² Fourth chapter, “Kaivalya Pada,” *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, IV.29: “The yogi who has no interest even in this highest state of evolution, and maintains supreme attentive, discriminative awareness, attains *dharmameghab samadhih*: he contemplates the fragrance of virtue and justice.”

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comes: *pratyaksa jnanendriya*. He speaks of that in the first chapter, the 17th sutra. The two hemispheres of the brain are further divided biologically into two: that means four “hemispheres” of the brain. Patanjali speaks of the four intellectual parts of the brain, not biological conditions of the brain. These are his four: the analytical brain; the reasoning brain; the brain which has experience of the bliss, our joys and sorrows; and the one which experiences that, and the true self. So these are the four parts of the brain. Patanjali explains in such a way that the I-feeling –as you say, the feeling of I, the feeling of ego – is in the information level. *Vitarka* and *vicara* are on the information level.³

JM: Right.

BKS: When they join together, synthesize together, then there is a joy. Because you’ve come to the conclusion that cause and consequence have met together, are knit together, so there’s no further doubt, so cause and consequence have come to an end, so you experience a joy. And at that time, at that time of bliss, the self gets neutralized, the “I”. So when it gets neutralized, then one experiences the true quality of the Self, according to yoga sutras, you know? So this is very beautiful. I don’t think anybody ever explained, but that is the meaning of what I study about, that.

JM: Thank you, very much, Gururji.

BKS: And, similarly, in 1:33; he divides also the four chambers of the heart. We have two ventricles, two auricles. But he speaks

³ *Light on the Yoga Sutras*, I.17: “Practice and detachment develop four types of *samadhi*: self-analysis, synthesis, bliss, and the experience of pure being.

*So that one experiences the eternal time,
where the time becomes timeless
because it has no movement.
That is within and without.*

of that in an emotional intelligence way as friendliness, compassion, gladness, and indifference. So that means the union of the head with the union of the heart. For that reason we practice yoga so that head and heart work together in our practices. So that there is no other flow of information to the head, or no feelings of emotions from the side of the heart. So that one experiences the eternal time, where the time becomes timeless because it has no movement. That is within and without.⁴

JM: That is, within and without. That is also an answer to my questions about humility and confidence, and the information cycle to which we are so addicted.

The Interview, Part Two – How he goes about his writing

JM: The next area that I wanted to ask you about is your own writing practice. Since I’m a writer, I’m curious about this. You’ve talked about your asana practice, and about your

⁴ *Light on the Yoga Sutras*, I.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.”



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pranayama practice, and about your teaching, but I haven't read about your writing practice.

BKS: No. I'm a rather raw student in writing, still. [laughter]

JM: You have written so many wonderful books!

BKS: Well, but each time I have to correct it ten times or fifteen times. Now, what I am writing is the third time correcting. Same book.

JM: But I think that's how writers are....

BKS: No. Many writers do not do like that.

JM: Oh, but I think....

BKS: No. Because they work from the head. So here I have to find out, whatever sentence I write, whether it is coming from the experience outside, or just from an expression of words. Because lots of writers I've seen create a lot of confusion. So I don't want to create confusion in my practice, in my *sadhana*. So, that's why I have to write and rewrite, read and reread, so that the doubts are completely removed.

JM: That is how I have to write, too. [laughter] Very slowly, going through it many times, and trying to recognize what it is that's speaking.

BKS: Because experiential knowledge, we've got plenty. But expressive words are few. So, one is immeasurable – one side, my *sadhana*, is immeasurable – and on the other side, the words are measurable, so I'm caught in between. So it's very difficult to express the experiences. Sometimes the words do not come at all.

JM: Yes. I know! Do you see your writing practices as part, as akin to....

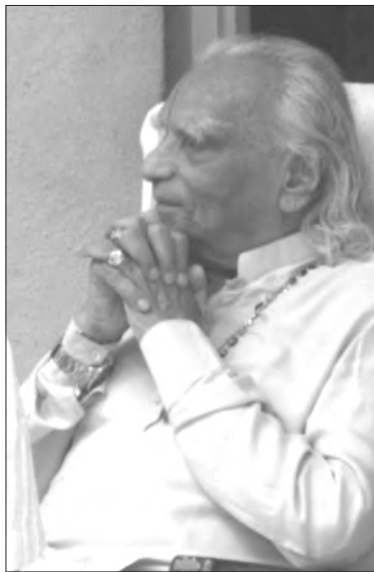
BKS: No, no, no! I'm not interested in writing practice at all. Please know that I'm not interested in that part – writing books or anything like that. Circumstances are forcing me, because people say you explain but we forget, so can you put it into black and white so we can read and remember. Beyond that, I absolutely have no taste for writing. I have a taste for practice, not for writing.

JM: So would you say that your writing is part of your teaching?

BKS: Yes. It is 100% part of teaching.

JM: When you write, do you work on one book at a time, or do you have a number of them going?

BKS: No. Actually, I said I've written books by process of consensus of other people. So I have no idea at all. Even what



In conversation with B.K.S. Iyengar

I'm writing, working on now. Only, it struck me several years ago, but until now I have only sat on it.

JM: Right.

BKS: So the name of the book is going to be called: *Yogic Advice and Essence*. So advice I'm giving on one side, and the essence is where I'm regrouping or reiterating the *sutras* for people to understand. So that, as you say, is information: first I have to give information.

Now, even if you read the yoga *sutras* of Patanjali, they speak of *cittavrtti nirodhah* without mentioning the consciousness. How is it that a man of intelligence does not speak? So it is a compound word, *cittavrtti* is a compound word: waves of the consciousness, but he has not explained the first word, what *citta* is. And if we're going to understand.

it's a real sideways task. What is the source? The root of the thought waves?

JM: Do you think that it comes through?

BKS: No. But, it does come in the fourth chapter.

So how do you understand? If you ask anybody: what is consciousness? they cannot tell you at all. But you ask them what is, ah – movements of the consciousness, such as sense modulations, modifications, vacillations, fascinations, all this would be said. But, what is consciousness?

JM: It's very hard to say.

BKS: That's what I'm saying! So I'm bringing that into view. I'm giving the information – so they know from the source, how, from the source, the actions take place.⁵

JM: Okay.

BKS: Now, as you said, you've taken this. I'll give an example. This is the third time I must have written, which is no English at all. I'll give you a chunk: "Consciousness: *citta* is like a disc of the sun at the time of raising and setting without any rays." So people cannot understand, right? So I have to work. Now, "like the disc of the sun which has no rays at the time of rising and setting." The consciousness is like that. It's like a disc without any thought rays. "As the sun raises up, millions and millions of rays generate, penetrating the world with heat. In the same way, similarly, the consciousness generates thought waves by various means." So this is how many times I have to work to write. See: one, two, three, four [flipping through his drafts] – it's the fifth one. [laughter]

⁵ See also his commentaries in *Light on the Yoga Sutras*, especially those in *Kaivalya Pāda*, sutras IV.15 through IV. 28.

JM: I have files this thick of one poem! Not that I think that's a wonderful thing.

BKS: How to make people to understand? I do the same thing.

JM: Do you rely on readers to give you feedback?

BKS: No, no. I can't do all those things. This yoga is a very difficult, practical, subject. Theoretically, writing on yoga is not worth reading. Anyone who writes a book on yoga, without a good background, just having words – such books are not at all worth reading. But the market is coming with lots of books. For example, there was a book sent to me for review. Just last month I read it. They say, a book – guide – for teachers. There's not one sentence how to guide a teacher! And the book will be sold like hotcakes because the title's very good. So the people get carried away by the title, but when I read inside, nothing.

JM: Yes, I understand. So then, when you start writing, do you write by hand?

BKS: By hand.

JM: And, do you go through, say, four drafts before you have it typed up?

BKS: I'm a conservative; I belong to the old generation. So how do old generations do writing? I do that.

JM: You work, and you work, by hand, until you reach what point? When do you give it to someone to type up?

BKS: Unless and until it gives me the satisfaction that I explained well. I go on working on the same thing until it sets in.

JM: Do you have publishers, and readers, who give you feedback?

BKS: My friend, it is not publishers! You know, the recent ways of publishers asking the artists: you have to pay – you, the artist, have to pay for publishing the book in the beginning.

JM: I wouldn't think they'd need to make you pay for much.

BKS: It's going on everywhere because they're not sure that the book will be sold out. So, naturally, they want some protection. Fortunately, they know that I do not repeat, I give always new things, so they are – publishers are waiting for me.

JM: I'm sure the publishers are waiting for you, Guruji! I'm certain that they are. Your books are read by many, many people, all round the world. We're looking forward to the next one.

Thank you for answering the questions about your writing "practice" and telling me – clearing up the idea I had – that it is a "practice."

BKS: No. Even this is a *sadhana*. This is also a *sadhana* for me. [laughter] So it's not just writing.

JM: No? You sit down every day and work at it?

BKS: I work to clear and clarify and find out. To find out, I



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even give it to raw students to read – whether they understand or not. If they don't understand, again, I redo it. So that even the average intellectual can grasp this difficult subject. It is a spiritual subject, so naturally I can't talk in that language where others do that.

JM: Yes. So you have a very clear sense of the reader when you're writing, and the reader is exemplified by your students. That, I think, is really clear.

BKS: Even this [touching the manuscript he's working on] may be read five, six times by different people. Then only, I am straight. For no doubt should be there.

JM: I understand. That's very interesting. Thank you!



practices. Is this generally a good way to practice for older students?

BKS: Old people cannot do quantity. So, quality: to do, they have to use their brain. Like I said, some maturity will be there for older people, so they have to use that maturity to see that the self – like water which spreads all over, evenly. So when one reaches old age, one has to learn how to spread the consciousness, like spreading a carpet on the interior body, the exterior frontier. So that would be what the elderly people should do, not just as a physical exercise, but as a seeing: let my soul spread in the body like I spread the carpet in my room.

JM: That's a wonderful image! It's very vivid, and very memorable!

The Interview, Part Three – Practice for older students

JM: The next question that I had was about practice for older students.

BKS: Yes! I'm an old student! [laughter]

JM: Well, you are more than a student!

BKS: I'm going to complete 91 soon.

JM: I know! It's extraordinary! I saw you do an amazing backbend yesterday. I can't imagine anyone else at almost 91 doing a backbend like that!

BKS: That is devotion and dedication. I am dedicated to the subject. You know people go to the church and pray. I go to my temple; I practice. The others chant; I practice. That's all the difference, you know. My practice is a chanting. Each cell in my body has to talk on its own. They have no language but they will talk, and send the message to me: you are not attending here, you are not attending here, don't make this part unholy. So the message comes to me, and creates life there.

JM: And so that is how you shape your practice? [He nods] Yes.

Over the month that I've been here, I've often observed you doing very long holds of not too many *asanas* in your morning

You know people go to the church and pray. I go to my temple; I practice. The others chant; I practice. That's all the difference, you know.

Facing old age and death

JM: And then the difficult question that I have, I hesitate to ask, but it is something people think about and talk about. I'm sure that, at almost 91, you have come to terms yourself with the fact that you won't be with us forever. But how can you help those who, I know, will be very unhappy to lose you? How can you help people prepare, or deal with – to come to terms with, this?

BKS: When they come – my job is only to help when they come. To [anticipate their future needs]⁶ would be ridiculous. That's not true compassion.

JM: Right.

BKS: For me, my confidence is still so strong, because I'm quite physical. I'm not becoming the victim of the mind. I am still the master of the mind. That's why I am practicing. So I tell the old people how to come out of the pit of the mind, which creates a snake pit in you. Mind creates a snake pit, so the fear goes on increasing. You can't come out of it. That's the old age – sign of old age. So one has to come; you cannot be a victim of the dictates of the mind. The mind dictates: No, it is enough! Even if you will tell me. Because at this age, the muscles cannot bear the weight of *Sirsasana*, which still I do! I get pain. The pain is there, but I also do it. I do twenty minutes, thirty minutes.

JM: I know. I have watched you. It's amazing!

BKS: So many people drop off. Even, if you want, I show you here: the neck, you know, like cracks. You can hear the cracking

⁶ The recording here is not clear; I've enclosed my best guess in square brackets but "anticipate their future needs" is just a guess.

sound when I'm practicing, no? But it has not made me nervous, or anything like this. I continue, no? I do not stop automatically. But it is there, still, not so high. In the beginning, it frightened me. Like a cracking sound [cracks his knuckle], you know? People could hear just standing. What's that sound?

JM: It would be frightening.

BKS: Now, I can create that sound on my own! Now I can create! Because I've learned! [laughter]

JM: So you have control over that sound, as well as over your mind.

BKS: I observe how it comes, and so, how the nerves do not behave.

JM: Right.

***Comment:** The other people in the library, listening to this interview, burst out in laughter when Gururji talked about how he can create the cracking sound in his neck.*

About having a "vision" of what will happen

JM: What is your vision of what will happen to the institute?

BKS: My friend, at the age of 91, do you want me to develop vision? God is calling me. My vision is to be close to God. No. All these things are now, nowhere different, eh?

JM: So you don't have a particular vision of what will happen?

BKS: I never practice with a vision. Therefore, I do not advise what the future will be. Nobody told me what yoga was. Not even my guru guided me, what yoga is. I started practicing; nobody answered my questions in my early days. So I used to tell them, don't talk for me. Write to me what your experiences are.

In the year 1958 – even students will tell you – I used to get blackouts in the practice. So I asked Shriman Krishnamacharya, my guru, everybody. Not one could answer me. Now at your age, you are to test it. I said that is only a frame of mind. That is not the true way of seeing.

Then I work. When I, you know, do *Vrschikasana*⁷, I could not do even two, three. So one or two, immediately I used to feel, no: I should completely lose my consciousness. Till then I tried. I went on increasing – four, five. So let me try one more. Can I try this? Can I continue? Then I came back



Poet, Jane Munro, relaxing in Pune.

I never heard these people's words. I did not follow them. If I'd followed them I would have fallen. So I used to question: Have you done it? Have you got it? Don't give me from your head. Tell me the fact. Have you ever done? Nobody'd ever done.

So that means, with these ideas, I just pick up information: that old age means you may get all these things. I had it! But how to conquer it?

JM: Wonderful.

BKS: So I worked like that, and learned more and more. That's how I developed

confidence. If I'd not continued, probably I would have – you know – been on the infirm side, due to: "do this," "do that," "do that." That's all.

JM: Thank you very much, Gururji.

BKS: God bless. God bless.

JM: Thank you very much.

BKS: Thank you. God bless you. ॐ

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

with Shirley Daventry French

**6:30 - 8:30 pm Friday,
September 24, 2010**

Yoga in the tradition of B.K.S. Iyengar is firmly rooted in 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 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.

Fee: \$40 + GST for IYCV members,
\$45 + GST for non-members

To register, drop in to or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$15.00 cancellation fee.

⁷ *Vrschikasana* means scorpion. The recording is unclear at this point; however, after careful listening, I think this is the *asana* he names.

Delving into Patanjali's Yoga Sutras

by Leslie Hogya

THIS ARTICLE ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN THE
2004 JANUARY/ FEBRUARY ISSUE OF THE
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE NEWSLETTER.

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* which 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*, Bernard Beauenchaud says that there is an 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 it 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, 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. ॐ

Setups for Supported Asanas

by Ann Kilbertus

On March 25, 2010, a little booklet entitled *Setups for Supported Asanas* was launched at the Special Needs Tea.

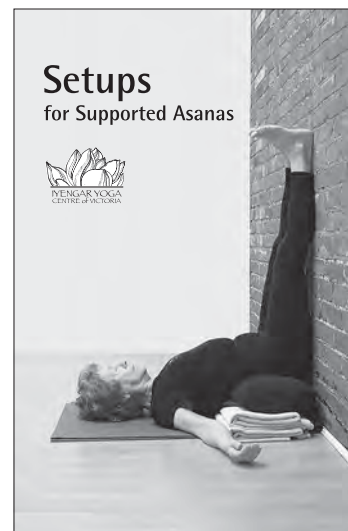
This booklet began five years ago as what we thought would be a simple volunteer project in order to assist our helpers in Special Needs class. It evolved into a friendly format to help remind any student how to set up in specific poses. So often we get questions from people who can't recall which way the bolster went or how to put on the strap correctly. We are very aware that the set ups shown here are but a few drops in the sea of possibilities.

The effort waxed and waned over the years but due to the steady prompting from Debra Johnson, we managed to keep ourselves on track. The project began with an offer from Gillian Davidson, a photographer. She and four other volunteers (Debra, Karin Dayton, Hugh Aitken and I) came to the centre one cold and dark January afternoon and took the bulk of photographs for the booklet. Karin, Debra and I found bits of time here and there for edits and re-edits. We wondered if the project would ever see the light of day!

Finally Debra contacted Peggy Cady, a professional graphic designer, who helped us with a final photograph of Shirley for the cover and with the design and layout of the book.

Working at this very small scale did have us in awe of the monumental effort it must have taken to publish such a work as *Light on Yoga*.

Our humble thanks to Guruji for the inspiration behind all of these ideas. Any mistakes are definitely our own. ॐ



Shirley Daventry French in Virparita Karani on the cover of *Setups for Supported Asanas*

Teacher Training & Junior Intermediate Workshop

For Levels 3 & 4 Students | With Chris Saudek | November 19-21, 2010



TEACHER TRAINING

Fri. 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, 3:00 - 6:00 pm

Open to certified Iyengar yoga teachers and teachers in training.

Chris, a senior teacher from La Crosse, Wisconsin, has studied extensively with the Iyengar family in Pune since 1978. She is a precise, disciplined, and innovative teacher whose training in physical therapy enhances her study and teaching of yoga.

Note: Chris will be teaching an extended Level 4 class Monday, November 23, 2009, 4:30-7:30 pm. Open to Level 4 students only. There is a nominal surcharge for students registered in the Level 4 class.

JUNIOR INTERMEDIATE WORKSHOP

Sat. 10:30 am - 1:30 pm, 4:00 pm - 6:30 pm

Sun. 10:30 am - 1:30 pm, 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

IYCV MEMBER FEES:

\$363.00 + GST Teacher Training and Workshop

\$231.00 + GST Workshop

NON-MEMBER FEES:

\$399.00 + GST Teacher Training and Workshop

\$254.00 + GST Workshop

REGISTRATION OPENS:

September 2, 2009 for IYCV members

September 9, 2009 for non-members

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.

To register, drop in to or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3 (250) 386-YOGA (9642)

2010 Annual General Meeting

General Manager's Report

by Wendy Boyer

The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria celebrated its 31st year in Victoria in 2009. Thirty years ago in 1978, Shirley and Derek French, Marlene Miller and Carole Miller, among others, came together to incorporate the Victoria Yoga Centre. Nine years ago the Centre moved into the current space at 919 Fort Street.

Workshops reflected the strength of the Centre both in the diversity and attendance this past year. Workshops were a good source of revenue in 2009. The major workshops were: *Heart of Yoga* in January with Shirley Daventry French; Birjoo Mehta in April; the June retreat on Salt Spring, two summer teacher training intensives taught by Shirley, Leslie Hoga and Ann Kilbertus; the student intensive with Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler in September, as well as *Going Deeper* with Shirley; and Chris Saudek's workshop in November. Also, both fundraisers, the Annual Appeal and the Special Needs Tea, generated revenue for the Centre.

This year for the first time in nine years the Centre registered a deficit. The number of students attending classes has been shrinking. We have had many meetings generating ideas on how to keep the Centre vibrant and viable! The student base has gone down from about 600 students a term to 470. Most yoga facilities in Victoria operate on a drop-in class basis or on a monthly class term. Our Centre offers an 8-week term of classes in keeping with the tradition in Pune.

We have to take some risks, try things out and be flexible. If the ideas don't work, we'll improvise and try something else.



Current Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Board members are (L to R top row) Krysia Strawczynski, President; Peggy Taylor, Vice President; Ann Nolan, Treasurer; Laine Canivet, Secretary; (L to R bottom row) Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hoga, Christine Peterson, Emma Richards and Keiko Alkire.

How do we change the class schedule and maintain the integrity of the work? B.K.S. Iyengar has been very innovative in his life. We have to be innovative too! Shirley tells us that Mr. Iyengar was neither respected nor supported by the Indian public in his earlier days or by the yoga establishment. But he kept his purpose in mind and kept moving forward and look where he is now!

The Centre is trying some new marketing ideas and various new pass options. For the first time, 55 minute introductory classes for 4-week terms will be offered throughout the week. Several pay-what-you-can classes are being scheduled. We have to take some risks, try things out and be flexible. If the ideas don't work, we'll improvise and try something else.

We are a unique Iyengar teacher training centre in Canada and continue to draw students to our program. This year seven new trainees from Victoria and Nanaimo joined the group. We are very proud of our training program!

The Centre had five part-time paid staff members in 2009. Britta Poisson manages the office. Bruce Cox and Hilary McPhail handle registration, membership, website maintenance, annual appeal donations and flyer production. Recently Linda Poole resigned from reception. She is replaced by Theron Morgan who will work at the desk as a volunteer...a big cost-saving for the Centre. Wendy Boyer, as general manager, reports to the board. Thanks to Theron Morgan, Ty Chandler, Linda Poole and Bruce Cox for keeping the Centre clean in 2009. Special thanks to Bruce Cox for painting and keeping things in good repair.

I want to thank the board for their work in 2009. They are a wonderful group of people! I am delighted all board members have agreed to serve another term. Special thanks to Krysia, as president, and Ann as treasurer, for their wisdom and patience.

I also want to acknowledge several people who may not show up in the other reports. Sue Riddell, who volunteered to manage our props for years, is stepping down. Many thanks to Sue and Jim for taking blankets and sticky mats to be washed four times a year! Janine Beckner and Mary Hayes volunteered to

keep the library running for several years. Thanks to them for their service. Judy Atkins took over as librarian in November. Thanks to Linda Poole for her work at the Centre over the past 18 months. Linda will continue to make our bolsters and volunteer as time allows. Jeannette Merryfield coordinates the distribution of our flyers. Jane McFarlane keeps our windows clean and props tidy. Thank you all!

Iyengar Yoga Centre Treasurer's Report

Year Ending October 31, 2009

By Ann Nolan

This year has presented our centre with a number of financial challenges. We began the year with a conservative budget based on our experience over the past few years and using consistent accounting methods. While expenses were well monitored and maintained throughout the year, revenue fell short of plan on several fronts resulting in a net deficit for the year.

Total revenue for 2009 was \$451,977 as compared to \$474,187 in 2008, down \$22,210. Lower than

projected enrolment numbers in both scheduled classes and workshops as well as lower membership numbers were the most significant factors.

Total expenses for 2009 were \$464,698 as compared to \$470,319 in 2008.

When it became evident early in the year that enrolment numbers were down, numerous cost saving measures were put in place in an effort to balance the budget. Many of our major costs such as rent, and professional fees were little changed from 2008 thanks to careful planning and negotiating by our General Manager. A number of our teachers attained higher certification levels this year resulting in increased teaching expenses; as class sizes were generally smaller, teacher bonuses were lower than anticipated thus mitigating some of the cost increase.

We end the year with a net deficit of \$12,721 as compared to a surplus of \$6,223 in 2008. Through good planning and governance over the years, the board has had the foresight to set aside surplus revenue in a contingency fund providing the centre with a cushion to weather unexpected costs and economic uncertainties. Overall the financial health of the Iyengar Yoga Centre

remains good and these reserves permit us to carry on the Centre's objectives and activities.

Thank you to the members of the Board for their support, to our General Manager and our accountant for their diligence and vigilance, to our teachers and all our members for supporting our Centre.ॐ



ASSESSMENT DATES

June 11-13, 2010

Introductory I/II
Courtenay, BC

October 16-18, 2010

Intermediate Junior I & II
Montreal, PQ



Student Intensive

With Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler
August 30 – September 3
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Learn how to establish
and deepen your practice.**

All levels

Each day there will be an introduction to pranayama along with philosophical and spiritual discussions. Two hours of yoga asanas, including a timed practice, yoga kurunta work, restorative poses, and inversions will follow.

Fees: \$235.00 + GST for IYCV members
\$260.00 + GST for non-members

Registration is now open.

To register, drop in to or phone the
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria:
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
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Return Again

By Robin Popinski

ROBIN POPINSKI WHO IS A CERTIFIED IYENGAR YOGA TEACHER FROM PORT ANGELES WHERE SHE RUNS AN IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE.

For me, returning to India is like taking a tablespoon of castor oil; I have to get ready, get set and go. This was my third trip to India in the last ten years. It is always a difficult decision to go – I have to be mentally prepared – not like going to Maui in January.

Pune, where the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute is located, was my destination. The population of Pune is 4,485,000: 30% live in slums, yet the literacy rate is over 81% and there are nine universities. It is called “the Oxford of the East.” Pune is an industrial city, producing sugar, glass, technology and metal forging. The auto industry is booming. Not only are Indian car manufacturers doing well, but GM, Fiat and Volkswagen have established plants. In a few years, Pune will be the number one small car manufacturer in the world. Tata is producing a \$2500 four-seat car that will take five years to hit the American market. Tata is the largest private corporation in India, diversified in oil, tea, hospitality and communications. There are more than twenty-five hospitals and one hundred small and private health facilities. The life expectancy is sixty-eight years. Parents or elder aunts and uncles still arrange children’s marriages; mixed-race marriages appear to be a small percentage. Crime is minimal. There are over 1.7 million motorbikes and 400,000 cars; more than 200,000 vehicles are added each year. 250,000 people enter the city to work

30% live in slums, yet the literacy rate is over 81% and there are nine universities. It is called “the Oxford of the East.”

daily. The government is democratic.

I left Seattle on July 30, 2009. I was acclimated from our recent heat wave and expected to be comfortable when I landed in Mumbai. I traveled 10,207 miles in fifteen hours; there is a thirteen-hour time difference. On arrival, I hired a driver to take me to Pune. The drive from Mumbai is three to four hours along a two-lane paved road. The highway was built within the past ten years, and I put my life into the driver’s hands – his savvy ability to weave and bob between large trucks, motorbikes and other cars. The first day I slept from two am to seven am, then spent the rest of the time registering for class, grocery shopping and just finding my way. I had forgotten how overwhelming India can be. The first night I wore ear plugs. Horns, motor bikes, horns, auto rickshaws, horns...all want to be heard. When I awoke in the middle of the night, it was silent except for a man walking down the street, his steps echoing against the buildings.

On Sunday my *pranayama* (breathing practice) was impossible because of the air pollution. My practice for the month was abandoned. I was excited to walk around the city and look for the old familiar sites. There were so many people on the streets, along with goats, dogs, cats, cows, children and the odors of garbage and urine. The Indian women



Practice hall at the RIMYI

wore saris every color of the rainbow; the bright colors looked beautiful next to their creamy brown skin.

Much had changed in the last seven years. New buildings were wedged between houses from the nineteenth century and the slums. The city government was beginning to upgrade the infrastructure. Sewer pipes were being laid next to the roads waiting to be installed. The pipes will be placed in the earth, dug by hand, then the sidewalk bricks will be lifted by young men and the dirt will be carried away in pans balanced on women’s heads. In twenty years, all of Pune will be rebuilt and modernized. The Indian people were friendly and helpful, smiling as I pass; some greeted me by saying *Namaste*.

On the first day of class, there were fifty students – mostly Indians, but a scattering of fellow yogis from around the world: Russia, Brazil, Holland, Malaysia, Canada, China, Japan, Israel and Hong Kong – all there to catch the brilliant teaching the Iyengars have to offer.

In the mornings from 9:30 a.m. to noon I could practice in the yoga hall. The foreigners, the assistants and the teachers usually attended. Mr. Iyengar, now ninety-one, had his own area in the

hall where he practiced every morning. Now and then he worked with a long-term student or Abhijata, his granddaughter, one of the next generation of Iyengar teachers. Mr. Iyengar gave Abhijata no slack. He worked her hard, and she just smiled, taking it in stride. Mr. Iyengar's body is youthful in spite of his age. His skin is soft and supple, eyes alert and spine erect. He mostly practiced inversions and backbends supported by many handmade props to open and stretch his body. He held the poses for fifteen minutes or longer, looking very relaxed, calm and meditative. Some students in the hall were very advanced, bringing a foot behind their head, or, from standing position, gracefully dropping back into a backbend. Some of us just worked on the simple poses, everyone going through practice looking for tight areas to bring space, breath and light.

At night from 6:00 to 8:00 pm I had class. The first week there were substitute teachers because Geeta (Mr. Iyengar's daughter) had been ill. She has taken over the majority of teaching since Mr. Iyengar retired. Now in her mid-sixties, she has

Mr. Iyengar's body is youthful in spite of his age.

taught since the age of sixteen. The substitute teachers were all excellent. I always learned and the two hours flew by. When the class was over I felt inspired and lucky to be in this place.

Prashant, Mr. Iyengar's son, teaches the men's class from 7:00 to 9:00 am. He also teaches one or two nights each week, so I was fortunate to attend several of his classes. His style is different than Geeta's; he alternates between teaching a few poses and lecturing. He is a brilliant man who studied with Menuhin on the violin. Unfortunately, his elbow was crushed in a tragic traffic accident. Surgery was done, but the arm fused at an angle, ending his playing. His lectures between the poses are about the philosophy of yoga, the breath and being in the moment. When he threw a joke in now and then, I was so surprised.

The second week of class, swine flu hit Pune. It was the first Indian city to be

infected. The local government decided to implement the Mexico City outbreak plan and closed all public areas – schools, malls, movie theaters and shopping areas. People out on the streets wore masks and twenty-eight succumbed to the flu during my stay. I decided to leave the city and go to Kare, an ayurvedic health spa. It is an hour and a half drive from Pune. Kare is out in the country with good food; it is quiet and the air is clean. The best part was the two hour, head-to-toe sesame oil massage. On Saturday I met with a friend and we hired a driver to take us to Allora and Ajanta Caves, a seven hour drive from Pune. The caves are unbelievable, built from the second century on. They were a gathering and worship place on the ancient roads. The craftsmanship is superb with huge Buddhas, elephants and wall painting covering the cave walls. The rooms and beauty were overwhelming, all done by hand without power tools or levels.

Several Americans left during the week, and the studio in Pune was closed; it was uncertain if and when the Institute would reopen. However, the third

Sadhana

"At winter solstice the light begins to lengthen again. Invite the light into your life with five days of morning yoga; a gift of peace for your body, mind and spirit."



with Corrine Lowen

December 14-18, 2010

6:30 - 8:00 am daily

Fees:

\$98 + GST IYCV members

\$108 + GST non-members

Registration opens:

Oct. 19, 2010 for IYCV members

Oct. 26, 2010 for non-members

To register, drop in to or phone the

Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria

202-919 Fort Street

Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3

(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$15.00 cancellation fee.

Summer solstice **WORKSHOP**

With Ty Chandler

June 20, 2010

1:00 - 3:00 pm

Fees:

\$30 + GST for IYCV members

\$35 + GST for non-members

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$10.00 cancellation fee.

week the Institute did re-open and Geeta was on fire with her teaching, starting with a two hour lecture on the *Bhagavad Gita*. She is trained as an ayurvedic physician, but she chose to teach with her father. When Geeta teaches, she links the poses with inner knowledge. We did many poses, perspiring profusely, giving our best, because Geeta sees every student of the fifty to eighty in the hall. Geeta can teach 1,000 students and still see what every student is doing, seeing into everyone's body. At the end of class I was infused with peace and energy, and I wanted to start all over, knowing this was the best.

Luckily I have friends in Pune that I met on my first trip in 1998, Geeta and Sunder Bhojwani. They are my touchstone. Their house in the suburbs is quiet and clean; they took me to lunch and dinner, and offered companionship when I needed it. Sunder is a retired military man. He keeps change in his car to give to the children who beg. While driving me back to my apartment one night, Sunder rolled down his window to pass some change; a group of young children and an infant were begging at a red light; but it wasn't enough. A small boy came to my window and hung on the window as Sunder rolled it up. The boy lifted off the ground and the other two children began slapping the side of the car. The young girl who carried the infant held out the child's hand expecting change to be placed inside the tiny fist. I was very anxious the whole time that fingers would be crushed, or legs would be smashed under the car. Sunder said that they are pros at handling the traffic. The light changed and we were gone.

An auto rickshaw is a three-wheeled vehicle with a roof; it runs on leaded gas. The drivers make about five dollars per day and most understand but do not speak English. Sunder referred to the local auto rickshaw drivers, as "kamikaze drivers" or "jackals". They were aggressive and drove within inches



of our car, but they were experienced and knew just how far they could push into the mass so they would get through the traffic light first.

Goats, cows and camels still wander the streets. Years ago people put their garbage out for the animals to eat. Now the garbage consists of plastic bags and containers, so people place food in baskets for the wandering animals.

Motorbikes have changed the society. Not only do young people drive them, but whole families of five will be on the bike. The poorest in society have a motorbike parked outside of their shelter. Few wear helmets, and India ranks second in the world for motor accidents.

Crossing the street was a real challenge for me. Not only are there countless vehicles, but the flow of traffic is opposite to the U.S. Every time I tried to cross the street, I looked left then right. As a result, I was almost hit by a motorbike with two young men on board. I scared them and they scared me. After that, I started crossing the streets with other people so that I would not get in trouble.

Monsoon season runs from July to October and rain falls daily, but this year very little rain had fallen. People

sleep under mosquito netting and do not eat any produce grown under ground – potatoes, mushrooms and onions. Some rain fell the last week of August; then it rained heavily, and when it stopped, the air was clean for a change.

When I met Indians for the first time they wanted to know where I lived in the U.S., whether I had children, where the children attended university, if they were married, and where they worked. They were interested because their children's success and education were very important to them. Their children's happiness was primary – they were good, hard working, family people.

In the mornings I awoke to the sound of birds, then the street sweepers, cleaning the leaves. The traffic noise from far away began as a deep hum, then the auto rickshaw's horns began.

Every time I go to India I have to get ready, get set and go. There is a mind shift that must happen. While I am there I must overlook much, but the country and the people are so beautiful, friendly and pleasant, that when I get home, I miss it. I miss it all. ॐ

Open House

Wendy Boyer, our office manager at the Centre, promoted the April Open House event well in advance of the day, in every conceivable way. There were beautifully designed invitation cards for the Iyengar troops to distribute at large. There were posters, ads and magazine articles. Fort Street pedestrians were treated to a beautiful sign stretching across the studio windows. Balloons, ribbons, chalk drawings and dolls on the walls all called "look up; come visit." But would they come? Wendy wondered and pondered and redoubled her efforts. The phone rang off the hook at the front desk; the call went out for more cookies; please everybody bake more cookies.

Then came the day. People could smell chai bubbling in a giant pot on the balcony as they climbed up the stairs. Tables overflowing with home baked cookies lined the hallway. Victoria Iyengar Yoga Centre ambassadors welcomed the guests. Iyengar yoga videos were playing in Birch studio. Free introductory classes commenced on the hour from twelve noon to five. Guests asked questions, picked up schedules, and socialized with tea and cookies after their class. And they did come! Lots of smiling people! ॐ



Leslie Hogya practising trikonasana with the new installation.

A huge thank you to
Arno de Boer for his outstanding
design, and carpentry skills
in installing the new grill
for Arubutus studio!



Fundraising
Bake Sale for IYCV

at Moss Street Paint In
July 17, 2010

Donations of
Cookies, Cakes, Muffins, Squares,
Preserves, Snacks and Breads

Please contact Keiko
about donations:
keiko_alkire@hotmail.com

Thank You

- **Linda Poole**, one of our most devoted volunteers, for working the front desk for the past 18 months and for making bolsters for the last couple of years.
- **Rosemary Barritt** for donating 10 gorgeous eye pillows as door prizes for the Open House on Feb. 27th.
- **Ann Nolan** for beautiful replacement covers on the sand bags. The handles are a bonus.
- **Theron Morgan** for volunteering to fill the Friday and Sunday shifts at the front desk.
- **Bruce Cox** for building the new props cupboard in Birch Studio.
- **Anna Cox** has combined her course work in computer sciences with her artistic flare: check out the look of our new web site!
- **Board Members** for organizing the Annual General Meeting and **Corrine Lowen** for teaching the asana session.
- the **Committees** which organized and carried out the Open House drawing much interest and encouraging New members to join our Centre.
- Annual High Tea organizer **Robin Cantor**, and contributors to both events: **Adrienne Else, Asha Rao, Betsy Gutnik, Britta Poisson, Carol Newton, Caroline Meggison, Charles Cohen, Connie Barker, Dawn Cox, Debra Johnson, Dhanya Walbank, Dianne Brooks, Genny Dark, Glenda Balkan Champagne, Glenda Gain, Jane McFarlane, Jaya Malaviarachchi, Jayne Jonas, Jayne Stephenson, Jeannette Merryfield, Johanna Godliman, Karen Gibbs, Karin Dayton, Karyn Woodland, Krysia Strawczynski, Laine Canivet, Linda Benn, Lynn Jones, Lynn Langford, Melissa Worth, Melrose Marsh, Michael Blades,**

Melissa Hadley, Richard Stevenson, Roger Champagne, Rosemary Barritt, Sotoko Ogura, Vi Peskett, Wendy Boyer and everyone else who helped.

The many tasks which were carried out by these generous volunteers include baking, donating to and setting up the draw, set up, serving, clean-up, the taking of photographs, and a million other tasks, both large and small, but all important. Your expertise and dedication contributed to yet another successful and enjoyable occasion. Thank you all.

- **Adia Kapoor** for taking over newsletter distribution from **Karin Dayton**. An enormous thank you goes out to both these volunteers for their work in ensuring this important task is handled in a timely and efficient way.



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:

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of Victoria Society
c/o Hilary McPhail
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Victoria BC V8V 3K3**

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Members' Scholarships are available for all long workshops and intensives.

Please apply in writing prior to the workshop in which you are interested.

Scholarship applications for Weekend Workshops are due one month prior to the workshop. Scholarships for Special Events and Intensives are due two months before the event.

Student Bursaries are available to all students presently enrolled in classes. To subsidize your term fees please apply three weeks prior to term.

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

**202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)**



2010-2011 CALENDAR

JUNE

- 4-6 Salt Spring Retreat
- 11-13 Introductory I & II Assessment
- 12 Teachers' Meeting
- 20 Summer Solstice

JULY

- 5-10 Summer Sadhana
- 19-24 Intro Teacher Training Intensive

AUGUST

- 9-13 Intermediate Teacher Training Intensive
- 25-29 In the Footsteps of Patanjali Workshop
- 30-Sept 3 Student Intensive

SEPTEMBER

- 1-3 Student Intensive continues
- 11 Teachers' Meeting
- 24 The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali
- 25-26 Going Deeper workshop
- 30-Oct 3 Stephanie Quirk in Winnipeg

OCTOBER

- 1-3 Stephanie Quirk continues
- 16-18 Intermediate Junior I & II Assessment Montreal, Quebec
- 30 Teachers' Meeting

NOVEMBER

- 5-6 55+ Salt Spring Retreat
- 19-21 Chris Saudek Workshop
- 22 Extended Monday night class
- 27 Teachers' Meeting

DECEMBER

- 12 Guruji's birthday celebration
- 20-21 Winter Solstice
- 27-31 Sadhana
- 20-Jan 3 Holiday break

2011

JANUARY

- 21-23 Heart of Yoga

FEBRUARY

- 19 Victoria Yoga Centre AGM

APRIL

- 22-24 Corrine Biria



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

N E W S L E T T E R
F A L L 2 0 1 0



*On men's yoga: patience, even breathing and knowing
when to pause, are aspects of yoga that men can always
learn better.*

– Gary Wong

An Iyengar Yoga Workshop

September 25-26

with Shirley
Daventry French



Going Deeper

This is an opportunity for Level 1, 2 and 3 students to work with senior teacher Shirley Daventry French to explore yoga in a deeper way. This is also an opportunity for teachers to observe Shirley teach.

Shirley is a direct student of B.K.S. Iyengar. Since her first visit to Pune in 1979, she has returned regularly for further study.

The founder of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, Shirley has been the driving force in making the Victoria Iyengar 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, students have the opportunity to learn from her in a workshop setting.

Saturday, September 25:

11:00 am - 1:00 pm
3:00 - 5:00 pm

Sunday, September 26:

10:30 am - 1:00 pm
1:00 - 1:30 pm refreshments
1:30 - 2:30 pm debriefing
for observers

Fees:

\$130.00 + HST
for IYCV members
\$140.00 + HST
for non-members
\$100.00 + HST
for observers

To register,
drop in to or phone

Iyengar Yoga Centre
of Victoria
202-919 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3

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www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.

Teacher Training & Junior Intermediate Workshop

For Levels 3 & 4 Students | With Chris Saudek | November 19-21, 2010



TEACHER TRAINING

Fri. 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, 3:00 - 6:00 pm

*Open to certified Iyengar yoga teachers
and teachers in training.*

Chris, a senior teacher from La Crosse, Wisconsin, has studied extensively with the Iyengar family in Pune since 1978. She is a precise, disciplined, and innovative teacher whose training in physical therapy enhances her study and teaching of yoga.

Note: Chris will be teaching an extended Level 4 class Monday, November 23, 2009, 4:30-7:30 pm. Open to Level 4 students only. There is a nominal surcharge for students registered in the Level 4 class.

JUNIOR INTERMEDIATE WORKSHOP

Sat. 10:30 am - 1:30 pm, 4:00 pm - 6:30 pm

Sun. 10:30 am - 1:30 pm, 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

IYCV MEMBER FEES:

\$363.00 + HST Teacher Training and Workshop
\$231.00 + HST Workshop

NON-MEMBER FEES:

\$399.00 + HST Teacher Training and Workshop
\$254.00 + HST Workshop

REGISTRATION OPENS:

September 2, 2009 for IYCV members
September 9, 2009 for non-members

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled
and are subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.

To register, drop in to or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3 (250) 386-YOGA (9642)

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE OCT. 20, 2010

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IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the *Society 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 Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Newsletter, published regularly by the IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA SOCIETY, provides current information on events concerning Iyengar yoga in the Victoria area.

Send contributions, articles, photographs (high resolution), drawings, information or suggestions to: the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3.

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

Newsletter Advertising Policy

(Adopted February 20, 2004)

In keeping with the mandate of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria 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 IYCV.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar yoga
3. Priority will be given to advertisements regarding IYCV events, IYCV sponsored events, and IYAC events.

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REFLECTIONS

REFLECTIONS

Fall 2010



By Shirley Daventry French

In the spring I attended two yoga conferences back to back. Afterwards I was exhausted, but glad to have made the effort. Spiritual opportunities rarely present themselves at the *sadhaka's* convenience and always involve effort, sacrifice and reflection.

The first of these conferences, organised by the Iyengar Yoga National Association of the United States, was held in Portland, Oregon. The principal guest teacher was Dr. Geeta S. Iyengar, daughter of B.K.S. Iyengar and his foremost disciple. Geetaji (as students fondly address her) is a master teacher in her own right, constant in her devotion and deference to her father who is also her guru. The focus of this conference was therapeutic yoga.

The second conference was the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada's annual meeting. These conferences started with B.K.S. Iyengar's encouragement in 1988, and have taken place in a variety of communities throughout the country from Atlantic to Pacific. This year's host community was Calgary. For assessors, who always have additional meetings, there were only two days between these two conferences. But there was a direct flight from Portland to Calgary, and I had an invitation to stay with my friend and colleague Margot Kitchen for the two intervening days!

To be with Geeta, no matter what she would be teaching, no matter where, was a priority if humanly possible. To attend the Canadian conference with my Canadian colleagues was also a priority of a different nature. During an interview with Gururji during one of my early visits to Pune, he spoke about the value

of coming together once a year for an exchange of ideas, to practise and learn. I have attended all except one when I had a personal health issue which took precedence.

Of course, I know that these meetings do not depend on my presence, neither does the community; but I had a special interest this year because I am familiar with the Calgary yoga community, and anticipated we would get a good number of students in addition to the various officials, assessors and teacher trainers who generally attend. When we first incorporated as a national association it was for teachers only, but a few years ago, Gururji asked us to open up our membership to student members. I believe that the health of our association and the continued growth of Iyengar Yoga in Canada depend on building and sustaining a strong student base, and I want to support such growth.

In the yoga world generally, there is too much emphasis on becoming a teacher and too little on becoming mature as a practitioner. Whatever role we play in the yoga community: be it president of the national association, assessor, teacher trainer, senior or junior teacher—first and foremost we are students. Our *sadhana* depends on it. The success of any other role we play in the yoga world depends on it. The quality of our life depends on it.

At the Portland conference, in the mornings Geetaji presented the theory and principles of Iyengar Yoga therapy for each category of *asana* and pranayama. In the afternoon sessions, assistants who had travelled with Geeta from the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial

Yoga Institute in Pune went over the work presented in the morning, guiding us through hands-on adjustments, what to look for and the purpose of various props.

This was very specialized training and not open to everyone. Geeta wanted only experienced teachers to attend, requesting that they hold a minimum of Intermediate Junior Level One certification. During the conference it was made clear again and again that no-one should embark on therapeutic work until well versed in general teaching, had been to Pune several times and in particular had observed the work done in the medical classes there.¹

Caution and restraint abounded during this conference about the importance of spending time looking, seeing, practising on yourself and working with other skilled teachers until you have some understanding of what you are doing and its purpose. Propping someone up and making them comfortable is not always the best way of dealing with a problem, although it may be a way of beginning by giving a chance to observe breathing, skin, general tone and alignment of the body, areas of tension. A beginning teacher will have had some training in observation, but the ability to see and interpret will be very limited. It is essential to spend a lot of time observing, noticing patterns. What effects come and go and which linger all or most of the time? What causes distress, what relieves strain? Trial and error is

1 B.K.S. Iyengar stipulates that only teachers holding Intermediate Senior One certification or higher who have attended classes in Pune regularly may offer therapeutic yoga classes.

essential, and the more of these trials you can do on yourself or with colleagues, the less room for error and the better it will be for your students.

You have to learn which props to use, how and why. How long should the *asana* be held? What to look for during this process? Is the student experiencing discomfort due to being poorly placed, or because this is the wrong posture or sequence of postures? Or perhaps the *asana* is having the desired effect, which may of itself cause emotional disturbance. How much can the patient bear? How much should the patient bear? Both overdoing and underdoing should be avoided.

Geeta showed how props can be used to facilitate positive actions and liberate energy, and I was fortunate enough to be taken on the platform and given a direct lesson at one moment when I was experiencing difficulty with a particular use of blocks in *urdvha mukha svanasana*. I could have forced myself to continue, but was aware of an inner struggle about whether or not to continue with this action. As a verse in the *Baghavat Gita* states: "He who seeth inaction in action and action in inaction, he is wise among men; he is a Yogi and performer of all actions."²

And I am definitely not always clear about this!

When Geeta asked if anyone was having difficulty with this way of working, I felt that the Divine was intervening, and put up my hand. At first she did not see me because she was facing away from the side of the room where I was working, but my friend Eddie Marks loudly alerted her to the fact that I had my hand up and I received the gift of one on one working with Geeta in the midst of hundreds of people.

Geeta knows the challenge I have experienced in trying to stabilize my systolic blood pressure. She also knows

something of my character, and that it is not in my nature to give up easily. On the platform, Geeta observed me closely, asking questions and considering my answers. Her gradual adaptation of my presentation of this *asana*, built a strong and healthy progression from the base. Effort was required, but effort suitably applied. She directed my actions systematically from feet and legs through the entire body, so that eventually I experienced a tremendous surge of energy throughout. Yes I had some support, neither too little nor too much, but just enough to allow me to create and experience a very dynamic *asana*. At the same time I was both letting go and making an effort. They are not mutually exclusive. Thanks to Geeta, for a few blessed moments as my effort was well applied it became effortless effort!

One of the interesting corollaries to this episode was the reaction of other students. Many of them were friends or senior international colleagues, who, when they ran into to me afterwards, said how inspiring it was to see Geetaji working with one of her longtime students. They understood the brilliance of her teaching! Others, people I did not know at all, wanted details from me about what happened, in one case intending to write them down. They were not able to see! This was a reinforcement of the restraint Gurujī imposes on us about embarking on yoga therapy.

Eliminating or reducing the effects of most diseases or medical conditions requires assessment of this balance between letting go and making an effort. A good therapist allows time and space for patients to tap into their inner resources.

I learned this lesson once from my physician husband. One evening we were holding a yoga gathering in our home. When the practice ended I went into the kitchen to prepare some refreshment, and heard agonizing moans and groans emanating from the yoga room.

One of the men was either in extreme pain or extreme anguish. Immediately several people rushed to his aid. Derek, my husband, did not make a move but continued to serve refreshments. Knowing that he is not a cruel man and would ply his skill if he felt it was necessary, I waited. I have seen his ability to react quickly in medical emergencies! The man in question received treatment in many New Age therapies; still the cries of distress did not diminish. The 'healers' returned frustrated and perplexed. I noticed that Derek had disappeared. I carried on, the groans ceased, and Derek eventually reappeared, still saying nothing. When I had a chance I asked him what had happened, to learn that this man was in bed in our spare room sleeping peacefully, which is where he spent the night arising the following morning to eat a hearty breakfast and depart.

Of course, I quizzed Derek about his action (and inaction). He told me he had observed earlier in the evening that this man was exhibiting symptoms of distress, and the moaning coming from him was of a hysterical nature, a cry of emotional rather than physical pain. Derek offered him support without judgment plus a place to retreat, rest, regroup and face his problems.

I remembered this incident one afternoon at the conference when we were working in groups. Geeta had emphasized again and again the importance before intervening of *waiting, looking*; trying everything out on ourselves first. Much of our morning work was of this nature. In the afternoon, we had the chance to work on each other, and it was interesting how some teachers were unable to let go of the role of 'expert' even for a minute and couldn't wait to get their hands on someone else, despite the restraint which was being urged on us. These were people I made an effort to avoid. We have to make space for new knowledge. We have to allow time to develop sensitivity.

² *Bhagavad Gita*, chapter IV, verse 18; translation and commentary by Swami Sivananda.

An expert like Guruji can act quickly, but even he takes his time as he described in an interview on Yoga Therapy conducted by one of his long-time students from Mumbai, Rajvi Mehta. Guruji spoke about his caution and precaution when someone comes to a medical class for the first time:

“When the patients come to me with their reports, I just glance through the report and from that report, I measure the velocity of the attack on that patient. In what state the disease has affected the part of the body. That’s all. Then I work by looking at the person as to what courage the person has. Whether the person is confident to undertake the load. Also I observe the movements and mobility of the body. Then I have to create confidence in the patient if I see that the person has no confidence, by giving pleasing *asanas*. I will never treat the disease at that time. First, I will culture their body and mind so that they develop the power of tolerance. Then I go to the *asanas* which attack the disease directly. Till then, I give some time and create confidence in that person to mentally feel that the *asana* is comfortable in the affected area.”

Geeta exhibited that same restraint with several of the students who were called up to the platform. One woman in particular was very nervous, very tense and uncomfortable being the focus of attention. Geeta first asked her a few questions as she assessed the situation. The woman was apprehensive—not surprising because she was in pain. She was also defensive. Geeta did not do much at first other than keep her seated on the platform with support for her back while one of the assistants placed her hands on the woman’s shoulders in a way that helped her gradually relax some of the tension in her neck and trapezius. Geeta left her there and went on to

teach another student, returning later to this woman. During that time not only had her shoulders relaxed but her entire visage and much of her body. It was then that Geeta worked with her and much more progress was achieved than would have been possible with the guardedness and wariness she had carried on to the platform at first.

Contrast the measured approach of Guruji and Geetaji with the haste in which many yoga teachers seek to become yoga therapists. It is bad enough that untrained students are being trained to become teachers. It is frightening that so many of them are also becoming yoga therapists. My husband was able to see right away when he went to Pune to work with Guruji, that while he was an expert in healing according to the principles of modern medicine, he was a novice in yoga therapy.

In Iyengar Yoga it is implicit that you hone your skills first as a student before becoming a teacher; then develop your skill in teaching for many years before becoming a teacher trainer; and spend as many or more years teaching before even thinking about yoga therapy. In the Iyengar system, even private lessons are to be undertaken only by teachers certified at an intermediate level. I cannot fathom how this sequence of professional development is not obvious to anyone with the slightest knowledge of the depth and ramifications of yoga and its practice. I am embarrassed by the inflated promotion and self-aggrandizement which has entered into the yoga world in North America. As the old adage says, buyers need to beware!

There had been discussion whether to hold a Canadian conference this year with Geeta coming to the United States, but since attendance at the conference with her was restricted we decided to go ahead. These meetings are needed to conduct the business of our association.

As it turned out, many students who are not teachers did attend and participated in large classes taught by senior

Canadian teachers who, at other times during the conference, worked alongside them as students. We took meals together where we had many informal discussions, attended those meetings which directly concerned us, plus the annual general meeting which concerns all who benefit from Guruji’s work. The conference ended with a banquet where Leslie Hogg, the outgoing President of IYAC, the teachers who taught and the main organisers were made honorary Calgarians and given white cowboy hats to wear as we all joined together in a spiral dance. Calgary is a friendly place, the organisers were most welcoming, and the spirit of yoga was alive and well as our community took another step toward embracing its student members as well as the core of teachers. Hopefully this progress will be built on next year in Saskatoon.

True, I experienced fatigue after these back to back conferences, but each in their own way enriched my spiritual journey. The fatigue has passed. The inspiration remains. ॐ

Thanks to Geetaji for the light of her teaching. Thanks to the Indian teachers who accompanied her and helped us all. Thanks to Julie Lawrence and Gloria Goldberg and the team of volunteers from the Iyengar Yoga National Association of the United States. Thanks to Margot Kitchen and her team in Calgary and all the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada members who volunteered their time. The selfless work of so many people enriched all of us who attended one or both of these conferences, each in their own way exemplifying the spirit of community which lies at the heart of Yoga in the tradition of B.K.S. Iyengar.

Assessments: Failure and Success

by Alan Brown

This article was reprinted with permission from the author. It first appeared in the magazine of the Iyengar association of the United Kingdom, The Iyengar News (Issue no.16, Spring 2010).

The first part of this article is for the 30% or so of candidates at all levels who every year fail their assessment — just remember you are not alone!

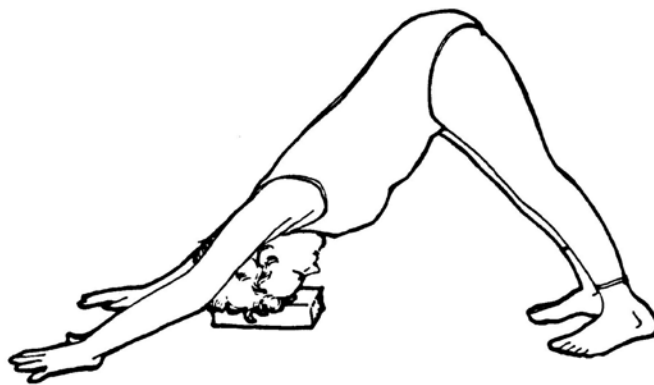
I am currently the Chair of the Assessment and Teacher Training Committee of IYA (UK) and our job is to deal with all matters to do with Iyengar Yoga assessment and teacher training in this country. This includes reviewing and updating procedures and syllabuses for the various levels of assessment which we do in line with the guidelines received from Pune. We have done a tremendous amount of work to formalise the whole process to make it as fair as we possibly can and to try to ensure candidates are well treated and have a positive experience of assessment.

At Introductory assessments there are three assessors and a moderator. Each assessor marks the candidates independently without communication with the other assessors and these marks are then recorded by the moderator. There is generally a good understanding of the required standard by the assessors and a high level of agreement in the marks but in the rare cases where there is disagreement, the moderator will lead a discussion and guide the assessors towards a decision. A similar process takes place when a candidate's marks are border-line and a decision has to be taken as to whether to pass or fail. At Intermediate and Senior levels the system is very similar but there are only two assessors and a moderator.

Assessors are only human and so occasionally they will make mistakes, but all the assessors of the IYA are very experienced Iyengar yoga teachers who have, without exception, been assessed themselves at least five times and fully appreciate what it feels like to be on the other side of the clipboard. In my experience they are well meaning and sympathetic to the candidates and don't fail anybody without good reason.

Every year there are always some candidates who, finding it hard to accept they have failed, lodge an appeal. Despite all our best efforts to ensure fairness in the system mistakes are made from time to time and appeals are sometimes allowed for procedural irregularities which cause the candidates not to receive the treatment they have a right to expect. The appeal process was set up so there would be an avenue of redress in such cases.

We do not allow appeals just because the candidate disagrees with their result.



Despite all our best efforts to ensure fairness in the system mistakes are made from time to time and appeals are sometimes allowed.

It is important that all candidates understand this because if such a thing was allowed there would be no respect for the system and it would quickly crumble. Therefore it is clearly stated on the assessment application form that the candidate agrees to abide by the assessors' decision. Successful candidates feel pleased and proud to gain their certificate and never contest the sound judgement of the assessors, yet some failed candidates will take issue with that judgement and complain bitterly about the unfairness of their result. Would these same people have felt pride in their achievement if they had passed? If so, then by the same token, they should surely have the humility to accept the result if they fail.

Of course it is understandable that people feel upset when they fail an assessment and it is an experience many of us have been through and can empathise with: The disappointment, hurt and humiliation; the disbelief and indignation that so-and-so could have passed when we didn't; the feelings of resentment and injustice.

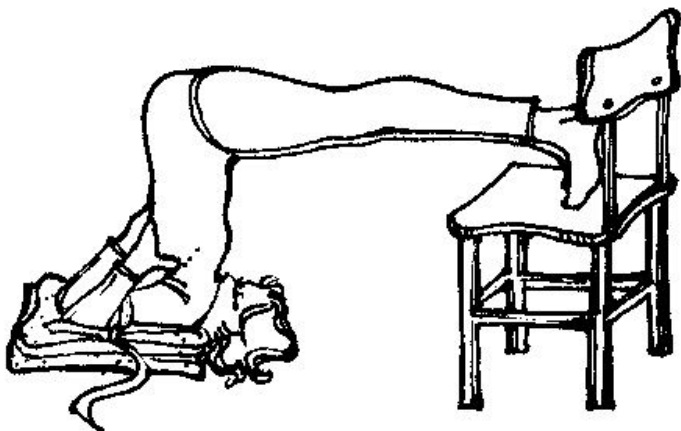
I say 'us' because I have experienced all of this and so I know how difficult it is to come to terms with failing and understand the reasons for it. But I now see the assessment I failed as the one that taught me the most. As a teacher trainer myself I have one trainee who has just taken his Level I assessment for the third time and finally succeeded. He has suffered all the agonies of disappointment and questioned more than once whether it was worth his while continuing, but he is now cheerfully embarking on Level 2 with a pragmatic view of however long it takes. His argument is 'you can't lose' because he sees the value to himself of all the extra personal attention he gets on teacher training and even if he is not yet ready to teach he is gaining immeasurably from the benefits of the yoga.

It may be difficult to adopt such calm pragmatism when so much time and money has been spent on training and all hopes and desires directed for so long towards the goal of passing an assessment. But it is a good attitude and one that is wholly in keeping with the philosophy of yoga, which warns us to work diligently but not to be attached to the result.

For the second part of this article I would like to talk about those successful candidates who are now thinking of going on for higher levels of assessment. We are extremely fortunate that we have been given a system of eight levels of assessment based on an ingenious scheme of progressively more difficult work. The first two levels of the Introductory teaching syllabus give us the essential foundation of *asanas* in all the different categories and equip us with the knowledge to teach at a basic level of safety and competence. The continuing three levels of Intermediate Junior and three levels of Intermediate Senior provide us with a vehicle for continuing learning; to deepen our knowledge and bring more depth and maturity to our teaching.

The **minimum** requirement to progress to Junior Intermediate is to have held an Introductory certificate for 18 months. Because of the timing of our assessments this means in reality that an Introductory teacher has to wait nearly two and a half years before going in for the first level of Junior Intermediate. After that the next two levels may be taken in subsequent years. Once Junior Intermediate Level 3 has been gained the system then requires a further 8 months before embarking onto the Senior levels with the additional requirement that the candidate has visited the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in India at least once. The timing of our assessments means that there will be a gap of at least 20 months between Junior Intermediate 3 and Senior level I.

Mr. Iyengar has told us that these **minimum** periods between the assessments are for those with exceptional talent and for most of us it will take longer to gain the necessary flexibility, strength and intelligence in our bodies to be ready to progress to the next level. There is also the matter of teaching ability to consider because each level of assessment requires



There is also the matter of teaching ability to consider because each level of assessment requires not only the skill to perform more difficult asanas but also a greater degree of maturity and understanding in teaching.

not only the skill to perform more difficult *asanas* but also a greater degree of maturity and understanding in teaching. Unfortunately there is often a tendency to try to race through the levels without fully consolidating the work of the preceding level and then the candidate runs the risk of failing their assessment or, much more worrying, hurting themselves - an all too common occurrence for those who race against the clock to achieve positions their bodies are not ready for.

It may be because the assessment programme has become linked to status in many people's minds and either because of personal ambition or encouragement from their teachers that some are feeling pressured to enter when they are not properly prepared. It is a fine line and I don't want to give the impression I am discouraging anybody from going for assessments, but I do feel it is important not to rush into them. I know from my own experience how long it takes to assimilate each level and, once gained, the new work has to be absorbed into one's regular practice and incorporated into day-to-day teaching for some time to acquire the maturity that only experience gives — as in passing a driving test it is only after the qualification is gained that the real learning begins.

My simple point is that it is a pity to miss out on the marvellous opportunity for learning which has been presented to us by rushing the work or skimming too quickly over it in the desire to achieve the end result - or more sadly still, forcing our bodies and causing injuries which may set us back years. After twenty- two years of teaching I now hold a Senior 2 certificate and I have been carefully working towards Senior 3 for a few years: It contains some very difficult *asanas* and I am still quite a way off some of them but am greatly enjoying the process of practising them and marking the gradual improvement that brings me closer to their eventual achievement. I am hoping to go in for it next year but I said that last year so we will see. In any case there is still plenty from the other levels that I am working to improve — to be perfectly honest with you I can't yet complete every posture from Introductory level!

So in both success and failure, let us not forget that the assessment programme is there for yoga and not the other way round. ॐ

Preliminary Impressions from Geetaji's Teaching in Portland, Oregon

by Ann Kilbertus

Geeta Iyengar made the long journey from Pune, India, to North America, to preside over a large convention on the subject of yoga therapy. This gathering took place from May 11-16, 2010 in Portland, Oregon.

About 500 teachers came together to attend the convention and approximately 20 percent of the group were from countries outside of the USA, including Canada, Australia, Mexico, China, Italy, France, Israel, Russia, Argentina, the UK and several others. The American association and specifically the community in Portland were extremely welcoming while still managing all the details involved in putting on such a grand event.

In Guruji's message, enclosed in our convention package, he stated: "Healing therapy is a science and an art. It needs purity of the heart and clarity of the head. As the technique and method of science is essential, the way of making the patient do, requires an emotional touch." He ended his message by saying: "May this seminar conducted by Geeta and her assistants go a long way for you all to learn the right means to give the



right effects. I hope this educative seminar gives you insights to the Art of Yoga Therapy."

The convention was launched on a Tuesday evening with a lecture from Geetaji. She referred to a verse at the end of the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* (ch.II.54):

What is the mark of one who is
stable of mind, who is merged in
Supreme Consciousness, O Lord?
How does the stable-minded speak,
sit and walk?

To eradicate the *klesas* (afflictions) which Patanjali refers to specifically in chapter 2.3-9, of the *Yoga Sutras*, stability of mind is required. The moment there is instability, peace of mind is gone. When ease is gone one is diseased. Thorough study, feeling and contact with the whole process of the *asana* is required. For example when you look up or down in *utthita trikonasana* what happens?

Geeta stressed the responsibility of teachers to watch: "Your eyes need to

catch" how a person walks, talks, sits and moves in the world. Our responsibility needs to grow to learn to dissect our own bodies when performing an *asana* so we can "dissect" another person. This requires learning to look and to feel. Not only is patience required, but the qualities of *maitri*, *karuna* and *mudita* (friendliness, compassion, and joy) referred to in Patanjali's Yoga Sutra I.33.

Systematically over the next five days we were guided to look and feel in different categories of poses, from supine and prone *savasana*, to sitting both reclined and upright. From forward extensions to side extensions to twisting and standing poses. The end of the week brought our attention to inversions, culminating in a *pranayama* class on the final day. An evolutionary approach to a revolutionary week!

Each morning Geetaji conducted a master class for the large group from 8:30am-1:30pm. Each afternoon we were divided into smaller groupings where her able assistants reviewed a very specific sequence set out by Geeta to build upon the morning's work.

These assistants are all teachers from India who have had long associations with the Iyengar family: Sunita (Guruji's daughter), Abhijata (Guruji's granddaughter), Raj Laxmi, Gulnaz, Zubin and Mondira.

Not only was I humbled by Geetaji's profound depth of knowledge, but also by her ability to manage such a crowd while making us actively work and learn throughout each day. At times the group of 500 was divided to use strategically

"Your eyes need to catch" how a person walks, talks, sits and moves in the world.





Canadian teachers and friends in Portland

placed tresslers and at other times we had to share hundreds of chairs! Watching Geeta keep such a crowd under control while imparting the opportunity to make hands on corrections, as well as observe each other, was awe-inspiring. I must confess that before the convention, I really did wonder how Geetaji would organize the event. Simply watching her manage the large number of participants was a teaching in itself.

Shirley Daventry French stated in a recent reflections column in our newsletter: "Iyengar yoga has great content." Geeta somehow allowed us to uncover a few more layers of this content by

*Watching Geeta
keep such a crowd
under control...
was awe-inspiring.*

managing and directing the flow of her teaching. From a lifetime of watching her father B.K.S. Iyengar, without taking notes, she has found her own way to convey these teachings in a format where we were asked to study our body, mind, and breath, while learning to refine our observation skills more and more, in pairs and in small groups.

Fortunately the whole event was filmed, and though never the same as being in the presence of a great teacher, the DVD's (when they become available) will enrich the learning and afford further opportunities to study from the vast amount of material presented.

The whole event culminated in an invocation to thank Patanjali for the success of the conference. The three women of the Iyengar family led us in a joyous chant full of rhythm and sound and clapping hands. With energy spreading and feeling uplifted, we went our separate ways homeward, filled to the brim. ॐ

IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE
OF VICTORIA

**ANNUAL
GENERAL
MEETING**

Saturday,
February 19, 2011

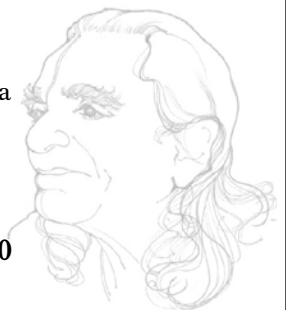
See next issue for more information

In the Light of Yoga

Join in the celebration of
the 92nd birthday of Yogacharya
B.K.S. Iyengar at this special
benefit workshop.

Sunday, December 12, 2010

See next issue for more information.



Men's-Only Yoga Class Offers Opportunities for Awareness

By Gary Wong

I ran a men's yoga class last year but it doesn't run every term. It depends on my availability, and the slots in the class schedule for such a 'specialized' class.

I was interested in forming this class because I felt that some men were more ready to join a men's-only class as opposed to a mixed class. Stereotypically, women are more flexible while men are more stiff and muscular. Although this is only a stereotype, the perception is enough to impact how male beginners sign up for a mixed class as opposed to a mens-only class.

From my experience teaching various disciplines, I would say that many men have sports-related injuries that are long-standing and affect how they sit, stand and walk. Yoga is excellent for highlighting these injuries during *asana* class, and teaching us how to gain awareness of these imbalances or injuries.

Another important aspect to yoga is its relationship to the aging process. I would say that many men (myself included) remember the days (in our teens and early twenties) where injuries would heal themselves in a few days. As we age, the injuries take longer to heal and many men (myself included) don't take this into account when we study yoga. We need to give the necessary time and attention to these injuries, rather than just 'bearing down' and working through the pain.

For men, and this is a generalized comment, taking it slow, and working 'restraint' into the practice is a common challenge. Willing effort never seems a problem from these students, but patience, even-breathing and knowing when-to-pause are aspects of yoga that men can always learn better.

I felt that it was important to introduce Iyengar yoga to beginners who might not try a mixed-gender class. But, once the students are comfortable with the beginner-level curriculum, they should join the regular mixed-gender classes as our style of yoga is meant to be taught to people of all genders, body types and temperaments in the same class! ॐ



High Tea Fundraiser Captures Essence of Giving

By Caroline Meggison

My introduction to the annual High Tea Fundraiser occurred in 2009 when I was attending the Special Needs class. Anticipation rose weeks before the event as announcements and requests were set out. “Can anyone bring baking or a fruit plate?” “We need donations for door prizes.” There were reminders of what the fund raising was for: the addition of new props for the Iyengar Yoga Centre.

All of this could not have been announced in front of a more understanding group. In the Special Needs class, we use props more than in any other class I have ever witnessed. The teachers and helpers in the class use an amazing amount of creativity and critical thinking to enhance each student’s ability to fully open in whatever *asana* is suitable to their needs. The room is full of props in so many forms and guises; from bolsters to the “bread box”, simple plastic stools to benches. And now, most significantly, after the fundraising activities of last year, the grill that aids us in so many *asanas*. *Trikonasana* on the grill allows openings that bring a new understanding and ability to the pose.

The knowledge and expertise of all the teachers continues to astound me, for what opened in me was an internal awakening that would not have been possible without their support in the asanas.

My introduction to the special needs class began soon after my diagnosis with cancer in the fall of 2008. There was surgery, chemotherapy, radiation and more chemotherapy, and an 18-month journey that would have been much darker if not for the Special Needs class. How humbling to one day be a healthy, fully functioning woman to the next being unable to lift my arm and be full of aches and pains unknown before. The knowledge and expertise of all the teachers continues to astound me, for what opened in me was an internal awakening that would not have been possible without their support in the *asanas*. In my darkest times at home when I struggled with not knowing what to do, a voice would come that said, “do your *asanas* Caroline, just start with *supta baddha dhakonaasana*,” and there would begin a supportive and connecting path that let me find light in the darkness. As I began to feel better physically (hey,



Robin, dressed in High Tea finery, in Parsvottasana

my hair was growing back!) I would agitate to Ann Kilbertus that I was ready to move out of the Special Needs class. How wise of her to counsel me to stay in the class. Staying in the class helped me to move away from an ego state about the *asanas*, to a centered one, where *asanas* need to come from.

This year when the High Tea Fundraiser was announced, I had an even deeper understanding of why it was necessary. I think I was not the only one who felt that way, because it was a huge success. There is something magical about being served tea with beautiful china teacups and eating delicious goodies that nourish another part of us. The effort of so many volunteers and the creative organizing of Robin Cantor made us feel special somehow, like it was a celebration of the goodness that fundraising could bring to the community that is the Iyengar Yoga Centre. This year there was an astounding array of door prizes that were thoughtful donations to the event. Robin Cantor’s demonstration of *parsvottanasana* with a teacup balanced on her sacrum was a quintessential statement of what this tea party was all about. The slide show presentation of the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, by Melissa Worth, was especially interesting because of being able to witness her own “special needs” *asanas* that brought home just how much we need our new props. I know the fundraising for new props is not just about our Special Needs class, but you will not find a more appreciative group of people who understand the need for this fundraising. The High Tea Fundraiser captures so much about the essence of the Iyengar Yoga Centre. So much is given there in the true meaning of *karma* yoga that it is an honour to attend. I look forward to the next High Tea Fundraiser, to how much it offers the centre and how much I can offer in return. And you never know, I may win a door prize next time! ॐ

A Personal Journey

By Missi Hegyes

Question # 11

The last thing for you to do this year after completion of the other papers is an assessment of your own progress in the teacher training program. What have you learned while teaching your own class? Have your expectations of yourself and the training program been met? What are your plans for the future in terms of continuing to teach Iyengar yoga? Include documentation of your second year.



Students under the watchful eye of Ann Kilbertus

MISSI HEGYES HAS TAKEN TEACHER TRAINING FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS IN COURTNEY, NANAIMO AND VICTORIA. SHE HAS FACED MANY CHALLENGES IN HER LIFE WITH HER HEALTH. THIS IS HER LAST PAPER BEFORE HER LEVEL ONE ASSESSMENT WHICH SHE WILL ATTEND THIS OCTOBER, 2010. SHE IS PRESENTLY TEACHING IYENGAR YOGA AT THE BEND OVER BACKWARDS STUDIO IN NANAIMO, WHERE SHE LIVES.

I've learned so much this year and not at all what I had expected or planned. My teaching time in my second year has been limited at first by my total hip replacement in June '09 and then by my set back with a form of cancer called lymphoma. During this challenging time I have found that my students and fellow teachers are kind and caring beyond anything that I could imagine and that I am very blessed.

My yoga practice and study have kept me positive. At one time I almost stopped yoga entirely as my hip was so painful. Now I know when disaster rears its ugly little head one of the best antidotes is yoga. No matter how sick you are yoga offers you something to help yourself; seated meditation, *pranayama*, restorative poses, the study of the history and philosophy of yoga (and you haven't even left your bed). As the body grows stronger the more strenuous *asana* work makes you feel good. Inspiration comes from the life of Mr. Iyengar, not all his many successes, but the obstacles he faced throughout his life and how he dealt with them.

My expectations for my second year were not at all what eventually happened but now I value the part Iyengar yoga plays in my life even more. As a teacher I want to continue to learn and to share this with my students.

My colleagues in the Nanaimo teachers group supported me throughout this year with food, hugs, good wishes and teaching my classes. I looked forward to returning to our bimonthly teacher meetings as they encourage me in many ways.

All things being equal my plans are to start teaching Iyengar yoga in the fall of 2010.

- Specifically, I have learned to tackle one project at a time and finish it before moving on.
- Understand what you can and cannot do and don't beat yourself up about it.
- Invest in your own health and do things that give you the best return on this investment.
- Don't overdo anything because you will pay for it the next day.
- Use your time wisely. ॐ

Corrine Biria Workshop

April 22-25, 2011

The Friday-Sunday portion of this workshop is for students Level 2/3 and higher. The Monday portion is for teachers only.

See next issue for further information.



ASSESSMENT DATES

October 15-17 2010
Introductory I/II,
Edmonton, AB

October 15-17, 2010
Intermediate Junior I/II,
Montreal, QC (French)

January 21-23, 2011
Intermediate Junior I/II,
Vancouver, BC

The 55+ Salt Spring Retreat

Join Leslie Hogya and Wendy Boyer for a yoga retreat at the beautiful Salt Spring Centre of Yoga on Salt Spring Island from Friday, November 5 to Sunday, November 7. Eat delicious vegetarian meals prepared from organic ingredients grown in their own gardens. Leslie and Wendy have planned a daily *asana* practice that is paced to suit the abilities of fifty-plus students. ॐ



55 Plus Retreat

at the Salt Spring Centre

November 5-6, 2010

With Leslie Hogya
and Wendy Boyer

\$340 + HST for members, \$375 + HST for non-members
Starts: 4:00 pm on Friday, Ends: 1:30 pm on Sunday

To register, drop in to or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.



Aging and Yoga

Guruji answers: How did your practice change with age?

You may have no problems at all up to the age of fifty or sixty. After that, the real problem arises when the tissues of the body do not bear the load. What I practise now is more difficult than what I did when I was young or struggled to learn. Though today, I don't consider those practices as very hard although I practised ten hours a day then. Today, it is a big fight between the body and the mind. The body says, "I can't do it." The mind says, "Do not force me." Believe me, after a certain age, to practice *asana* and *pranayama* is going to be very hard. I am doing it because of this reason only. The body ages. It descends towards deterioration. The rate of catabolism increases more than anabolism. The bones become brittle. The blood vessels get hardened. All these are known facts. I do not want to fall prey to these. If I surrender to the will of the body, then I am no more a yogic practitioner. When I practice, I watch how to stop this deteriorating process. That is the will over matter. Then you say, "Iyengar doesn't need anything because he has practised earlier." But that is not the right way of thinking. In fact, I see how at this age I need to practise.

I have to avoid the constriction of the sternum. I have to see how the diaphragm remains free. If I look at the possible deteriorations and maintain my practice of *asana*, then people say that I am a physical yogi.

Often people think that at the old age they should do *dhyana* or *japa* instead of *asana* and *pranayama* practice. I am not that type of a *sadhaka* to take shelter under the garb of old age. I will not run away from my practice because of the fear complex of old age. I do meditation in each *asana* as in each *asana*. I see God who is infinite and beyond measure. Because of age I have increased

"I will not run away from my practice because of the fear complex of old-age."

timings in my practices. Mind and body want to give way. I daily charge my body and mind to stand with will power so that I do not surrender to the weakness of my body and mind.

Having a good background of philosophy, practising yoga, I now continue life without depending on anyone. I have to stick to the philosophy of the body as I am already ingrained in the spiritual knowledge.

The only difference between now and the early days is that in the early days I was like all other youngsters. I was tempted to do the *asana* one after the other. Today, I stay in *dwi pada viparita dandasana* or in *kapotasana* for quite a length of time. At this age I clearly understand the sutra, *sthira sukham asanam* in its total sense. Now, I see in each *asana*, the perfect freshness and firmness of body, the alert, steadiness of intelligence and the sweet, benevolence of the self. I see whether I can enjoy *sthira* and *sukha* in a long stay in *kapotasana*. Can I be *sthira* and *sukha* in *dwi pada viparita dandasana*? Sometimes I do ten minutes *parsva sirsasana*, on each side. These are difficult *asanas*. Nobody does the advanced or complicated *asana* at this age. Nobody takes the risk of doing and staying in these *asana* as it requires courage. To do and maintain an *asana* when the muscles and nerves tremor and the loose joints shake, or the heart beats faster, it is not an easy thing. I am not that type of a person to sit in *padmasana* and say, "I am comfortable."

If you are doing yoga, you realise the difficulties as one ages. So, my advice to all of you is that as yoga frees one from the afflictions of actions, afflictions come in chains in old age. Therefore maintain and sustain what you have learnt and do to keep it up then.

This needs not only will power but also courage and faith. By the proper chemistry of will power and courage along with discrimination, the yogic practices generate the energy in the nerve cells as you stay in those difficult *asanas* for a long time with comfort. At this age I learn lots of things. It is the wisdom that comes at this age. I have not lost this freshness of intelligence.

When you do *parsva sirsasana*, sometimes you may not know where the legs are, where the shoulders are, where the load is. For an aging person like me, it is more difficult to have the sensitivity; yet, I have not lost it. Every now and then I come back to the right position in case I deviate from my limbs or mind. I educate the cells that they have to remain where I want them. I try for *sthira sukham asanam* in these difficult *asana*. It is easy to be *sthira* and have *sukham* in the simple *asana*.

I regularly practise *pranayama* and *dhyana* in *padmasana*. You do not see me early in the mornings to know what I do. You only see me practising *asana* in the hall, but my approach is the same in *pranayama*, *dharana* and *dhyana*. To be honest, this is ethics.

Tatah klesha karma nivrttih (Y.S., IV.30). With the end of afflicted oriented actions, see that the afflictions do not enter the system or you in old age. ॐ

(This article is reprinted from Yoga Rahasia, Vol 16, No 3, 2009.)

Clearing Misconceptions: Sportspersons Should Meditate Before Games

"For an untrained mind, meditation creates a void in the brain which makes a person slow in action."

by B.K.S. Iyengar

I have been told by one of the authorities that the Indian hockey players were asked to do *Savasana* and meditation before their match during the Mexican Olympics. The team was beaten. Obviously!! One cannot even run after *savasana*. Is yoga to be blamed for this? It is for the yoga teachers to know what should be taught to sportsmen.

The idea of meditation is to direct the mind and thoughts from active thoughts to something else. What does *asana* do? The *asana* spreads the flow of energy in the body and keeps the mind warm. This flow of energy and warmth in body and mind in *asana* rejuvenates the system; with a positive effect on body, brain and mind. For an untrained mind, meditation creates void in the brain which makes the person slow in action. That was what happened to our hockey players in Mexico.

No dancer or musician or an actor should do *savasana* before his/her performance. If they relax they can't dance or play or act. So meditation and *savasana* is futile in competitive sports.

It is true that one needs mental peace before any competition. But there is a world of difference between relaxation needed for activeness and relaxation for passivity. If this is not understood, it will spell doom for the players.

When you have to play you need a stimulative body. The *asana* stimulate and atomise the body and brain and at the same time keep one mentally alert. The nerves too get rejuvenated to endure the strain of the day. One derives disciplined action in the movements. The *asana* like standing postures, lateral twists, back bends, help to shed out the

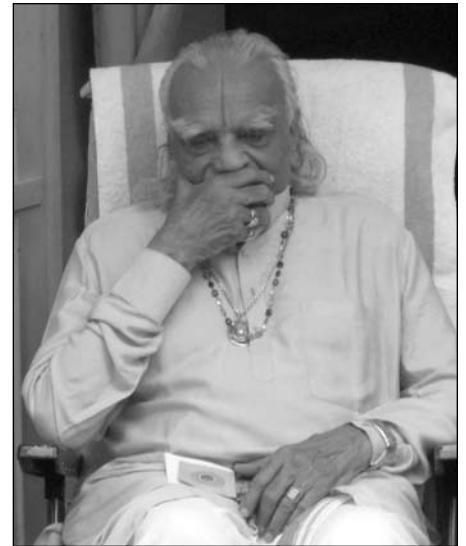
lethargy, bring lightness and agility in body and mind.

"A sportsperson requires active meditation and not passive meditation."

A sportsman requires active meditation and not passive meditation. *Dhyana* and *savasana* makes one passive and the body becomes cold, soft and heavy. *Dhyana* and *savasana* are undoubtedly good but after doing them one cannot begin active action at once. As one has relaxed, the body and mind do not stimulate suddenly. It is good to do it after the game as it brings relaxation, calmness, quietness and serenity. Therefore active action with a passive brain is the key to play well which is available in abundance in certain *asana*. Meditation or relaxation of the body do not stimulate to rise to the occasion. In such circumstances the performance of *asana* works. *Asana* practice is nothing but active and dynamic meditation. *Savasana* does not bring co-ordination between the body movements and alertness of mind, but performing other *asanas* keeps the body warm and the brain cool.

I have often stressed that the cells have their own psychology, intelligence and memory. If you don't observe these through your body language then you are bound to be a failure in your games or sports.

If you run on the ground to warm up, you end up with fatigue whereas practice of *yogasana* stimulates you,



makes you active, and helps you to gather your mental energy for attention without getting fatigue. Other exercises throw your mind out of gear, while *yogasana* integrate the cells of the body with the cells of the brain, so you remain composed and attentively alert to face the confrontation.

If you do meditation or *savasana* you relax so much that you become passive. Coaches have only an idea that *savasana* and meditation improve concentration. Meditation (*dhyana*) comes after concentration (*dharana*). When the intelligence of the body acts and reacts without bodily impediments, concentration comes on its own.

Savasana brings so much of quiet state in the fibres of the cell that it takes time for the cells to set up action, and by the time you recover active energy, you are either out or last in the game even before you reach half time.

Those people who have undergone training with me have understood the difference. If they are warmed up without strain and kept ready to act with precision, how can they face defeat? ॐ

(This article is reprinted from Yoga Rahasia Vol 16, No 3; 2009.)

Winter Sadhana: Lighting the Divine Flame Within

by Joy Illington & Daphne Stancil

This past December, a group of students signed up for Winter *Sadhana* daily practice, early in the morning, for 5 days through to January. Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar characterized *sadhana* or constant practice as a key to freedom. "Wood must be heated to ignite it and bring out the hidden fire within. In the same way students must by constant practice light the divine flame within themselves."

Our teacher Corrine noted that it is constant rather than casual practice that will strengthen the body, steady the mind and nourish the spirit. She brought to our attention the *tapas* or burning zeal that is necessary to go beyond mere intention and follow-up with action to achieve a definite goal.

Winter *sadhana* required us to rise in the dark and cope with cold temperatures, reminding us that, at this time, in nature, many living things are dormant. Nature is demonstrating *pratyahara* to

us – withdrawal from the domination of exterior sensory stimulation. Nature does this in order to sustain the cycle of life – growth to bud; leaf; flower; and to attain fruit. We learned from nature and used our winter *sadhana* as a chance to begin the constant practice of directing our energy by the right means.

Corinne's sure and steady voice dispelled the nervousness many of us had in joining the *sadhana*. She assisted and adapted our practice to help some of us through the challenges of tight muscles and joints, holiday stress, and the toxins of over-indulgence or insufficient sleep.

Our *sadhana* was like a quest. We used invigorating asanas to keep the body healthy and free of pain, and learned to regulate the body's energy through breath to still the mind and help us find inner harmony. We bound our heads and practiced sensory withdrawal, reflecting on the divine aspect of ourselves and our connection to the divine in our world in

all of its aspects. We anticipated and absorbed the quiet the environment provided us. We wrapped ourselves in the soft morning light as we melted into healing, uniting *savasana*, providing energy and calm for each busy day.

We were encouraged by the inspiring words and readings by Corrine, and the coincidence of the winter *sadhana* with the new, blue moon, the new year, and the auspicious rainbow that arced over the sky one morning after our practice. For some of us, this winter *sadhana* ignited our passion to pair our good intentions with the discipline of a daily practice. Others are working toward that goal. All experienced a glimmer of the repose that *sadhana* can help us achieve. ॐ



IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA
PRESENTS

The Heart of Yoga

An Intermediate Workshop
with Shirley Daventry French

For Level 2, 3 and 4 students

Friday, January 21, 2011, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Saturday, January 22, 2011, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm,
3:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Sunday, January 23, 2011, 12:00 noon - 3:00 pm

Shirley is a direct student of B.K.S. Iyengar. Since her first visit to Pune in 1979, she has returned regularly for further study.

The founder of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, Shirley has been the driving force in making the Victoria Iyengar 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, students have the opportunity to learn from her in a workshop setting.

January 21-23, 2011

Fees: \$200 + HST members
\$220 + HST non-members

Registration opens:
December 1, 2010 for IYCV members
December 8, 2010 for non-members

To register, drop in to or phone Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
202- 919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
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A Member's Practice

Practice: Exploring *Light On Yoga*

by Corrine Lowen



How much time do you make in your life for practice? The answer will influence your approach.

Establishing a home practice is one of the most rewarding aspects of a life involving yoga. If you have a sticky mat and enough floor space to lay it down you should be well on your way. Yet, space and a mat alone are rarely enough to get going. Why is it easier to go to class than it is to practice at home? I suspect there are a few variations on the answer to that question, but a common obstacle is simply knowing what to practice, and then knowing what sequence to follow.

B.K.S. Iyengar has developed a systematic approach to these questions, and provided us with an invaluable resource in his most famous book *Light on Yoga*. Originally published in 1966 and now in its gillionth printing, it is an astonishing work, yet often overlooked as a practice resource. If you have a copy of this book on your shelf, take it out, use it, and yes, even make notes in it. Every pose is illustrated and clearly explained in simple terms. Studying this resource is an excellent way to supplement and consolidate what you learn in class. If you do not own it, you will find copies in the Iyengar Yoga Centre library (no notes allowed in that copy).

As I began my own home practice I found the Asana Course in Appendix 1 at the back of the book to be an invaluable resource. Here, Gururji provides a series of practices in two-week increments that progress from elementary to intermediate in a matter of months. While it eventually took me a great deal longer than the prescribed 8 months to get through the first course, I found the first 12 weeks provided a sound sequence, well within the reach of Level II students. In this article I want to share a sequence adapted from *Light on Yoga*, Appendix I, 9th and 10th week.¹ (See chart, next page)

How much time do you make in your life for practice? The answer will influence your approach. If you practice 45 minutes to 1 hour a day, this sequence will be quite doable within your time frame. The whole practice can be done in as little as 40 minutes: hold the standing poses for 20 to 30 seconds each side; the abdominal poses to your capacity; *sirsasana* for 3-5 minutes if you are stable (substitute *adho mukha svanasana* (Dog pose) if you have not learned *sirsasana*); shoulder stand and *halasana* 3-5 minutes each; *paschimottanasana* 1-3 minutes and *savasana* 5-10 minutes. If you extend your practice one to one and a half hours a day, you will find opportunities to explore the sequence more deeply with longer holds, or repeat some of the standing poses two or three times.

¹ *Light on Yoga*, Thorson's 2001 edition, page 390.

Your teachers, Light on Yoga, or any of the Iyengar yoga books you have access to are excellent resources to help you on the learning journey.

If you are short of time, don't miss the practice entirely. Think about ways you could section it out. For example, you could do the standing and abdominal poses in the morning, and then take the inversions and forward bend at the end of the day before your evening meal. (Remember to do *savasana* even for a few minutes after each *asana* session.) If even this is impossible, do the sections on alternating days. Once a week, try to do the whole sequence. Observe any changes in yourself from week to week.

You may be more familiar with some postures than others. In that case, practice the ones you do know. Devote time in your practice to explore ones you don't. Your teachers, *Light on Yoga*, or any of the Iyengar yoga books you have access to are excellent resources to help you on the learning journey.

In Jane Munro's interview with B.K.S. Iyengar (summer issue, 2010), Mr. Iyengar talks about the process of practice—one that begins from the development of intellectualism and proceeds slowly toward clarity, to a place where practice brings wisdom and maturity. He said, "We practice yoga so that head and heart work together in our practices." He has given us very specific and useful tools, which through practice lead us to a deeper understanding and experience of the self. We have only to step on our mats to begin that journey. ॐ



is pleased to present

Stephanie Quirk

**Seeing, Understanding and Reflecting
from the Base**

*Part 2 of a 6-part course for teachers
Sept. 30 - Oct. 3, 2010*

For information, call Ann Kilbertus (250) 598-0976.

| Plate * | Pose (in Sanskrit) | Translation |
|---------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 4 & 5 | <i>Trikonasana</i> | Triangle |
| 8 & 9 | <i>Parsvakonasana</i> | Extended lateral angle |
| 14 | <i>Virabhadrasana I</i> | Warrior I |
| 15 | <i>Virabhadrasana II</i> | Warrior II |
| 17 | <i>Virabhadrasana III</i> | Warrior III |
| 19 | <i>Ardha Chandra</i> | Half Moon |
| 6 & 7 | <i>Parivrtta Trikonasana</i> | Revolved triangle |
| 10 & 11 | <i>Parivrtta Parsvakonasana</i> | Revolved side angle |
| 26 | <i>Parsvottanasana</i> | Intense stretch of the side chest |
| 33 & 34 | <i>Prasarita Padottanasana I</i> | Expanded, spread extended foot |
| 39 | <i>Parighasana</i> | Gate latch pose |
| 276-279 | <i>Urdhva Prasarita Padottanasana</i> | Upright extended foot |
| 78 | <i>Paripurna Navasana</i> | Complete boat |
| 79 | <i>Ardha Navasana</i> | Half boat |
| 184 | <i>Salamba Sirsasana</i> | Supported head balance |
| 223 | <i>Sarvangasana I</i> | Whole body (Shoulder stand) |
| 244 | <i>Halasana</i> | Plough |
| 246 | <i>Karnapidasana</i> | Knees by the ear |
| 250 | <i>Eka Pada Sarvangasana</i> | One foot extended in shoulder stand |
| 160 | <i>Paschimottanasana</i> | West side intensely stretched |
| 592 | <i>Savasana</i> | Corpse |

(*Plates in *Light on Yoga*)

A YOGA PRACTITIONER FOR OVER 30 YEARS, CORRINE TOOK HER FIRST IYENGAR YOGA CLASS IN 1979. CORRINE IS A LONG TIME STUDENT OF SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH, AND A MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FACULTY AT THE IYENGAR YOGA CENTER OF VICTORIA. SHE ENTERED TEACHER TRAINING IN 2001 AND HAS BEEN TEACHING FOR 9 YEARS. CORRINE CURRENTLY HOLDS AN INTERMEDIATE JUNIOR I CERTIFICATE AND CONTINUES TO ENGAGE IN NEW TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES, THE PROCESS OF SELF-STUDY, AND DISCOVERY THROUGH PRACTICE. (FROM THE IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA WEBSITE, WWW.IYENGARYOGACENTRE.CA)

Calgary Annual General Meeting 2010

by Jayne Jonas

Hello everyone. I am back from the AGM in Calgary and want to share some of my experience.

It was wonderful to be with our broad community from across Canada. We had wonderful *asana* classes with Marlene Mawhinney and Shirley Daventry French, *pranayama* classes with Marlene, Margot Kitchen and Ann Kilbertus.

We stayed on campus at SAIT, and the rooms and meals were great. On Saturday night we had a really tasty Indian banquet and did some circle dancing with lots of laughter and great fun. Margot Kitchen had organized this

event. It turns out Margot is quite an enthusiast! There was also a “white hat ceremony” honoring the outgoing president, Leslie Hogya, incoming president, Lynne Bowsher, and all the senior teachers who taught at the AGM. A Calgarian tradition with lots of whoops and hollers for effect!

The meeting went well. One of the most important things was the transition of the IYAC presidency. Leslie Hogya has been our president for the last three years and has served her term and now our new president is Lynne Bowsher from Kelowna. ॐ



Shirley receiving her official Stetson



Patricia Fernandes thanking Leslie for her wonderful work for IYAC



The new IYAC Board of Directors, from left to right, Patricia Fernandes, Karen Major, Nancy Searing, Melissa Schoales, Barbara Young, Marilyn Shepherd, Linda Shevloff, and our new president, Lynne Bowsher. Missing from the photo are Naomi Minwalla, Theresa McDiarmid, and newly elected Jocelyn Hollman.



Regional reps from across Canada

Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada, Outgoing President's Message

After three years as President of IYAC, my term as President came seamlessly to an end, as a new President, Lynne Bowsher, was elected.

My term as President was marked by a most auspicious event when Geeta Iyengar agreed to visit Canada in 2008. I attended meetings and conducted the business of the association via emails and conference calls. Changes were made to various procedures, including changing our name to reflect our bilingual country. We are

now the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada/Association Canadien de Yoga Iyengar. Many accolades and kind speeches marked this ending. At the final goodbye, I was made an honorary Calgarian. The teachers who instructed us during the conference, including Shirley Daventry French, were also honoured in this way. To “top” this off, we were each given a white cowboy hat!

— Leslie Hogya

Short WORKSHOP

Winter Solstice Workshop

With Ty Chandler

December 20-21, 2010

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Fees: \$60 + HST for IYCV members,
\$66 + HST for non-members

To register, drop in or call
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
250-386-YOGA (9642)

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled
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In our mailbox

Reflection

Last year I attended Shirley's philosophy class. Someone asked her the question about her life of yoga. Her answer was very simple. "It is just so interesting," she said. Well I must say at the time I was wanting to hear more than just that. In my disappointment I went home to my husband telling him of this simple short statement, but to my surprise and a credit to his wisdom he was intrigued. He said he couldn't imagine a better answer, for if as one ages you have something you still find interesting then that is truly worthy.

This reflection of Shirley's has stayed with me and finely it has born fruit. My husband and I joined a gym (I really don't want to tell you how often we went as it is most embarrassing) and it is there I finely got it. This lovely gym had the latest of everything including space for yoga. On arriving this day I went to the mat and did my own practice which held my usual attention and increasing awareness. Then I went on the machine, rotating my arms this way for 30 seconds, then the opposite way for 30 seconds and on and on for 10 minutes. The contrast was stark. I was completely bored, whereas on the mat I had found the yoga so interesting. On the mat I learn so much about myself, and even though much is not complimentary, it is refreshing and honest, and with the tools which yoga gives – one is given hope.

Shirley, I want to thank you for your wisdom and generosity of spirit. The Yoga Centre has become home for me, a place where my spirit is supported and finds rest, and last but not least, makes life interesting.

– Laura Jane Johnston

Salt Spring Retreat, June 2010

Sublime! I arrived early on Friday in time to have an ayurvedic massage. As soon as I stepped onto the property, all my cares slipped away. The treatment was followed by a delicious dinner. Each meal a salad display of delicate fresh organic greens fresh from the Salt Spring Gardens was on display, topped with colourful edible flowers. Dinner was followed by a gathering, introductions and *savasana*. Stories of how people came to yoga were told, and a camaraderie was established. Early morning and a fire was in the yoga room to ward off the early morning chill and Shirley began with *pranayama* so that all levels were accommodated. Each *asana* class brought stories, laughter, and clear teaching. The weekend seemed to last for longer than 2 1/2 days, with the pampering by the Salt Spring staff, the insightful teachings by Shirley, and of course the food that kept appearing at regular intervals.

– Leslie Hogya

May 26, 2010

Dear Hilary,

Please find attached an application to the IYCV Newsletter and the subscription fee. I have had the opportunity to read this newsletter over the years and found it very informative with a number of interesting articles. Please thank Leslie Hogya for the recent copies she has given to us.

Keep up the good work.

Regards, Tom (Toronto)

Dear all,

Today I passed my yoga assessment and am now, after four years of training, a certified yoga teacher. I'd like to thank you for walking this path with me, knowingly or unknowingly. Yoga is not just about poses. Everything in life counts. With your walk (or your talk) I am enriched, and you were part of me when I was on the matt.

And, no, I still can't put my foot on my head.

Thank you very much.

Namaste, Lydia

Dear Editor,

I would like to take this opportunity as I leave the Victoria community to express my deepest thanks to my teacher Corrine Lowen who, in the classroom, gave me the freedom and acceptance for me to be myself and who, outside the classroom, gave me the courage and the vision to be more.

Corrine, I would not have made it to medical school without your words, and more importantly, your example.

Namaste, Emma Richards

Scholarships & Bursaries

Members' Scholarships are available for all long workshops and intensives.

Please apply in writing prior to the workshop in which you are interested.

Scholarship applications for weekend workshops are due one month prior to the workshop. Scholarships for special events and intensives are due two months before the event.

Student bursaries are available to all students presently enrolled in classes. To subsidize your term fees please apply three weeks prior to term.

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



Wendy receiving cheque on behalf of the Centre

Thank You to CIBC: Grant Awarded to Iyengar Yoga Centre

This year Ann Nolan applied for a grant under the CIBC Employee as Ambassador Program.

This program encourages and recognizes employees who personally volunteer to support community causes.

To be eligible to apply for the grant, an employee needs to volunteer with a charity or non-profit community organization in a significant and ongoing way such as being a board member, treasurer, committee member or coach.

CIBC considers funding for organizations that work in a socially important field such as education, health, community service and whose projects provide a tangible benefit to the community.

The committee advised Ann that this is the first time a yoga centre received this grant in BC. The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria qualifies because it is non-profit and runs programs for youth (family, kids, teen, pre and post natal) and programs for special needs and muscle and joint care.

The Centre thanks Ann Nolan for her initiative and is grateful to the CIBC for their generous support. ॐ

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

with Shirley Daventry French

**6:30 - 8:30 pm Friday,
September 24, 2010**

Yoga in the tradition of B.K.S. Iyengar is firmly rooted in 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 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.

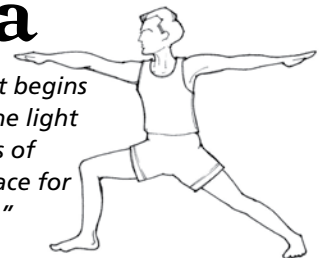
Fee: \$40 + HST for IYCV members,
\$45 + HST for non-members

To register, drop in to or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$15.00 cancellation fee.

Sadhana

"At winter solstice the light begins to lengthen again. Invite the light into your life with five days of morning yoga; a gift of peace for your body, mind and spirit."



with
Corrine Lowen
December 27-31, 2010
6:30 - 8:00 am daily

Fees:
\$98 + HST IYCV members
\$108 + HST non-members

Registration opens:
November 1, 2010
for IYCV members
November 8, 2010
for non-members

To register, drop in to or
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tion fee.

Thank You

Thanks to **Jane McFarlane** for volunteering to take over the task of compiling and updating the ads for each edition of the newsletter.

Thank you to the tireless fingers of the following volunteers at the July 7th Bolster Bee: **Dianne Taylor, Carol Jenkins, Pauline Linzey, Dorothy Liedtke, Patti Kallio, Judy Atkins, Laine Canivet, Krysia Strawczynski**, and especially to the bolster master, **Linda Poole**, for her expertise and organizational skills.

Thanks to **Carol Jenkins** for taking our student handout box from chaos to order.

Many thanks to the students and trainees who volunteered their time, enthusiasm, and limbs for the July assessments.

Thank you to the board members, **Laine Canivet, Krysia Strawczynski, Keiko Alkire, Christine Peterson**, and **Ann Nolan** who organized the cookie sale at the Moss Street Paint-In. Thanks, too, to all the bakers. We raised \$220.

Jane McFarlane has, once again, helped us all as we strive to see clearly both literally and metaphorically. Thanks again, Jane, for keeping our windows sparkling!

Congratulations!

The following candidates achieved certification at the June 11-13 assessments in Courtenay:

Introductory II

Kimberlie Jezior,
Toronto, ON
Ann Toelle,
Quathiaski Cove, BC
Betsy MacKinnon,
Toronto, ON
Nicola Tiburzi,
Roberts Creek, BC
Linda Kusleika,
Smithers, BC
Sarah Nordin,
Toronto, ON
Kumar Sukumar,
North York, ON

The following candidates, all from Hong Kong, achieved certification at the July 1-3 assessment in that city:

Introductory I/II

Kitty Leung,
Olivia Tang,
Lydia Tsang,
Kitty Wong,
Caroline Roy,
Theresa Wenk,
Ursula Tuck,
Andrew Horner

Introductory I

Helen Chiu

The following candidates achieved certification at the July 13 assessments in Victoria:

Introductory I

Patti Rivard,
Victoria, BC
Asha Rao,
Victoria BC



Bake Sale Fundraiser at the Moss Street Paint-In

The Board of Directors held a fundraiser bake sale during this year's Moss Street Paint-In. Thanks to the many donors who provided a wide variety of delicious baked goods, our table looked like a true bakery. We had a steady stream of enthusiastic customers until our pantry was bare – more than two hours before the Paint-In was over! We used the opportunity to hand out almost 150 coupons for a free yoga session. It will be very interesting to see how many of those coupons show up in the form of new students. The sale was so much fun we plan to do it again next year.





2010-2011 CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2010

- 1-3 Student Intensive continues
- 11 Teachers' Meeting
- 24 The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali
- 25-26 Going Deeper workshop
- 30-Oct 3 Stephanie Quirk in Winnipeg

OCTOBER

- 1-3 Stephanie Quirk continues
- 16-18 Intermediate Junior I & II
Assessment Montreal, Quebec
- 30 Teachers' Meeting

NOVEMBER

- 5-6 55+ Salt Spring Retreat
- 19-21 Chris Saudek Workshop
- 22 Extended Monday night class
- 27 Teachers' Meeting

DECEMBER

- 12 Guruji's birthday celebration
- 20-21 Winter Solstice
- 27-31 Sadhana
- 20-Jan 3 Holiday break

JANUARY 2011

- 7 Teachers' Meeting
- 21-23 Heart of Yoga

FEBRUARY

- 12 Teachers' Meeting
- 19 Victoria Yoga Centre AGM

MARCH

- 12 Teachers' Meeting

APRIL

- 9 Teachers' Meeting
- 22-25 Corrine Biria Workshop



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:

**Iyengar Yoga Centre
of Victoria Society
c/o Hilary McPhail
202-919 Fort Street
Victoria BC V8V 3K3**

Membership/subscription fee
is \$40.00 + HST, renewable
each January.

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Country: _____

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E-mail: _____



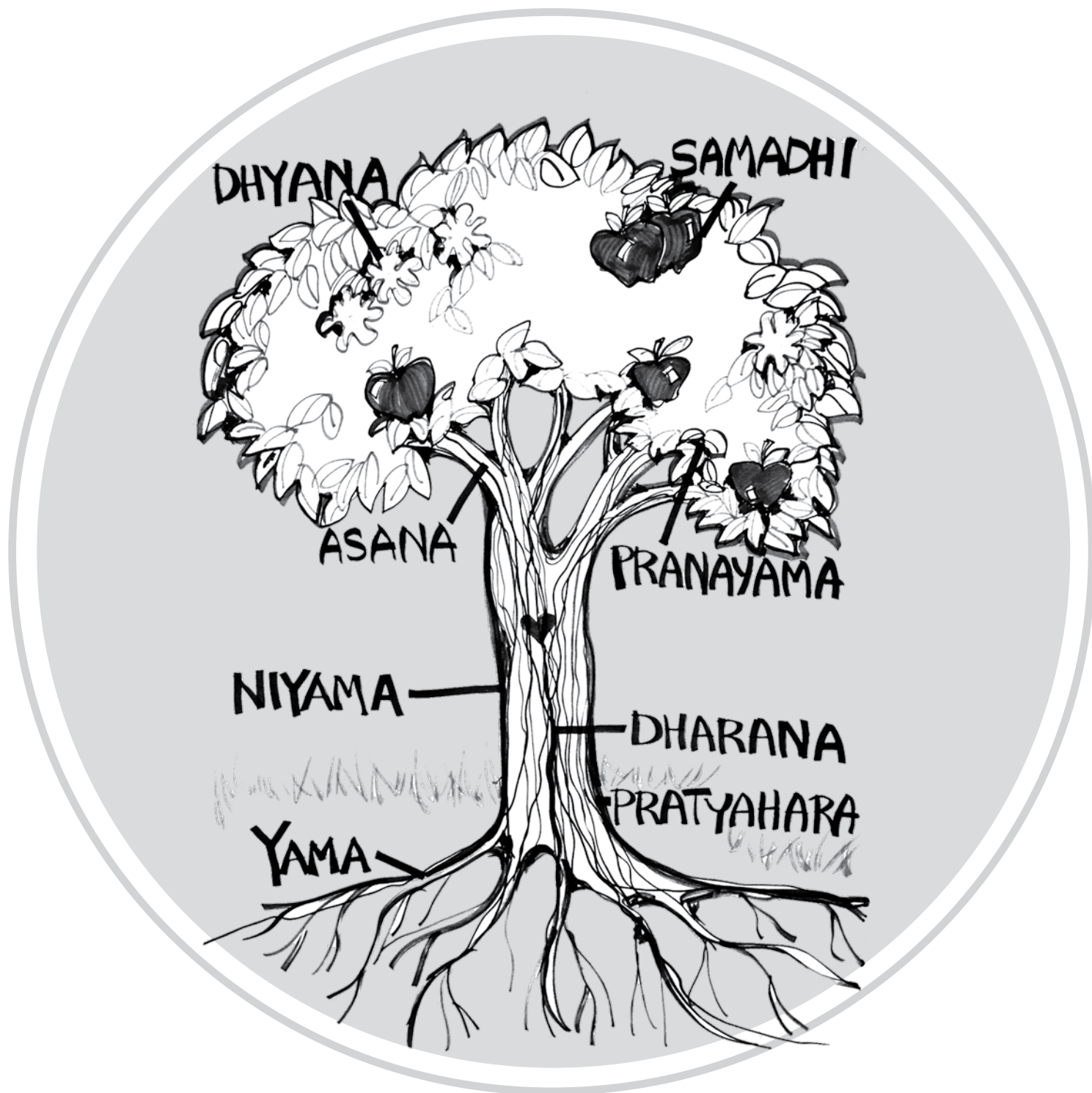
☐ Do not mail me my
newsletter during
sessions, I'll pick one
up at my class.

☐ Receipt required.



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2010



IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the
IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA
will be held

Saturday, February 19, 2011, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

at 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C.

2:00 ASANA PRACTICE

3:00 ANNUAL MEETING FOR ALL MEMBERS
with tea and refreshments

As a non-profit society, we meet annually.
All members have a voice and are welcome to attend.

Business will include the election of board members and
the review of annual reports.

The past year's financial statement and reports will be
available at the front desk prior to the meeting.

If you are interested in serving on the board, please contact
the front desk for application forms.

In the Light of Yoga

Join us in the celebration
of the 92nd birthday of
Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar
at this special benefit
workshop.



Sunday, December 12, 2010, 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

2:00-3:30 pm asana & pranayama with Ann Kilbertus
3:30-5:00 pm tea, cake & movie

Cost: \$25. Please note: payment of the ticket price does not
qualify as a donation. Tax receipts will be issued for donations
of \$20.00 or more, to the BKS Iyengar Scholarship Fund.

All proceeds from this workshop go to the B.K.S. Iyengar
Scholarship Fund which assists teachers and committed
students to attend classes at the institute in Pune.

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IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA
PRESENTS

The Heart of Yoga

January 21-23, 2011

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with Shirley Daventry French
and Ann Kilbertus**

For Level 2, 3 and 4 students

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Sunday, January 23, 2011, 12:00 noon - 3:00 pm

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to Pune in 1979, she has returned regularly for further study. The
founder of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, Shirley has been the
driving force in making the Victoria Iyengar Yoga community one of the
strongest and most viable in Canada. Students from across Canada and
around the world have studied with her.

Ann has been a student in the Iyengar tradition for over twenty years.
She continues to study with Shirley Daventry French and has been teach-
ing since 1988 locally and nationally. Ann began going to Pune, India in
1992 and returns every few years to study with the Iyengars. Her prac-
tice and training as an occupational therapist offer a valuable contribu-
tion to further understanding of this work.

Fees: \$200 + HST members
\$220 + HST non-members

Registration opens:
December 1, 2010 for IYCV members
December 8, 2010 for non-members

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE JANUARY 20, 2011

EDITOR Roger Champagne

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE Judy Atkins,
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Jonas, Jane McFarlane, Asha Rao

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COVER ILLUSTRATION Lauren Cox

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IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the *Society 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 Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Newsletter, published regularly by the IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA SOCIETY, provides current information on events concerning Iyengar yoga in the Victoria area.

Send contributions, articles, photographs (high resolution), drawings, information or suggestions to: the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3.

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 available only with written permission.

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

Newsletter Advertising Policy

(Adopted February 20, 2004)

In keeping with the mandate of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria 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 IYCV.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar yoga
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REFLECTIONS

REFLECTIONS

Winter 2010



By Shirley Daventry French

THIS COLUMN IS A REPRINT FROM A PREVIOUS
REFLECTIONS FROM THE WINTER OF 2007.

The first of Patanjali's 196 *sutras* announces the beginning of an exposition of yoga. Four chapters later, for those who have shown the discipline and perseverance to follow the thread of wisdom contained in this celebrated treatise, the journey culminates in freedom or liberation (IV-34). To reach this destination requires sober reflection, courage and constant vigilance as you observe body, mind and self ever more closely. Most likely it will involve turning one's life upside down (literally and figuratively) by questioning one's most cherished beliefs and habitual ways of reacting to the phenomenal world.

What is reality? That is one of the questions posed in all spiritual texts. In Canadian society you often hear people dismiss the idea of putting spiritual values into their life by saying: "Well, that's alright for those of you who don't have to deal with the real world." I was in a workshop with Swami Radha when one of the participants, an engineer by profession, voiced that disclaimer. A constant refrain of Swami Radha's was that if you were serious about yoga, it was important to make all of your life spiritual life. This man protested that in the real world where he worked this was impossible. Looking him straight in the eyes, Swami Radha shot back: "Which one is the real world?" — a question

which has to be pondered by everyone on the yogic path.

Many people have heard my story about how easy I found it to focus on my spiritual life at an ashram or spiritual centre, but on my return home, when confronted by the demands of my family and in particular three teenaged children, this idealism went out of the door almost as soon as I entered the house. It took a sustained struggle to overcome this obstacle, but I could see a goal well worth the effort. And the struggle did not end there; it just metamorphosed into another form. The ego does not give up easily, and will intensify its efforts to distract and divert you when it sees you making some progress!

For most of us it is impossible to be with our teacher all of the time, unless we renounce our family; and there are many stories of people who have done this and become great teachers. I am judging no-one, because it is all a question of priorities, goals, *karma* and levels of consciousness; there are many ways to enlightenment. Most of us, however, choose to follow the path of a householder for this life's journey.

When we spend large periods of life distant from our teacher, we must draw on our experience, memory and, of course, our own insights from our practice. We are also likely to rely more on the written word when the spoken one is not available to be heard. I love language

in all its forms with reading high on my list of favourite activities. I have many books on the *sutras*; three well worn favourites are B.K.S. Iyengar's *Light on the Yoga – Sutras of Patanjali*, I.K. Taimi's *The Science of Yoga*, and Swami Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga*.

The *sutras* are divided into four chapters. The first chapter is called *Samadhipada* (on contemplation), the second *Sadhana-pada* (on practice), the third *Vibhutipada* (on powers), and the fourth *Kaivalyapada* (on emancipation and freedom). As Guruji points out in his commentary, the first chapter is directed towards those who are already highly evolved, who have "an advanced state of cultured, matured intelligence and wisdom."

In sutra 1.22 Patanjali speaks of levels of aspirant as feeble, average and keen. Not surprisingly, how quickly they move towards their goal of emancipation depends on the intensity of their practice. Earlier he has listed certain practices which lead to stagnation; to move from stagnation to emancipation demands that we redouble our efforts (1.19 & 20).

Once upon a time a student would not receive any of these teachings unless he or she had reached a high state of consciousness. Today, anyone can come into yoga classes off the street with little or no knowledge of what yoga really is. Some are ready for its message; for others, with no spiritual foundation in their lives, it will be difficult to accept responsibility for an unaware body and an undisciplined mind, and far more difficult to sustain a disciplined practice. Discipline is a scarce commodity these days. It is entertainment that many are

*Few beginning students are looking
for a spiritual path.*

seeking when they come to yoga, or a fitness workout. Few beginning students are looking for a spiritual path.

Of course, everyone has to begin somewhere and many of the most distinguished yogis had an inauspicious start to their journey (read *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa* by W.Y. Evans-Wentz).

After doing some yoga, you may be inclined to explore the philosophy. If you are lucky enough to have a teacher who is familiar with the *sutras*, she or he is likely to direct you to the second chapter which is where most of us need to focus in the beginning. There we find certain practices such as Kriya yoga (the path of action)¹ in the first *sutra* of the second chapter, and Astanga yoga (the eightfold path)² which comes towards the end.

Some years ago, I was thinking of starting a study group on the *sutras*, to encourage students to make use of them in their daily lives. I wanted them to discover, as I had, that they were not some esoteric text but practical wisdom containing a healthy dose of common sense: that they are as applicable in the Canada of today as they were in the India of old. When I was in Pune, I spoke to Gururji about this, and he said “Start with *The Bhagavad Gita*; *sutras* are too difficult at first. Then, when some understanding has been developed, move on to the *sutras*.” So this is what I did. The wisdom of the *Gita* is as timeless as the *sutras*; the knowledge these texts contain is vast.

In the early days of my teaching, the majority of students who came to class were stuck on the physical aspects.

1 Kriyayoga: *tapah* (self-discipline), *svadhyaya* (self-study) and *isvara pranidhana* (devotion) are the acts of yoga.

2 Astanga yoga: *yama* (universal ethical disciplines), *niyama* (individual ethical disciplines), *asana* (posture), *pranayama* (expansion of vital energy), *pratyahara* (withdrawal of the senses into the mind), *dharana* (concentration), *dhyana* (meditation), *samadhi* (absorption or profound meditation).

A further obstacle was that we were running our program out of the “Y” where others were suspicious about what they saw as a strange Eastern cult. There was some basis for their caution as this was the 1970s when many people purporting to follow Eastern disciplines were using sex and drugs rather than disciplined practice as their preferred method of “raising consciousness.”


In fact, I had attended what were grandly called “Consciousness Raising Groups” with a man who had been a Christian minister but who had given up the church, along with his marriage, to lead these groups. He was helpful to me up to a point in that he was very strong and pitted his will against mine showing me how I tended to use my strengths and emotions to impose my will. The problem was that having opened up a Pandora’s Box of issues, we were not given any guidance about what to do next. Many of the people I met in these groups ended up changing jobs, changing spouses, and although most were well educated, foul language and uncouth behaviour were commonplace. Some of them were ‘high’ on drugs much of the time. Whether they continued along this destructive route, I have no idea, because — thank God — I stumbled into yoga.

Under Swami Radha’s tutelage at Yasodhara Ashram, my mind and behaviour continued to be under close scrutiny. Clearly some major changes were required, but I was given tools to use to establish new patterns of consciousness and trained in their use. I was also introduced to the philosophy of yoga and shown how to make this a framework for living my life; how to use my energy to overcome the obstacles in my path, rather than shore them up. I was encouraged to discard everything which weakened me. I was taught that practice is essential, and encouraged to establish a regular practice — an essential step towards maintaining these changes when I returned home.

Patanjali defines yoga as cessation of the fluctuations of the mind (*sutra* 1.2) then goes on to speak about the various aspects of the mind. After which, in *sutra* 1.12, he states that *abhyasa* (practice) and *vairagya* (non-attachment) are the means to still this restless mind.

Later, in the second chapter Patanjali speaks of the *gunas* or qualities of nature which have three attributes: *tamas* (inertia), *rajas* (vibrancy) and *sattva* (luminosity). On one of my visits to Pune, while sitting at his desk in the library, Gururji addressed this topic. He was speaking of a student of his who was a dedicated practitioner, very regular in his practice, but he kept hurting himself. Gururji stated the problem was that his practice had vibrancy but no illumination. Vibrancy is seductive, and I returned to Canada thinking a lot about this and how it pertained to my own nature and my practice.

At the “Y”, a few of us persevered in our efforts to offer more than just the physical, and eventually earned sufficient confidence from the “Y”’s management to introduce some of the spiritual aspects. After all, as we took care to point out to them, the “Y”’s motto is to promote health in body, mind and spirit. It was a relationship that worked well for many years but eventually outlived



Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada

ASSESSMENT DATES

January 21-23, 2011
Intermediate Junior I/II
Vancouver, BC

February 18-20, 2011
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its time so we moved into our own space where we experience far more freedom to vary our program.

As students of Iyengar yoga, one of our primary tools is *yogasana*, but we endeavour to use the form of the *asana* to teach yoga in its fullest sense including body, mind and spirit. The teachers we train have to study the yogic texts and learn to apply them in their own lives before their training ends. In fact, in their assessment they are examined on yoga philosophy along with their practice and teaching of *asanas* and *pranayama*.

New teachers often find it strange and difficult to bring yoga philosophy into their classes, but the assessment is only a first step; at our centre teachers on our faculty are expected to attend monthly meetings which begin with a practice and go on to consider some aspect of philosophy. One of the things which inhibits teachers from introducing philosophy is the feeling that students may be uncomfortable. 'What matters, of course, is that the teacher is comfortable within him or herself in presenting these teachings. Besides, one never knows who likes, or does not like, such teaching.

I often give talks on some aspect of philosophy at the beginning of my classes. Usually some ordinary event during the day has triggered certain thoughts: I may have been reading a text which was relevant to my experience, or listening to the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) on my drive into town. Or I may have developed fresh insight from my *asana* and *pranayama* practice, or from a discussion with my husband. I endeavour to pass on to the students the idea that their lives are also packed full of these teachable moments if they care to observe this, that the teachings are relevant all day every day. Some students fidget and feel this is a waste of time and wonder why I don't get on with the class. But I am teaching the class! Others tell me how much they

value these talks. One never knows!

One of my colleagues, Carole Miller, a certified Iyengar yoga teacher and a professor in the Education faculty of the University of Victoria, has established yoga as a credit course at the university. Each year she invites some of us from the Iyengar Centre to teach as guest teachers. Last year, when I taught one of these classes, as I entered I asked Carole if she was doing the Patanjali Invocation at the start of the class. She said she hadn't done so yet, but why didn't I introduce it. So I did. This group of young and largely fit students did not respond much to my call, so I found myself both calling and responding to myself along with Carole. Well, I thought, that didn't go over very well. But at the end, when most of the students took the time to come up and thank me for the class, quite a few of them told me how much they had enjoyed the chant at the beginning. One never knows!

There are a variety of doors which open to deeper learning giving the student a choice according to her or his nature and level of maturity. As teachers we have to be careful not to give too much too soon, but never to underestimate the student. Apart from exceptional cases, the possibility of learning is always

there. How well we can transmit this fount of ancient wisdom depends on the quality of our own practice and learning, and whether we can teach without being attached to a particular result or response. As students, how well we can receive teaching and guidance from qualified teachers depends on the quality of our practice. As seekers on the path of yoga, the manner and style of our journey, and how close we will come to the goal of liberation in this lifetime, is entirely up to us.

Practice and detachment are the means to still the movements of consciousness.

Practice is the steadfast effort to still these fluctuations.

Long, uninterrupted, alert practice is the firm foundation for restraining the fluctuations.

Renunciation is the practice of detachment from desires.

— Chapter I, verses 12-15,
Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali
by B.K.S. Iyengar ॐ

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The Eight Limbs of Yoga

Leslie Hogya

In the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, near the end of the second chapter, Patanjali introduces *ashtanga* yoga, *ashta*, eight, *anga*, means limbs. The eight limbs of yoga are represented on our cover as the tree of yoga, drawn beautifully by Lauren Cox. B.K.S. Iyengar used the metaphor of the tree in his book *Tree of Yoga* to explain the eight limbs of yoga. A tree grows with all its parts and they are interdependent. Each part is essential.

When one wants to plant a tree, a seed must be sown, and from it, first a root must grow. In this metaphor, the roots of the tree are the ethical foundations of yoga; they give us a guide about how to live in the world. In Sanskrit these are called the *yamas*. These *yamas* are often compared to the Ten Commandments.

The first *yama* is *ahimsa*, *a* means non, *himsa* means harm. So it is translated as non-harming. B.K.S. Iyengar in the introduction to *Light on Yoga* says, "It is more than a negative command...it has a wider positive meaning- love. This love embraces all creation."

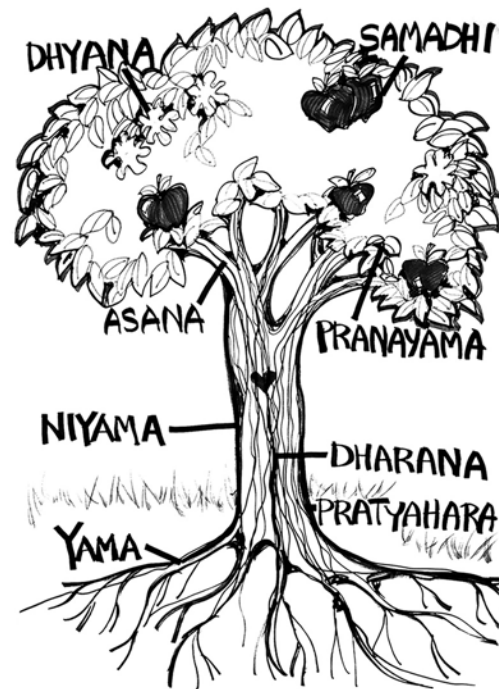
Using the metaphor of the tree helps us to understand that yoga is more than asana.

The next limb is the *niyamas*. They are shown as the trunk, and are the personal observances such as cleanliness, contentment, and devotion.

The root and the trunk then support the limbs of the tree. These are the *asanas*. The branches are different shapes and angles. To feed the tree there must be healthy green leaves. *Pranayama* is the next limb. *Prana* means, breath, energy, life, vitality. This is one practice where Patanjali says the practitioner should perfect the *asanas* before attempting *pranayama*. In our classes, we introduce simple breath awareness and lying *pranayama*, which gives a taste of this practice.

The bark of the tree protects it from the elements, from invasion of insects. This is *pratyahara*, the fifth limb, and it means withdrawal of the senses. The path of yoga leads inwards.

Next comes *dharana*, or concentration. In the image of the tree it is the sap. The sap runs deep inside to every part of the tree from the roots to the farthest tip.



Many people begin with the asanas, the postures, but traditionally, the ethics would be understood as the foundation of any practice.

When all the parts are healthy, then the tree will start to flower; *dhyana*, is meditation.

The final of limb of yoga produces the fruit of the practice, the fruit of the tree. *Samadhi* is the fruit of the practice, when body, mind and spirit are in complete union.

Using the metaphor of the tree helps us to understand that yoga is more than *asana*. The limbs cannot live without roots, without a trunk, without leaves, without sap. The next time you practice *vrksasana* (tree pose) feel the steadiness of the feet rooted into the ground, the strength of the leg and torso, the flow of the breath, withdraw your senses from the classroom and notice how you must practice concentration to stay stable. ॐ



Footsteps of Patanjali 2010: A Personal Perspective

By Krysia Strawczynski

August 23, 2010

I returned from the Footsteps of Patanjali retreat about an hour ago. Shirley Davenport French and Leslie Hogya led the retreat. I believe I have been to every one of these retreats since they began four years ago.

The setting at the Salt Spring Yoga Centre is peaceful and beautiful as is the space where we do yoga. I have enjoyed each retreat although I found each very different because the group was different each time. One of the nicest aspects of these retreats is that there are plenty of opportunities to get to know the unique and interesting people who come or, if you prefer, to spend time alone.

The schedule gives the time needed to truly relax and re-energize. Early every morning (7:00 am) Shirley or Leslie led us in *pranayama* for an hour. I am always surprised at how quickly the time goes. A fabulous healthy breakfast follows and a break until 10:00 am. Shirley and Leslie then teach *asanas* until 12:30. Because they are both master teachers, the class is neither too easy nor too hard but pitched just right for the students.

After lunch, there is nothing scheduled until 4:00 pm. You can book a massage. You can walk through the woods. You can swim in a nearby lake. You can poke around Ganges and go to the Saturday market there. Or you can sit in the orchard and read or walk through the flower gardens. Or go to a winery or a lavender farm or a cheese producer. Lots to do in the afternoon.

The thread running through the retreats is of course the *sutras* of Patanjali. (Give yourself a bonus point for spotting the word play.) The *sutras* are the taking off point for wide ranging discussions. We gather for this purpose every day for



two hours at 4:00 in the afternoon. We mostly focussed on the *yamas* and *niyamas*. What a luxury to have the time and space to think about universal concerns. The topics I particularly remember from this year were truth and perception, greed and contentment. It is always interesting to learn how others see these matters and even more interesting to see your own views change.

The evening schedule varies. One evening we had *kurtan*, which is Indian chanting. Another evening we continued our afternoon discussion. Every year, the last evening is devoted to presentations prepared by individuals or small groups on some aspects of the *sutras* we



had studied in group discussion. This last evening has always been fun and funny. It has also had some very moving moments. It is never boring.

I remember I was a little disappointed in my first retreat. I thought there would be more time spent on *asanas*. I'd been to the Heart of Yoga taught by Shirley at Salt Spring and I expected more of the same. But the following year, I realized I didn't really want that intense an experience. The slower pace of the retreat suited me. It is not everyone's cup of tea but I like it. I always learn something new. I make friends. I eat great veggie food. And most of all, I am taught yoga every day by Shirley and Leslie. What's not to like?

The cost of the retreat (over \$700) is very reasonable considering that it includes accommodation and food from Wednesday to Sunday AND daily yoga taught by great teachers. One of this year's participants said she had saved up to give herself this treat. Start saving now and it is almost painless. It is even more painless to be given a gift certificate to offset part of the cost. The yoga centre will also be offering a layaway plan for this retreat. ॐ

Guruji responds to Children

The students of the children's class at Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, aged 9 to 12 years, had a chance of asking one question each to Guruji. A selected few of these questions were put forth to Guruji and here are his responses.

REPRINTED FROM YOGA RAHASYA, VOL.17,
NO.1; 2010

Why did you take this task of yoga?

I don't know why I took this task. Maybe it was the hands of God that made me do this. In the beginning, it was uninteresting. Initially I practised due to the force of my guardians. Secondly my health was also not good. I used to be on the bed for days together because I was sick. Then I continued the task of Yoga to make a living out of it.

What is the secret? Why do you know yoga so well?

Hard-work is the first secret. The second was a sense of responsibility, as I was dealing with living beings. Third is the sense of observation while practicing. In those days, people were very hostile towards this subject. This attitude of people pushed me into learning, unlearning and relearning because I had faith in this subject. I wanted to create interest in the minds of people.

When you were learning yoga as a child, did you practise every day early in the morning?

When I was young, my Guru made me practise *asanas* at odd hours — sometimes morning, sometimes evening. Sometimes, he would call me at any time and ask me to be present. He also made me do difficult *asanas* at any time, sometimes immediately after lunch. This developed the power in me to do any time.

How can you perform such difficult asanas?

I wanted to attract people to yoga, hence I started learning the difficult *asanas*. It

What is the secret of you being this fit at this age? – My devoted, dedicated, sincere and honest practice.

did not come in a day. Repeated practice and introducing the life force to express dynamism even in the tips of my toes took years to reach finest levels in difficult *asanas*.

Why is yoga so important?

Why is yoga important? Why is food important? Yoga is important so that the food we take gets properly digested, assimilated and integrated in our blood. *Asanas* help in distributing the energy evenly to each and every part and polishes the inner body for the outer body to glow.

Why don't you take our yoga class?

If I take your class, what about members like you who have to grow and shine like me? I have taught for more than 50 years. Now it is your turn. Young and budding teachers should now come up and take this forward.

How many asanas have you done?

See *Light on Yoga*. You will get an idea of how many *asanas* I do.

What is the secret of you being this fit at this age?

My devoted, dedicated, sincere and honest practice.

How are you so flexible?

I have to practise everyday to maintain

the flexibility as we can trim a sapling and not a tree. At this age, God has blessed you with a mobile body. Make use of it and trim it so that even after you grow old, you maintain the body movement. As we need food, clothing and sleep everyday, yoga should also be practised everyday. As food, clothing and sleep is a MUST, yoga practice should also become a MUST for all so we can live in peace and not in pieces.

How do I do asanas that are hard for me?

Ask your teachers for tips. You will then realise that the *asanas* are not hard, but the mind is hard, the mind is unco-operative and unwilling. Rigidity in mind brings rigidity in body.

How much memory power do you have?

I do not know. But I have the power to transform the rigid body and mind to a fresh body and mind. If you maintain and retain your practice, you experience what is a fresh body and a fresh mind.

What is yoga?

What is sleep? Can you explain? So, what you enjoy in sleep, you enjoy in yoga.

Body has inertia. The body should be made to become vibrant like the mind, and then the body and mind together mingle with the Self for all the three to live in serenity. Yoga is to blend the intellect of the brain (*vidya*) with the intelligence of the heart (*buddhi*) so that these two rovers of intelligence unite as one river. Senses of perception uniting in the sea of life is yoga. It makes one to live in a lively and lovely way. ॐ

Sva-bhava Dharma to Sva-dharma: Our Inherent Nature and the Nature of the Soul

Geeta S. Iyengar

REPRINTED FROM YOGA RAHASYA. THE
BRACKETED TRANSLATIONS HAVE BEEN ADDED
BY THE EDITOR AND TAKEN FROM *LIGHT ON*
YOGA WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

Every human being is born with some inherent qualities or characteristics called *sva-bhava dharma*. **A simple translation of *sva-bhava* is the nature of a person.** There are many people sitting here and everyone has his or her own nature. That is called *sva-bhava*. It is the inherent characteristics. Some people are very good by nature. They see you and just come and help even if you have not asked for it. There are some who are non-cooperative and who create problems; they quarrel for no reason. It is the nature that speaks. We are supposed to study this nature — ours and not others'. Why do we quarrel? Why do we fight? Why do we hate someone for no reason? Why do we love or why are we compassionate or passionate?

One's own varying nature and the differing natures from individual to individual, the *sva-bhāva*, and the behaviour depends upon the qualities that one imbibes from the cosmic nature. We appreciate the beauty of the nature outside — the rivers, the mountains, the ocean etc. We also see nature in its terrifying form and furious nature such as hurricanes and tornadoes which frighten us. The *prakṛti* [nature] that exists outside also exists within us. We inherit our characteristic behaviour from the cosmic nature and the cosmic nature provides it in turn, according to our karma which again depends upon our nature. We do the *karma* according to our nature of behaviour. However, all this depends upon *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These three qualities are known as '*triguṇa*'.



Every human being is born with some inherent qualities called sva-bhava which is imbibed from cosmic nature.

Sattva nature, which is the illuminative nature, brings the luminosity — it shines and clears. If the sunlight is strong, everything becomes clear. Sometimes, when it is cloudy, we can't even see the sun. So this *sattva* is indicated with the word luminosity because of its illuminative nature — *prakasha*. The light is inherent in it.

The second type of nature is *rajas*. *Rajo guna* is of active nature. It makes us move. It creates vibrancy within. You need that luminosity and you also need this kind of activity. The action and motion are inherent in *rajas*.

Then, the third is *tamo guna*, which is inertia. Even that inertia has two facets. Sometimes you need that inertia just

to relax yourself. If you decide to relax, then you need to be, to some extent, inert. You imbibe that inertness through the *tamo guna* so you become quiet. Again, it has its own quality. This inert feeling can lead towards laziness and dullness where people don't feel like doing anything. There are people who just don't want to do anything because of *tamo guna*. Stupor, dullness is inherent in *tamas*.

So, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* reflect on behaviour, thoughts, actions, movements, intelligence, emotions as well as the out-going mind and the in-going mind. That is why we need to know this nature of ours. We have to find out what type of category we belong to and that is called as *sva-bhāva dharma* [path]. *Sva-bhāva* is the nature of a human being. You say somebody is a very kind-natured person. That kind-naturedness has come to them through that *sattva guna*. To simplify and put this into a very gross form, I can say the person of *tamo guna* will be alcoholic, *rajoguna* workaholic and *sattva guna* yogaholic.

"A person of tamo guna will be alcoholic, rajoguna workaholic and sattva guna yogaholic."

These *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* interact with each other. They play as well as fight with each other. Sometimes, they show dominance over each other and their ratio will be changing all the time in our consciousness. We need not worry about how it happens, but we have to study our nature. As we study, we know that these *triguṇas* [three *gunas*] are influenced by food, karma, behaviour,

character and the way of living. Sometimes, we suddenly feel dull. We just don't want to do anything and we don't know the reason behind the dullness. So, we pick up certain projects like cleaning the room and make ourselves active.

Sometimes, when you read a book, you think that nothing goes into your head although you are reading. You find that you have read 15 pages but nothing has entered your head. For no reason, you find that nothing has registered. At that time your mind, which you call disturbed, has been diverted. You have gone far away from *sattva guna* and that is why you could not concentrate even though you have read 15 pages. The *rajo guna* disturbs you. That is how the *gunas* play tricks on us. When you are tired fatigued, then nothing goes into your head and you go to sleep. That is *tamas*. We need to study this nature because everyone undergoes these feelings and changes.

We can then find out what kind of *sva-bhava* or nature we have. Some people

are lazy and some people are active. Some are overactive. Some are cruel and some are kind-hearted. Watch this changing, modifying and varying nature. It reveals your *sva-bhava*, because you will be experiencing all the shades of this nature existing in you and you will be matching to some extent with others in whom you notice this nature.

So, Patanjali says, "Through the practice of *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama* and *pratyahara* [withdrawal of the mind from the domination of the senses] you have to change and tame this *sva-bhava* — the nature. You have to train this *sva-bhava*, the nature, so that it will be in tune with the soul. To be in tune with the soul, we have to culture this nature through the practice of yoga, through these first five aspects of yoga. We have to cultivate a certain nature within us so it is conducive to the practice of yoga. This leads us to go from *Vyuthana citta* to the *samahita citta*, so that *dhāraṇa* [concentration], *dhyāna* [meditation] and *Samādhi* [becoming one with the

Supreme Being] becomes possible. The *samahita citta* begins to surface and reflect. It says, "Yes. Now I'm establishing myself to go inside." That mind or that consciousness becomes more penetrative inwards. This *sva-bhava dharma*, I would call as *sva-dharma*. This *sva-dharma* is strengthened by *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna* and *Samādhi*.

"As we train and cultivate our sva-bhava, we go to the original state of our consciousness."

As we train the *sva-bhava* that we have — and begin to cultivate it, culture it, shape it properly — we go to the original state of our consciousness. That is *sva-dharma*. *Sva* means one's own and *dharma* means religion. Consciousness or *citta* is termed as *sva* since the soul possesses the consciousness. Soul is the owner who owns the consciousness. The soul is *svāmi* and consciousness is *sva*. The *sva-dharma* means one's own

Congratulations!

The following candidates achieved certification at the October 15-17 assessment in Montreal:

Intermediate Junior II

Ginette Dion, Montreal, QC
Sylvie Lapointe, Mascousche, QC

Intermediate Junior I

Leigh Anne Milne, Chester, NS
Lisa Towson, Winnipeg, MB
Drew Perry, Winnipeg, MB
Mona Keddy, Montreal, QC
Susanne McAdam, Montreal, QC
Christine Michaud, Montreal, QC

The following candidates achieved certification at the October 15-17 assessment in Edmonton:

Introductory II

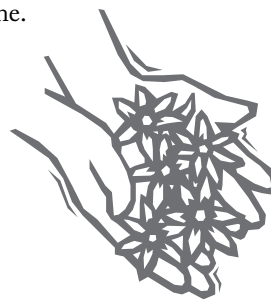
Joann Kalantzis, Calgary, AB
Janette Hook, Edmonton, AB
Julie Mah, Calgary, AB
Corinne Milroy, Edmonton, AB
Pamela Nelson, Christopher Lake, SK
Isabel Oliveira, Calgary, AB
Grant Richards, Vancouver, BC

Introductory I

Tom Levery, Toronto, ON

Summer Omission:

Grace Thompson of London, ON, received Introductory II certification at the Courtenay, BC, assessment in June.



religion. So the religion of the consciousness, the religion of *sva* is to have self realization, which in simple words is sometimes expressed as peace or serenity. What is that which feels the serenity? What is that which feels the peaceful state? Something from inside feels and experiences that serenity is the *sva*. If *sva* is serene, then we experience the soul — the *svāmi*, who is originally, eternally and inherently serene.

In simple words, when you have a good sleep at night, you don't wake up every moment and say, "I'm having good sleep." You get up in the morning and say, "I had a very good sleep because it was not broken." You were not disturbed at any moment. You were deep inside that sleep. Only after waking from that state you say, "I had a very good sleep." As sleep is experienced in that manner, so the *sva-dharma* is also experienced in the same way.

All your energies flowing from your body right up to the consciousness are concentrated. They are almost purified, cleansed in such a way that they are almost equal to the luminous soul. If the consciousness is full of light, the soul, whose obvious nature is full of light, remains face to face at that moment.

That is what yoga teaches — to have this union of consciousness and soul in an absolutely pure and clear form.

That is what *Astanga* yoga teaches and expects from its *sadhaka* — the practitioner — and that is why we have to be very clear about the *sva-bhāva dharma* and *sva-dharma*. Patanjali uses the words, *sva* and *svāmi* in *Sadhanā Pāda* [the second part of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, dealing with the means.]

***Sva svami saktyoh svarupapalabdhī hetuh samyogah.* 11.23.**

[The powers of *purusa* (the Soul) and *prakṛti* (Nature) are intended for self-realization. The purpose (*hetuh*) of the

contact between the two (*samyogah*) is the unfolding of their inherent powers (*saktyoh*), and the seers discovery of his own true nature.] – Ed.

Sva means one's own nature and that is *prakṛti*. *Svami* is the master — the soul. *Sva-bhāva* means our own nature, our own feel. *Sva dharma* means our own characteristic, original nature. *Dharma* also means duty and virtue. Our nature depends upon *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and therefore differs from each other but *sva-dharma* does not differ.

Our *dharma* is self realization. Our *dharma*, our duty and virtuous act is to know the *Atman*, [the Supreme Soul] to be as pure as the *Atman*. And, yoga *sādhana* changes our *sva-bhāva* in order to embrace *sva-dharma*.

Our dharma is self realization. Our duty is to know the Atman."

Through the practice of yoga, we need to have first the *sva-bhava darshana* [seeing or vision] and then *sva dharma darshana*. We need to know what we are; what we need to be, and finally have the crystal clear vision of our self.

Yoga is like a mirror. It reflects our *sva-bhāva*. If there is something wrong with us, it shows in the practice that there is something wrong with us. It shows not only our physical defects but also psychological, emotional, intellectual and egoistic defects. We need to correct ourselves and for that Patanjali uses a good word. When we look at ourselves in the mirror, we look at our face, our hair, we look at our dress; we try to see if something is wrong and then we want to change it. It could be an eyebrow or it could be our face which needs cream. You also do your hair properly if it is untidy. You give proper curls to it. We do all this in front of the mirror. You see how the dress is beautifying you. If it's

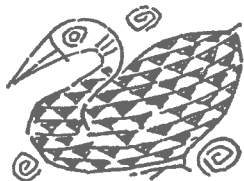
not, then you immediately say, "Let me change the dress it doesn't look nice, the colour is not suitable". This is how the mirror is talking to you, and according to that talk you change your look. You bring the change in you.

Yoga is like a mirror. It shows not only our physical defects but also psychological, emotional, intellectual and egoistic defects.

The mirror of yoga exposes you completely — the good and the bad aspects of yours, the ugliness as well as the beauty, your nature, your behaviour, your inner mind, your inner thoughts and your inner conspiracy too. You need to cleanse, touch and purify it. You have to embellish it. That is what Patanjali calls *citta prasadanam*. The Sanskrit word he has used is *prasādanam*. *Prasādana* means decoration, adornment. It is the process of taking off the dirt and cleaning oneself. He offers us these cosmetics to beautify our consciousness which begins from the body. However the beautifying of the body is not for the external purposes but for the internal purpose to go towards the soul. The soul doesn't need external beauty. The inner beauty is different from the outer beauty and that is the real nature we have to clear; and that is called purification. If this background is known to us then it makes sense to us as to why and how we have to adopt it, why and how to practice, and this brings clarity.

We now know the body, the organs of action, the senses of perception and the mind. I'm repeating this so that the whole picture of you as an individual has to stand in front of you — the mind, the intelligence, the consciousness, the I-consciousness and the conscience.

The conscience differentiates between *sat* and *asat*, the real and the unreal; it discriminates between what is correct and what is incorrect; what is eternal and what is not eternal. We have to develop this kind of conscience that has to keep on reflecting on the mirror of yoga. In fact, it has to become a habit for consciousness to look into the mirror of conscience. In order to develop this special sense of 'looking in' we have to do a lot of cleansing on all levels such as body, senses, mind, breath, energy, *samskāra* — imprints, memory, intelligence, I-ness, consciousness and conscience. ॐ



NEW YEAR'S DAY All Levels

Timed Practice

With Robin Cantor

January 1, 2011
12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Free for 2010 IYCV members
\$40 + HST for non-members

Pre-registration is required by
Thursday, December 23, 2010

To register, drop in or call
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
250-386-YOGA (9642)

Refunds will be offered only if your space
can be filled and are subject to
a \$10.00 cancellation fee.

Guruji's Prescription for Staying Young

The Times of India, *Mumbai edition* did a feature called 'long live longevity.' They spoke to many people amongst whom was our Guruji. This is an extract from that article by Kamini Mathai.

"The grand old man of yoga, B.K.S. Iyengar is 91. His face is wrinkle-free (even though the flowing hair is silver), spine is straight and chest is spread wide. India's famous yoga instructor devotes four hours to yoga every single day. And that's his secret to a healthy and long life. "I wake up at six, and do 'pranayama for an hour. Then it's time to pick up the newspapers to know what's happening around the world. From 9 am to about noon, I do *asanas* nonstop. There was a time when I'd do a number of *asanas*. But now, although I do a lesser number of these, I hold them for a much longer time – till I am able to penetrate into my inner self and feel my body getting refreshed,"



says the yoga legend, who began his yoga practice in 1934, in Mysore. Post-yoga, it's time for a bath and lunch, after which Iyengar heads for his yoga institute where he sits in the library to work on his new book. By 10:30 pm, one of the world's most famous yoga guru is fast asleep.

Rx

- Disciplined lifestyle
- 30-minute *sirsasana*, *sarvangasana* and other inversions
- Live in the present. Live life moment to moment.

Besides following a disciplined lifestyle, Iyengar also vouches for a 30-minute headstand, besides the shoulder-stand and other inversions which, he says, are the poses that postpone the onset of old age. "Even today, my feet don't swing even slightly when I do the headstand," he says. Iyengar's prescription for staying young, apart from practising yoga regularly, is never to dwell on the past. "I live in the present. I live life moment to moment. I reflect – do this specially when I am holding my *asanas*, and that's what keeps me refreshed." ॐ

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Being Set Free

Deborah Lomond

"What will you take home with you?" asked Shirley at the end of the Junior Intermediate Intensive in Victoria. There were many thoughtful responses but the ones from the French Canadian contingent resonated with many of us as we wiped away our tears. "People here have such good hearts, I feel like I have been set free." "I have discovered something new in myself that I want to carry on with, not sure how I will do it but I will."

I have been attending teacher intensives at the Victoria Yoga Center since 1988, and every year I come away with a growing sense of community and renewed purpose. It is an enriching five days working with colleagues with that one-pointed (*eka grata*) focus that Patanjali talks about in the yoga *sutras*. We bear witness to the evolution of each other and the bigger yoga community.

I have also seen Shirley's evolution. Her teaching is still as dynamic and as precise as it was in 1988, but now it is evident that her own journey has provided her not only with a wealth of knowledge but also with a wellspring of stories and experiences that serve to create a teaching/learning environment that is rich, fun and safe for her students.

Her lightness of being encourages everyone to take risks, to explore and to develop their potential. Someone put it well when they said that "making a mistake is just another way of being." I felt that Shirley's leadership brought us closer to what the Buddha called "the divine abodes," the states of *maitri*, *karuna*, *mudita*, and *upeksanan* as is written in sutra 1:33, "consciousness settles as one radiates friendliness, compassion, delight and equanimity towards all things, whether pleasant or painful, good or bad."

The teacher intensives have changed for me over the decades. In the early years of study and practice, there would be huge light bulbs going on as my awareness expanded but now it is more like those tiny Christmas tree lights where all the connections have to be made for the entire circuit to work. The same connections have to be made and maintained to keep the light of the community strong. This year's intensive was a shining example of building community from coast to coast.

The intensive culminated with an Indian feast at Shirley's house. I was struck, as usual, by everyone's radiance. This is how people look when they are nourished by yoga's gift of union. Embracing a life of evolution and learning, which is a hallmark of Iyengar yoga, allows the light within to shine forth. ॐ

I have been attending teacher intensives at the Victoria Yoga Center since 1988 and every year I come away with a growing sense of community and renewed purpose.



The 27th Annual Retreat at the Salt Spring Centre

Coming June 3-5, 2011

With Shirley Daventry French

This is your opportunity to attend the annual retreat on beautiful Salt Spring Island and participate in a weekend of Iyengar Yoga with Shirley Daventry French. Renew your Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria membership so you can be in the front of the line for an opportunity to participate in this wonderful event.

Fees: IYCV Members
\$340.00 + HST – shared accommodation
\$310.00 + HST – camping
\$285.00 + HST – commuting

Fees: Non-members
\$375.00 + HST – shared accommodation
\$345.00 + HST – camping
\$320.00 + HST – commuting

Registration opens February 14, 2011 for members and February 21 for non-members.
Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.

Sutra Study: The Introductory Teacher Training Intensive

July 2010

By Leslie Hogya

Each year during the introductory teacher training intensive, we study a section of the yoga *sutras* of Patanjali. The goal is to gain some deeper and more personal understanding of these ancient teachings. Most days, after a lunch break, we chant a section of the *sutras*, taking turns with the pronunciation, and then reading English translations to help us learn the meaning of the Sanskrit. We always rely on the *Light on the Yoga Sutras* by B.K.S. Iyengar as our main source.

In July 2010, we focused on the *sutras* in Chapter 2 from verse 30 to the end of the chapter, with emphasis on the *yamas* and *niyamas*, which shed light on universal moral observances and ethical guidelines. Patanjali devotes 16 *sutras* to the *yamas* and *niyamas*; this is very significant. It is more than any of the other eight limbs of yoga, except *samadhi*. “They are a crucial and indispensable prerequisite of yoga.” – Edwin Bryant.¹

The first *yama* (moral observance) is *ahimsa*, which means non harming, and compassion. *Ahimsa* is the tap root of all the others. If we do no harm, then we will be truthful and not take from others. Sutra II, 31 then states that these vows (the *yamas*) are universal, irrespective of age, class, place or time.

Sutra II, 34 further elaborates on the importance of non-harming, it says that *himsa* (harming) can come from greed (*lobha*), anger (*krodha*) or delusion (*moha*). All these must be counteracted with correct knowledge and self-study.

On Friday afternoon at the end of the week, participants shared with us some-



Ann Kilbertus teaching pranayama



thing they learned from this study. Ann and I are always overwhelmed with the creativity and inspiration that comes during these presentations. I can’t summarize them all, yet each person’s willingness to present what they had learned added to the whole of our understanding.

Some people present things that are deeply personal, inspirational, touching



and/or serious. Others are informative, and some fun and uplifting. One year we had a cello performance, another year a game show.

This year, we had a lesson on the phonetic pronunciation of Sanskrit from Soo. Ken led us through a description of his journey to understand how he had suffered many injuries over his life, and how through yoga this is now changing.

¹ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, Edwin Bryant, North Point Press, 2009, p. 283.

From Jane we had the linking of the words *satya* (truth), *sadhana* (practice), and *Ahimsa* (impartial love), that tied into the meaning of the word *asana*.

From Ann and Cathy, we were treated to a menu from the Tapas bar, located at 2, 43 Sutra St. and how we could choose one item from each column, which gives daily nourishment for the body, mind and soul.

Morgan Rea and Cheryl Joseph, sang to us. Here are the words to their song:

This is the tale of Patanjali,
His *sutras* have been here for a long,
long time,
We have to learn our best from them,
The *sutras* are our guide,
The *sutras* are our guide.
There's *ahimsa*, and *satya* too,
Asteya and *brahmacharya*
There's *aparigraha* and the *niyamas*,
Here in Patanjali's *sutras*,
Here in Patanjali's *sutras*.

All sung to the tune of the well-dated but ever loved theme song from Gilligan's Island.

Twenty-one participants gave us very different interpretations, with charts and lists, concrete lessons; others used storytelling, music, or art. We even got a *yama* cookie! Jana brought in a beautiful mobile with each bead representing the many facets of the *sutras*. Michele told a children's story with the *yamas* and *niyamas* being there to help a young child adjust to starting school.

Each person's courage to present these projects and willingness to share their understanding inspired us all, and helped us gain a deeper understanding of how the *sutras* are alive and relevant to us today. ॐ



Ann and Leslie going over the sutras



a member's practice

by Glenda Balkan Champagne

If only the summer lingered through the fall... The days are long and my obligations consist of leisurely walks with Roger and our dog Rufus, casual dinners with friends, and plenty of time to practice yoga at any hour and for as long as I wish. It's not unusual to spend two hours at a session exploring new discoveries in familiar poses, or being inspired by words written by Mr. Iyengar, while sweet, balmy summer breezes lull me into *savasana*.

Then – BAM – it's September. School begins. Meetings are held. Work-related social gatherings are obligatory. Week-ends are called off. My husband and my dog forget who I am.

Yoga? I need it more than ever, but where will I find the time?

I've learned to solve the problem by preparing my yoga t-shirt and tights the night before so that rolling out of bed at an early hour won't wake everyone up.

My yoga space downstairs is warm and the lighting, subdued. I begin my practice with the three poses that I've been told Geeta often opened her classes with.

*Adho mukha virasana,
adho mukha svanasana
uttanasana.*

It feels like a good way to begin when I am not yet fully awake. Many teachers and practitioners use the early morning for *pranayam* practice. As a voice professional, much of my day is spent practicing and teaching the action of the breath as it relates to singing, so generally I choose an *asana* practice. The chest opening and stability of *asana* help prepare me for my voice work.

Lately I've been looking to Mr Iyengar's sequences at the back of *Light on Yoga*. Many begin with *sirsana* and *sarvangasana* and variations. In my experience headstand usually follows standing poses. Shoulder stand is often saved for the end of practice or prior to sitting forward bends. However, if time is plentiful, I find doing inversions first in my practice a lovely way to start. Early in the morning when time is limited I save inverted poses for later doing them on their own, sometimes after work or even occasionally at work if I have a break!

Most recently I've been following the three day cycle at the end of Course One in *Light on Yoga*. This cycle sequences many groups of poses, for example *asanas* that focus on the abdomen such as *jathara parivartanasana*, *paripurna navasana* and *ardha navasana* with twists and then back-bends later in the practice. He has also included timings with each pose. Most of these practices can be performed in 45 minutes to an hour and yet at the end of each I feel awake and serene.

Practicing early in the morning before anyone else in my house – even perhaps in the world – is awake has been a journey of resistance for me. I had always been convinced that I worked most effectively later in the day and preferred to begin my morning with a good strong cup of coffee and the *Globe and Mail*. Now my energy feels more balanced throughout the day and the 4:00 pm lag that I took as a given for most of my life seems to have disappeared! This is reward indeed and inspiration to continue life upon the mat. ॐ

Thank You

A huge thank you to all the volunteers who made our September Open House a success: organizers, teachers, bakers, cleaners, Bhavantu Sound, decorators, meet-and-greeters, and at least 150 visitors! Thank you Monika Eilerman, Steven Alpert, Marion Wess, Chuck Cohen, Chris Peterson, Janet Strauss, Shauna Johnson, Andrea Brimmel, Laine Canivet, Margo Kobly, Adia Kapoor, Jill Williams, Cathy dePont, Anna Wren, Boni Hoy, Ann Nolan, Haik Miller, Krysia Strawczynski, Jane McFarlane, Keiko Alkire, Johanna Godliman, Wendy Boyer, Britta Poisson, Corrine Lowen, Ann Kilbertus, Glenda Balkan-Champagne, Gary Wong, Shirley Daventry French, Charles Campbell, Lucia Guindon, Ty Chandler, Chris Simmons, Tia Benn, Matthew Balchin, Jayne Jonas and Jo Anna Hope.

Thank you, Theron Morgan, for your accounting assistance.

Thank you, Simon Ainsworth, for your contribution to the High Tea Fundraiser.

Thank you, Jo Anna Hope, for organizing and updating the newsletter ads and announcements for the last four years.



Ahimsa: Delving into the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

Leslie Hogya

THIS ARTICLE WAS ADAPTED FROM A SPEECH LESLIE HOGYA GAVE OCTOBER 1, 2010 IN QUERETERO, MEXICO FOR THE OPENING CEREMONIES OF THE CONVENTION FOR THE ASOCIACION MEXICANA DE YOGA IYENGAR.

Ahimsa (or love, compassion) is the foundation of yoga. It is the keystone; nothing is possible without love and compassion for all people. The *asanas*, or postures are the route of Iyengar yoga but the road is closed if we don't practice the moral observances, *yamas*, like *ahimsa*.

In the second chapter, verse thirty, of the yoga *sutras*, Patanjali lists the *yamas*. In verse thirty-one, he says that the *yamas* are essential, they are the universal truth: "*jati desa kala smaya anuvicchinah sarva bhauma maha vratam.*"

This *sutra* reminds us that the *yamas*, or moral observances are for all people, at all times, in all circumstances. They were true 2000 years ago. They are true for you and I today here in Canada. They are true for people everywhere now and always. *Maha vratam* means great or mighty vow. *Maha* means great, or most important. It is most important for all time, *kala*, to follow these vows.

The first *yama* is *ahimsa*, and it is the one that helps us understand all the others. *Ahimsa* means non-harming and compassion. The idea of non-harming may seem fairly simple at first. You and I are not likely to be going around hitting others, or throwing rocks at them. But this *sutra* also means to practice this ideal in thought, word and deed. So while we may not hit another physically, what about with unkind words? Even when we eliminate unkind words, then there are the thoughts, which only we can know. Yet those thoughts are harmful to others and, probably even more so, to ourselves. Our unkind thoughts can take root in our hearts.



Leslie teaching in a strange mixture of Spanish and English at the second conference of the Asociacion Mexicana de Yoga Iyengar in Queretero Mexico.



Oct 1-3, 2010 the Association Mexicana de Yoga Iyengar held their second convention in Queretero, Mexico. The theme was the *yama* ahimsa (no violence).

B.K.S. Iyengar inspires us by saying that friendliness and compassion cannot be felt by an unquiet mind. His way to help us achieve a quiet mind is to work with determination on our *asana* and *pranayama* practices. These will bring mental equipoise and inner peace.

The Dalai Lama says something very similar to *sutra* II, 31, about the great vow, *maha vrata*. He says:

Compassion, loving kindness, altruism and a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood are the keys to human development, not only in the future but in the present as well....Thus, we find that kindness and a good heart form the underlying foundation for our success in this life, our progress on the spiritual path and our fulfillment of our ultimate aspiration, the attainment of full enlightenment. Hence, kindness and a good heart are not only important at the beginning but also in the middle and at the end. Their necessity and value are not limited to any specific time, place, society or culture.¹

Let us spend the next few days together in this spirit, and let us grow in compassion so that these ideals are what is rooted in our hearts and minds.

Namaste. ॐ

¹ Georg Fuerstein, *The Deeper Dimensions of Yoga*.

IYENGAR YOGA: An Overview

Adia Kapoor

ADIA KARPOOR IS A STUDENT TEACHER IN HER FIRST YEAR AT THE IYENGAR CENTRE OF VICTORIA.

SHE WROTE THIS PAPER AS PART OF HER COURSE WORK AND HAS GRACIOUSLY AGREED TO ITS PUBLICATION IN THE NEWSLETTER, ON THE OCCASION OF MR. IYENGAR'S 92 BIRTHDAY.

Bellur Krishnamachar Sundararaja (B.K.S.) Iyengar was born in 1918 in Bellur, Karnataka, South India. He came from a poor family and suffered from ill health most of his young life. In 1934, at age 16, he went to Mysore to stay with his sister who was married to Professor T. Krishnamacharya, a renowned scholar and yoga adept, who directed a yoga school for the royal family of Mysore.

Although B.K.S. Iyengar did not come to Mysore initially to study yoga, his brother-in-law shortly thereafter initiated him into yoga and, through hard work, B.K.S. became proficient in a very short few years. He began giving yoga demonstrations and classes, which led him to an opportunity to teach yoga in Pune, where he came in 1937.

His initial career as a yoga instructor was challenging and he struggled financially. However, by 1944, his reputation began to spread and eminent persons sought his guidance. In 1952, Yehudi Menuhin, the celebrated violinist, learned yoga from B.K.S. and then brought B.K.S. and his teachings to the west in 1954. Since then, he has repeatedly travelled abroad to teach and promote yoga.

In 1975, he and his students opened an institute in Pune, which has become the foremost seat of learning for Iyengar yoga and a centre of pilgrimage for students around the world. B.K.S. continues to

practice and teach today, and his family and his students all over the world continue his work.

Since B.K.S. began teaching yoga in 1936, he evolved and perfected his unique system of imparting yoga. He developed this method, which we call Iyengar yoga, through his devoted and diligent personal practice and the study of the needs and problems of his own students. Although his is a unique interpretation of the classical yoga of Patanjali, it is true to the spirit of the yoga *sutras*. His style is unique not in the postures themselves, but in the interpretation of how to execute them. As he himself has said, "Yoga belongs to a civilization which is 3,000 years old. It cannot be my yoga or somebody's else's yoga, but as everything has to have a common brand, my yoga has a brand."

What distinguishes his "brand" is his flair for precision. Precision and alignment, the search for perfection in each movement, the constant awareness of every cell and muscle of the body, and the meticulousness in observation are what characterize Iyengar yoga. Students work continually at refinement in an effort to achieve perfection. B.K.S. instills in his pupils that nothing less than total involvement is required to discover true alignment, not just in the body, but also in the mind. Iyengar yoga is not performed casually or mechanically, but consciously and deliberately, so that awareness is present, even at the cellular level. This awareness in every pore of the body is in itself meditation.

Intense self-study, discipline, and personal practice are cornerstones of this method of yoga. To this day, B.K.S. continues to perform *asana* and *pranayama* every day. He is continually learning, and there is no

Precision and alignment, the search for perfection in each movement, the constant awareness of every cell and muscle of the body, and the meticulousness in observation are what characterize Iyengar yoga.

end to the vast subject of yoga. But he does not encourage students just to seek knowledge of yoga. He encourages his students to practice and observe in themselves, to seek and find out the truth in their own bodies. Though his students benefit from his years of work and knowledge of yoga, Iyengar yoga classes teach technique to students so that they can do their own practice more effectively. Iyengar yoga students are taught to approach their practice with eagerness, enthusiasm, energy, and passion, but most of all, constancy. There is nothing that can take the place of a continuous and regular personal practice.

To the uninitiated, the emphasis appears to be on *asana* (postures) and *pranayama* (breath control). However, Iyengar yoga also emphasizes the morality of yoga in the *yamas* and *niyamas*, and the Iyengar institute, teachers and students are known for discipline and good conduct. B.K.S. believes that the higher forms of yoga and, ultimately, *samadhi*, can only

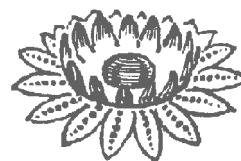
The practice demands regularity, punctuality, cleanliness, purity, courtesy, modesty, and morality.

be taught to those who are proficient in the first limbs of yoga. Hence, these are the focus of intense study and practice. The practice demands regularity, punctuality, cleanliness, purity, courtesy, modesty, and morality.

Many people think first of props when they think of Iyengar yoga. B.K.S. Iyengar has developed simple and effective techniques to help students take and also retain postures for lengths of time with greater ease. He has developed methods of using walls, window ledges, chairs, ropes, blankets, straps, planks, bars, weights, benches, and stands to better aid in alignment. Though *asanas* are best done without aids, props

simplify the process of learning and to enable students to gain some benefit and understanding from the practice. Props are one of Iyengar yoga's gifts to the world. Even those who are adept at yoga can achieve greater heights of learning through the use of props.

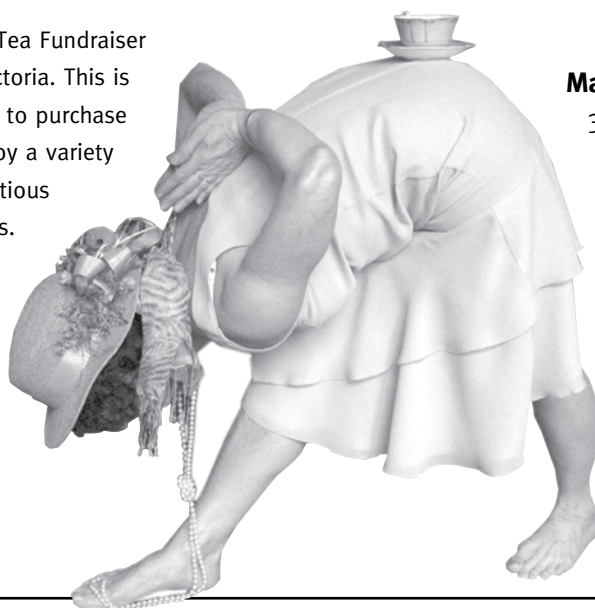
Yoga also has tremendous possibilities for curing or alleviating ailments and disease, and Iyengar yoga has developed therapeutic and medical techniques for helping those suffering from physical, physiological, and psychosomatic problems. In particular, the use of props serves in yoga therapy, and Iyengar yoga has been a leader in these techniques. Indeed, the innovations that have grown out of B.K.S.'s work make him a pioneer in this field. ॐ



Please Join us for our 4th annual HIGH TEA FUNDRAISER

Welcome to our fourth annual High Tea Fundraiser at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria. This is THE event where we raise funds to purchase new props for the Centre. Enjoy a variety of delectable teas with scrumptious homemade sweets and savories.

The tea will be followed by a video presentation of Dr. Geeta S. Iyengar teaching therapeutic yoga at the Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Convention held in Portland, Oregon, May, 2010.



March 25, 2011

3:00 – 5:15 PM

Arbutus Studio

Cost: \$20,
free for children

**Feel free to wear
your favorite hat!**

Please note: payment of the ticket price does not qualify as a donation. Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$20.00 or more, to the IYCV Props Fund

Greetings and Thank You from Shirley

As many members of the yoga centre are already aware, I had an accident recently and fractured my kneecap. It happened in Montréal where I had flown to act as moderator at an Intermediate level assessment. Most of the candidates would be teaching in French; we had to mark exams written in French and would be required to offer oral feedback in this language. I knew this was going to be a challenge—one I had accepted freely and gladly. It was an incentive to make an extra effort to refine my knowledge of the French language.

As it happened, the real challenge for me arrived just as the assessment was about to begin when I had an accident and fractured my kneecap. This catapulted me into another area of learning which I was not so eager to pursue.

Yoga has two aspects: practice and renunciation. Action comes more easily to me than inaction. Since the accident I have had to surrender my independence and accept help and support from a variety of people. Given no choice, I am finding it is not as bad as I thought it would be!

Something which has helped immeasurably is the community support I received, much of it direct and physical. First in Montréal from the assessment team and the Montréal Iyengar yoga community. Secondly from Air Canada who made the long journey home as comfortable as possible. Once I arrived on the west coast my husband, daughters and son provided more support on many levels. And when the surgery was over and the recuperation process began, the Victoria Iyengar community provided support by covering my classes and offering food, service and well wishes.

One of Mr. Iyengar's wishes has always been for us to work together in fellowship and friendship. I can confidently say that in Victoria and across our country, there is a vibrant, caring, loving community of teachers and students. I am honoured to be part of it, and most grateful for this outpouring of love and concern.

In gratitude to all of you,
With love and Light,
Shirley Daventry French

October 29, 2010

Just knowing about yoga is not going to give relief from sorrows, anxieties and depression. Daily persistent practice alone makes you face the turmoil of life.

– B.K.S. Iyengar

Short WORKSHOP

Winter Solstice Workshop

With Ty Chandler

December 20-21, 2010

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Fees: \$66 + HST for members,

\$66 + HST for non-members.

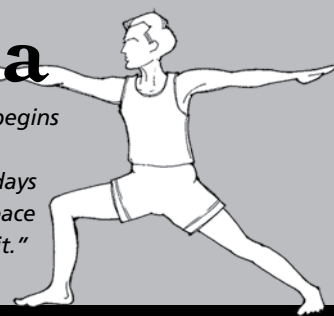
To register, drop in to or phone the
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
250-386-YOGA (9642)

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled
and are subject to a \$10.00 cancellation fee.

CANCELLED

Sadhana

"At winter solstice the light begins to lengthen again. Invite the light into your life with five days of morning yoga; a gift of peace for your body, mind and spirit."



with
Corrine Lowen

December 19-23, 2010

6:30 - 8:00 am daily

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$15.00 cancellation fee.

Fees:
\$98 + HST IYCV members
\$108 + HST non-members

Registration opens:
November 1, 2010
for IYCV members

November 8, 2010
for non-members

To register, drop in to or phone the
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
202-919 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

A Therapeutic Workshop: Stephanie Quirk in Winnipeg

By Ann Kilbertus

Stephanie Quirk worked as a psychiatric nurse and graduated from art school in her native New Zealand before beginning Iyengar yoga in 1987. She made her first trip to Pune in 1991 and, inspired by the Iyengars, returned several times. She eventually moved to Pune, and has spent many years studying daily at RIMYI and assisting in general and therapeutic classes.

In Canada, the second part of a six-part series took place September 30-October 3, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, at Yoga North. Participants came from coast to coast to attend the four day intensive. This is the first time IYAC (the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada) has sponsored a workshop series, and it has provided a very successful opportunity for teachers to work and study together to deepen our understanding of this vast subject.

We practiced together, observed, learned to make new adjustments on our peers, and listened to Stephanie's instructions based on her years of experience at the institute in Pune.

One note-taker and one photographer volunteered to collect the teachings of each half day, and these will be compiled and disseminated to the group so that the material can be reviewed by participants during the subsequent year.

Part three will take place next year in Ottawa and will be open to those who have attended the previous two sessions.

The opportunity to experience the breadth and depth of Iyengar yoga through Stephanie's workshops adds yet another dimension to our yoga instruction across Canada. For this we are most fortunate; not only for Stephanie's teaching but for those teachers who have made the six year commitment across the country to deepen their work. ॐ



Workshop and Teacher Training

with Corine Biria

April 22-25



Sandhya Corine Biria began the practice of Iyengar yoga in 1981 with Faeq Biria. She is a close disciple & student of Sri B.K.S. Iyengar. Her numerous journeys to India since 1983 to study closely with her teacher and renowned yoga master have immensely enriched her experience in terms of technique, teaching pedagogy, and therapeutic application.

In France, she teaches regularly at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Paris, and for the last 15 years she has conducted teacher training courses in France and in Israel.

She shares this art of yoga with her students with strength, vigor and generosity. Her love of yoga, her ethic and her constant concern with clarity and precision make her a respected teacher and excellent educator.

WORKSHOP

Friday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
3:30 pm - 6:00 pm

Saturday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
3:30 pm - 6:00 pm

Sunday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Open to Iyengar Yoga students able to hold headstand and shoulderstand for five minutes. Ask your regular teacher if you are wondering about attending.

Workshop Fees:

\$330.00 + HST for IYCV members

\$360.00 + HST for non-members

TEACHER TRAINING

Monday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
3:30 pm - 6:00 pm

Open to certified Iyengar Yoga teachers and teachers in training

Times subject to change

Teacher Training Fees:

\$130 + HST for IYCV members

\$145.00 + HST for non-members

Registration opens:

February 21, 2011 for IYCV members

February 28, 2011 for non-members

To register, drop in or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre.

202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K3
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

www.facebook.com/iyengaryogacentre

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.

All memberships expire Dec. 31. 2010 Renew now!



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE OF VICTORIA
SOCIETY

Membership

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

Iyengar Yoga Centre
of Victoria Society
c/o Hilary McPhail
202-919 Fort Street
Victoria BC V8V 3K3

Membership fee is \$40.00 + HST, renewable each January.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Prov/ State: _____ Postal code: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____



☐ Please mail me my newsletter as I do not attend classes at the Centre.

☐ Receipt required.



2010-2011 CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2010

- 12 Guruji's birthday celebration
- 19-23 Sadhana
- 20-Jan 3 Holiday break

JANUARY 2011

- 1 New Year's Day practice
- 4 Classes resume
- 8 Teachers' Meeting
- 21-23 Heart of Yoga
- 21-23 Intermediate Junior I Assessment, Vancouver, BC

FEBRUARY

- 12 Teachers' Meeting
- 17-19 Intermediate Junior I Assessment, Toronto, ON
- 19 Victoria Yoga Centre AGM

MARCH

- 12 Teachers' Meeting
- 24 High Tea Fundraiser

APRIL

- 9 Teachers' Meeting
- 22-24 Corine Biria Workshop
- 25 Corine Biria Teacher Training

MAY

- 27-29 IYAC AGM in Saskatoon, SK

JUNE

- 3-5 Salt Spring Retreat
- 11 Teachers' Meeting
- 17-19 Introductory I/II Assessment, Montreal, QC

JULY

- 4-8 Teacher Training Introductory Intensive

