



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA



Atha Yoga Anushasanam
– Patanjali's Yoga Sutra I-I

A Weekend with Louie Ettling

March 6-8, 2015

Friday 6:00 - 8:00 pm, Saturday 10:30 am - 1:30 pm, 3:30 - 5:30 pm
Sunday 11:00 am - 3:00 pm



Louie Ettling is the director of the Yoga Space in Vancouver (www.theyogospace.ca). She started studying Iyengar yoga in the eighties with Vancouver teacher Wende Davis. Since then Louie has studied in Pune regularly. She is grateful for what students have taught her about teaching and continues to be passionate about the body's yoga journey.

Fees: \$225 + GST members
\$245 + GST non-members

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

**The Annual General Meeting
of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
will be held**

**April 12, 2015 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 to appreciate our Board and volunteers for all the work that they do. 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.

The 31st Annual *Retreat at the Salt Spring Centre*

June 5-7, 2015

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.

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



Fees: IYCV Members
\$395 + GST – shared accommodation

Fees: Non-members
\$435 + GST – shared accommodation

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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.

REGISTRATION

Please visit our website:
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca for full information on classes and workshops.

Drop in: 202-919 Fort Street,
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3

Phone: (250) 386-YOGA (9642)



Reflections

By Shirley Daventry French

The following article was written shortly after Guruji's death. I ended with the words "the learning continues." Six months have passed since then and these words have been prophetic.

When Guruji died I was in the Okanagan Valley with my husband and oldest daughter staying in a small villa with a magnificent view of the valley. Daily, I was following all the bulletins on Guruji's health and knew his passing was imminent. At ninety-five years of age this was not surprising but one can never be prepared for such an eventuality.

When Guruji's death was confirmed I was sad, but my overwhelming feeling was one of profound gratitude: to have been his pupil, to have had his guidance for many decades together with training in the use of yoga as a spiritual tool.

Accolades poured in from all over the world: from public figures such as the President and the Prime Minister of India. Respectful and well-written articles were published in many notable

English language newspapers throughout the world including the *Times* and *Guardian* of the UK along with the *New York Times* and *Times of India*. I read and savoured them all. Clearly they understood that this was an extraordinary man and a teacher of exceptional brilliance. Those privy to learning directly from Guruji wrote sober contemplative essays.

B.K.S. Iyengar was an incomparable teacher, but more than that, he was a lifelong student of Yoga engaged in a fervent search for truth, purpose and meaning in life. In the midst of this absorbing quest he took time to guide others one on one, in groups large and small, as well as through writing, discourse and the example of how he lived his life. Engrossed in learning, to use contemporary North American vernacular: "He talked the talk and walked the walk."

Guruji lived a life full of learning. This same opportunity is available to all of us.

Memories, Dreams, Reflections

by Shirley Daventry French
(Victoria, BC)

Since learning of the death of Guruji, B.K.S. Iyengar, on August 20th 2014, I have experienced a tumult of memories, dreams and reflections as I contemplate my loss and his legacy.

Memories, Dreams, Reflections is the title of a book by Carl Jung. It was required reading in a course I attended at Yasodhara Ashram almost 40 years ago, and remains on my bookshelf. Jung was a penetrating thinker. Profoundly moved by his personal revelations, I was inspired by his insight and in awe at the power of his mind.

The exemplary life and work of B.K.S. Iyengar inspire me in a similar manner with the added bonus that my learning from Guruji is not restricted to his writings or other people's accounts of his life and times. I have been fortunate to learn from him directly, to listen in person to many discourses, planned and impromptu.

In 1984 I had the additional honour to welcome Guruji as a guest in my home, to sit with him around a dining table and be nourished by a constant flow of ideas and insights. A walk down to the waterfront park near my home ended with an impromptu yoga lesson on a rock overlooking the beach. This

was Guruji's practical response to a question from me.

Guruji was not a renunciate although he was offered sannyas by Swami Sivananda. He followed the path of the householder, and relished this role while never letting it distract from the goal of self-discovery. He taught that the opportunities to learn are always there, and learning need never stop.

During a course he taught on his 85th birthday, he told us that yoga *sadhana* is bereft of mistakes but not the *sadhaka*. This mortal body is a spiritual tool. The journey of yoga is a search for the true self, *purusha* or *atman* which is our constant companion from birth to death.

Guruji was a consummate Master of Yoga, and such mastery comes from regular intense practice with the ego remaining firmly in its place. Such practice will spill over into all aspects of our life. The ego is always there, ready and waiting to assert itself and take the lead if given a chance, rather than playing its subsidiary role of serving the Self.

At the beginning of 1976 I took three months out of a busy life to live in an Ashram where I could learn more about yoga and put down deeper roots in its practice. At the end of this year, I had my first experience of *asana* and *pranayama* in the tradition of Mr. Iyengar.

These classes were taught by Norma Hodge who was trained in the Iyengar method and had studied with Guruji in Pune. Thanks to Norma, three years later I was a student in an Intensive course at the Institute taught by Guruji himself!

Each and every class with Guruji then and ever after was intense. He knew no other way. He was intolerant of anything less than maximum effort. When he corrected or adjusted us, once

Guruji prepared us well for his departure from this earthly life. The learning continues.



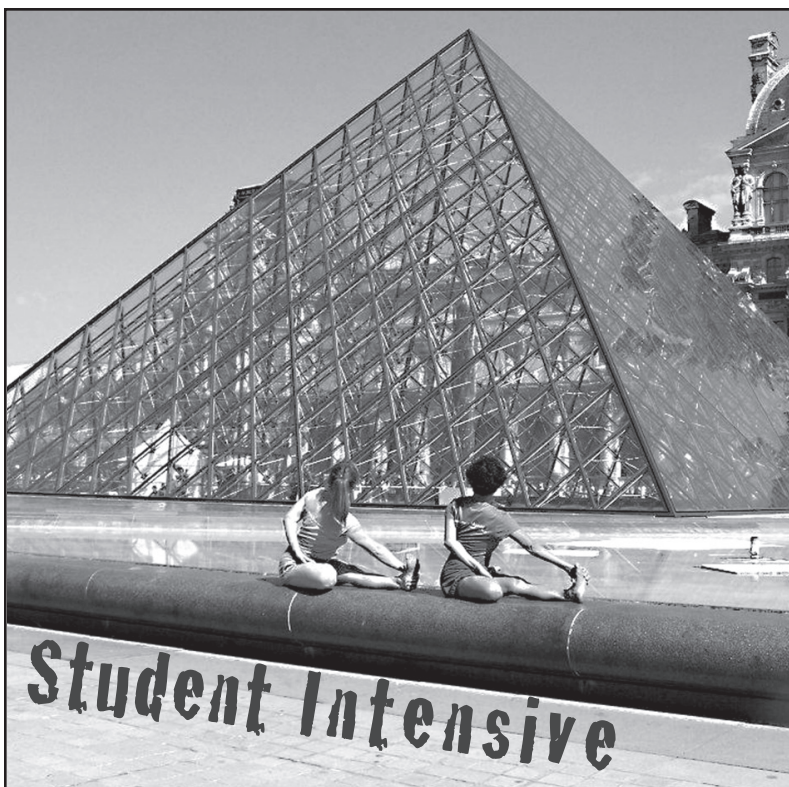
he was satisfied we were on the right track and before moving on to another student, he would insist that we sustain whatever effort he had demanded of us “any amount” and “to the maximum!”

One day in the library, Guruji was discussing different kinds of aspirants and reminded us that the goal is nearer for those who are more vigorous in their practice and far away for those who

approach it casually (sutra I.21). He told us that there are three levels of aspirant: mild, moderate and intense. Then he added: “I am intensely intense.” And not one person in that room doubted the truth of that statement. Guruji’s teaching was physically demanding, emotionally challenging and spiritually awakening!

Guruji has left his physical body, and in company with his pupils worldwide, I mourn the loss of a very great man and teacher whom I not only respected for the brilliance of his mind, his intelligence, his unparalleled teaching, and, with whom I was fortunate to have some personal contact. Iyengar the man and Iyengar the teacher were inseparable. His example and these teachings remain undiminished and available to all of us.

My sadness is cloaked in profound gratitude for a vast body of work, the tools of spiritual practice and the training in their use. Guruji prepared us well for his departure from this earthly life. The learning continues. ॐ



With Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler

August 31-September 4, 2015

9:30 am – 12:30 pm

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 follow.

Registration opens May 25, 2015

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

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Yoganusasanam – Geeta Iyengar’s Intensive, December 2014

by Adia Kapoor

“Yoganusasanam” was the title of Geetaji’s 70th birthday intensive, held in Pune, India from December 1-10, 2014. My only previous encounter with this word was in the first of Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras: 1.1 *Atha Yoganusasanam*

Atha: now

Yoga: joining or union

Anusasanam: advice, direction, instructions.

“With prayers for divine blessings, now begins an exposition of the sacred art of yoga.” (translation by B.K.S. Iyengar in his book *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*).

An exposition is truly an appropriate word for this event. More than 1,200 participants from over 52 countries joined together for ten days of intense *sadhana* under the expert guidance of Geetaji. Mornings each day consisted of four or five hours of *asana* and *pranayama*, transforming a massive arena of badminton courts into a *yogashala*. We practiced together, took lunch there together, and filled the space with the collective energy of our studies. It was no wonder that when Geetaji came onto the stage each morning, it was to a standing ovation. The event was incredibly well organized, staffed entirely by volunteers, and a testament to the power of a team of like-minded individuals devoted to their labours.

As if Geetaji’s birthday were not enough of a special event, the intensive also provided the opportunity to gather together with a diverse community of Iyengar students from around the world to honour the Iyengar family, and Guruji himself, through yoga. This event, coming so soon after Guruji’s passing from his physical body, provided those of us in collective mourning a way to come together and celebrate his life. From the first day she entered the arena, Geeta’s honesty about his absence, and her willingness to expose her grief, moved us all. Her raw emotions allowed us collective permission to carry those feelings in our hearts throughout the course. She explained that, even as his health had begun to deteriorate,

From the first day she entered the arena, Geeta’s honesty about his absence, and her willingness to expose her grief, moved us all. Her raw emotions allowed us collective permission to carry those feelings in our hearts throughout the course.



Students setting up for morning practice

Guruji had insisted that she go ahead with the event.

And so we gathered to practice together, to continue his work, and to deepen our resolve not to lose his legacy. We carried on in his name, and worked to honour him. His presence in the room was palpable, his light shining through his daughter and his students. The event lit a fire in all of us who attended. It burns brighter because of the experience.

The event was open to those who are beginners on the Iyengar path, students with minimum three years of practice. Though many attendees were seasoned practitioners, including many senior teachers from around the world, Geeta’s focus was on teaching the foundations of *asana* in order to teach beginners the basics of *pranayama*. She stated on the first day that, “as *savasana* has to be known to do *pranayama*, the *asanas* must be known to do *savasana*. In this world, everyone wants to just rush and run. This subject cannot be known objectively.”

We were divided into eight groups by country, given an identification number, colour-coded, and moved around the massive wooden floor of the arena each day, giving students different perspectives and ultimately a spot right in front of the stage. Take a moment and imagine over a thousand people in *salamba sarvangasana* at the same time! Huge screens were required to clearly see Geetaji on a platform at the front, and focus in on whatever she was explaining. Yet somehow, her eagle eyes zoomed out over the throng of bodies to pick out the one or two who were struggling. At times, I was convinced she was speaking directly to me!



Geeta amongst the volunteers

From the first day, Geetaji set us to task. We were reminded that we have chosen a divine path, and that we must stay on it, not give up, and not leave it. She told us to take the work that Gururji had given us and teach it honestly and truthfully for the future generations who will not have the opportunity to meet him personally. She reminded us that we do not know how much longer she herself will live. Therefore, we must pay attention to the details of her teaching. Once she is gone these details cannot be lost forever. This responsibility involves not only understanding the detailed actions of the poses, but also understanding what energy is being activated, and how to work with that energy.

We worked intensely, despite the course being intended for beginners. Right from the first morning, we strongly opened the armpits to prepare the chest for *pranayama*. In *urdhva hastasana* she demanded that we “lift the arms, elbows straight, take them higher, and now cinch the side skin in toward the back without compressing the spinal muscles. You must break the rigidity! Take the arms behind the ears! Reach!” It was an “uplifting” way to begin our intensive after such a long journey to reach India.

Geetaji wanted to impress upon us that learning standing poses in a slow and methodical way is integral to readying the body for *pranayama*. The body is naturally heavy. However, in *pranayama* the body and mind must be light. Bringing attention to the granular actions needed in standing poses teaches us how to lighten the body, which is the beginning of bringing lightness to the mind. Stability is key to that lightness, and can be achieved through the practice of standing *asana*.

Each day, we continued our conditioning for better *pranayama*. Geeta compelled us to reinvigorate the preliminary actions of poses to be sure the details of the actions were coming. We worked intensively every morning, each session running longer and longer. Despite her health challenges, she was determined to fill us with awareness.

During the intensive, Geeta turned seventy years old. She entered that morning to all singing “Happy Birthday!”

In the afternoons, following lunch with 1,000 attendees, senior Iyengar teachers organized conference-style sessions – different each day, and each day remarkable. Speeches, presentations, readings of articles, showing of films, dance and music performances – all connected through a theme of devotion to the study of yoga and its relationship to our daily lives.

We were treated to Abhijata, Gururji’s granddaughter, giving brilliant speeches about “how to take an Iyengar class” and “how to be an Iyengar student.” Abhijata told many moving personal stories about Gururji, which inspired us to make our own commitments. “Habit is a disease,” Gururji had said. She used a metaphor of a yoga class as a journey, just as life is a journey. You make a commitment to this journey. So why do you hold yourself back? It is somatic fear, holding patterns in the body that have become instinctual and reactive. “We seek freedom and yet we cling to bondage. When we receive a new instruction, we hold back. Or, we approach the pose with our old memories, we impose the old pose.”

A few afternoons we chanted the Yoga Sutras with Sunita, another of Gururji’s daughters. Sunita explained that the recitation in call and response are the two pillars of yoga (*abhyasa* and *vairagya*). In order to hear and to learn, we have an outward practice of listening. And in the response of chanting we have internal surrender to our Self. We had a great talk on the history of the Yogini, the female yogi, given by Swati Chanchani. Yoginis have been around as long as yogis, but served a more specific role in ancient times. These were women of great power, both feared and honoured. This was a fitting presentation for the intensive, as we were gathered here to seek guidance from and to honour of one of this generation’s greatest yoginis, Geeta Iyengar!

Students also spoke from the stage, like Mark Zambon. Mark is a US veteran who lost his fingertips and both his legs. He told an inspiring story about Iyengar yoga helping his recovery and changing his life. It was inspirational to see him practicing headstand!

This intensive had a transformative effect on me. And not just because I am now brave enough to wear Pune Bloomers to class!

Birjoo Metha read an article, an emotional tribute to Guruji, of personal experiences and last day accounts written by a medical doctor and longtime student. It was very heart-rending, and brought us all to deep silence. I was moved by a panel of practitioners describing the growth of Iyengar yoga in countries where Iyengar yoga is relatively new. Some have faced large barriers to practice, including government and religious bans on the practice.

During the intensive, Geeta turned seventy years old. She entered that morning to all singing “Happy Birthday!” Geeta gave us a surprise party for her birthday. Hundreds of children from the children’s program rushed in and took the center stadium. The energy of the entire space changed. It became so light. To celebrate her birthday, Geeta wanted us to feel what it was like to take a children’s class. We marched like soldiers. We flapped our arms like birds. We moved through poses quickly and my energy lifted. I loved every minute of it. The lesson for adults taking a children’s class is the value of movement. There was lightness. There was laughter. Geeta’s sense of humor came out so playfully, her years dropped away.

That afternoon, despite teaching all morning to the children and then a long class of inversions to the adults, despite it being her birthday and her being 70, she gave of herself for the afternoon session, answering questions. Some good questions and some “stupid” questions, as Geeta was quick to point out. She was brilliant and sharp. My favorite question was: “Geetaji, do you have any idea how much we love you?” Grinning from ear to ear, she said, “I know!”

A theme that Geeta expressed during the course is that adults are so attached to the body, we tend to turn quickly to excuses. We say we cannot do because of being stuck in our fears, the biggest fear being *abhinivesa*, fear of death. Guruji taught us how to live, work, and play through yoga. He also taught us how to die. His system of learning yoga develops the body and the courage and mental awareness to release our attachment to it. When it is time to live, we know how to live. When it is time to die, we are ready to let go. Opening up to this span of time via the path of yoga means learning to be more present from the beginning to the end. In our yoga practice, that means being even more attentive to the actions in our *asana* so that when we move into our *pranayama* practice, we can be more present in our inner world. From there, we can be more aware of our life force energy and our connection to the universe.

Guruji may not be physically with us, but his unequalled presence and energy was palpable whenever we were all practicing together. Wherever there is yoga, there is Guruji.

The intensive reminds us how much we have to keep learning, never letting our attention waiver in order to pass his teachings along accurately – not rigidly, but with deep understanding, respect, and love.



Adia Kapoor and Glenda Balkan Champagne during a break.

This intensive had a transformative effect on me. And not just because I am now brave enough to wear Pune Bloomers to class! Upon reaching the end of our ten days with Geeta, though it did go by just a little too fast, I was ready to live in the work of my practice at home. My body and practice will never be the same (in a good way of course!). I am overwhelmed by the volunteer work and organization of the event, but most of all, this global community of Iyengar yogis. Guruji spent his whole life sharing through yoga. His family also give so much to Iyengar yoga across the globe. There is no end to their generosity in yoga. It is our responsibility to take this teaching deep within ourselves in order to share with the world around us.

Guruji may not be physically with us, but his unequalled presence and energy was palpable whenever we were all practicing together. Wherever there is yoga, there is Guruji. It seems throughout Geeta’s Birthday Intensive, we celebrated Geeta’s birth and we honored her father’s life and death. As one participant wrote: “Thank you, Geeta for your time, your dedication, and your energy; thank you for your patience, your knowledge, and your wisdom; thank you for your fierceness and gentleness, your fearlessness and courage, your humor and criticism, your charity, your beauty, and your peace.”

As we all make our way back to our respective countries, yoga studios, and mats, we carry with us an invisible thread

binding us together as a community. As an Iyengar student and teacher, I know so little about the depths of this subject. Yet I know well the feeling of love and respect for the people who take the time, patience, and effort required to help us to be better human beings. This intensive was very much about *yoganusasanam*: the responsibility, the effort, the time, and the patience it takes to be a great student and teacher. B.K.S. Iyengar set very high and exacting standards. The intensive reminds us how much we have to keep learning, never letting our attention waiver in order to pass his teachings along accurately – not rigidly, but with deep understanding, respect, and love.

Each moment of each session is so full of inspirational teachings that it truly is impossible to share all here. The great

news is that the sessions were recorded and the DVD's are available. As well, many students kept blogs during the intensive.

Below are links to a few good ones:

<http://www.yogarockford.com/blog/>

<http://lisa.walford.com/>

<http://karensyogatravels.blogspot.in>

<http://rhondageraci.blogspot.in>

<http://susanallenlifeinthesixties.blogspot.jp> ॐ

ADIA KAPOOR HAS BEEN A STUDENT OF IYENGAR YOGA SINCE 2001, AND ACHIEVED HER INTRODUCTORY TEACHING CERTIFICATION IN 2013. SHE TEACHES AT THE IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA. THIS WAS HER FIRST TRIP TO PUNE, BUT LIKELY NOT HER LAST!

Reflections on Yoganusasanam: December 2014 in Pune

by Marilyn Shepherd

An Integrated Life

If I knew nothing else than that B.K.S. Iyengar's children loved him, that would be enough – but there is more. He lived an integrated life.

I cannot share all the details of a two week intensive with Geeta. I am going to focus on what is absorbing me still almost two months later. The intensive was largely a tribute to her father, Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar. Geeta's love and devotion shone through her eyes, her voice, her words and in her efforts to manage her physically challenged body. She brought tears to my eyes every day. They were the kind of tears that one gets when we see or hear something that is truly beautiful, pure.

As I reflect on some of the stories that were told by Geeta and Abhijata (Guruji's granddaughter), I begin to see how Guruji integrated the second chapter of the Yoga Sutras into his life. I am thinking about Kriya Yoga, the *tapas* – burning zeal, sustained practice, *svadhyaya* – the study of self and scriptures and *isvara pranidhana* – surrender to God.

Guruji, without a doubt had a burning zeal in regards to his practice. He had long practices, day after day, year

*He knew his life was not his own.
He surrendered his work, doing his best
always, letting it go and staying in
the present.*



Geeta entering with Abhijata to a standing ovation.

after year. His body of written work is evidence of his self-study and study of scriptures. He has lit the path for us with his long hours of focused attention that was required to complete it.

His devotion is reflected in his living a simple life, being a householder, with family, contributing to the community. His work in rebuilding Bellur is evidence that he was not

attached to the fruits of his labor. He knew his life was not his own. He surrendered his work, doing his best always, letting it go and staying in the present.

What often happens when we are around someone who has excelled is that we put them on a pedestal and think "we cannot do that." What would he say when he would show us an *asana*? "Now, you do!"

One of the stories that was told was when Guruji was quite ill in the hospital. Abhi and others were hanging around, just to be with him. He apparently asked them if they had done their practice. They said no, they had wanted to stay with him. He sent them away to do their practice.

My trip to India, to Geeta's Intensive in 2014, stoked the fire in my heart and reminded me I have a lifetime's worth of firewood in what Guruji has left us. It is still up to me to keep

the fire burning. I can do that every moment of every day by following his lead. May I deepen my practice, continue to study and learn. May I purify my heart, remembering that my life is not my own – surrendering my work and my life to my Source. Thank you Geeta for sharing your father! ॐ

MARILYN SHEPHERD IS A CERTIFIED INTERMEDIATE JUNIOR 1 TEACHER WHO LIVES IN VICTORIA AND IS CURRENTLY TEACHING IN COLWOOD.

Yoganusasanam: Lives Take On Many Shapes

by Glenda Balkan Champagne

Lives take on many shapes. B.K.S. Iyengar's life was dedicated to the subject of Yoga from root to tip. His devotion and discipline transformed him from a sickly young man to the giant spirit he became. As a householder, he was modest and retained his friends and acquaintances throughout his life. However, in his work his genius left no cell unexplored.

I often wonder how Geeta Iyengar withstood the pressure of being Iyengar's daughter. She is a great teacher in her own right, yet her presentation is entirely different from that of her father. I came to this practice too late to study the basics of Introductory Yoga with B.K.S. Iyengar. My only experience of him was in Pune in 2013, where he practiced supported back bends at the back of the class, viewing us from upside down and issuing instructions to us of such subtle brilliance through his granddaughter Abhijata that they transformed my understanding of yoga as well as myself.

Geeta's teaching is fundamental, yet no less profound.

Her instructions are basic. "Press the back heel!" "Front buttock forward!" "Front knee back!" We've heard these instructions since our first Iyengar class, and yet they were spoken with such strength of spirit that resistance was impossible. Her power held me in the pose. It took me further than I thought myself capable of. It opened spaces within that have been neglected and once opened cannot be closed.

There are floodgates in all of us. Our lives shape and create them. When we are injured, for example, surrounding muscles may tighten to protect and guard us against pain. But once

I came back from this experience with an understanding that there is so much work to be done, and that not only is it necessary – it is possible!



Leslie said that in a few generations they'll be asking if Iyengar was in fact more than one person, just as we wonder if Patanjali could possibly have written all those treatises in one lifetime.

healed, the habit of protection remains as does the memory. We become fearful of letting go. In Pune we were reminded that Guruji only lived in the present. What happened yesterday is now past. What happened a minute ago – past. He said "You take your memory to the pose." "Do! Why are you holding yourselves back?" "Habit is a disease".

Geeta's forceful instructions to the external body in *asana*, broke the locks of my resistance.

She taught only *asana* for the first two days. On the third day after an *asana* session she brought us back for *pranayama*. Quite suddenly all the work made sense! She taught us how to sit and where to focus our attention. Even in *pranayama* there was no change in her voice. Her words and the energy behind them remained strong, forceful, irresistible. She'd repeat the instructions to the chest, the shoulders, the dorsal, the seventh to ninth vertebrae with the same insistence that she taught standing poses. As if by magic, my eyes began to see the working of my inner ribs, the spread of my diaphragm, the opening lift of my heart.

One of the greatest gifts of this work was brought home to me in a conversation with Leslie and Adia in mid-January, weeks after the convention. Leslie said that in a few generations they'll be asking if Iyengar was in fact more than one person, just as we wonder if Patanjali could possibly have written all those treatises in one lifetime. B.K.S. Iyengar was one man devoted to his work and to his family. He was disciplined, endlessly curious, tirelessly committed. His daughter, Geeta embodies all the vulnerabilities of human existence. She is in pain much of the time. She can be fierce and frustrated, forthright in the face of questions she feels are – in her own word – “stupid”. Yet the intensity with which she voiced the work, the sparkling flame in her eyes, touched 1200 souls from 57 countries around the world who gathered in a badminton arena in Pune, India.



The Canadians at the Intensive.

I came back from this experience with an understanding that there is so much work to be done, and that not only is it necessary – it is possible!

There is a world both outside and within that needs attention. There are resistances to unlock and fears to shed. Despite our limitations, externally or internally imposed, we are each more than we appear and infinitely more than we know. ॐ

GLENDAL BALKAN-CHAMPAGNE IS A CERTIFIED INTERMEDIATE JUNIOR II TEACHER. THIS WAS HER SECOND TRIP TO PUNE AND SHE IS HAPPILY MAKING PLANS FOR HER NEXT TRIP IN 2016 WITH HER HUSBAND ROGER.

A Celebration of Gururji's Life

December 14th 2014 IYCV

by Johanna Godliman

An abundance of home made foods arrived early, brought by eager hands. Volunteers made light of the many simple tasks of ushering and unpacking, slicing and presenting all that was provided for those who attended. Shirley led a vigorous Yoga practise for those who came early. Brandy Baybutt, gave a free-flowing solo homage to Gururji, and Anne Glover insightfully enacted the fable of a resourceful baby monkey, wise beyond her years who outsmarts a hungry wily crocodile. At times poignant, the humour of Anne's story balanced well with the more introspective tone of Brandy's dance piece. Stories focus the mind, and as an audience there is a shared experience, a joy, an unspoken participation.

How blessed we are to have such a strong and supportive community here in Victoria. Many of our senior and other teachers, and a good number of students enjoyed, laughed and benefited from the warmth of the day.

The celebration was a reminder of our individual abilities to give, to share of our talents, and to remember the importance of friendship and support.

Gururji is no longer of this earth, but his life and legacy will continue to inspire us for many years to come. ॐ

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Postcards From Pune

By Jayne Lloyd-Jones and Jane Munro

POSTCARD #1 • NOV. 7, 2014

~ Geeta taught Monday night's class this week, with no fanfare or announcement. We are waiting to see if she will teach again tomorrow evening.

~ The location for Geeta's birthday teaching sessions has changed to accommodate the 2,000+ students now signed up. In class today the session was still being advertised.

~ Model Colony's gentrification is definitely under way. The stray dogs are looking healthier; the sidewalk paving in red and yellow bricks is almost complete. And we've only seen one pig around.

~ Jayne has signed up to observe medical classes and is wishing there was a diagnosis on each student to better understand the prop set-up for each individual.

~ Several of the medical class patients were young children, which surprised me. With several children playing in the room, Abhijata's daughter and

one or two others, there was a community atmosphere.

~ Prashant's new book is out, and Jane has one of the first copies! Watch this space for her review in the coming weeks.

~ Prashant's points this week included: 98% of you come here to improve your physical poses instead of deepening your consciousness; and this rigidity in focus on 'Photo-asana' leads to fundamentalism. So, we're yoga fundamentalists. Jayne thinks he even mentioned terrorists.

~ He's also been talking about using the breath as a tool for integration (which he described as a necessary step on the path to unity or Yog). One of his metaphors for this was the breath as "Queen Bee" that all the senses and body systems follow. At first, Jane thought he was saying the breath was like "green beans" – blame it on the street noise pouring in through the open windows.

~ Prashant claims you can use the breath to increase the strength of bones and increase their intake of calcium. So, you don't need to take multi-vitamin and mineral pills.

~ Of course, all this is filtered through our memories of what we could pick up during class. But, we both agree that his points have been well constructed and we've been able to follow the thread of his discourse better this time. We don't know if this is related to the fact that they are recording his classes now.

~ Guruji's absence during practice times casts a poignancy over them: every time we walk past his trestle to get props, he's not there. But he is at the same time very much there with all the photos of him around the hall.

~ Raya has had a haircut! He looks rather corporate – no more abundant curls.



~ Geeta is teaching! She taught three classes last week: *asanas* Monday and Thursday plus *pranayama* Friday. The *pranayama* was a particular treat. Her instructions were insightful and easy to follow. There were many peaceful, smiling faces as we put on our shoes and drifted off into the night.

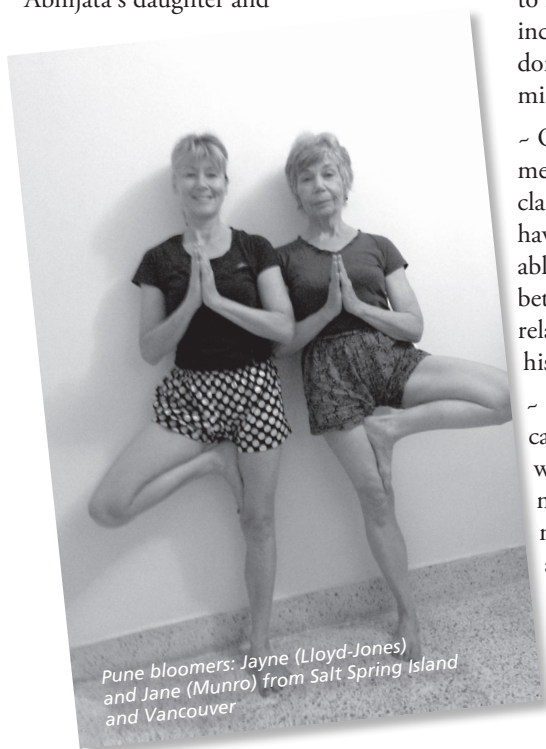
~ "Westerners" are now given a choice on Monday and Thursday between the 7 am class (Prashant) and the 6 pm class (so far, Geeta).

~ The division between "Gents" and "Ladies" classes has disappeared. (But Prashant has yet to join the non-sexist language movement: today he spoke of "man-making" and kept using "he" as a generic pronoun.)

~ Gulnaz taught an excellent 9:30 am class (formerly a Ladies class) on Wednesday to mostly women but two brave men attended. So, last week we had three classes with Geeta, two with Prashant, and one with Gulnaz.

~ Babies are a hot topic. Prashant and Geeta have both mentioned "the granddaughter." We've heard Abhi's daughter's voice downstairs when we're upstairs practicing and seen her in the medical class and outside the Iyengar's house. Prashant has drawn analogies with babies or children in every class. On Saturday, he built a complex description of "psyche-analysis" that culminated with "when baby goes to sleep, mother can

POSTCARD #2 • NOV. 13, 2014



Pune bloomers: Jayne (Lloyd-Jones) and Jane (Munro) from Salt Spring Island and Vancouver

do her work for baby” – i.e., when monkey mind gets hypnotized, psyche can get to work. And there are more babies coming. Jayne noticed Raya’s pregnant wife in the medical class.

~ Not only are there new red and yellow sidewalks going in – the park also has red bricked paths edged with red and white tiles circling an expanded children’s playground. There’s a looping network of hard-packed walking paths, jet sprinklers spraying undergrowth, fresh white and red bands around the trunks of trees, and a bevy of attendants sweeping fallen leaves.

~ We set off at 6:30 am on Sunday to join a Heritage Walk around Pune’s old town that was to start at 7 am. After adventures with rickshaws, we missed the start (this was a very well-organized walk which began precisely on time) so had to speed walk across Shivaji Bridge to catch up with the tour group at their first stop, Shaniwar Wada. We hadn’t realized that the Maratha empire, ruled from Pune,

stretched over most of the Indian subcontinent and included parts of Pakistan and Bangladesh. Our guide was an architect with a passion for preserving Pune’s heritage buildings. Afterwards, we first found a clean washroom in a restaurant near the Mahatma Phule Market, then enjoyed masala dosas and chai. Refreshed, we crossed the street and bought spices.

~ Last night, Geeta spoke of how bad “” headstands have been and undertook to renovate Jane’s *sirsasana*. I was right under her nose in the front row. She sent Gulnaz to hold “the Canadian’s” ankles (so I wouldn’t topple over) and Abhi to lift my shoulders. Abhi is very strong! Her hands felt like a pair of hydraulic jacks hoisting my head four inches off the ground. “She has to learn to do it at the wall,” Geeta observed. Two tri-folded blankets, a wall, and some prompting later, I got a glimpse of what Geeta is looking for. This is not going to be a quick fix – but, what luck!

~ Jayne has registered to observe medical classes, wanting to learn more about set-ups for pregnant students and other specific conditions. The first class proved to be a frustrating experience, as observers have little idea what they are observing, not being privy to the injury or illness. However after gleaning tips like “NEVER sit down!,” from a US teacher assisting the Indians, I have managed to make myself useful and am assisting several people in the class, under the supervision of an Indian teacher.

~ We attended an evening meditation at the Indira Ashram next door on Saturday. Our landlady, who is a devotee of Sri Aurobindo’s two disciples who founded the ashram, invited us along. It’s a graceful airy building dating from the Raj; it has its own temple inside and well-tended gardens with memorials to the two spiritual leaders.

POSTCARD #23 • Nov. 27, 2014

~ This week Geeta has been teaching “spine extensions” – not to be called “backbends.” She began with *gomukhasana*, prepping each arm independently, then taking *gomukhasana* into the backward extension of *parsvottanasana* to get even more opening in the armpit which allowed us to draw the upper arm further back from the ear and down. Result: both Jane and Jayne caught four fingers in each hand!

~ In her second class, we did *baddha padmasana* to open the upper chest. Her work with every aspect of this pose was fascinating.

~ “Why do you need a blanket for your head in *savasana*? Next week you’ll be wearing helmets!”

~ “Remove your specs: you don’t need specs to see your soul! You meet the Atman face to face.”

~ Yesterday, Prashant got onto the topic of “intensives.” (RIMYI is abuzz with preparations for Geeta’s Intensive.) Prashant said he is “educating” us in a way that cannot be accomplished in a workshop or intensive.

~ “Don’t invite me to come to you. The mountain does not go to Muhammad, Muhammad must go to the mountain!”

~ “Asking me to come to you is like asking the sun to revolve around the earth.”

Prashant takes a forensic interest in words – often viewing them as evidence from a crime site. (Of course, he makes up words too!)

~ “Apart – ment: what is the fascination of being separated from others?”

~ “Corner your consciousness by taking it to a specific part of the body.”

~ “Employ psyche-analysis to deepen your practice.”

~ “Hypnotize monkey mind with cyclical breathing so you can do your yoga practice without interruption.”

~ “RIMYI is an ‘academy’ for study and experimentation. A ‘laboratory.’ Why use the word ‘studio’ for yogaaaah? Because you are striving for ‘photo-asana’!”

~ We had another cracking class Wednesday morning from Gulnaz who picked up on and deepened the work Geeta introduced Monday night. Gulnaz is clear and



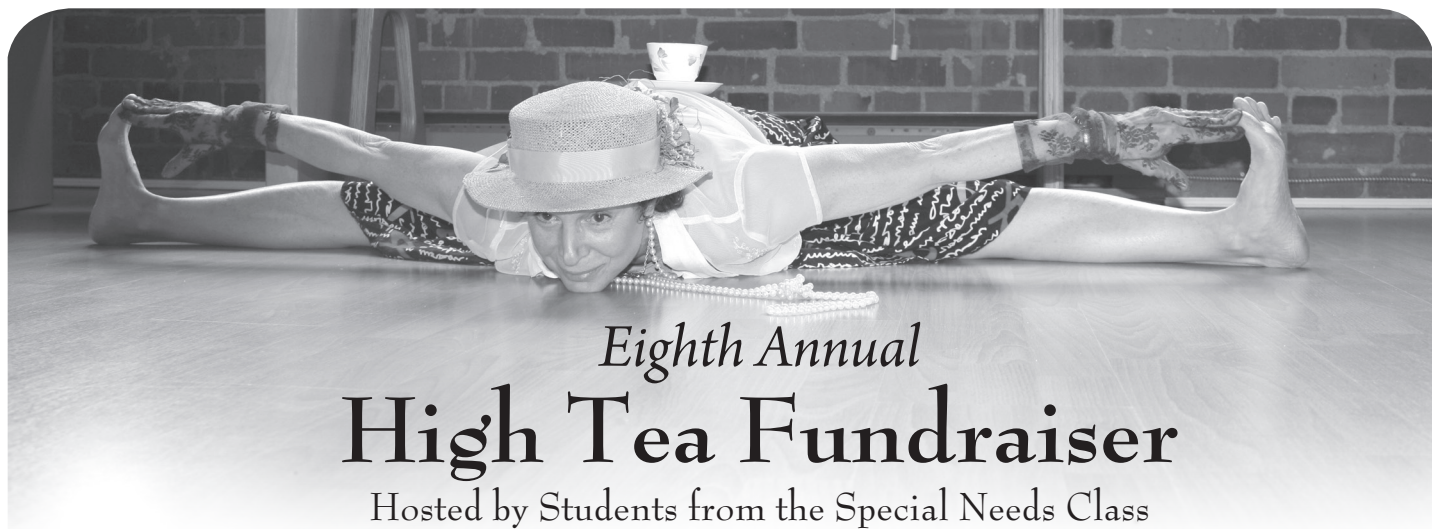
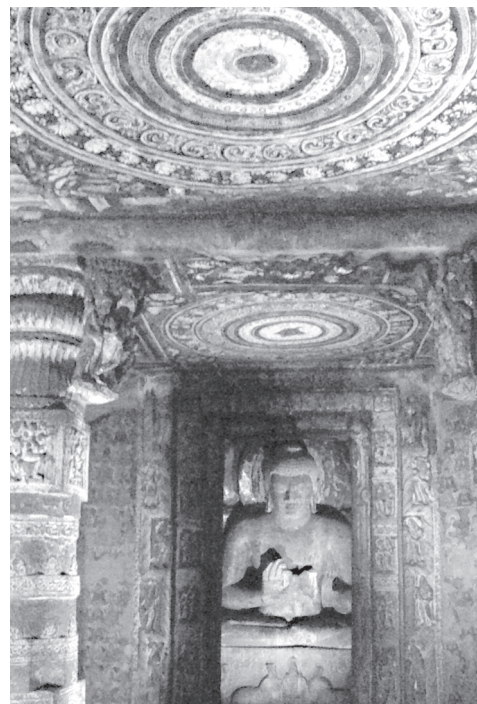
demanding; she doesn’t miss anything or anyone. She produces amazing results from us, while retaining a warm relationship with the class.

~ We made the six-hour drive (through pouring rain) to Ellora with its Buddhist, Hindu and Jain caves on Saturday after Prashant's 7 am class. En-route, we saw Aurangabad's caves and mini Taj Mahal.

~ Sunday, we visited the amazing Buddhist and Hindu caves at Ajanta (dating from 200 BC to 650 AD). Their monolithic sculptures, beautiful paintings, and the astonishing feats involved in carving these temples and residential caves into the basalt cliffs (then decorating them!), left us reflecting on the transitory nature of our own art and cultures.

~ At dawn on Monday, five of us entered one of the main Buddhist cave-temples (from 750 AD) in Ellora and had it all to ourselves, except for a yellow dog who had followed us in. Later, we saw her with her five pups lounging on one of the paths. By then, there were throngs of tourists. But that early light shone in through the entrance and through a round window cut

into the upper level and gradually intensified. We sat on the smooth, cool stone floor and meditated for some time – a memorable experience!ॐ



Eighth Annual **High Tea Fundraiser**

Hosted by Students from the Special Needs Class
Thursday, March 19, 2015, 3:00 - 5:00 pm

\$20 per person

Free for children

Please note:

Payment of the ticket price does not qualify as a donation. Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$20 or more.

Enjoy a variety of delectable teas, scrumptious homemade sweets and savories.

Daryl Lechinsky on acoustic guitar;
Contemporary Dance by Brandy Baybutt

Win something amazing at our silent auction and draw.

Feel free to wear your favorite hat!

Proceeds will assist the purchase of new props, the replacement of old props, and fund bursaries for Special Needs classes.

From My Notebooks, Winter 2015

by Leslie Hogya

August 20, 2014 was the day the world shifted for all Iyengar students, when we had news of Guruji's death. So many tributes to him have been written in journals, newspapers, interviews, postings on Facebook, and *Yoga Rahasya*. *Yoga Rahasya*, edited by Rajvi Mehta, published in Mumbai, arrived in my mailbox with the many tributes from family and long time students.

Rajvi wondered if in years to come people will wonder if there was just one B.K.S. Iyengar. How could one person do so many things, write so many books, accomplish so much in one life?

Prashant, his son said he was a common man, and had the same quality of relationships with people he knew from the early days, before he was world famous. He treated people the same no matter their station in life.

One of Guruiji's gifts was that each interaction with him was fresh, direct and intense. On my last visit in 2013, he celebrated his 95th birthday. More than a thousand students came to the dinner at Govinda Gardens, that the Iyengar family hosted, to pay tribute. He was incredibly generous and a gracious host.

At 95 I could see he was thinner than on previous visits. He had given up the stairs for an elevator, but he was in the practice hall, astounding us still with his ability to hold back arches for prolonged periods; or getting his granddaughter Abhijata to penetrate a pose. Other times we would see him dangling his great granddaughter, Satvika, by her ankles or sitting in the hall talking to visitors from around the world.

At 95, he came almost daily to help in medical class. Before I arrived in Pune last fall, I had written to him for help with a severe shoulder injury (see *IYCV Newsletter, Fall 2014 issue*).



One of my first days at the institute, he called me over to see how much movement I had in the arm. He said, "This will not change fast." I was humbled that he remembered my letters, and that he invited me to his side.

He willingly worked with me in medical class and gave me a sequence

"We say we do yoga for health, we must do it to spread yoga. We must go inside and spread the skin....I am measuring the universe in my body."

of poses that has ultimately helped me regain most of the use of my arm. He was preparing to entertain the world at his birthday, and yet, he made time to help me. I will always treasure the memory of his touch, his care, his attention.

Almost daily he would appear in medical class. When he worked with me, all the foreign teachers crowded to see what he was doing. On other days, some of them would then assist me because what I needed to do required more than one set of hands to hold down my shoulder, or lift my chest. I appreciate the teachers at the institute, and those friends from around the world who helped. One day, he came upon me in the modified *urdhva mukha svanasana* (upward facing dog) I was given to practice, and he adjusted what I was doing. Then he scowled at me, saying, "You have to remember!" How could I not?? I was almost afraid to return the next day, yet, afraid to miss his care and eagle eye.

When I took my leave of him for the last time, I knelt down, and he asked about the shoulder. And then he smiled, "God Bless you." I hated to leave his side. Now it is more profound, as it was the last time I would see those eyes with such strength, wisdom, and such compassion.

The visit preceding this was 2010.

On that visit, there was a smaller scale celebration for his 92nd birthday. At the evening discourse, Guruji told us he was grateful to his parents and his wife. He felt that he would never have accomplished all he did without the support of his wife Ramamani. Then he made this profound statement: "We say we do yoga for health, we must do it to spread yoga. We must go inside and spread the skin....I am measuring the universe in my body."

On several occasions during that visit, he spoke to me while he was at his desk in the library. I asked about his projects in Bellur. (Bellur is his home village, for which he formed a trust to improve the lives of the villagers.) There was damage to the water tank, and it had to be rebuilt. Also a wall had to be constructed around the school, clinic and other buildings in a large compound named for his wife, Ramamani. Since there are young girls at the school – it was necessary to take precautions. I said, "Ramamani Fort" and this got him laughing. Then he explained the children who have now completed high school want to continue studying. He realized the money needed to start a college would have to be enough to sustain it even if he is not there. He related that the grounds have been beautified as there are more gardens and trees now.

A few days later, I saw he was reading our newsletter. It was the issue with Lauren Cox's drawing of the tree of yoga on the

cover. He chuckled when I said, “You see how we used your book ‘Tree of Yoga’ as inspiration.”

That day, I had returned from a visit to Wadia College. I had taken the opportunity to talk about yoga and to teach a few poses to the students. The students asked me why I kept coming to India. I looked at him and related that I had said: “...because of you Guruji. You are the living master of yoga.”

My friend who is a professor there had bought a copy of *Light on Yoga* for the college library.

He reminisced with, “I visited there in the 30s but no one who had been there then would still be there.”

Another day, he said he had spent three hours on his correspondence. I commented that this would leave him very little time to do his own writing. “Yes, I am writing a new book on the sutras tracing the links. There are 15 chapters, I have rewritten three or four times.” (This would have been the *Core of the Yoga Sutras*.) He was sitting with paper and pen, as he wrote all his books by hand and then others would type up his manuscripts.

“Now I must read this latest draft and make corrections.”

During morning classes in these later years, he would be practicing at the side of the hall when his granddaughter Abhijata was teaching, and one day he exclaimed, “You came to learn — we should see change. Learn to do and do to learn. Connect intelligence of side ribs to heels...”



He was passionate when teaching, wanting for us to catch his insights, to practice and understand for ourselves. He was teacher, family man, healer, scientist, artist, philosopher, author, humanitarian, and friend.

Everything he did he did from the heart.

With deepest gratitude,

Leslie ॐ



Happenings at the Centre

Clockwise from top left:

*Guruji's Celebration of Life:
Glenda Balkan-Champagne and Shirley
Daventry-French sharing stories about Pune.*

*Anne Glover enchants birthday celebration
attendees with a story.*

Introducing teachers at the 2014 Open House.



The Essence of Guruji's Teachings

by Geeta S. Iyengar

THIS ARTICLE FIRST APPEARED IN YOGA RAHASYA,
VOL. 2, NO. 4.

The body is like a vessel filled not only with cells but also, with energy and consciousness. A body, without consciousness and energy, is dead.

The theme of his teaching

The body is like a vessel filled not only with cells but also with energy and consciousness. A body, without consciousness and energy, is dead. We therefore have three instruments, i.e. body (*sarira*), energy (*prana*) and consciousness (*citta*). That *prana sakti*, *sarira sakti* and *citta sakti* have to be brought in alignment with *atma sakti* was the theme (*sutra*) on which the whole teaching was built. The practice of *asana* and *pranayama* undoubtedly generated a tremendous *prana sakti* in us. It is primarily this *prana*, or bio-energy, which prevents and combats disease.

The tussle begins when the consciousness cannot take the tremendous energy that is generated by the practice of *asana* and *pranayama*. The energy produced by the body gets wasted if the consciousness cannot take it or the consciousness may be too strong and that damages the body. Whichever the case, both may break. The body is like a small machine and the energy is like electricity. The body gets damaged if it receives high voltage. Therefore, none of us can afford to have even a single extra or unwanted movement in the body or forego the awareness which was created. We must not cheat ourselves and our consciousness or abuse our energy and awareness.

Physical extension and mental expansion

Guruji pointed out the difference between the stretch of the physical fibre (muscles, bones, nerves, joints, etc.) and the expansion of the mental fibre. The body may have the capacity to extend and flex and increase the physical span of movement, its elasticity, firmness and steadiness, but how do we charge it with consciousness? That is exactly what was taught – the right utilization of energy with the awareness of consciousness and vice versa.

A gap remains between the body and the consciousness even when a disciplined body tries to go into a posture with all the cellular adjustments. This gap is like a black hole. One has to fill this gap by bringing awareness into it. Awareness brings light into the gap which is dark.

Awareness and consciousness

Awareness is the servant or messenger of consciousness. Consciousness is *chaitanya sakti* or *mahat*, which exists in us as part of *vishva caitanya sakti*. It is *vibhu* – all-pervading but needs fuel to function. That fuel is will power and *prana* is the flame.

Prana and *citta* are like a couple going together. *Citta* moves when *prana* moves and vice versa. Unfortunately, we often fail to observe and witness this movement and the gap between the body and consciousness remains. The function of witnessing is expressed through the will. The gap between the body and the consciousness persists when the consciousness is not charged with will power. Only with the will power of consciousness can the servant (awareness) reach and fill the gap. Will is the fuel for consciousness and breath is the fuel for energy. Breath ignites the *prana* and will ignites the *citta*.

The freedom created by asanas and pranayama

We can create space within by the practice of *asana* and *pranayama*. Space is freedom, a new opening, but it is *avidya* if the 'space' remains dark. This dark 'space' has to be illuminated with the 'big bank' of *prana sakti* and *citta sakti* similar to the thunderbolt that results when two clouds collide. However, the disparity remains when there is too much 'space' and not enough *prana sakti* or *citta sakti*. Similarly, disparity remains even if there is too much *prana sakti* and not enough *citta sakti* or vice versa. We have to measure 'space', *prana sakti* and *citta sakti*, and apply them evenly.

We have to create 'space' for *prana sakti* and *citta sakti* when we perform *asana* and *pranayama*. Practitioners, when they work only at the physical level, often do not create this 'space' and do not observe how each cell has its own intelligence. This 'space' is seen by those who penetrate further. However, the 'space' should not be left empty or it kills the practitioner.

The *pranic* energy charged with breath and consciousness charged with will power have to reach the 'space'. This is real freedom. It is freedom with fullness rather than emptiness.

The disparity between cells, energy, and consciousness should not be allowed in *asana* and *pranayama*, whether it is with reference to stability or mobility, firmness or lightness, expansion or extension, contraction or release. To bring this parity is Yoga.

Guruji brought this new awareness to us by showing the ways of filling the gaps between *prana sakti* and *citta sakti* in the entire body as a single entity through right performance of almost all *asanas* as a union of *prana* in *citta*. ॐ



Heart of Yoga

by Jane McFarlane

Shirley Daventry French and Ann Kilbertus began this year's Heart of Yoga workshop by asking us to read "The Essence of Guruji's Teachings," [*Yoga Rahasya*, Vol. 2, No. 4] an article written by Geeta S. Iyengar.

Here are some excerpts from the article juxtaposed with some of my impressions from the workshop and reading:

The body is like a vessel filled not only with cells but also with energy and consciousness. A body without consciousness and energy, is dead.

Shirley described the body of a baby as charged with life. Then she described the first time she saw a corpse and knew without a doubt that the 'person' was absent from the body.

The capital we are born with, the human body, remains unutilized for most of us. [B.K.S. Iyengar quotation]

The body is like a small machine and the energy is like electricity.

It is a sacred pattern-maker to house and to distribute sacred energy.

Shirley reminded us that Mr. Iyengar said "The body is my temple, and *asanas* are my prayers."

Guruji pointed out the difference between the stretch of the physical fibre...and the expansion of the mental fibre. The body may have the capacity to extend and flex and increase the physical span of movement...but how do we charge it with consciousness?

The physical fibre and the mental fibre are to be differentiated. The mental fibre must be expanded with the stretch of the physical fibre.

The tissues and organs of the body develop from three layers of germ cells that make up the early embryo. Moving from outer to innermost layer: epithelial (inner and outer skin) and nerve tissue (including the brain) arise from the ectoderm, muscle and connective tissue from the mesoderm, and the internal organs from the endoderm.

Everything cannot be observed by our two eyes. Each pore of the skin should act like an eye. Your skin is the most sensitive organ. [B.K.S. Iyengar quotation]

Asana should be performed without creating aggressiveness in the muscle spindles or the skin cells. Space must be created between muscle and skin so that so that the skin receives the actions of the muscles, joints and ligaments. The skin then sends messages to the brain, mind and intelligence which judge the appropriateness of those actions. In this way the principles of *yama* [societal moral restraints] and *niyama* [personal moral restraints] are involved and action and reflection harmonize...Conative action [volition] is the exertion of the organs of action. Cognitive action is the perception of the results of that action. When the two are fused together the discriminative faculty of the mind acts to guide the organs of action and perception to perform the *asanas* more correctly; the rhythmic flow of energy and awareness is experienced evenly and without



interruption both centripetally and centrifugally throughout the channels of the body. A pure state of joy is felt in the cells and the mind. The body, mind and soul are one. This is the manifestation of *dharana* [concentration] and *dhyana* [meditation] in the practice of an *asana*. [From Mr. Iyengar's commentary on sutra II.46, the definition of *asana*.]

We can create space within by the practice of *asana* and *pranayama*... but it is *avidya* [ignorance] if the space remains dark. This dark space has to be illuminated with the 'big bang' of *prana shakti* [bio-energy power] and *citta shakti* [consciousness power] similar to the thunderbolt that results when two clouds collide. However, the disparity remains when there is too much 'space' and not enough *prana shakti* or *citta shakti*. Similarly, disparity remains even if there is too much *prana shakti* and not enough *citta shakti* or vice versa. We have to measure 'space', *prana shakti* and *citta shakti*, and apply them evenly.

Shirley had us try full arm balance in the middle of the room. Years ago, she would always teach this pose at the wall, until the day Elizabeth Peckham did it without the wall when the pose was called out. Elizabeth (present this weekend years later) and Brandy Baybutt demonstrated

in the room. Then Shirley asked Jana Bodiley to try. Jana had never tried before, but was confident at the wall. Shirley provided touch and go fingertip guidance and Jana held briefly unsupported. Jana (and the group observing) was spontaneously joyful.

I have passed through the fleeting moment of unsupported full arm balance, just before arriving at the wall and just after leaving the wall, for years without refining the energy and consciousness required to extend that moment.

Habitual movement is quick but lacks consciousness. Learning movements are awkward but aware. Yoga demands that we continuously go beyond habit, beyond efficiency, beyond grace, and beyond personal expression.

The path to cessation of movements in the consciousness requires the gradual empirical study of disciplined movement from outer body to inner body to embryonic cell.

Ann recalled Geeta saying that Mr. Iyengar said that "to reach *citta vrtti nirodha* [cessation of movements in consciousness] we need to have *guna* [natural attributes/instincts] *vrtti nirodah*, *indriya* [senses of perception and organs of action] *vrtti nirodah*, *snayu* [muscles and sinews] *vrtti nirodah*, *prana* [bio-energy] *vrtti nirodah*, *mano* [mind] *vrtti nirodah*,

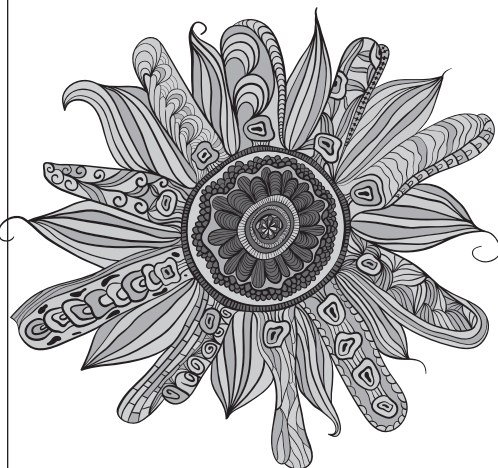
buddhi [discriminative intelligence] *vrtti nirodah*, *ahamkara* [source of 'I' or 'me'] *vrtti nirodah*, and finally *citta* [consciousness] *vrtti nirodah*. For each of these restraints Patanjali gave *ashtanga* yoga, namely *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi*.

Guruji brought this new awareness to us by showing the ways of filling the gaps between *prana shakti* and *citta shakti* in the entire body as a single entity through right performance of almost all *asanas* as a union of *prana* in *citta*.

Why 'almost all' and not 'all *asanas*'?

What about *Savasana*, the *asana* we offer at the end of every class?

On Sunday, in *Savasana*, Shirley asked us to feel our connection with others in the room and, as cars passed by on the street below, with others in our capital city. Perhaps the city is a vessel filled not only with cells but also with energy and consciousness. In tandem with the ocean waves that come up and down the shore, the generations of people come back and forth to the shore, pausing to commune with the great body that they arose from and return to. ॐ



SUMMER Early Morning PRACTICE

Slide into summer with this
early morning practice
with Wendy Boyer

Monday to Friday, July 6-10, 7-8 am
Non-Members \$55, Members \$50

Congratulations!



Congratulations to Nancy Searing
who achieved Intermediate Junior 2
at the October assessment
in Vancouver.

Less is More

by Athena George

A few years ago, one of my yoga students gave me a thank-you card. He was in his eighties. During yoga classes, he groaned in the poses, often seizing up with cramps in his legs and feet. I don't remember what he wrote, but I do remember what he slipped into the card. I see it every day, fixed to my filing cabinet, a purple fridge magnet that says, in bold white letters: I TOTALLY CHEAT AT YOGA.

It's funny. But why? Nothing to do with my student—for him I had only admiration. I see myself, bending my knees in *uttanasa* when the teacher's back is turned or coming out of a headstand in my home practice before the timer rings. Over the years, in Shirley Daventry French's Going Deeper workshop, whenever I've chosen to observe rather than participate, a choice offered to teachers, I feel like I'm a cheat.

Here's what I do to counter this feeling that I'm a slacker, and it might seem crazy, but I try to write down every word Shirley says. This isn't as hard as it sounds. She uses short sentences and leaves silences for the words to translate into actions in her students' bodies. I even underline the words she emphasizes. In this past workshop, my scribbled transcript of her seven hours of instruction filled twenty-one pages.

When I'm back at home, I read aloud her words while I'm practicing. Sometimes I memorize her instructions and try them out on my students. Words are tricky things for yoga teachers. We often use too many.

All the students lay face-down on their mats while I sat on a bolster, leaning against the wall. Two other teachers also observed. Shirley strode around the room—she has short legs, but she can move. She said, loud enough for everyone to hear, but not shouting, “Curl your toes under. Pull up your kneecaps. Lift your

legs off the floor. Cut your tailbone in. As you lift your buttocks off the floor, lifting your chest and straightening your arms.” And, just like that, everyone is doing upward dog.

“Bend your elbows and lower yourself.” Now everyone is down.

Why do we always think more is better? Paring something down to what is required is beautiful. And it's not as easy as it looks. When I teach, I catch myself using unnecessary words, teaching too many points or filling in spaces that should be silence. Fear of looking stupid? Fear of not seeming important or interesting enough? It takes a lot of years of experience to know and trust the core actions of the poses; Shirley has been at it for over forty years and every word she uses has a purpose.

On the second repetition of upward dog, she added only one new action, “Lift part way. Don't be in a hurry to straighten your arms. When they are bent, bring the front armpits up.”

She had the class do five repetitions of the pose and everyone's faces looked flushed. I was feeling a bit guilty, plopped on my cushy bolster, writing, “Lift the legs.” “Thighs lift.” “Feel the action with the legs.” “Start with the legs.” It was legs. All legs to bend backwards. Legs must not listen very well. Over and over, she had to talk to legs.

And then she added, after telling the students to lift their thighs again, “Calves toward the heels.” Reading over my notes, I'm struck with how she connected all the poses with two actions: thighs pressing back and calves stretching to the heels. As well as using it in upward dog, she had the students press their thighs into their hands and smooth the calf flesh to the heels in *supta padangustasana* and *uttanasa*, had a partner lift the thighs with a strap in *adho mukha svasana* and told them to repeat the same action in plank, *chaturanga dandasana* and *sirsana*.

She linked poses one to the other and connected actions within a pose. In *virabadrasana* I: “As you bend the right

knee press the left thigh back.” In *ardha chandrasana*: “As you lift your right arm up, cut your left shoulder blade in.” At one point she described the two choices for actions in poses: “Fix one and move one or move both away from each other.”

She didn't say much during *pranayama*. I don't notice this when I am participating in a class, but when I sat there, staring at all the students lying on their backs with their eyes closed, my pen hovered over the paper without much to do for many minutes at a time.

“Breathe into your back.” Long pause. “Let your abdomen create a basin-like space.” Another long pause. “Hear the sound of your breathing.” A few minutes passed. “Is the skin on your chest tight? Dull? Alive? Healthy and expanding?” Another very long pause. “Breathe in and out. Smoothly. Slowly.” She told the students to feel the breath entering the lower back ribs and wrapping around to the front chest, rising like a fountain or a flower. Looking back at my notes, I keep thinking that I must have missed something she said—I'd written down so little. But I saw that the students were going into a deeper state of breath observation with only a few instructions.

Aparigraha: without possessions, without belongings, non-acceptance of gifts. No extra words, actions or even thoughts. As B.K.S. Iyengar writes in *Light on the Yoga Sutras*, about *aparigraha*, “Repeated attempts must be made to gain pure knowledge of ‘What I am and what I am meant for?’”

Thinking back to my fridge magnet, I must say that it's impossible to cheat at yoga. Everything I do is simply an opportunity to learn about myself. Even sitting on a bolster watching while the rest of the people in the room bend over backwards. ॐ

ATHENA GEORGE HAS BEEN TAKING WORKSHOPS WITH SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH FOR ALMOST TWENTY YEARS. SHE TEACHES YOGA ON SATURNA ISLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Remembering Corrine Lowen

March 15, 1958 –January 9, 2015



Leslie Hogya spoke these words in honour of Corrine Lowen at the memorial service at the University of Victoria Chapel on January 17, 2015. The chapel overflowed with family, friends, colleagues, yoga friends and students.

I am going to speak today about my personal connection with Corrine Lowen, but I represent the yoga community. Many people from across the land have written to us from as far away as Nova Scotia to send their support to us and the family.

The path of yoga is what brought Corrine and I together. For upwards of 30 years we practiced on the mat in a Monday night class, first at the Victoria YM-YWCA and then at our own dedicated Iyengar yoga studio on Fort St.

Our founder, Shirley Daventry French was the main teacher of those classes. Shirley challenged us, and also set the tone for building a strong community.

When Corrine decided to pursue the goal of becoming a certified Iyengar yoga teacher, I had the privilege of being her mentor for the three-year apprenticeship program. She tackled the necessary requirements with dedication, and her creative organizational abilities were very quickly apparent. She developed charts and study methods that have been beneficial to me, and many others. She became an excellent and skilled teacher. I learned a lot from her.

When she was pursuing her undergraduate degree at UVic, she assisted me in a credit course on yoga for physical education and kinesiology majors. She was able to do an independent study and her final paper was insightful and of the highest quality. She summarized with this quote: "Students recognized that the Iyengar approach makes it possible to embrace diversity in the teaching setting, and that

yoga is an appropriate and beneficial activity for everyone."

Over the years Corrine supported the Iyengar Yoga centre in various ways, as teacher, staff, board member, and volunteer. Before her career started to blossom at the university, she supplied us with the bolsters we still use in our classes – thirteen years later. We will miss her, and her contributions to our potlucks!

Corrine served as a board member of the national association of Iyengar yoga and in May attended the conference in Halifax. Her talents were widely recognized, from planning the menus to helping systemize some of the complex documents we need in the national organization.

The goal of yoga is to work inward towards a unity of body, mind and soul. The work begins with standing straight; standing on a firm foundation, with alignment, which brings balance in every aspect of our lives. Corrine exemplified this. In these last months she showed by example how to live in balance with grace and face what must be faced. Her acceptance of the inevitability of her diagnosis gave a glimpse into her inner strength. It has been profound for me to be able to spend precious moments with her. It was an honour to know her.

In these last months we have said the Divine Light invocation for her at the centre. She told us often that she felt this support from our community, and said how it helped sustain her.

She had been doing this invocation daily. I would like to share this with all of you here. We learned this practice from Swami Sivananda Radha, who founded the Yasodhara Ashram in the Kootenays.

I am created by Divine Light
I am sustained by Divine Light
I am protected by Divine Light
I am surrounded by Divine light
I am ever growing into Divine Light*

*From the book, *The Divine Light Invocation*, by Swami Sivananda Radha, Timeless books. 2001

Thank you to:

- Nancy Searing who made many tiny, mini, mat rolls (now stored in the plastic drawers on the lowest prop shelf in Arbutus) for all our mini lift needs!
- Peggy Cady and Hilary McPhail for their help in launching our first Yog-e news with Mail Chimp.
- Glenda Balkan-Champagne and Adia Kapoor for the ten portraits of Guruji from 2014 and picked up from RIMYI during their recent visit.
- Al Reford for his donation to the library of Ty Chandler's CD "General Iyengar Yoga Practice Sequence."
- The anonymous donor of the DVD "Breath of the Gods," featuring B.K.S. Iyengar, Pattabhi Jois, and T. Krishnamacharya.
- Marion Longpre for taking home some of our kitchen laundry and individual blankets that needed cleaning.
- Roger Champagne and Krysia Strawczynski for their fundraising

at Christmas with Roger's pots and Krysia's table decorations.

- Don Lowen and the family for donating Corrine's yoga books to our community. Most of them will appear in the library and means we have more books to circulate and more on reserve of things like B.K.S. Iyengar's *Astadala Yoga Mala* series.

For *In the Light of Yoga* celebration honouring the life and teaching of B.K.S. Iyengar:

- Shirley led a practice for 42 people, brilliantly pitched to the various levels, that was both lively and quiet.
- Brandy danced beautifully.
- Ann's story about the crocodile and the monkey was delightfully funny!
- And Shirley, Marlene, Ann and Glenda (just back from Pune) ended with comments and stories about their experience with Guriji and his family.

Behind all the heartwarming programming was a whole team. Thanks to:

- Johanna Godliman for coordinating the event;
- Jane McFarlane, Laine Canivet, and the board for cleaning and setup;
- the bakers for the awesome treats;
- Gary Wong for being emcee.

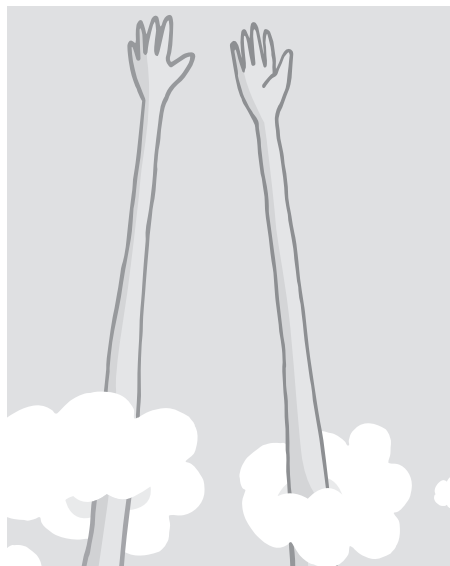
A huge vote of thanks to our board president Laine Canivet, board members, the staff, and numerous teachers who helped behind the scenes for the celebration of the life of Corrine Lowen held at the centre January 17. People are too numerous to name, so many helped by setting up and cleaning the centre, bringing food, washing dishes, returning all the props back in place in time for classes on Sunday. This is such a great example of the community spirit we have! ॐ



A Request for Auction and Draw Prize Items

The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria is a 34-year-old, not-for-profit organization and a registered charity. The Centre has over 200 members of all ages and from all walks of life.

Our annual High Tea Fundraiser event is on March 19, 2015, during which we raise funds to buy props for our special needs classes. These classes are for people facing physical challenges due to illness or injury. The teachers use the props to make it possible for their students to get into positions that provide relief, help healing, and counter further deterioration.



We are seeking auction and draw items for the event.

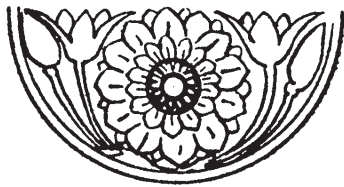
The items will be displayed for a week at the Centre. About 350 yoga students come to the Centre weekly and will be bidding on the items.

Recognition of donations will be by way of signage at the Centre and in our quarterly newsletter with a circulation of 300.

If you'd like to contribute to this worthy endeavour, we can arrange to have your item collected.

Please email or call

Amanda Mills: 250-727-0222
amandamills@shaw.ca.



Members' Practice

All current members of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria who attend a regular class or have received permission from the practice monitor are welcome to participate in an open practice every Sunday afternoon from 12:30-3:30 pm.

There is no instruction given in this self-directed practice session. Props, books and other resources are available for the use of anyone who attends.

Come for 20 minutes or stay for three hours!



IYAC/ACYI ASSESSMENT DATES

April 24 – 26
Introductory II,
Abbotsford, BC

June 19-21
Intermediate Junior I,
Winnipeg, MB



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE OF VICTORIA

Scholarships and Bursaries

Members' scholarships are available for:

**Salt Spring Retreat June 5, 6, 7,
deadline for applications: May 19**

**Teacher (Intro) Intensive July 6-11,
deadline for applications: June 19**

**Intermediate Intensive August 10-14,
deadline for applications: July 24**

**Student Intensive August 31-September 4,
deadline for applications: August 7**

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

Applications for both are available at the reception desk.
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria | 202-919 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3 | 250-386-YOGA (9642)



Become a member of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria and enjoy the following benefits:

- Receipt of four newsletters per year. Our in-depth newsletters are eagerly anticipated by over 500 people worldwide.
- Discounts on classes and workshops.
- Early registration for classes and workshops.
- Scholarship eligibility for various workshops.
- Library borrowing privileges.
- Free practice space on Sunday afternoons.
- Opportunities for members to contribute insights and apply to sit on the board of directors.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

PROV/ STATE: _____

POSTAL CODE: _____

COUNTRY: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

The one-year membership fee is \$42 CDN and is renewable each January.

For a one-year membership, please complete this form and mail or drop it off at our office 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 Canada

- ☐ Please mail my newsletter.
- ☐ Please email me the link to the newsletter.
- ☐ Sign me up for monthly yog-e email news.
- ☐ Unsubscribe from monthly yog-e email news.
- ☐ Receipt required.

Calendar



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

MARCH

- 6-8 Louie Ettling Workshop
- 14 Ropes Workshop
- 19 Special Needs Tea

APRIL

- 11 Beginner's Workshop
- 12 IYCV AGM
- 25 Teachers' PD Day

MAY

- 7-10 IYAC Conference,
North Vancouver

JUNE

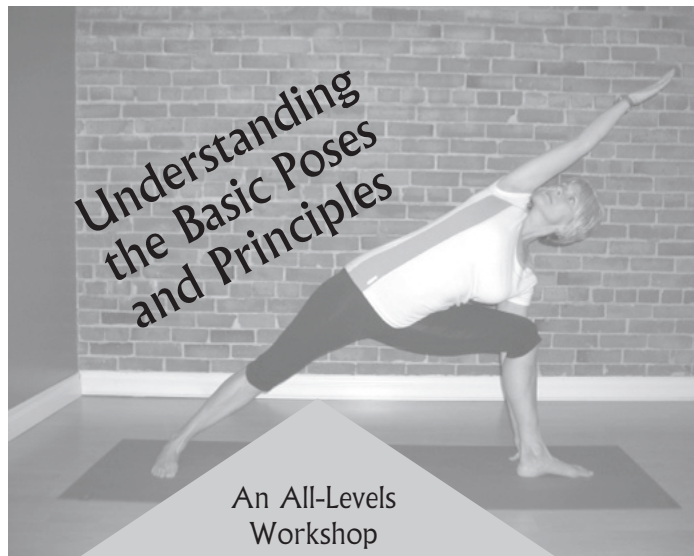
- 5-7 Salt Spring Retreat

JULY

- 6-10 Summer Early Morning Practice
- 6-11 Intensive for Introductory
Teachers in Training

AUGUST

- 10-14 Intensive for Certified Iyengar Teachers
- 31- Sept 4 Student Intensive



An All-Levels
Workshop
with Lucie Guindon

April 11, 2015 10:45am - 1:00pm

Beginners—
this workshop is for you, too!

\$38 Members
\$43 non-members



Learning the Ropes

With Lauren Cox

All levels | March 14, 2015 11 am - 1 pm

\$30 members/\$35 non-members

Wear something green!

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



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA



"Are you understanding?"

— Zubin Zartoshtimanesh
in Vancouver, BC, May 2015

Iyengar Yoga Teacher Intensives



INTENSIVE FOR INTRODUCTORY TEACHERS IN TRAINING

July 6 - 11, 2015

Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus
and Ty Chandler

Daily asana and pranayama practice, peer teaching, philosophy and anatomy are included in this intensive for trainees preparing to become Iyengar yoga teachers.

Leslie Hogya and Ann Kilbertus are experienced teachers certified at the Intermediate Senior level. Ty Chandler is an experienced Intermediate Junior III teacher. Leslie, Ann and Ty have practiced and studied for years under the mentorship of Shirley Daventry French. Leslie and Ann travel regularly to Pune to study with the Iyengar family. Ty has travelled to Pune and to France to continue her studies in the Iyengar tradition.

**Daily schedule runs 9:30 am to 5:30 pm
and concludes Saturday at 12 Noon.**



INTENSIVE FOR CERTIFIED IYENGAR TEACHERS

August 10 - 14, 2015

Shirley Daventry French and
Ann Kilbertus with guest teacher,
Louie Ettling

Take this opportunity to work with master teacher Shirley Daventry French along with two senior Canadian colleagues, Ann Kilbertus and Louie Ettling. This course is designed for teachers seeking to refine their skills at junior and senior intermediate levels.

Shirley Daventry French is a direct student of B.K.S. Iyengar. Since 1979 she studied with him regularly in India, North America, and Europe. Shirley has been teaching and training teachers for 45 years in Victoria and internationally.

Ann started her studies in the tradition of Iyengar yoga in 1984. Ann's training as an occupational therapist enriches her teaching perspective.

Louie Ettling is the Director of The Yoga Space in Vancouver. She has been a keen student of Iyengar Yoga since she started her studies 28 years ago.

Ann and Louie have studied regularly with B.K.S. Iyengar and his family in Pune. Both hold Intermediate Senior certificates.

**Daily schedule runs 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
with a two-hour lunch.**

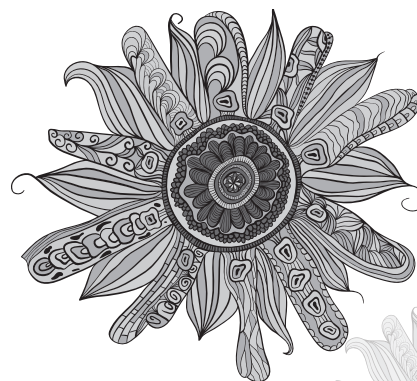
Fees for each course:

\$610 CDN + GST IYCV members
\$650 CDN + GST IYCV non-members

To register, drop in to or phone:
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,
202-919 Fort St, Victoria, B.C.

(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.



SUMMER Early Morning PRACTICE

Jump into summer with an early morning
practice **with Lauren Cox**

Drop-In \$12 | Monday to Friday, July 6-10, 7-8 am
Non-Members \$55, Members \$50



International Day of Yoga

Sunday, June 21, 12:30 pm - 2:00pm
Join the World in Practice

The United Nations has declared June 21st International
Day of Yoga. Come be a part of this global celebration
at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria in an
All Levels practice. Free.

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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.

REGISTRATION

Please visit our website:
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca for full information on classes and workshops.

Drop in: 202-919 Fort Street,
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3

Phone: (250) 386-YOGA (9642)



Reflections

By Shirley Daventry French

The Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada held its 2015 Annual General Meeting and Convention at Capilano University in North Vancouver. The May weather was perfect. The university campus was green and spacious with nature beckoning from every direction. Vancouver is in a magnificent setting ringed by mountains and ocean; but beautiful and seductive as this space and natural beauty is, the convention was compelling in its own way.

We had a charming and knowledgeable guest teacher in Zubin Zarthoshmanesh from Mumbai, a close disciple of B.K.S. Iyengar. In fact, Zubin's parents were students of Gururji; he grew up as a member of the Iyengar community in India and accompanied Gururji on many of his worldwide teaching tours. The programme of superb classes with Zubin was preceded by several days of committee meetings which culminated in the formal Annual General Meeting.

My oldest daughter Rachel is a yoga student of Louie Ettling in Vancouver. She lives close to the convention site and volunteered her services to the conference committee. At the same time she

also extended an invitation to me and some of my Victoria yoga colleagues to stay in her home. Apparently, when the convention organisers discovered she was hosting the Victoria yoga matriarchy, they decided she had enough to take care of.

It was a pretty full programme and I had doubts about my stamina and how much I would be able to participate, but thanks to Rachel's care and attention, I was able to participate in all of the meetings and the classes with Zubin.

Before leaving for the conference, I received a phone call from the President of IYAC, Drew Perry. As this would be the first national gathering since the death of Gururji, he wondered if I would be willing to say a few words about Gururji during the opening speeches before Zubin's first class. I did not hesitate in accepting. What a pleasant task this would be! Gururji is always in my heart and mind as I am sure he is in Zubin's. There would be no shortage of things to say—the challenge would be what to select.

In preparation for the conference, I decided to read *all* the committee reports as well as the minutes of last year's annual meeting which I was unable to attend. I am really glad I took this time—it gave me an overview of the many tasks and talents required to run a national non-profit association such as ours and gratitude for those who undertake this work. My association work has been primarily on the Professional Development committee involved with teacher training and assessment matters; but none of the committee work takes place in isolation. It is an excellent example of teamwork. There

are flaws and disputes, as with any group of individuals trying to work together, nonetheless I thought to myself: Gururji would be pleased (even though he would offer "any amount" of suggestions for improvement!)

From my very first visit to Pune, in interviews and meetings with Gururji here and abroad, he has always stressed the importance of working together—like a family. While most of us know that families are not always harmonious, there is, a common thread linking its members together be it bloodline or, as with IYAC, inspiration from Gururji on our personal spiritual practice.

Many people dismiss the business meetings with statements such as "I prefer to spend my time practising yoga." Or another common dismissal: "It's just politics!" They couldn't be more mistaken: it is part of the practice of yoga and politics doesn't have to be mean and nasty despite what we see on the national scene in this country and so many others. I have learned so much from my participation in both the national association and our local centre, which is also not-for-profit.

Having read all the association reports, it is evident how many hours of dedicated work go into the smooth functioning of a national association in such a large and diverse land with two official languages. It requires a vast effort to sustain such an organisation. And this work is being accomplished in a very professional manner. This is yoga *sadhana*! The administrative work, whether it's serving as President, on the Board of Directors, on one of the committees, or donating time in any capacity, combines elements of the three

I have learned so much from my participation in both the national association and our local centre, which is also not-for-profit.

main streams of Yoga: *Karma*, *Bhakti* and *Jnana*.

In the 1970s, dissatisfied with the status quo in North America, many people looked to the East for meaning and purpose in life. I was one of them and plunged into Tai Chi, Transcendental Meditation and the grandly named Consciousness Raising movement! There was also yoga of the “relax and let go” nature which offered a quiet space to contemplate my predicament. Who am I? Why am I here? What is the purpose of my life?

These questions kept surfacing, without answers. And so began a pilgrimage which took me on a journey to Yasodhara Ashram in central British Columbia and the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Pune. It began to dawn on me that while I was responsible for finding my own answers, some guidance would be very helpful.

Personal practice is the first and foremost tenet of Yoga. B.K.S. Iyengar sustained his personal practice even during his last few days on earth, as reported by his granddaughter Abhijata when paying homage to Guruji in Pune

There was also yoga of the “relax and let go” nature which offered a quiet space to contemplate my predicament. Who am I? Why am I here? What is the purpose of my life?

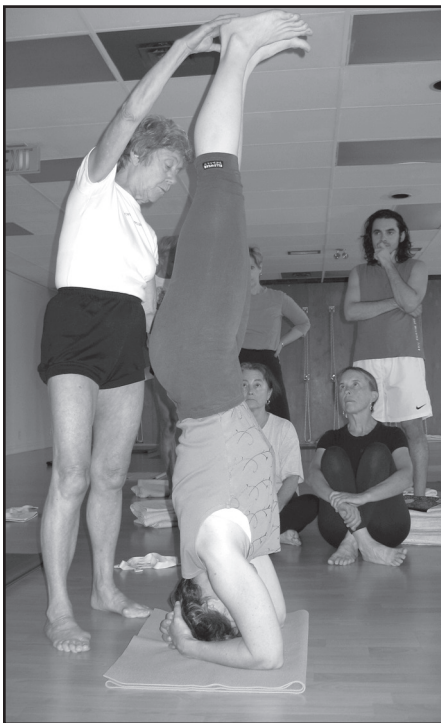
shortly after his death.¹ He left us with the message that he hoped his ending would be our beginning. This year’s Canadian conference had the theme “Endings and Beginnings.”

In Canada in the 1970s, Iyengar Yoga communities began to form on the West coast, in Newfoundland, Central Canada and the Prairies. A few yoga students, who had had the opportunity to study with Guruji in Pune, in Europe or the United States brought the work back with them. My first two trips to Pune were organized by Maureen Carruthers and Ingelise Nherlan of Vancouver. In 1979 the intensive included two of us from Victoria, which increased to nine in 1982. There were

two teachers from Edmonton and two from Calgary in both these courses, but it was not until 1984 at the International Iyengar conference in San Francisco with Guruji as guest of honour, that I made first contact with Marlene Mawhinney and a few other teachers from the eastern part of the country. The following year I organized a Canadian intensive which included teachers from coast to coast.

Two years later, the Americans held another convention in Boston at Harvard University. A large contingent of teachers from Canada attended this conference where we had a couple of national meetings: one on our own and the second with Guruji. He encouraged us to meet once a year in Canada, and the first Canadian conference was held the following year, 1988, in a “rustique”

¹ *Yoga Rahasya*, Volume 21, Number 4. 2014
“Goodbye Guruji” by Abhijata Sridhar.



Going Deeper

with Shirley Daventry French

An opportunity for all interested students to deepen their understanding of asana, pranayama and the philosophy which lies at the heart of yoga. Shirley is a direct student of the great contemporary yoga master, B.K.S. Iyengar. Since her first visit to Pune in 1979, she has returned regularly for further study.

An Iyengar Yoga Workshop for
Students of all Yoga Traditions

November 20 & November 21

Registration opens September 1, 2015

Shirley is the founder of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria and her energy has contributed to a vibrant yoga community in Greater Victoria. Students from across Canada and around the world have studied with her. We invite you to join her for this special workshop.

Friday, November 20

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Saturday, November 21

10:30 am - 1:30 pm

4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Fees:

\$150 + GST

for IYCV members

\$165 + GST

for non-members

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

setting just outside of Montreal. About a dozen of us attended; not a big group but the first of a sequence of annual meetings which have continued uninterrupted since that time.

AGM's have been held in all of our Provinces with the exception of Prince Edward Island. We have practised together, taught each other, learned from each other, and become acquainted with some of each other's idiosyncrasies. We have debated many issues, sometimes quite heatedly. In St. John's, Newfoundland we "kissed the cod" while standing on our heads wearing a yellow oilskin slicker and Wellington boots "ranting and roaring like true Newfoundlanders....." ²

Twice we were honoured to have Guruji as our guest (Edmonton 1990 and Toronto 1993) and twice with Geetaji (Vancouver 2001 and Penticton 2006).

² A traditional Newfoundland song with the refrain: *We'll rant and we'll roar like true Newfoundlanders, We'll rant and we'll roar on deck and below; Until we see bottom inside the two sunkeners, When it's straight through the channel to Toslow we'll go.*

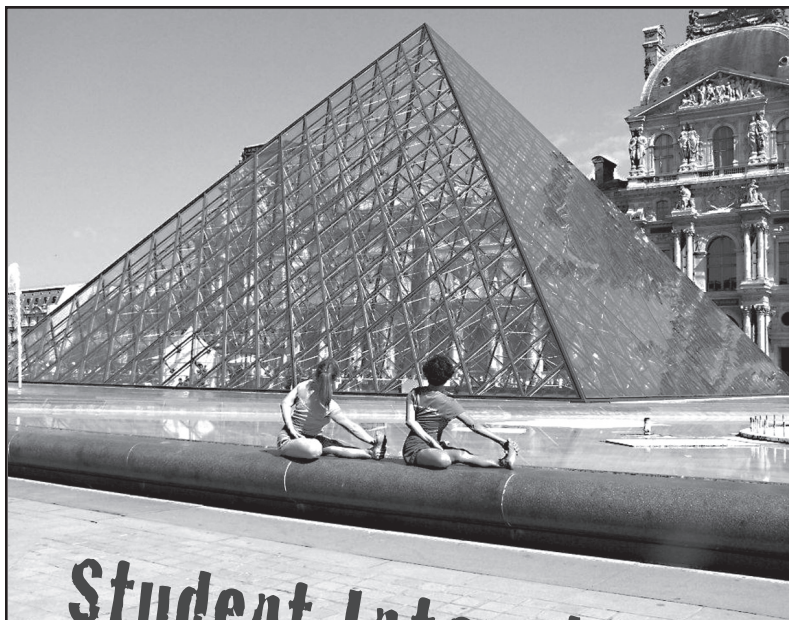
From 1988 to 1993 our association was informally organised and we had no official certification and assessment. In Toronto in 1993 all this changed when Guruji insisted, in no uncertain terms, that we fall in line with other international Iyengar communities. Guruji's directive was that we establish a formal association, implement his syllabus, and begin certification and assessment. There was some objection to the idea of a formal association and strong resistance to certification which almost split our community in two: but Guruji was adamant. In any case, a majority of centres were not averse to the idea.

As someone who was travelling to yoga centres throughout Canada as this began to happen, I can say that it made a huge difference to the level of teaching in our country and built a connection between distant communities. It has also cemented a very strong bond with Pune as well as with other international Iyengar associations.

The first group of assessors appointed by Guruji worked hard to assess a backlog of teachers who had been teaching for ten or more years. Logistically it was a big task because of the huge distances involved and the harsh winter climate in most of our land. Much has been accomplished with a few tears and a great deal of laughter and collegiality.

In his book *Raja Yoga*, Swami Vivekananda warned readers: "Never trust a spiritual teacher without a sense of humour." One of Guruji's maxims is "Love, Labour and Laugh"—and he told us to take the work seriously but not ourselves!

This article has been written in gratitude to all who organized this year's Vancouver convention, to those who serve our Association in any capacity, to Zubin for his expertise and grace, and to Guruji for the light of Yoga. ॐ



Student Intensive

With Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler

August 31-September 4, 2015

9:30 am – 12:30 pm

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 follow.

Registration now open

Fees: \$235.00 + GST for IYCV members
\$260.00 + 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 \$50 cancellation fee.

Victoria Iyengar Yoga Centre Annual Report 2014/2015

Message from the President of the Victoria Iyengar Yoga Centre

It seems to me that this was an extraordinarily eventful year. Maybe they are all this eventful, but I don't think so.

It started off with an open house in March. Quarterly Kirtans with Ty Chandler and Bhavantu Sound were new this year. Some teachers attended a first aid workshop and travelled to the IYAC Conference in Halifax. We held workshops with invited teachers such as Jawahar Bangera, Chris Saudek and Stephanie Quirk. Our own teachers presented workshops such as the Summer Sadhana, 50+ Workshop, Going Deeper, Winter Solstice, Heart of Yoga and the Enrichment Series. We also hosted intensives and assessments: Summer Intensive for Teacher Trainees, a Certified Teacher Intensive, a Student Intensive and an Introductory II Assessment. There was the lovely annual retreat on Saltspring Island. The quarterly teachers' meetings morphed into a successful new format, now called Professional Development days. To raise funds we held the Special Needs Tea, the Annual appeal and a one-time special Fire appeal.

In addition to all of the above events, we celebrated achievements and awards:

- Several of our teachers and trainees achieved new levels of certification.
- Leslie Hogya was awarded a lifetime Honorary Membership in the National Iyengar Association.
- B.K.S. Iyengar was awarded, by the President of India, the Padma Vibhushan award, which is the second highest civil honour anyone can receive in India. This recognized that

Mr. Iyengar taught yoga to four generations and had 30 – 40 million followers.

Busy as we were with our events and achievements, we also found time to party and host Celebrations of Life.

The annual birthday party for B.K.S. Iyengar was different this year, being the first one when he was not alive. The end of summer picnic was revived and held at the French's house where many friends enjoyed sunshine, food and friendship.

Celebrations of Life were hosted for Jayne Jonas' husband and Iyengar student, Len Edstrom, and for Corrine Lowen, a long time Iyengar student and teacher. Both events were attended by over 100 friends, family and colleagues. B.K.S. Iyengar's Divine Light invocation was a small, intimate event.

How does a small organization such as this manage to pack so much into one year?

Many of our students and all of the people who work and teach at the centre are generous with their time - often going way above and beyond in what they give and do for this centre. If there is something to be done, it seems there is always some one who will help. This first year, as chair of the Board of Directors, has been a real pleasure for me.

Namaste, Laine Canivet

Report from the General Manager

The Iyengar Yoga community lost its beloved leader, B.K.S. Iyengar, in 2014. Shirley's early trips to study in Pune seeded Iyengar Yoga in Victoria. At the Centre we celebrate Guriji's life everyday through our teaching. Also in 2014, Corrine Lowen, one of our valued teachers, died of cancer. We honour you both.

On June 2nd, the Blue Fox Cafe had a fire that closed the Centre for three days because of smoke damage. It was a shock to arrive to fire trucks and smoke pouring out of our upstairs windows at 6:45 a.m.! We quickly removed all bolsters, blankets and mats and took them to the laundry. Insurance covered the clean-up costs and fire sympathy prompted donations to the annual appeal that were well over target. In 2014 the Centre ended the year in the black with a healthy surplus for the first time in seven years. Thanks to all for the generous donations.



Bhavantu Sound

Thanks to designer, Peggy Cady, we have a new website that represents who we are and what we do. The site is key to marketing in this yoga competitive city. Posters and schedules were distributed around town to promote classes, workshops and open houses. We sold two on-line coupons; advertised regularly in Monday and Focus magazines, sent monthly e-marketing updates; posted on Facebook; made 65 bolsters in-house, and offered first-class-free to promote the Centre.

Passes for classes is still our best marketing tool in this saturated yoga market. The popular Unlimited Yoga pass sells for \$219 per term and allows students to take any class at their level, anytime. The Om Pass for \$55 offers six hours of class time. In 2014, the Centre offered a six month pass between March and August which worked very well. This year, we are offering a six-month pass between March and September 4th.

The Centre hosted two open houses in 2014. Each extended over two days and had an average attendance of 80 people. On Saturday, we offered three free yoga classes plus philosophy with Shirley and Derek French. On Sunday, we added Discover Iyengar Yoga Basics, a free two hour class with Ann Kilbertus. Thanks to Bhavantu Sound with Ty Chandler, Tia Benn and Chris Simmons for the wonderful Kirtan. Thanks to our generous bakers who made tasty treats and savories, and to Jane McFarlane who brews wonderful chai for open house events.

Membership is renewed at the beginning of each year. In 2014 the Centre had 351 members, 43 of whom are life members, seven international members and 23 members who reside outside of BC but within Canada. We mail 97 newsletters. Postage increased in March so we encourage students to pick up or read the newsletter on line.

The largest cost saving in 2014 came from very committed volunteers. Jane McFarlane does Centre maintenance and Theron Morgan does bookkeeping. Jane contributed hundreds

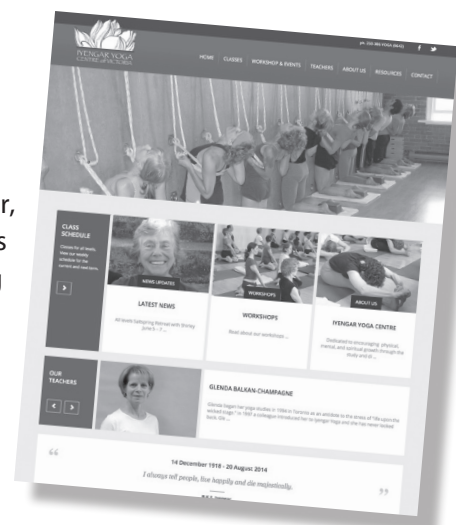
of hours cleaning daily, painting, and maintaining the props. Theron, our volunteer bookkeeper, contributed countless hours as well keeping the finances in order. Johanna Godliman became part of the maintenance crew in 2014. We salute you!

Marketing and managing finances consumes staff time these days. Staff also provides administrative support for classes, workshops, intensives, retreats, national assessments, and numerous annual events. Thanks to Britta Poisson who manages the office and whose beautiful posters and ads help us stand out; Bruce Cox who maintains the website and poster boards; Hilary McPhail who handles membership registration and newsletter ads and Jane McFarlane whose creativity we appreciate at the front desk. My time as general manager is spent trimming costs to budget; reporting to the board monthly; managing staff, volunteers and events, and administering the overall operation of our very busy Centre.

As with any registered charity, we have many dedicated volunteers, I can mention just a few here. Thanks to Shirley and Derek for hosting the Labour Day picnic; Lucie for coordinating billets; the teachers at the open houses; Ty and Gary for supervising the members' practice; the programming and newsletter committees; Linda Poole and her crew for making bolsters; Marlene and Glenda for coordinating the 2014 assessments; Johanna for coordinating Gurujī's celebration in December; Ty who posts to Facebook; Patty Rivard for managing the library and Jeanette Merryfield who distributes posters.

Thanks to the board for their work in 2014. Special thanks to our president, Laine Canivet, whose leadership makes the work fun. Keiko Alkire leaves the board this year. Many thanks Keiko for your six years of service. Finally thanks to continuing members Bev Kallstrom, Amanda Mills, Carole Miller, Sheila Redhead, Stacey Frank and Ann Kilbertus.

Submitted by Wendy Boyer



Iyengar Yoga Centre Victoria Treasurer's Report

Year Ending October 31, 2014

Our year end financial statements have been prepared by the firm of Sterling and Gascoigne with notice to reader signed off by the treasurer, Bev Kallstrom on December 16, 2014.

Our budget for the year was prepared based on actual revenue and expenditures of previous fiscal budget and projected changes.

Our goal was to contain expenses and maintain our revenue through student enrolment in classes, workshops, merchandise sales and donations. This year I am pleased to report that although the major budget areas were within 5% of planned budget, we ended the year with a net surplus of \$15,952.25 from operations.

REVENUE

Total revenue for 2014 was \$391,446

including gains on investments and foreign exchange reversing the downward trend of previous years as follows:

2013	\$ 371,324
2012	\$ 402,491
2011	\$ 412,601
2010	\$ 434,296

Class revenue for the year of \$248,448.96 is slightly under budget at 98.32% despite having to close the centre for a few days due to a fire in the restaurant below.

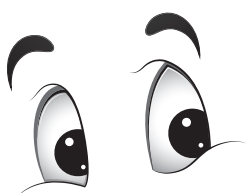
The Workshop income is strong at 119.54% of budget with Jawahar Bangera, Chris Saudek and Junior intermediate intense workshops all exceeding our budget forecast.

President's appeal and donations of \$27,498.08 exceeded planned budget.

Looking for a Volunteer

We need someone to post
our class schedule each term
on yellowyogi.com.

Contact Britta Poisson at iyoga@telus.net



EXPENSES

Total expenses for 2014 were held to \$375,706

which also included the development and launch of our new website. Expenses of previous years were as follows:

2013	\$ 372,278
2012	\$ 403,532
2011	\$ 410,290
2010	\$ 447,778

Our General Manager, Wendy Boyer and our staff worked hard managing expenses and ensuring a quick reopening after the fire.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

The Statement of Financial Position documents our assets and liabilities as of October 31, 2014. At year end our short term funds are invested were follows:

\$ 25,977 GIC @ 1.4 maturing April 22, 2015

\$ 50,534 GIC @ 1.6% maturing January 8, 2016

\$ 25,977 GIC @ 1.4% maturing January 8, 2015.

The Iyengar Yoga Centre is being managed prudently and overall the financial health of our centre remains strong, our financial 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, staff and volunteers for all their efforts as well as our accountants.

Finally thank you to our teachers for their inspiration, work, and contributions and to our members and students who support our centre. It is a true pleasure to be part of this great community of people.

Submitted by Bev Kallstrom

2015 IYCV Board of Directors Elected

Meet your new board members

Laine Canivet enjoys volunteering for various projects and events at the Centre. This is her second stint serving on the Board of Directors. The first time round she served mostly as the secretary. This time, she was ready to take on the challenge of President. Laine Canivet has been practicing yoga at the Iyengar Yoga Centre for about fifteen years. She retired from managing large computer projects for the BC government and in her spare time she volunteers for a national organization and is a fabric artist.

Stacey Frank started practicing yoga in 1996 with Lauren Cox at Fairfield Community Centre. With Lauren's encouragement, she participated in an Iyengar yoga workshop at the Y and then became a regular at the Yoga Centre in Marlene Miller's Saturday morning class. Yoga has helped Stacey to cope with the stresses of managing her own audiology practice as well as dealing with having a child with a severe mental health disability. Stacey says she used to do yoga to help her work; now she works to support her yoga habit.

Bev Kallstrom has a background in Real Estate and Project Management and currently works for the Provincial Government delivering facilities projects. Besides the environment, other interests include travel, gardening and cycling. Bev took her first Iyengar Yoga class at the Y with Lauren Cox in 1988, and has been attending classes at the Iyengar Yoga Centre since 2000. Bev has been a board member for three years where she serves as Treasurer.

Ann Kilbertus began her studies in



IYCV 2015 Board of Directors, Back Row: Laine Canivet, Ann Kilbertus, Stacey Frank, Amanda Mills. Front Row: Bev Kallstrom, Carole Miller, Shiela Redhead, Ann Nolan

the Iyengar tradition in 1984. She is currently an Intermediate Senior certified teacher. In 1992 she made her first trip to the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, India and returns every few years to study with the Iyengar family. Ann has served on the Iyengar Yoga Centre Board for many years; she is involved locally in the training of teachers and nationally on the Board of the Iyengar Association of Canada. In addition, she teaches the Yoga course at the University of Victoria.

Carole Miller has been a student of Yoga for over forty years, having been a founding member of the Victoria Yoga Centre and recently served on the Board as Vice President and is on the Scholarship Committee. She studied with Mr. Iyengar both in India at the first Canadian Intensive as well as in North America. Retired from the University of Victoria where she was a professor in the Faculty of Education, she developed and continues to teach

Yoga as an academic course for the School of Exercise Science and Physical and Health Education.

Amanda Mills previously served on the Board of Directors of the Iyengar Yoga Centre Board a number of years ago and is currently the Secretary. She is a long time practitioner of Iyengar yoga, starting at the YWCA in Victoria and was involved in the search for and securing our current premises on Fort Street. Amanda has served on several boards, including the Victoria Chinatown Care Foundation, The Victoria Chapter of the Appraisal Institute of Canada, Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria and the Victoria Chinese Commerce Association. She is currently on the Centre's Scholarship Committee.

Ann Nolan is a happily retired banker, full time grandmother and freelance illustrator. She has been a practicing member of IYC Victoria for 12 years and a past board member, including treasurer for six years. Practicing yoga

and being part of the community has been and continues to be a wonderful part of her life.

Sheila Redhead was introduced to Iyengar Yoga on Galiano Island in 1988, and has been attending classes whenever and wherever possible since then. She has held the position of Manager of the Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra for 12 years, and is an avid supporter of music and arts in Victoria. A student and member of the Iyengar Yoga Centre for nearly a decade, she has served on the Board for two years and is currently on the Scholarship Committee. ॐ

Practice Enrichment Series

Friday afternoons
2:00 - 5:00 pm

October 16, December 4,
January 29, February 26

Commit to this series to advance your personal practice of *asana* and *pranayama*. The series is designed for serious intermediate and advanced students in the Iyengar Yoga tradition. Students will be guided in a strong practice over each three hour session. Each month will build upon the previous month's work to unlock individual challenges.

With Ann Kilbertus
and Ty Chandler

Note: Instructor permission
is required to attend.

\$45 each session,
\$180 for the series

Corrine Lowen Memorial Scholarship Awarded

The Board of Directors of IYAC/ACYI is very pleased to announce that Nancy Searing has been chosen to be the first recipient of the Corrine Lowen Memorial Scholarship.

The award was presented to her by Leslie Hogya in Vancouver at the AGM. Nancy spoke some lovely words about her friendship with Corrine.

Below, Don Lowen shares some of the initiatives that Corrine's friends and associates have sponsored over the past few weeks.

1. UVIC Scholarship – Colleagues of Corrine Lowen at the University of Victoria are interested in establishing an annual award for five years (2015-2020) in her memory. Graduates whose research addresses any of the following will be considered for the award:

- Inequitable social relations
- Inquiring into, creating, or sustaining collaborative policy processes
- Relationship-building across cultural communities
- Indigenous methodology
- Health or educational equity for Indigenous peoples

2. Your Donations, in Corrine's name and in lieu of flowers, to the Victoria Iyengar Yoga Center, will support Special Needs classes – specifically the purchase of props, bursaries for class registration, and fee payment for the teachers needed to run classes for students with chronic illnesses, injuries and disabilities. Total of donations to date is over \$1,300.



While I am greatly honoured to be the recipient of the Corrine Lowen Memorial Scholarship, it has been a bittersweet experience. I am very sad that it comes with the loss of Corrine's intelligent, insightful and kind presence. She was a highly valued colleague and a dear friend, a true kindred spirit who I miss very much.

– Nancy Searing

3. Corrine Lowen Memorial Scholarship

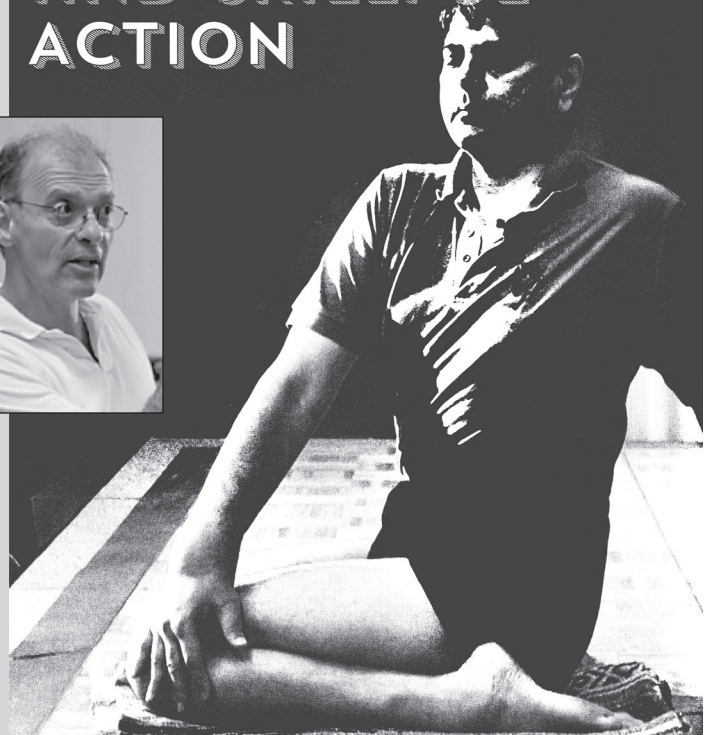
To celebrate Corrine's love of learning, and in gratitude for her contributions to the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada (IYAC) and the Iyengar Yoga community, the IYAC Board of Directors is pleased to announce the creation of a new Scholarship in her name.

The Corrine Lowen Memorial Scholarship will be available for three years (which is a Board of Directors' term). The amount of the scholarship is \$500 per year and is intended to support members in good standing who are pursuing teacher or assessor training, preparation for assessment, or other advanced Iyengar studies. ॐ

COMMUNITY, CONSCIOUSNESS, AND SKILLFUL ACTION

In May 2013, Birjoo Mehta travelled from Mumbai, India, to San Diego, California, to teach at the National Iyengar Yoga Teacher's Convention and Regional Conference. Manouso Manos had a chance to sit down with Birjoo to discuss Community, Consciousness, and Skillful Action. This is the final part of their conversation.

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM YOGA SAMACHAR
FALL 2013/WINTER 2014, (THE NEWSLETTER OF THE IYENGAR
YOGA NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES.)



If you recall on his 85th birthday, he [Gurugi] said that when people say, “This is something you just taught us yesterday,” he replies, “Yeah, but that was yesterday.” Today is something new because you have to cross the boundary. If you don’t cross the boundary, you are still not doing yoga. You have to cross the boundary, and that’s where you can actually see your growth.

MM: So the sharpness that comes—to go onward with this, we all hesitate to use the words—but eventually, these practices lead one to a state of meditation or *dharana* [concentration] or *dhyana* [meditation]. What you’re giving it is a much better example because it’s easier for people to relate to ego and intelligence. The way you’re phrasing this presents a very clear path toward something, and this is why you’re a remarkable spokesman for what we do. You can bring that to light and let people start to see. Everybody recognizes that sharpness of mind. Everybody’s had that whether

they’re trying to become skillful while learning a game as a child or driving an automobile. We all see that kind of sharpness, but unfortunately it becomes easy to go into that rote operation of the mind repeating the same path, like the rat who goes through the maze. And this is the spark of divinity or the sharpness that Gurugi has brought to this subject for so many of us.

BM: Yes, actually I would say that doing things repetitively brings about efficiency. You are able to do that same thing with little amount of involvement. So you are highly efficient, but efficiency is not everything. You have to see the effectiveness. So in a particular environment, you have to work and read somewhere in that particular environment. And environments keep changing, so for you to remain effective you might need to do things differently. Your processes lead you to undergo changes from time to time so you can be efficient, but you may not be effective.

So to get the effectiveness is where yoga comes in. If the definition of yoga is “*karmasu kaushalam*,” [Bhagavad Gita II.48] which means “skillfulness in action,” skillfulness in action does not mean only efficiency; it means effectiveness. So this is exactly what yoga should bring you, and that’s why I feel there are a lot of people who say, “After doing yoga, I am a much better dancer or a much better painter.”

MM: Or a much better husband or a much better son, you know, whatever it may be.

BM: There was this woman in Israel. She started doing yoga, and afterward, she and her husband became more and more interested in the Orthodox Jewish traditions. So effectively, what it means is that you are able to do better at whatever you want to do. Why is it? Because you learn to be effective not just efficient. So that’s how yoga helps.

MM: Going back to our original definition of what yoga is—the one that predates Patanjali is “skillful action,” as you have just mentioned.

BM: That’s right.

MM: So if you find skillful action within the confines of your *asanas* and *pranayamas*, the understanding is that eventually you will find your way toward skillful action across every manifestation.

BM: Absolutely. The human body is like your laboratory. So in a controlled environment, you are making some experiments, and after you learn what is happening, you can go out into the world. For example, say that within your controlled environment you find that today you’re unwell. You can still see what happens if you do this or this or this. You start learning how in different environments you’re going to work. It sort of trains you similar to doing a Ph.D.

When working toward a Ph.D., you learn how to conduct research. The importance of the Ph.D. is the process of learning how to do research and not just what you’ve found out. That finding out will continue over time. But that’s the whole thing about yoga—it tells you how to become effective. So in your own body, within your own environment, within the controlled environment of the laboratory of your body, you learn how to be effective because everything is within you. So you don’t really need to interact with something outside yourself. Because that’s such controlled learning, you can do better at whatever you are doing. I think you know that’s very important.

MM: Birjoo, thank you from all of us. It’s been quite enlightening.

BM: Thank you.

More on Community and Consciousness

In May 2013, Birjoo Mehta traveled from Mumbai, India, to San Diego, California, to teach at the Iyengar Yoga National Teachers’ Conference and Regional Convention. Manouso Manos had a chance to sit down with Birjoo to discuss community, consciousness, and skillful action. This is Part Two of their two-part conversation.

Manouso Manos: Getting back to the topic of community again—you have a remarkably unique perspective on the world compared with everyone else on this subject. You are a senior teacher and a well-noted world-class teacher of yoga by all standards. Yet, you also have travelled with an international corporation because of the kind of business you do, and you’ve been able to walk into communities unannounced. For example, once you were in South Africa, and you said, “I am here. Can anyone use a yoga teacher?” You get to see certain communities in a very different light than many of the rest of us senior teachers. You walk out of a business community on Friday and into a hard core yoga community on the weekend. I’d like to hear a few of your thoughts on this.

Birjoo Mehta: Well, if you have visited South Africa, you know that you can visit some beautiful sites, game parks and things like that, but if you are there for too long, there is not that much activity other than shopping malls. So I had an assignment in South Africa once, which meant that I was there for four to six months overall. Now what would you do on a Saturday or Sunday in Johannesburg if you have already seen the sights?

MM: Well, I know you well enough to know that you are going to practice.

BM: Yes. So apart from my own practice, I just called up [some of the people I was working with] and said, “Hey, I’m here. Would you like to take a class? I’d be happy to share my experiences.” And within half an hour they rustled up 20-25 people for a class. That worked out pretty well. It was very nice because I was meeting people from different places. The same thing happened while I was in Hong Kong. I was there for business, and I just called up [my friend Linda and she invited me over to her studio for a class]. I like to do that because it allows me to talk and interact with the community. In that sense, it’s not that I planned to be there to teach or anything like that.

MM: You’re being very humble because you’ve actually had quite a strong effect on these communities that you’ve walked in and out of. Maybe you don’t even know the ripple effect that

you have as a human being and how the community coheres around the teachings that you leave behind. You aren't the kind of fella who seeks this kind of gratification of the ego on the way out of town, but you have really strengthened those communities in quite strong ways, and I applaud you for it.

BM: I don't think I have such an impact like that.

MM: You've been the keynote speaker at many of the world conventions and have accompanied Guruji on many of his travels, so you know your effect has been felt. I think you have had a remarkable effect on a group of people and their yoga practices and how they conduct themselves.

BM: I don't give credit to myself. I think it's their own yoga practice that has brought about any changes.

MM: Yes, but inspiration comes from the outside. Guruji's an inspirational figure for me, let me say that straight up. I know you know that, but I'm saying it for the record. But in fact, YOU in particular have this way about you and a way of conducting yourself—some people do see you as a revolutionary figure and an inspirational figure because of how you've stood with that strong standard of practice.

BM: I don't know about standards of practice and things like that, but let me put it this way: Whatever Guruji says leaves behind an impression with me. And many times it's not what he has taught in the class, but what he has talked about in the library or what he has said just in passing. Those things leave a deep impact on me. I may not be able to immediately understand what he has said, but over a period of time, suddenly while I'm practicing, something will come back and [I'll realize] what Guruji actually meant and then [I'll work with that in my practice].

Second, through teaching, Guruji has left some very strong imprints of corrections that he has made. These corrections have happened across the 40 or 45 years that I have been with him. After the impression is left behind, I struggle to articulate that impression, and this articulation can take a lot of time. I may not use his exact words because those words were actually meant for me in the situation I was in at the time, with the shortcomings of the pose. He gave that correction to me. So what I do is keep that impression with me and then struggle to articulate how I got it. And I use the instructions that Guruji has given me when I teach. They may not be directly spoken, but they will be translated into my own language and then given to other people. So there is a sense of Guruji's teachings—maybe not his words because his words were relative to a particular context—but I sort of take the context and try to pass it on.

For a long time, there was a challenge that was always with me. You know, coming from an engineering background, I place

"...but inspiration comes from the outside. Guruji's an inspirational figure for me, let me say that straight up. I know you know that, but I'm saying it for the record. But in fact, YOU in particular have this way about you and a way of conducting yourself—some people do see you as a revolutionary figure and an inspirational figure because of how you've stood with that strong standard of practice." – Manouso Manos

a lot of importance on objectivity. I don't trust subjectivity; I go on objectivity. It is easy for us to measure objectivity and to work on an objective level because for generations—probably 2000 years or more—people have been learning objectivity. You know, 12 years in school and another three to four years in university, so 15, 16 years of hard training in objectivity. So, obviously you trust objectivity, and you know how to measure objectivity. A question came to me that if I injure my knee, would I not be feeling the same pain as somebody else who also injured their knee? My thought was obviously that it should be the same. Therefore, if something happens to me and I can feel pain, and a similar thing happens to somebody else and he can also feel pain, then is it possible for me to translate my feeling onto somebody else? That's how I started to work in the standing poses. I'd think, "I am standing here, what do I feel? Where are my thoughts? Where do I feel something? Where am I aware of something? And now what did I do? Where did the awareness go?" So when I teach, I say, "Okay. This is where your awareness is." Then I realized that people's awareness is not there. Then I said, "Okay. I have to first give an instruction to 'do something.'" So if I say, "Plant the heels firmly on the floor," the moment you plant the heels firmly on the floor, the consciousness goes to the heels. So I say, "Okay. Fine. You are feeling the consciousness now." When I say "consciousness" I mean "awareness." I use my body to experiment and see where the awareness should be moving and give the instruction in that manner so that the person who is studying with me, his awareness also starts to move. Then he gets a realization that awareness can move, so this is what is moving his consciousness. Otherwise, who knows what consciousness is? What I could do is make a person do the pose and move his consciousness from one place to another by giving fast instructions, you know, "Grip your knee, extend your hand, turn your chest, then lift your head up." All these things. And then his consciousness is moving all over the body.

Once his consciousness moves all over the body, he should feel the same restlessness as I would feel. He feels the restlessness, and I ask him, “Are you feeling the restlessness?” That is *ksipta citta* [wavering consciousness]. When you are not doing anything, and you are dull, and your mind is wandering all over the place, that is *mudha citta*. You are not aware of any part of your body. Then I say, “Okay, now focus on your knee. Whatever is happening, focus on your knee.” And as you remain in *trikonasana*, let’s say, focusing on the knee, I say, “Grip your knee again.” If you are able to grip your knee again, that means that it had become loose. If it became loose, it means that the awareness you had in the beginning lost out. So although your focus was on the knee, it was wavering in intensity, so that becomes *uiksipta citta* [partially stable consciousness, oscillating between wandering and stable consciousness].

MM: Right.

BAA: Now, if I want you to do the *viksipta citta*, I tell you that as long as your mind is on the knee and you’re observing the knee, your consciousness is there. The consciousness causes the movement. So while you are observing there, the consciousness also will continue to move because you are observing that spot. Whereas, if you focus on your back leg, for example, while observing the front leg, the movement will come in the back leg but it will keep the front leg undisturbed. So that becomes *ekagra citta* [one-pointed consciousness].

So from that point on, it’s going from *mudha citta* to *ksipta citta* to *viksipta citta* to *ekagra citta*, and that is something people relate to. Then they start understanding what consciousness is.

MM: Your explanation of the asanas with the understanding of the *citta* is really quite profound. And students can feel the changes that go on in consciousness even without any words attached to them. But they can, in fact, say, “I understand this was dull, now it’s awake. Now all of my concentration is here, now none of my concentration is here.” Those words are easy for them.

BAA: Yes.

MM: It takes later for the philosophy to catch up. This is what I think Guruji has really brought to the subject. [Guruji] gives up talking to my ears because I’m a fool. But he can talk directly to parts of my body, and they respond to him.

BAA: Absolutely, it doesn’t require language. The way I see it, language goes to the mind; the mind interprets it and sends it across based on whatever experiences you have had. Whereas a direct teaching is something that happens when he is working through the consciousness.

BM: Sure. To go back to the first questions about community—let me look at it this way: You have different parts of your body. These are the different individuals in the community. Okay? Each part of the body does a different thing because that is for the *dharma*. If every part started to do the same thing, then the human body would not work. Right?

In a similar manner, if you say a community is united when each part does its own thing, as it should be doing, what is the *dharma*? What is the duty? If everybody starts to do the same thing, that shows attachment. And attachment doesn’t lead to *dharma*. So what we need to do is [have] each one do what is the right thing for himself and the community, for the community to grow. What it does not mean is that everybody should be doing the same thing.

If [every body part tried] to do the same thing, the human body would not work. For example, if the ears attempted to do what the eyes are doing or if the tongue tried to do what the ears are doing, the human body would not function. Similarly, the community functions when each [person] does his or her own job. Each person’s view will be different. It has to be. Because what the eyes see and what the ears hear have to be different.

Therefore, forget about trying to bring consensus, but bring about the dutifulness, in terms of the ethics about it, that [asks], “Is what I am doing the right thing for me to do for the betterment of the community?” If that is so, go ahead and do it. You are not likely to cause any problem. But the problem comes in when we try to say, “Oh, I need to slight somebody.” You know, that is attachment.

When you try to slight somebody [or become attached], that’s where things start to fail. And I think that is the beauty about the communities Guruji has brought together. He believes that the community should develop, grow, work in its own best manner. And you find that communities are flourishing. And most of the other Gurus, as you might know, have this kind of hierarchy, like a pyramid, that leaves behind only one way to do things. Whereas this community...

MM: It keeps growing.

BM: Yes, it keeps growing because it’s like nature. It just keeps growing and growing and growing, and so I wish the U.S. community well and thank you.

MM: Birjoo, thank you very, very much from all of us. It’s been quite enlightening.

BM: Thank you. ॐ

YOGA SAMACHAR SPRING/SUMMER 2014

“Let My Ending Be Your Beginning”

– B.K.S. Iyengar

Theme of the IYAC/ACYI Conference at Capilano College, May 2015

With humbleness, and dedication to Guruji’s legacy, Zubin Zartoshtimanesh led us over four days at Capilano College during the recent Iyengar Yoga Association conference.

As a preamble, Shirley Daventry French was invited to speak, and she did so eloquently about Guruji. His presence was part of the atmosphere as Canadians from across the country came together for the first time since Guruji’s death.

Zubin is a dynamic and skilled teacher. From the first day to the last pose, everything was linked to the principles of Iyengar yoga. “Understand this!” was his constant refrain.



Above: Zubin in halasana; below: Zubin in urdhva dhanurasana; at bottom: Ann Kilbertus in supta padangusthasana while Zubin is making sure we ‘understand’



There was little use of props, and we were encouraged to think that if we always used a block say in *utthita parsvakonasana*, when would we ever learn the pose, or understand how to go deeper into the body? Props might be used to help us overcome a problem, with the idea, that we leave them behind. He often quoted Guruji’s phrase: “The body is the first prop.”

Zubin reiterated many times that when there is a problem, we shouldn’t practice for that condition. That is only a part of what our practice should be. The practice should not be divided. All the families of poses need to be done. Each one is a pathway to the inner understanding of how body, mind and breath are one; or how *asana*



pranayama and *dhyana* (meditation) are all working together.

Each morning we began with *asanas* to help prepare for *pranayama*, with such poses as *paryankasana* on a high block, or doing *jatara parivartanasana* to learn *uddiyana bandha*, and then taking the understanding to use it in *maha mudra*.

We did *supta padungustasana* many times and often for a different purpose, in *pranayama* class a blanket was placed at the pelvis, so tailbone would descend in the pose.

The whole four days was like one class, each pose leading to understanding of the next. The final day was a culmination of everything we had done. We ended with a high *setu banda sarvangasana*, to *eka pada setu bandha*, to *viparata karani* on the same blocks.

One of the differences in the Iyengar method is learning to hold the postures for long periods. He said, they often held *trikonasna* for five minutes on each side with Gururji. This builds endurance. Runners, hit the diaphragm when they



Zubin demonstrating urdhva mukha svanasana

run, when we hold the postures, the diaphragm can spread.

He showed clearly how the spreading has to be in back bends, so the length of the spine is not compressed. They are back extensions.

His talk on *vayus* [vital energies] on the last day was illustrated by the position we took for *setu banda* on a bolster, so the body was lifted and spread, and we could feel the effect on ourselves.

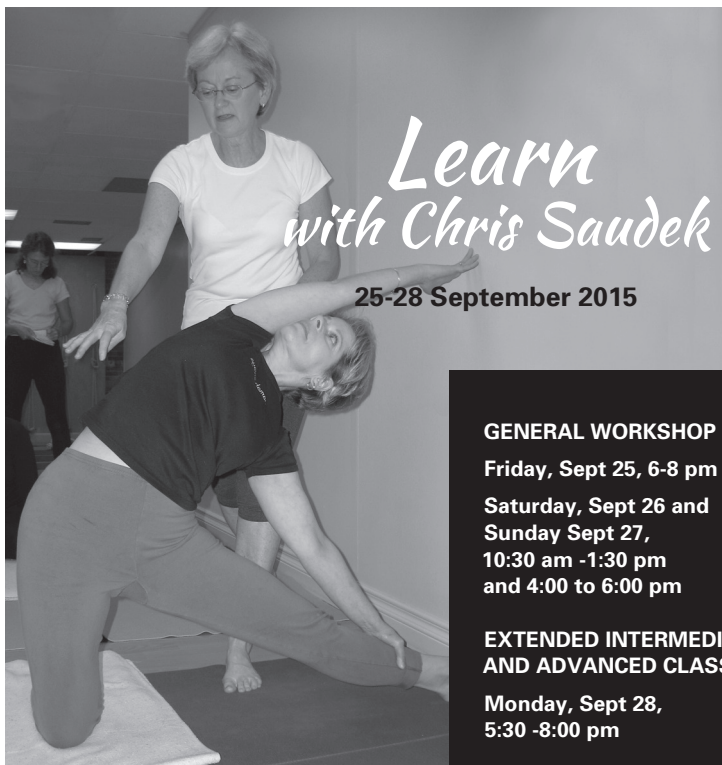
Zubin's wife, Parizad, was a constant and quiet presence. She walked through and among the 200 or so

participants guiding, adjusting and advising us. Her touch helped me immediately know the direction I needed to move.

Thank you Zubin for coming to Canada to share your teaching and for bringing your family with you. Thank you to all the organizers in Vancouver and the board for a rewarding and successful weekend together.

With gratitude to Gururji B.K.S. Iyengar and his deep and binding legacy. ॐ

Namaste, Leslie Hogg



25-28 September 2015

GENERAL WORKSHOP

Friday, Sept 25, 6-8 pm

Saturday, Sept 26 and
Sunday Sept 27,
10:30 am -1:30 pm
and 4:00 to 6:00 pm

EXTENDED INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED CLASS

Monday, Sept 28,
5:30 -8:00 pm

Open to Iyengar Yoga students, general level and above. Ask your teacher if you have questions about attending.

NOTE: Chris will teach an extended Intermediate class on Monday, Sept. 28.

REGISTRATION OPEN NOW

- Beginners Class \$30 + GST
- Teachers' Debriefing \$50 + GST (including attendance at the Beginner's Class)
- Workshop weekend (Saturday and Sunday) \$230 + GST Members, \$240 + GST Non-members

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

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



Louie Ettling Workshop

- In April, we were privileged to have Canadian Senior teacher, Louie Ettling (of Vancouver) lead us in an All-Levels workshop. She reminded us that no matter how practiced, every pose is a work in progress.
- Louie has a gift for imparting clear focused instruction with vivid imagery. Our cupped hands became “angry spiders” with upwardly arched backs. In *bhujangasana* we became reptiles evolving out of the primeval ooze. We found “bulls eyes” in our buttocks and shoulder blades and fitted tea cozies over our pelvises.
- She encouraged us to hold poses in order to build strength. The sense of “no hurry” allowed a subtle evolution to develop. I underestimated the effects of the raw work we did until the next morning when the memory echoed in my muscles. I slept very deeply and well both nights.
- “What is the nature of a blind spot?” Louie asked. “That it is a blind spot.”



Once discovered it is a revelation, but then up pops another blind spot.” Our lives are constantly more interesting because of these discoveries.

- She asked us “Do you know the story of the collar bones?” We didn’t. “It’s a short story. Once upon a time there were collarbones...and they were wide. The End.”



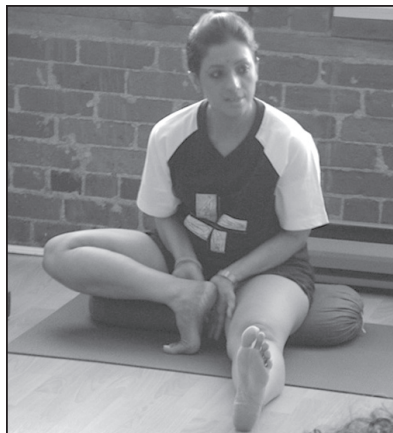
Devki Workshop

Monday, April 20

Devki Desai is a long time student of the Iyengar family. Her teachings reflect the very essence of the practise of yoga.



"You must have the strong desire to try to do what you cannot do yet. We can help each other overcome fear."
(salamba sirsasana)



"Open your feet – the ayurvedic doctor can read the body with the feet – you must read your own book- but you don't know how!"



"Trikonasana for the abdomen – navelize your trikonasana."



Sri B.K.S. Iyengar, Honourary President

IYAC/ACYI ASSESSMENT DATES

June 19-21
Intermediate Junior I
Winnipeg, MB

October 23-25
Intermediate Junior II
Toronto, ON



IYCV Open House

Free! Come one, come all!

*Featuring free yoga classes,
Bhavantu Sound, chai tea
and goodies.*

SATURDAY, SEPT 12

11:30 am Kirtan with Bhavantu Sound: Tia Benn, Ty Chandler, and Chris Simons

1:00 pm Intro Yoga – Adia Kapoor

2:00 pm 55+ Yoga – Wendy Boyer

3:00 pm Yoga – All Levels, All Traditions – Lucie Guindon

4:00 pm Yoga Philosophy – Shirley Daventry French and Dr. Derek French

Meet all the teachers, too!

SUNDAY, SEPT 13

1:00-2:30 pm Discover Iyengar Yoga Basics – Ann Kilbertus

A short workshop designed to acquaint students new to the Iyengar method with the fundamentals of yoga as taught in the Iyengar tradition. Students who have never taken an Iyengar class and students who have been away from the Iyengar Yoga Centre for 6 months – this workshop is for you!

Pre-registration required for workshop only. Max 35 students.



Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
250-386-YOGA (9642)

An Overview of Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar's "Jnana in Asana: Experiential Knowledge"

by Sharoni Fixler

The following article is an overview of a message given by B.K.S. Iyengar at the American Iyengar Yoga Convention in San Diego, June 1990. *Jnana* means knowledge and in his message, B.K.S. Iyengar explains how experiential knowledge can be attained through an *asana* (yoga posture).

Iyengar yoga is known for precision, a focus on alignment, longer holds in *asana* and the regular practice of headstand and shoulder stand. It has often been referred to as 'furniture yoga' because of its hallmark use of props. For these reasons, B.K.S. Iyengar has been regarded as a hatha yoga teacher when in fact he teaches Patanjali's yoga through *asana* and *pranayama*.

Patanjali's Classical yoga (also referred to as *Raja yoga* or *Ashtanga yoga*) was documented in his *Yoga Sutras* around the second century BCE.¹ It offers a broad scope of tools for the yoga practitioner to move toward the ultimate goal of stillness of consciousness. These include personal and interpersonal observances, meditation, devotion, study, action, etc. Patanjali briefly addresses *asana* and *pranayama* (breathing exercises) as part of his eight limbs of yoga.

Around the 15th century CE, the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* was written and with the emergence of the hatha yoga tradition, came a body-oriented tradition that focuses on physical purification practices meant to prepare the practitioner for, what were deemed to be higher levels of yoga, such as meditation.²

B.K.S. Iyengar's contemporary interpretation, marries Patanjali's yoga with hatha yoga. *Asana* and *pranayama* become the starting points for accessing

the many facets of yoga. While often misunderstood as a purely physical tradition, Iyengar yoga takes *yama* and *niyama* (personal and interpersonal observances) into *asana*, he takes devotion into *asana* and he takes meditation into *asana*. The *asana* practice both purifies and prepares one for seated meditation, as well as invoking the meditative state on its own when practiced in a particular way.

In his article, "Jnana in Asana: Experiential Knowledge," Iyengar explains how experiential knowledge can be attained through the practice of *asana*. He says:

*There may be a misconception in your mind that dhyana [meditation] is spiritual yoga and asanas physical yoga. where there is asana, there should be dhyana. Where there is dhyana should be an asana.*³

Furthermore, he states that it's impossible to meditate without having a body and taking a physical position during meditation. The body should not be given less importance than the mind. They are all part of a whole.

*Do not be confused if somebody says to you that this is physical yoga, be indifferent to such words and stick to your practices. Even for spiritual yoga, the body has to be used. Can spiritual wisdom be imparted without speech? ... Without physical means, the essence of spirituality cannot be expressed.*⁴

Iyengar explains that the *asana* practice matures over time. At first we do the *asana* from the gross body; eventually we move through to the subtle body to the causal body. He describes the gross body as the anatomical, the subtle body as the

The asana practice both purifies and prepares one for seated meditation, as well as invoking the meditative state on its own when practiced in a particular way.

physiological, mental and intellectual and the causal body as the spiritual. We move from the gross to the fine as the *asana* practice evolves and eventually the practice becomes meditation-in-action.

He goes on to correlate the three bodies with three *margas* (paths of yoga): *karma* (action) which connects to the gross body, *jnana* (knowledge) which connects to the subtle body and *bhakti* (devotion) which connects to the causal body.

Iyengar gives specific examples of poses that bring about a "state of silence." From his own experience in the postures, he has ascertained the effects of each pose on the mind.

*I will tell you the difference between these asanas. They take you to the state of silence [meditation], even perfection. But in that silence you find various differences. In halasana [plow pose], the silence is passive and makes you pensive. In setu bandha sarvangasana [little bridge pose], it is a half-pensive and half-dynamic state of silence. In halasana, you can go to sleep, but in setu bandha sarvangasana you cannot go to sleep and you cannot oscillate either. In salamba sirsasana [headstand] too you cannot oscillate, you can never be inattentive even for a second, otherwise you lose the balance. Yet you feel cool in the head. In paschimottanasana [seated forward bend] you experience serene silence.*⁵

1 Georg Feuerstein, *The Yoga Tradition: Its History, Literature, Philosophy and Practice* (Prescott, Arizona: Hohm Press, 1998), 214.

2 Feuerstein, 29.

3 Iyengar, 254.

4 Iyengar, 256.

5 Iyengar, 255.

He explains that in each *asana* the state of consciousness changes and that the practitioner should experience the effects of each pose for him/herself. With that experience, he/she can choose and sequence poses based on their effects and according to the individual's needs on a given day. For those who struggle in a pose or have difficulty accessing it, prop support is taken so that body and mind can settle more easily and the unique effects of the pose can be experienced.

Iyengar's sequencing, use of support and longer holds are excellent tools to access to the meditative/devotional state and rebalance the mind/emotions through *asana*.

At 95 years old, Iyengar continues to practice amongst his students at his institute in Pune, India. He is a true proponent of practice as a path to understanding. There is an anecdote of B.K.S. Iyengar going to a conference with several highly-regarded scholars. He gave a beautiful interpretation of one of the aphorisms of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* and Swami Satchidananda asked him which book this insight came from. Iyengar replied, "from the library of my body."⁶ ॐ

Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar, "Jnana In Asana: Experiential Knowledge" in *Astadala Yogamala*, Volume 2, pp. 254-256. Allied Publishers Pvt Ltd. 2009. \$22.00 Paperback. ISBN 8177641786 <http://iynaus.org/store/store/books>.

SHARONI FIXLER IS A CERTIFIED IYENGAR YOGA TEACHER AND A LIFELONG STUDENT OF YOGA. SHE TEACHES REGULAR CLASSES AT HER STUDIO IN CALGARY, YOGA FOR HEALTH AND FACILITATES A PRE-TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM FOCUSED ON PERSONAL PRACTICE. SHE CAN BE REACHED AT SHARONI@YOGAFORHEALTHCALGARY.COM

High Tea Fundraiser

Special Needs Tea Party Thank You

We had a fun tea party fundraiser! Delicious food, Robin's Tea Pose, music, and a crazy skit! Annual fundraisers can be challenging to sustain – this one is getting better! The tea takes a ton of energy and volunteer time from many people. We want to thank these few for the extraordinary effort:

- Special Needs Teachers – Ann, Marlene, Linda and the many volunteers who teach each week. What a dedicated group! And thanks to the very special students who attend the classes.
- The Bakers – the food was wonderful! Thanks to all of you who made the tea a sweet event.
- Robin (Jim too), for the overall organization of the tea – a job that begins months in advance



Robin taking tea in Uttanasana.

⁶ As told by S.F. Biria.

of the event. Thanks Robin for coordinating the volunteers who manage the raffle and auction; fundraising in your home studio; borrowing table cloths, cups, hats and finding the team of volunteers to manage the kitchen and food. Balancing a silver tea set on your sacrum yesterday in *uttanasana* is a good metaphor for your role in the tea!

- The Silent Auction committee of Amanda Mills, Carole Miller, and Bev Kallstrom, with help from Sheila Redhead and Krysia Strawczynski – organizing the auction is a huge job. Many thanks! It gets more difficult every year to keep the treasures coming – thanks to all who donated the items! This year we had a record 70 items, of good quality and variety. And thanks to the bidders and supporters of the Special Needs Tea – we raised about \$ 2,334 from the Silent Auction!
- Darwin Miller of the Renaissance Retirement Living and Robin's husband Jim Pask for the loan and delivery of all the table linens and dishes.
- Dawn Cox, Michael Blades, Johanna Godliman, and Jane McFarlane for kitchen duty and cleanup. The kitchen was so packed with people, food and dishes – like a short order kitchen for a couple of hours. Lucie's class started at 5:30 so it was a quick turnaround.
- Daryle Lechinski and Bryan Merryfield for the wonderful music!
- Brandy Baybutt, her son Theo, Ann Kilbertus, Linda and Bhakati MacRae (directed by Jane McFarlane) for the inspired skit!
- Silk Road for providing the tea! Johanna Godliman, Amanda Mills,

and Robin's granddaughter Kayla Smith for hauling the huge, full containers up to the studio.

- Thanks also to Britta, who was helping in her usual quiet way! ॐ



Ann and Theo in the skit "Iyengar Yoga Astrolabe"



Bonny hat



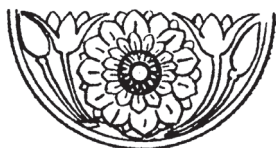
Part of the silent auction committee: Sheila, Carole and Amanda working on the "bids"

On Smrti: Holding Fast/ Letting Go

by Crystal McMillan

The definition of Yoga from the *Yoga Sutras* in the second verse is *yogah cittavrtti nirodhah*, or yoga is calming the fluctuations of the mind. One of the fluctuations or *vrttis* is *smrti* or memory.

Smrti: memory, the holding fast of the impressions of objects that one has experienced. This *vrtti* holds significance for me because I find it challenging to loosen the mental grasp of negative past experiences. Yoga has helped me to identify the seeds of these experiences and gain a better understanding of how my mind embeds, cultivates, and transforms these past issues. Chapter 1, verse 2 of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* (Isherwood, 1953), states that our constant thought processes develop natural tendencies (or *samskaras*) that form our character at any given moment. Patanjali describes *samskaras* as being analogous to a lake, in that, waves do not merely disturb the surface of the water, they also, by their continued action, build up banks of sand or pebbles on the lake bottom. These sand-banks are more permanent and solid than the waves themselves. They may be compared to the tendencies, potentialities, and latent states which exist in the subconscious and unconscious areas of the mind. Expose the mind to constant thoughts of anger and resentment, and you will find that these anger waves build up anger-*samskaras*, which will predispose you to find occasions for anger throughout your daily life. Patanjali states that these *samskaras* may be modified by the introduction of other kinds of thought-waves into the mind. ॐ



Members' Practice

All current members of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria who attend a regular class or have received permission from the practice monitor are welcome to participate in an open practice every Sunday afternoon from 12:30-3:30 pm.

There is no instruction given in this self-directed practice session. Props, books and other resources are available for the use of anyone who attends.

Come for 20 minutes or stay for three hours!



Winter Solstice Workshop With Ty Chandler

December 20 and 21, 2015

FIRST NIGHT: forward bend practice with inversions.

SECOND NIGHT: backbend practice with inversions.

Not recommended for beginners.

Fees:

One night: \$30 + GST IYCV members, \$35 + GST non-members;

Both nights: \$55 + GST IYCV members, \$65 + GST non-members;

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

Abhijata's Intensive Audio Recordings Available

The audio recording of Abhijata's intensive in the UK last May is available as a download from IYAUUK. If you want a taste of Pune without being there, this is awesome. It costs about \$16.50 Cdn.

I did the standing poses a couple of days ago and while I was begging for mercy, I learned a lot.

— Glenda Balkan Champagne

<https://www.iyengaryoga.org.uk/news/abhijata-convention-audio-recordings-for-download>



Become a member of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria and enjoy the following benefits:

- Receipt of four newsletters per year. Our in-depth newsletters are eagerly anticipated by over 500 people worldwide.
- Discounts on classes and workshops.
- Early registration for classes and workshops.
- Scholarship eligibility for various workshops.
- Library borrowing privileges.
- Free practice space on Sunday afternoons.
- Opportunities for members to contribute insights and apply to sit on the board of directors.

The one-year membership fee is \$42 CDN and is renewable each January.

For a one-year membership, please complete this form and mail or drop it off at our office 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 Canada

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

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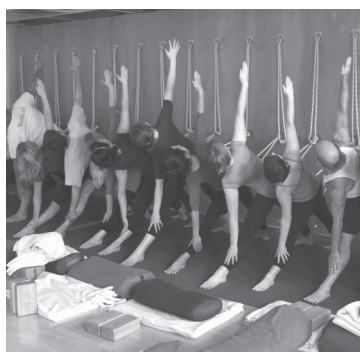
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☐ Sign me up for monthly yog-e email news.

☐ Unsubscribe from monthly yog-e email news.

☐ Receipt required.



Learning the Ropes

WITH LAUREN COX

All levels

October 24, 2015 | 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

\$30 members/\$35 non-members

Come explore the classical asanas with the support of the ropes!

Registration opens September 1, 2015

To register, drop by or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, 202-919 Fort St., Victoria, B.C. 250-386-YOGA (9642)



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE OF VICTORIA

Calendar

JUNE

- 5-7 Salt Spring Retreat
- 21 International Day of Yoga

JULY

- 6-10 Summer Early Morning Practice
- 6-11 Intensive for Introductory Teachers in Training

AUGUST

- 10-14 Intensive for Certified Iyengar Teachers
- 31- Sept 4 Student Intensive

SEPTEMBER

- 17 Open House
- 25-28 Chris Saudek

OCTOBER

- 16 Practice Enrichment Series
- 17 Teacher Meeting
- 24 Learn the Ropes workshop

NOVEMBER

- 20-21 Going Deeper with Shirley Daventry French

Scholarships and Bursaries

Members' scholarships are available for:

- Salt Spring Retreat June 5, 6, 7, deadline for applications: May 19
- Teacher (Intro) Intensive July 6-11, deadline for applications: June 19
- Intermediate Intensive August 10-14, deadline for applications: July 24
- Student Intensive August 31-September 4, deadline for applications: August 7
- Chris Saudek September 25-28, deadline for applications: September 10

Please note the following bursary

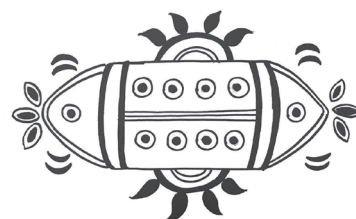
application due dates:

July/August term: June 9

September/October term: August 5

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

Applications for both are available at the reception desk.
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria | 202-919 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3 | 250-386-YOGA (9642)



Thank you!

Tracy Harvey for taking photos of the Heart of Yoga with Shirley and Ann;

Michael Blades and **George Klukowski** for hauling away the big TV and stand from the library;

Glenda Balkan-Champagne for the generous donation of the two-volume set of DVDs of Geeta's teaching in Pune in December of 2014 (total of 35 DVDs).



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

7 Yoga is One and
Yoga is for All

9 International
Day of Yoga

12 Live Happily–
Die Majestically

13 A look at B.K.S.
Iyengar's *Light
on Pranayama*

*Shirley Daventry French adjusts
Janine Beckner in urdhva mukha
svanasana at the Salt Spring
Retreat in July. See page 10.*



The Body is the First Prop: a Workshop with Senior IYCV Teachers

Friday-Sunday, September 25-27, 2015

B.K.S. Iyengar has often said, "a class is not a practice." How can one learn to practice at home with increasing sensitivity? This workshop will give you clues and practical techniques to both begin a practice and develop more intelligence in a regular practice.

"The body is the first prop." – B.K.S. Iyengar

Friday evening: 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Asanas for Pranayama Practice, with Marlene Miller

Saturday morning: 11:00 am - 1:30 pm

Asanas Begin with the Organs of Action (arms and legs), with Leslie Hogya

Saturday afternoon: 3:00 - 5:00 pm

Pranayama for Asana Practice, with Shirley Daventry French

Sunday afternoon: 12:30 - 3:00 pm

Asanas for Balance and Stability, with Ann Kilbertus

Practitioners of all ages and stages are welcome as classes will be structured to accommodate one and all.

\$180 + GST members / \$190 + GST non-members, for the weekend.



Upavista konasana

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: NOVEMBER 15, 2015

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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.

REGISTRATION

Please visit our website:
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca for full
information on classes and workshops.

Drop in: 202-919 Fort Street,
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3

Phone: (250) 386-YOGA (9642)



Reflections

by Shirley Daventry French

December 14th is an auspicious date for pupils of Iyengar Yoga, because that is the day on which Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar was born in 1918. Last year, on August 20th 2014, Guruji's exemplary and inspiring life came to an end. He was ninety-five years of age. Throughout the world his students mourned his passing. His message to us was for his ending to be our beginning: "to live a worthy life and die majestically, nobly and gracefully".

My predominant feelings were and still are of overwhelming gratitude for having been Guruji's pupil: for the brilliance of his teaching, for knowing him personally, for all the letters written in return for ones I had sent to him, and for his ongoing guidance.

I stood face to face with Guruji in Pune for the first time in 1979. We were a group of about twenty-five students, the majority from Canada. Few of us had been there before. It was to be a three-week course with Guruji as the teacher. It was called an *Intensive*, and afterwards we always smiled at this name because with Guruji there was no other way. He was intense!

"It was called an Intensive, and afterwards we always smiled at this name because with Guruji there was no other way. He was intense!"

On the first Monday our class was to follow an early morning general class. We waited in the lobby until those students left and we were told to go upstairs to the main yoga hall where we stood around silently with our own private thoughts.

Guruji entered the hall and immediately started telling us where to stand. The slate

floor of the main studio is painted with white lines which follow the octagonal shape of the Institute, and we were placed on one of those lines according to our height. Shortest at the front, tallest at the back! We were told that this was to be our place for the entire course unless told otherwise. Being small, I was in the front row. Definitely, I should have preferred to be at the back where my tall husband had been placed! However, as Guruji began to teach I understood that it made no difference: front, back or centre, wherever we were, we were going to be visible. His ability to see beyond the surface was phenomenal.

Guruji's Indian English was difficult for many students to understand, and most were in culture shock which was slightly mitigated for Derek and me because we had lived in the Middle East and North Africa and had experienced beggars, crowds, animals (camels rather than water buffalo) wandering all over the roads, and the noise and dirt of hot, dusty climates. For those who had never lived outside of North America it was a rude awakening.

Most difficult of all was for students to adjust to Guruji's direct and authoritarian style of teaching. This was somewhat familiar to the few of us who had been educated in English schools of the mid twentieth century.

We thought we had prepared ourselves well. But, as my colleague Carole Miller put it after her first class with Guruji: "It's like having a baby: no-one can tell you what it's like."

Our first trained Iyengar Yoga teacher was Norma Hodge whom we met at Yasodhara Ashram in 1976 when Derek and I and our family went there for Christmas. Norma had studied with Guruji in India and also with Swami Radha who invited her to teach the early morning hatha yoga classes. Norma's

classes were an awakening, not only because of the early hour at which they took place, but because of the clarity and directness of her instruction and hands on corrections. I was very impressed with this teaching and eager to learn more.

We continued to work with Norma for three years, which brought us the opportunity to study in Pune with Mr. Iyengar in 1979. Norma called her workshops “From Comfort to Newness,” a perfect description and a precursor of things to come!

By this time we had been studying with Swami Radha for nine years and had great respect for her and her work. She too was a direct no-nonsense teacher who brought us face to face with the truth. At her ashram we received a good grounding in the philosophy and psychology of yoga. Along with Norma’s excellent tutelage, this prepared us somewhat for the impact of B.K.S. Iyengar.

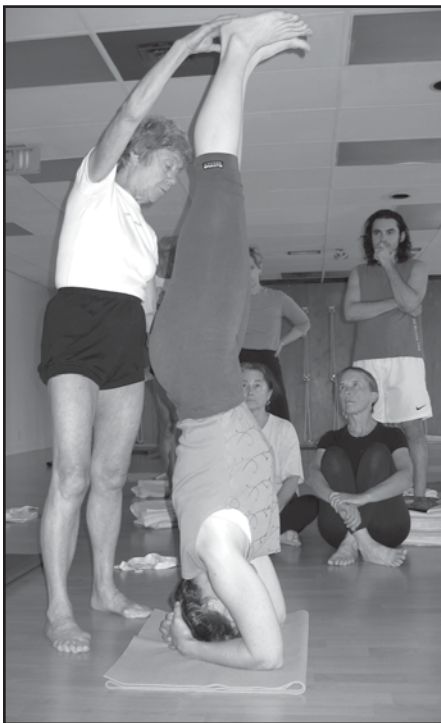
Light on Yoga was required reading in a three-month residential course we had taken at the Ashram. I had read and written a report on this book, but until Norma appeared on the scene I had no concept of such a strong and vibrant asana practice. The photos and instructions on practising *asanas* are clear but necessarily concise. The

In the first class with Guruji it was clear that he had laser-like vision, an incredible depth of knowledge, and very high expectations. Instructions were clear, direct and penetrating.

introduction with its overview of yoga philosophy is concise but comprehensive.

Because of my respect and gratitude for Swami Radha and her teaching I felt a little uneasy about going to study with another Yoga Master. For some time I did not tell her about my opportunity, but this did not feel good, so one day I sat down and wrote her a letter explaining my reasons for wanting to go to Pune. Shortly afterwards I received an answer in which she said: “If you are truly interested in this work then go the source!”

It was the philosophy which drew me deeper into yoga and was the catalyst to study at Yasodhara Ashram; but I also enjoyed the practice of yoga *asana*. Occasionally some fellow students and I would open *Light on Yoga*, pick a posture and practise it—generally amidst much laughter as we moved our limbs into a rough (very rough) facsimile of the picture we were looking at.



Going Deeper

with Shirley Daventry French

An opportunity for all interested students to deepen their understanding of asana, pranayama and the philosophy which lies at the heart of yoga. Shirley is a direct student of the great contemporary yoga master, B.K.S. Iyengar. Since her first visit to Pune in 1979, she has returned regularly for further study.

An Iyengar Yoga Workshop for Students of all Yoga Traditions

November 20 & November 21

Registration opens September 1, 2015

Shirley is the founder of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria and her energy has contributed to a vibrant yoga community in Greater Victoria. Students from across Canada and around the world have studied with her. We invite you to join her for this special workshop.

Friday, November 20

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Saturday, November 21

10:30 am - 1:30 pm

4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Fees:

\$150 + GST

for IYCV members

\$165 + GST

for non-members

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

In the first class with Guruji it was clear that he had laser-like vision, an incredible depth of knowledge, and very high expectations. Instructions were clear, direct and penetrating. He had no time for excuses. Most of the yoga being practised in North America in that era was of the “Gently. Slowly. As long as you’re comfortable” variety, and many people were indignant at Guruji’s demands, dismayed by the lack of what they described as “positive feedback”; but if you could get beyond the lack of North American niceties such as “good” “well done” and Guruji’s intolerance of excuses, there was much positive direction. Derek and I were very glad to have studied with Swami Radha who shared his insistence that we give our very best or, as she put it, “aim for the Most High”. In Pune the exhortation to work “any amount” and “to the maximum” echoed throughout the Institute.

During the intensive, Guruji’s classes generally lasted three hours or more, and each afternoon we had *pranayama*. On Sundays we had question and answer sessions. Although *asana* classes had a starting time, their finishing time was flexible: it usually came when Guruji saw that our eyes were glazing over and although he could have continued teaching, we could take no more—and it was not physical fatigue although that was often there too. At this juncture he would deliver what was to become a familiar closing line: “Enough for today!”

We were staying in a dismal room in a not very pleasant hotel, but we were simply too tired to move. At the end of each morning’s session we went out for lively lunches with some fellow students and then returned to our small dimly lit room for siesta. Afternoon *pranayama* classes stayed within their time frame because students (mostly Indian) were coming in after work for an evening class. After dinner it was early to bed.

At the end of the course, I couldn’t get out of India quickly enough, but once home I began to plan my next trip!

“If you are casually thinking about a pilgrimage to Pune, begin to plan seriously and make it happen! Such opportunity is a spiritual gift which will nourish your spirit and enrich your life with meaning and purpose!”

One of the first things we did on our return to Canada was put up wall ropes and two pelvic swings in our yoga room, and they continue to be well used. From 1979 onward I went to Pune as often as I could for periods of one, two or three months. It has enriched my life immeasurably and is one of the best choices I have ever made.

As Guruji’s work became better known, it was very competitive to get a space to study with him. There were long waiting lists for any intensive and should anyone drop out there were always others ready to take their place at short notice.

On my second visit in 1982, Victoria was given nine spaces in another intensive with Guruji. There were more than nine students wishing to go and it fell to me to make a selection. I went to great lengths to try and be fair in the selection process, which I based on experience of Iyengar Yoga and support for the work in Victoria. A couple of teachers who were not selected but felt they were very deserving got rather angry with me, and one of them never spoke to me again until about a year ago when I bumped into her in the street!

For Derek and I to both be in Pune at the same time required a locum for his medical practice and arrangements for our family. We were offering financial support to two elderly mothers in England, had just bought a new house and our finances were stretched to their limit, so we took out a second mortgage which has long been paid off and proved to be the best investment we ever made!

Guruji is no longer in this world in physical form but his light illumines the

Institute which has become a beacon all over the world! His closest disciples Geeta and Prashant are brilliant teachers in their own light, his granddaughter Abhijata has been trained with loving intensity by Guruji to become a fine teacher, and in anticipation of his inevitable demise, a coterie of Indian students have been well trained and equipped to teach at the Institute. If you are casually thinking about a pilgrimage to Pune, begin to plan seriously and make it happen! Such opportunity is a ‘spiritual gift which will nourish your spirit and enrich your life with meaning and purpose!’

Ritual, remembrance and respect are fundamental aspects of yoga. In my yoga room, there is a full-length photograph of Guruji standing barefooted in his robes. I have placed a statue of Patanjali on his right and Nataraj (Siva, Lord of the Dance) on his left. To end my practice, I have devised a short ritual which involves touching Guruji’s bare feet in the photo.

In Pune, although I saw Indian students performing this gesture of respect, I did not observe any westerners doing it, and neither did I at first. But for those of us who travelled back and forth to the Institute for any length of time, generally there came a moment when this was the appropriate thing to do, when it happened spontaneously and felt absolutely authentic. Although I can no longer physically touch his feet, symbolically I touch them every day in my practice and my life. I am eternally grateful. ॐ



Yoga is One and Yoga is for All

by Gururji B.K.S. Iyengar

Yoga works as a tool for the holistic growth of man irrespective of geographical divisions, it is meant for all living beings on this planet.

Imbibing oriental wisdom, and having taught for years in the occidental world, I find that the urge for self-realisation appears as the goal in all cultures. For this goal, one need not demarcate oriental ways of life with the occidental way of life. The ways of the East and the West are like two branches of a trunk growing in different directions. Let us not divide, but go to the trunk. The aim being identical for one and all, I do not think that yoga divides man from the religious point of view. As thousands and thousands practise in the West, it is enough assurance that yoga as a Universal religion fits irrespective of geographical divisions.

Many from various parts of the globe ask me whether yoga is international or secular or universal. As yoga can be embraced by all it is universal. It guides and shows the right way of living.

The ocean is one but for the sake of convenience man divides and gives it various names. Like one ocean and one earth, yoga is a single unit. As human beings we are one, but we get divided by our petty minds and thoughts. But beyond the labels we are all simply human beings.

Yoga texts claim it as universal (*sarvabhauma*). It builds right knowledge in all of us so that we live a spiritually happy contented life.

“As human beings we are one, but we get divided by our petty minds and thoughts. But beyond the labels we are all simply human beings.”

Our physical and mental problems are the same, but the differences are in the beliefs, outlooks and conditions that shape the mind and intelligence.

As yoga uplifts man from the physical, ethical, mental and intellectual drawbacks, it belongs to all irrespective of one's religion, class, caste, creed, colour, age or gender. The distance between God and man is on account of man's weaknesses. Yoga helps to close this gap and gets man to unite with the divine. At the very least it guides one to become a better human being.

Patanjali classifies consciousness (*citta*) into five categories, which are; dullness (*mudha*), negligence (*ksipta*), agitation (*viksipta*), one-pointedness (*ekagra*) and restraint (*niruddha*); along with the three qualities that govern nature (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*).

Patanjali does not deny its practice to anyone but shows the ways of approach. He wants not only to uplift those who are blessed but also those who lack stability and tranquillity so that all live in a wholesome state of consciousness (*samahita citta*).

A wandering consciousness (*vyutthana citta*) needs culturing, cleansing and polishing. This is achieved by the eight petalled yoga, which transforms one from an unsteady mind to a steady state of mind or *citta*. All are fit for yoga; but to reach the end aim of yoga may be hard and difficult for all.

First of all, yoga starts in helping an unhealthy person to become a healthy person, arresting the decay in him. I have taught yoga to those who were tender in age up to ripe old age, as well as invalids.

It uplifts the afflicted to a state of health, it guides the neophyte seeker to practice with ardour and develop skill to refine the gross and unstable body and mind so that it becomes fit for further penetration of the intelligence into the inner sheaths of man.

For the intense practitioner it guides him to seek the ultimate, the sight of the Self.

The adage, “where there is a will, there is a way” applies well for yoga. For one who has courage and willingness to face hardships, there is no bar in practising yoga. Only one should know what to do, how much to do and which way to do according to one’s capacity and capability.

Any science, art or philosophy has its own depth. But in order to understand them one has to study and build from the base. Take chemistry, it is a single subject, yet it is demarcated into physical chemistry, inorganic chemistry and organic chemistry. Each science at a certain point branches out for further specialised detail and depth.

In the same way if one has to know the body’s depth, its structure, anatomy; he has to have the knowledge of how the various systems function. One needs to know how ageing and disease take place, as well as the ways to alleviate and remedy them.

There is chemistry as well as physics in the body. In the body the physics lies at its core, and its chemistry is the change that takes place in the content. As it is natural to branch out compartmentally to know and understand each aspect in detail, so it is in yoga.

The science of yoga begins from the body; it leads one to study and penetrate further the inner layers and sheaths with the journey ending in the realisation of the soul (*jivatma*) and surrender to the Universal Soul (*Paramatma*). This requires study, culture, purity and sanctity in the body, organs of action, senses of perception, mind, intelligence, I-ness, consciousness, conscience and the individual self.

It is a journey from the microcosm to the macrocosm – the individual to the Universal. In order to reach this goal different techniques and different names such as *jnana yoga*, *karma yoga*, *kundalini yoga*, *raja yoga* were given as a way of describing the path. But the beauty is that the word ‘yoga’ remains common in all the paths.

One is required to study the fundamentals of science to become a master of a branch. In yoga one cannot drop any

“All are fit for yoga; but to reach the end aim of yoga may be hard and difficult for all.”

branch or aspect, the approach has to be thorough and total if it is to attain the goal.

People brand the practice of one aspect of yoga, *asana*, as physical yoga. The same people fail to acknowledge that recitation of any mantra too needs physical organs for their very pronunciation.

Self has physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual bodies. Yoga is meant for mankind to use this body in a right way for a right purpose.

In the *Bhagavad Gita* each chapter concludes naming yoga in different ways; *Arjuna visada* (yoga of dejection), *samkhya yoga* (yoga of knowledge), *karma yoga* (yoga of action), *jnana karma sannyasa yoga* (yoga of knowledge with the disciplines of action) and so forth. But the message of all the eighteen chapters is to unite the individual self (*jivatma*) with the Universal Self (*paramatma*). This covers the whole scope, range and aim of yoga.

Actually, yoga has no varieties. But authors of different intellectual levels presented yoga according to their calibre and gave different names. This is how the branches of yoga sprouted. Some choose certain subjects to study in depth.

In medical practice, there are specialists in cardiology, urology, dermatology, neurology and so forth. Similarly there are branches as part of yoga. If one predominantly takes one part of yoga and concentrates on it, he may name it according to how he associates with that branch.

Specialists in the medical field desire to help patients to derive maximum benefit of their knowledge. It is the same in yoga. Those who want to gain the depth of yoga for themselves, also wish to help those who come to them.

Man is made of three important components, namely, organs of action and perception, the brain and the heart. With these components, he acts, thinks and develops knowledge to become divine. If hands and legs are meant for work and service, brain is to avoid faulty acts, and heart for emotional human touch. Action (*karma*), knowledge (*jnana*) and devotion (*bhakti*) evolved on this basis.

Yoga is derived to keep the body to act, brain to think pure and heart to feel and respect all as children of God. Due to these three characteristic components in man, yoga is described as different paths; but I consider them all as branches of a single tree – the Tree of Yoga. ॐ

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM YOGA RAHASYA, VOL. 22, NO. 2, 2015

Geeta's International Day of Yoga Practice

Tadasana
Namaskarasana
Urdhva hastasana
Uttanasana
Adho mukha svanasana
Urdhva mukha svanasana
Uttanasana
Tadasana
Utthita trikonasana
Utthita parsvakonasana
Virabhadrasana I
Parivrtta trikonasana
Parsvottanasana
Prasarita padottanasana
Dandasana
Janu sirsasana
Adho mukha
Upavistakonasana
Virasana parvatasana
Swastikasana parvatasana
Parsva dandasana
Bharadvajasana I
Maricyasana III
Urdhva mukha svanasana
Dhanurasana
Ustrasana
Adho mukha svanasana
Sirsasana
Sarvangasana
Halasana
Chatushpadasana
Setu bandha sarvangasana
Savasana
Sit in dhyana (meditation)

International Day Of Yoga

by Leslie Hogya



PHOTOS: JANINE BANDCROFT

Urdhva mukha svanasana



Dandasana



Variations on ropes



We joined the world in practice on Sunday June 21, 2015. This was declared by the United Nations as the first International Day of Yoga.

From Pune, we had been sent a special list of poses from Geeta Iyengar, Mr. Iyengar's daughter. She said, "To us, every day is a yoga day."

The students came and filled our space as we followed the

quiet sequence led by Glenda Balkan-Champagne. We ended the day with an ancient prayer:

May all beings be happy
May all beings be free from illness
May all see what is auspicious
May no one suffer
Om Peace Peace Peace

The prayer was part of the protocol sent by the Indian Prime Minister's Office in Delhi. ॐ

Students practice a special group of asana sent by Geeta for this day.



Trikonasana



Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Presents

the Heart of Yoga

January 30-31, 2016

An Intermediate Workshop
with Shirley Daventry French
and Ann Kilbertus

Saturday 10:30 am - 1:30 pm
Saturday 4:00 - 6:00 pm
Sunday 12:00 - 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.

Ann has been a student in the Iyengar tradition for over twenty years. She continues to study with Shirley Daventry French and has been teaching since 1988 locally and nationally. Ann began going to Pune, India in 1992 and returns every few years to study with the Iyengars. Her practice and training as an occupational therapist offer a valuable contribution to further understanding of this work.

Fees: \$168 + GST members
\$184 + GST non-members

Registration opens:
Tuesday, October 20, 2015

To register, drop in to or phone
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 \$50.00 cancellation fee.



A Room of My Own

by Janine Beckner

I have been attending the Salt Spring Retreat fairly often in the last 25 years and I choose to camp there.

Camping isn't everyone's cup of tea but for me it is heaven. I love gathering my camping gear in anticipation of the weekend. It is an event in my yearly compass that I cherish. Because I have repeated this so many times, I know exactly what to bring. Just as the camping areas and the Center have evolved through the years, so has



Paschimottanasana on blocks



Chatush padasana lift-off

“I love crawling into my tent at the end of a satisfying day of yoga, walks, companionship, satsang, good food and a sauna.”

my little room. One improvement in comfort I discovered is to bring two Thermo Rest mattresses with me so I can have a ‘double bed’ instead of waking up with part of me off the mattress. That isn't practical if you decide to cycle to the Retreat of course, as you want to pack as lightly as possible for those hills.

During the early years of camping, the grass in the far meadows would be cut for ease of camping. I smile when I think about finding the perfect spot. It reminds me of how our black Labs would circle around looking for the perfect spot to curl up on. The walk from the far meadow to the house can take a bit of time, so the years I took my bike allowed me get to the house more quickly especially for the *pranayama* class in the morning.

The areas we camp in can change year to year depending on what is going on at the Center. Some years there can be many young farm hands that are camping and we camp in the meadows close to the pond.

One year, I picked a spot right by the pond. The nocturnal chorus of frogs was interesting. Could this be part of the reason why there were only two campers this year?

I was delighted to find out we could camp in the forest this year. There are some lovely platforms to set your tent on. I picked a spot close to the showers and new outhouses which are always very clean. I didn't bother putting the fly on the tent this year, as there is a tarp over the spot. The weather was very warm so I had a nice cool place to sleep. I like to arrive so that I have time to set up my tent and get organized and head back to the main house for the restorative class. As I was putting the finishing touches to my sleeping arrangement,



Shirley assists student

the sun shone through the trees into my tent delightfully confirming to me that I picked the perfect spot.

I love crawling into my tent at the end of a satisfying day of yoga, walks, companionship, *satsang*, good food and a sauna. I have been fortunate to have good weather most of the time. The years where we had some rain were not so uncomfortable because the house was warm. A cup of tea, *pranayama* class and a wonderful breakfast warmed the body and soul.

Visiting the Salt Spring Center is like coming home to me. There is a deep sense of peace, love and belonging.

Visiting the Salt Spring Center is like coming home to me. There is a deep sense of peace, love and belonging. For me sleeping out in nature deepens that connection. Thanks to everyone who helps to make this happen. ॐ

JANINE BECKNER IS A LONG-TIME STUDENT OF IYENGAR YOGA. SHE LIVES IN VICTORIA AND IS FORTUNATE TO HAVE A WORK SCHEDULE THAT ACCOMMODATED HER YEARS OF THURSDAY MORNING CLASSES WITH SHIRLEY AND NOW ANN. SHE ENJOYS CYCLING, HIKING, PAINTING AND QUIET TIMES ON HORNBY ISLAND.

Live Happily – Die Majestically

by B.K.S. Iyengar

THE FOLLOWING IS REPRINTED FROM
YOGA RAHASYA, VOL. 21, NO. 4, 2014, TO
COMMEMORATE THE PASSING OF OUR
BELOVED B.K.S. IYENGAR ONE YEAR AGO,
ON AUGUST 20, 2014

Of all the certainties and uncertainties, what is certain is death. Birth is not certain since we cannot be aware of birth before it happens. Our own unfinished karma gives us birth. When the karma destined to be completed in this life is over – death happens.

A yogi does not count his life in terms of years. He counts life in terms of breath. Each breath he takes has to be long, deep and subtle so that the energy is stored abundantly.

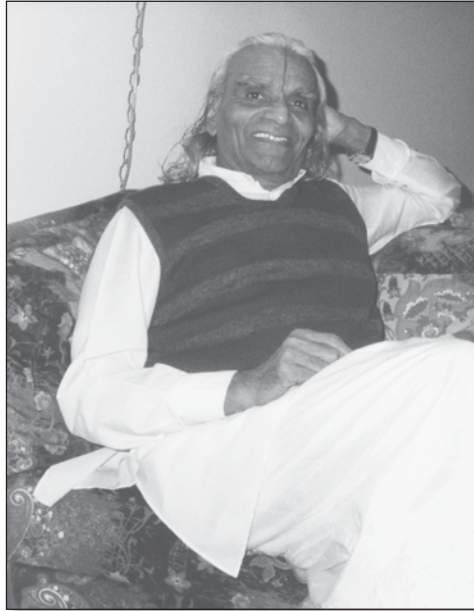
Therefore, as a practitioner of yoga, you still have chances to build your destiny for the future. If you lead and practise yogic discipline throughout your life, you are sure to prolong your life, as worries and anxieties do not corrode you.

One is responsible to think of what to do between life and death by making life worthy and to die majestically, nobly and gracefully. Yoga does that.

Regarding diseases, either we invite them or they appear on account of our destiny. The good karma yield good fruits and the bad karma yield bad results. Disease may come due to past karma. If one does yoga *sadhana* in spite of having disease, one can die majestically.

I remember, in this context, a story from the eighth *skanda* of Srimad Bhagavatam, known as Gajendra-Moksam – freedom from death of the King Elephant.

(Literally meaning Divine-Eternal Tales of The Supreme Lord is one of the



great Puranic texts of Hinduism, with its focus on *bhakti* (religious devotion) to Supreme God Vishnu (*Narayana*), primarily focusing on Krishna) – ed.

Once the King Indradyumna, an ascetic and a yoga practitioner, was meditating and did not pay attention to sage Agasti, his guest. The furious Sage cursed the King to become an elephant. Thus this curse made him to become the King of elephants. He was roaming with wild elephants waiting for his redemption.

Once the herd of elephants entered a lake and they were enjoying spraying water over each other. A crocodile in the lake caught hold of the King Elephant's foot, gripped it and drew him deep into the water. The fight between the two lasted for a thousand years. Finally the King Elephant remembered Lord Vishnu and started to pray and meditate on Him.

As death was approaching the King Elephant, he recalled his past life. Memory surfaced due to the *tapas* done

in previous life. Mahavishnu appeared and killed the crocodile. Later the King Elephant died majestically and attained Vaikuntha, the abode of Lord Vishnu.

The King Elephant attained Sarupya Mukti, a form similar to the Lord.

This story is a lesson for us. The diseases and onslaughts may come, but if our yogic practice profoundly touches our hearts, death will come majestically, in spite of the disease.

The other day a heart patient asked me, out of curiosity, whether *asana* has any effect. Knowing that he had cardiac problems, I made him to do *setu bandha sarvangasana* using the bench. When I put him in the *asana*, he said it was very comfortable. As he was enjoying the comfort, I said, "If you do this *asana* at least five minutes each day, you postpone your next attack by ten years."

No gift can surpass the gift of life.

It is also interesting to know that the fear of death leads one towards a religious disposition and the quest of Self. If the fear of death was not there, we would have indulged and steeped ourselves in enjoyments alone. The fear of death cautions us to follow the science of duty, which leads one towards spiritual life, knowing that we die sooner or later. Accept death, as you desire to live.

Nowadays medicines do prolong life, but the intention of yoga is not just to prolong the life span, but to utilise life that is available to us fully, happily, satisfactorily and spiritually.

Death is certain yet one can postpone it, leading a worthy life. Let not the thought of death or fear of death murder you before the actual death!

Yoga teaches the art of living as well as the art of dying. ॐ

A look at B.K.S. Iyengar's *Light on Pranayama*

by Leslie Hogg

**"It is as difficult to explain
prana as it to explain God,"
says B.K.S. Iyengar in *Light
on Pranayama*.**

Yet in his ground-breaking book, *Light on Pranayama*, Guruji rises to this challenge. Published in 1981, Iyengar's Guru, T. Krishnamacharya expressed doubts such a book could be written. But when Iyengar gave him the manuscript he gave his approval with these words: "Scholars will surely be interested in this thought provoking treatise, a gem in the firmament of yoga."

The book is vast in its coverage of the subject. Part One is divided into three sections: the theory of *pranayama* then art of *pranayama* and finally the techniques of *pranayama*. Part Two, called "Freedom and Beatitude", introduces *dhyana*, meditation, and closes with a chapter on *savasana*, corpse pose. One of the longest chapters, it gives a comprehensive guide to this "most difficult of yogic asanas to perfect..." (p. 232)

At the end of the book there is an appendix; that will help to guide practitioners on how to build up a practice of *pranayama*. Lastly, there is an extensive glossary.

In December 2013, Geeta Iyengar (Guruji's daughter) conducted a course on teaching *pranayama* to a large group of Indian teachers. She advised us not to treat *Light on Pranayama* as a storybook. One cannot open it and read it through from beginning to end, and then put it aside. Geeta stressed that one must go back and forth to the various sections of the book. A student needs to read and re-read the book.

There are gems in every chapter: "As light radiates from the disc of the sun, so air is spread though the lungs.... If the skin of the breast bone can move vertically up and down and it can expand from side to side circumferentially it shows that the lungs are being filled to their maximum." (Chapter Four (Pranayama and the Respiratory System) Note 38)

In chapter 11, on the art of sitting, he explains that there are three crucial spots in the body:

- i. the perineum
- ii. the sacrum and the first lumbar vertebra
- iii. the ninth thoracic vertebra at the back and the centre of the breastbone in front, (plate 35 and figure 18)

Then one may want to refer to chapter 14 on the art of inhalation and exhalation. Guruji says: (inhalation) draws the breath of life as carefully and as gently as the fragrance of a flower might be indrawn..." (Note 1).

There are many reasons to study chapter ten, called Hints and Cautions: "Only when the torso is firm, the brain receptive and the self attentive, is *pranayama saatvic*." (p. 61).

Chapter 13 is devoted entirely to *mudras* and *bandhas*. In order to perform *pranayama* in a seated position, one must master *jalandhara bandha* (chin lock). In shoulder stand (*sarvangasana*) the sternum is pressed against the chin, which naturally creates the correct position for this *bandha*. While sitting, this can be more challenging to recreate. Guruji cautions: "do not force the chin to the chest, but lift the chest to meet the descending chin." (Note 5(g) and plate 58).

Guruji says: Perfection in *asana* is a must if one wants to derive the full benefit of *pranayama*. There is a thirteen-year gap between the publishing of *Light on Yoga* and *Light on Pranayama*.

His publishers wanted him to write on *pranayama*, but he said he had to develop his own clarity on the subject before he could put anything in black and white.

The techniques of *pranayama* are not introduced until almost half way through the text. Only at this point does Guruji introduce *ujjayii*, *viloma*, *bhramari*, and so on. He was wise to begin in simple poses, as traditionally one would only learn *pranayama* with a guru, so he broke down the stages. The first levels of *ujjayii* and *viloma* are done in a lying position using bolsters, blankets and planks of wood. He says, "this relieves any tension and softens the diaphragm."

Delve into this book! When there is no teacher to guide you, or you have questions the book is there. Guruji always says: "a good book is better than a bad teacher." This is an excellent source and a safe guide for building a *pranayama* practice. ॐ

NOTE: WATCH FOR PRANAYAMA COURSES GIVEN AT THE IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE.

Light on Pranayama, B.K.S. Iyengar. Allen and Unwin, 1981. London.

Astadala Yogamala, Volumes 4, 5, and 8.

Yoganganusthana on Pranayama DVDs Geeta Iyengar Dec. 2013. RIMYI . Pune.



IYAC/ACYI ASSESSMENT DATES

October 16-18

Introductory II, London, ON

October 23-25

Intermediate Junior II
Toronto, ON

November 6-8

Introductory II, Ottawa, ON

Yogashtha: One Who is Firmly Established in Yoga

by Sameer Kulkarni

When I first went to the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute 17-18 years ago, Guruji was close to 80. By then, Guruji had stopped teaching in the general classes. However one could always see him in the therapy classes. At other times, his tryst with his chosen subject was on. His practice time was fixed and he could be seen in the hall practising in those time slots. He assumed his position of *asanas* often with the use of sticky mats, bricks and bolsters.

I instinctively deferred from going close to him while he was in practice. Just seeing him was such a magnificent treat. Even if he was silent, even if he did not teach anything, one could somehow sense that he was a great man. An inexplicable driving force was there by his mere presence.

"Body is my temple and *asanas* are my prayers." Along with the memory surrounding this statement, Guruji's dedicated practice exemplifying this statement comes to my vision even today. However, back then, I would see him only from a distance. This was so for many years.

* * *

Actually, I am a student of Prashant Iyengar. While learning from him, the fear of the subject of yoga was put to rest. There is a relationship between the body and yoga, but that is not the end of it. It is a complete *darshana* that transcends the body – this realisation came to me because of him. The questions for which I was looking desperately for answers were cleared because of his teachings.

One day in class, he made us do *eka pada rajkapotasana*. We pulled the leg

to the head with awkward faces, holding the breath and biting the teeth and lips. Prashant sir saw our battle for some time and said unexpectedly sharply, "Release the *asana*."

"Come here," he led us towards a photo in the hall.

In the main hall in the institute, there is a display of many blown-up photographs from *Light on Yoga*. Prashant sir stood near the photo of *eka pada rajkapotasana*. We followed him. He pointed towards that photograph. How Guruji did what we were trying to do was palpable.

Beauty and a masterpiece that cannot miss one's eye. Whatever Svati marama has mentioned in *Hathayoga Pradipika* – *angalaghava* i.e. lightness of the body etc...all that was crystal clear. Nothing needed to be said.

"Don't look at the pose," Prashant sir posed an impenetrable wall. Naturally I was also bewildered "Take note of his face. There is not a single freckle on his forehead, eyes are passive and pure. Examine his entire body and its senses, every nook and corner of it. It is all a clear reflection of how relaxed he is. Understand this peaceful condition. Understand the quietude. His sensitivity is alert, aware and total even in this difficult position. Can you realise this? We do the *asana*, and Guruji actualises yoga – this is the essential difference between Guruji and ourselves."

In a moment I felt as though someone lit me up with an intensely sharp and bright torch. The darkness was gone.

* * *

On the next day, I went to the institute hall at a time when none would be there. Believe it or not, I checked each and every photograph in the hall. What Prashant sir said was absolutely glaringly true. The peaceful composure was not disturbed in even a single *asana*. Not even a single part of the body or not even the skin showed any looseness or stress. (These photographs were taken in 1962 – in the days before Photoshop happened. There was no possibility of any editing or touchup. Even if the face of any *asana* was pasted on to the body of any other *asana*, it would not seem out of place – such a profound singular serenity. An equanimity of the highest character that *tadasana* turned topsy-turvy became *sirsasana* and *sirsasana* turned, indeed became *tadasana*! "We do the *asana*, and Guruji actualises yoga." I have rarely heard a statement that gives such a clear understanding. ॐ

THE FULL ARTICLE CAN BE DOWNLOADED AT
WWW.IYENGARYOGACENTRE.CA/NEWSLETTER.

Looking for a Volunteer

We need someone to post
our class schedule each term
on yellowyogi.com.
Contact Britta Poisson
at iyoga@telus.net.



Questions & Answers about the Waiver

As of September, students must sign a waiver when registering for classes. A copy of the waiver may be downloaded at www.iyengaryogacentre.ca/home/news-updates. Please print and fill in the waiver and bring it with you when registering.

1. Why is the Yoga Centre asking students to sign a waiver now?

Having students sign a waiver serves two purposes. Firstly, it ensures that you are aware there are risks in taking yoga classes and your responsibility related to those risks. Secondly, it protects the Centre from claims for injury to person and property. Participants in sport and recreational activities have become increasingly aware of their right, if they become injured, to make a claim against the organizations offering these activities. In order to protect the Centre from the time and cost of defending an injury claim, we have created a release to ask people to think about their rights and responsibilities, and to waive any future claims against the Centre before engaging in any of our yoga classes, workshops or other events. The prevailing line of legal authority in Canada holds that releases relating to recreational sports activities are not unconscionable. We are one of the few yoga studios in Victoria who currently do not have a waiver.

2. Do I have to sign the waiver to take classes at the Centre?

Starting September 2015, all students must sign the waiver prior to attending classes, workshops, retreats, intensives and special events. The initial box insures that students think about each of the four points before signing the full waiver.

3. When do I sign the waiver?

The waiver must be signed when you register for a class, workshop, intensive or retreat. Each time you buy a term of classes, a short or long pass, or pay for a drop in, you must sign the waiver. Drop-in students must sign the waiver each time.

4. Why are we signing the waiver on paper and not on an electronic device?

We have chosen the paper copy because we want you to take time to read the waiver carefully. With just a few tablets available you would be rushed. The Centre will keep the paper originals for three years. At that point, we will scan them onto a USB stick and hold on to them for another two to three years.

5. Why is the waiver written in this language?

This kind of language is consistent with language used in waivers examined by the courts in the prevailing line of legal authority in Canada.

6. Why doesn't the Centre just purchase enough insurance to cover damages and legal costs in the event we are sued?

A waiver provides protection against lawsuits and it would be prohibitive to pay the insurance rates for the amount of insurance required. The Centre's insurance company has recommended that we put a waiver in place, for the reasons cited in question #1 above. ॐ



PHOTO: KEVIN MASON

In the Light of Yoga

Come celebrate the anniversary of Gururji's birth with a special class taught by Shirley Daventry French. There will be time for discussion and questions after the practice

Sunday, December 13, 2015, 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm

All are welcome at this free event.

Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
250-386-YOGA (9642) www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims, and Assumption of Risks Agreement

By signing this legal document, you will waive certain legal rights, including the right to sue. Please read carefully.

I am aware that, as with any form of exercise, the risk of injury can never be entirely eliminated and that I am responsible for recognizing my own physical limits. I understand that yoga is not a substitute for medical attention, examination, diagnosis, or treatment. If I have any concerns about whether yoga is suitable for me, or if I have a particular injury or medical condition, I will consult my physician before participating in a yoga class. I will make my yoga teacher aware of any injuries or medical conditions before participating in a class.

In consideration of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria agreeing to my participation in a yoga class and/or workshop, and permitting my use of their equipment and facilities, **I hereby agree as follows:**

initial

1. I am aware of all risks associated with or related to participation in yoga classes and workshops, and the use of yoga equipment and facilities, particulars of which include but are not limited to the risk of injury from coming into and going out of a yoga pose, and using props to assist in attaining certain yoga poses.

initial

2. I waive any and all claims I have or may have in the future against the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria and its directors, officers, agents, employees, volunteers, and teachers, including visiting and substitute teachers (collectively, the "Centre").

I agree not to sue the Centre, and I release the Centre from any and all liability for any loss, injury, damage, or expense that I may suffer or that my next of kin may suffer as the result of my participation in a yoga class and/or workshop, or related activity, either on or off the Centre premises, due to any cause whatsoever including negligence, breach of contract, or breach of any statutory or other duty of care, including any duty of care owed under the *Occupiers Liability Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 337, on the part of the Centre.

initial

3. I accept full responsibility for any risk of bodily injury, death or property damage arising out of or related to my participation in a yoga class and/or workshop, or related activity, whether caused by the negligence of the Centre or otherwise.

initial

4. This Agreement will be binding on my heirs, next of kin, executors, administrators, assigns and personal representatives.

Dated: _____ at Victoria, BC

Name (please print): _____ Signature: _____

Phone: Home: _____ Work: _____ Cell: _____

Address: _____ E-mail: _____



202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3

OFFICE USE ONLY Name: _____

Pass: _____

Date: _____

One More Time

by Leslie Hogg



I tumbled on some stairs (again) in February. This time I broke a bone in my foot, the anterior end of the heel bone. I have discovered a whole long list of poses I can practice with and without the cast on. Luckily, I have what they call an air cast that can be removed easily for sleep, bathing, and yoga.

I have been attending class as a student, and figured out adaptations to what the class was doing as we went along. I began teaching once I could bear weight on the foot in the cast, which allowed easier access to the stairs. One day, as my taxi driver solicitously helped me into the car, I surprised him when I told him I was on my way to teach a yoga class.

Here are some of my adaptations: I can do dog pose in the cast in the ropes; for inversions, it is either with or without the cast, depending on the sequence and time available. There are all the poses like *supta padangsthasana*, *navasana* (boat), *upavistha konasana*, that I practice without the cast. I can do back bends on the *viparita dandasana* bench, Standing poses like *trikonasana* can be done on the floor, or on a chair seat. Twists also can be done in a chair. The list, it turns out, is quite long of the possible poses to practice with a broken foot.

I appreciate all the help and offers of help from colleagues to do the demonstrating in classes.

I want to thank everyone who has helped me along this new journey!

Special thanks to all the yoga centre for card and beautiful flowers, and words of support and encouragement

One day, as my taxi driver solicitously helped me into the car, I surprised him when I told him I was on my way to teach a yoga class.

I appreciate my students for their adaptability.

I want to give a huge thank you to all the people who have brought food, or supplies, offered rides, or volunteered to attend my class to demonstrate the poses: Lucie Gagnon, Ann Kilbertus, Lauren Cox, Gary Wong, Johanna Godliman, Jane McFarlane, Britta Poisson, Carole Miller, Melissa Hadley, Glenda Balkan-Champagne, Jayne Jonas, Crystal McMillan, Wendy Boyer, Michael Blades, and of course, all my family.

(Many more people gave vast amounts of moral support, too many to name!)

On TV lately, there has been an advertisement saying, "Most accidents are preventable, Have a word with yourself." I intend to have that word with myself more often—

With gratitude to Guruji B.K.S. Iyengar for his wisdom in showing us a myriad of ways we can adapt poses. ॐ



Practice Enrichment Series

Friday afternoons 2:00 - 5:00 pm

October 16, December 4,
January 29, February 26

Commit to this series to advance your personal practice of *asana* and *pranayama*. The series is designed for serious intermediate and advanced students in the Iyengar Yoga tradition. Students will be guided in a strong practice over each three hour session. Each month will build upon the previous month's work to unlock individual challenges.

With Ann Kilbertus and Ty Chandler

Note: Instructor permission is required to attend.

\$45 each session, \$180 for the series

Standing Poses

by Jessica Lowry

JESSICA LOWRY IS A STUDENT TEACHER IN TRAINING WITH LAUREN COX.

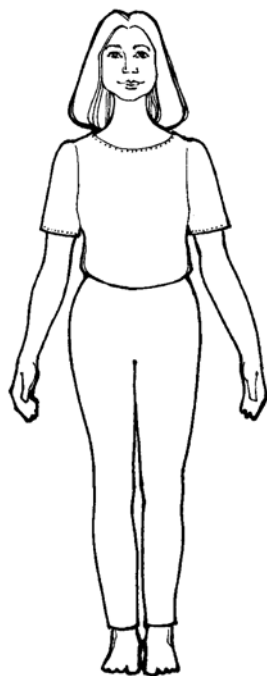
The seed of B.K.S. Iyengar's entire method stems from the truth that unless one really knows their body, there is no access to higher consciousness. It is essential to learn to correct major misalignments before progressing to deeper levels of yoga. Sitting is a requirement for meditation and unless a body can sit and breath with ease there can be no meditation. In *Geeta Iyengar's Yoga in Action; Preliminary Course*, it is said of *Samasthiti*,

"The mind is engaged in watching the limbs and trunk, resulting in a turning of the mind inward toward the core." [25]

And so it is in the standing poses we begin this journey from the outer physical body inward toward the Self.

"The *asanas* are simple but to learn inner alignment the practitioner has to apply the intelligence'. [PC, 25] Through standing work the practitioner becomes acquainted with their body from gross to subtle. In these poses there is a natural progression of teaching beginning from the outer body and strong **movements** (such as "Jump the legs apart; turn left foot in and right foot out entirely; raise arms to horizontal") to subtle **actions** that sustain the alignment of the poses and require inward excavation toward the intelligence.

In the Iyengar method, standing poses are the base from which the practitioner is taught all the elements of subsequent categories of pose work without the stress of asking the body to be inverted, seated, or extended backwards – although elements of these are prepped and awakened in standing poses. For example, in *utthita parsvakonasana* the



student is practicing key elements of *tadasana* in the legs and feet while simultaneously learning to twist the torso and extend the arms. These simultaneous actions will be important for other poses (e.g. *ardha chandrasana*) and prep the student for twists. The work on the hips and groins in many standing poses helps release the groins and buttocks to prepare the student for seated poses and forward extensions. The work in the legs begins to bring intelligence into the abdominal and pelvic regions. And learning to stand upright and understand all the action that is required to do so correctly in *tadasana* is imperative learning before inversions – as these actions are required to work with even more intelligence when upside down. In many of the actions required in standing poses the practitioner has to use mindful intelligence to move one or multiple parts of the body while maintaining the integrity of the base of the pose. So standing poses are truly the base of a sequential system of understanding and accessing the body/mind.

Important connections and threads are taught through the standing work as a student realizes the action/reaction

aspect of the work. (E.g. When we spread the collar bones and lift the chest the shoulders naturally draw down and press onto the back. When the thighs draw back firmly in *tadasana*, the skin of the knees naturally lifts.) And all this important work can be done very safely in the standing work.

There are many health benefits to practicing the standing poses that also help prepare the practitioner for some of the more mentally and physically demanding pose work and limbs of yoga moving forward. These poses help build strength and evenness in the legs and spinal muscles, reduce acidity, tone the abdominals, help reduce fat around waist, hips and thighs, and stimulate the vital organs. In *paschimata prantana shiti* there is a balancing, resting aspect as the head is below the heart. And so, within their own category, standing poses serve to balance the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems by both heating and cooling the body.

The basic principles taught in standing poses are stability, balance, coordination, proprioception, alignment, strength, endurance, flexibility and intelligence.

Psychologically the standing poses invigorate the body and mind and nurture both the fire of will and real groundedness. They help build confidence by teaching the practitioner the correct way to stand on two feet. Standing poses help balance the *gunas* by countering the *tamasic* inertia of gravity and mass with the *rajasic* power of endurance and strength and the *sattvic* element of keeping light— finding ease and breath in the pose.

How can you know God if you don't know your big toe? – B.K.S. Iyengar ॐ

The Introductory Teacher Training Intensive: a Focused Study

by Jacqueline Dumas

JACQUELINE DUMAS IS IN OUR TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM, BUT LIVES IN CANMORE, ALBERTA! SHE HAS JUST COMPLETED HER FIRST YEAR OF TRAINING AS WELL AS HER FIRST TEACHER TRAINING INTENSIVE AT THE IYCV.

I just finished my first week of teacher training Intensive and I am already looking forward to next year!

I am participating in the teacher training programme at a distance, and found the community building valuable to my ongoing practice. Through team work; creating a skit on the *sutras* and preparing to team teach, I got to know my peers, which is support in itself, as I continue my teacher training from away. The activities helped make some of the



Sanskrit words, like '*klesas*' and '*abhinivesa*', part of my vocabulary.

The teacher-student ratio was excellent and allowed us to receive much feedback on our practice and teaching. We were asked to teach in various scenarios; team-teaching, observing/correcting and also assessment style teaching.

Though we were all sad for the Intensive to be done, I leave with a sense of what my focus of study and practice can be for the next little while and I am inspired to keep practicing on my own until we meet again.

Thanks so much to [teachers] Leslie, Ann and Ty for your patience and wisdom! ॐ



Some of our male trainees, and board members, Stacey Frank and Sheila Redhead, helping in the kitchen for the Intro Teacher Training Intensive dinner in July!

BIG thanks to one and all! It was a wonderful event.
— Ann Kilbertus



Jawahar Banger Intensive

***The IYCV is pleased to welcome
Jawahar Banger back to Victoria***

Jawahar has been a direct student of B.K.S. Iyengar for many years. In 1984 he accompanied Guruji on a western Canada and U.S. tour. At that first visit, Guruji inspired local teachers with classes at the local YMCA. He and his entourage were honoured at a gala dinner at the Crystal Gardens. This was the start of a series of lectures, teaching tours, and demonstrations during the '80s and '90s when Jawahar was fortunate enough to accompany Guruji on his international

jaunts, which included visits to Edmonton and Toronto.

Jawahar teaches in Mumbai and is presently a trustee of the Light on Yoga Research Trust and partner in Yoga, which among other things, publishes *Yoga Rahasya*.

His years of dedicated practice and study have helped make him a teacher who inspires us to move deeper into our understanding of Iyengar yoga.

All levels intensive – pre-requisite: knowledge of set up for shoulder stand

March 25 - 28, 2016

\$365 + GST members

\$395 + GST non-members

FRIDAY 9:00 am - 12 pm, 4:00 - 6:00 pm

**SATURDAY 9:00 am to 12:00 Noon,
4:00 - 6:00 pm**

SUNDAY 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

MONDAY 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Registration opens January 25, 2016 for 2016 members and February 1, 2016 for non-members

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



Not able to attend the Intensive with Jawahar?

There's still a chance to take a class with him. Check out these FIVE options:

> Monday, March 28, 5:30 - 8:30 pm

Intermediate and above class,
Free for those registered in Monday night class.
\$65 for non-registered students.

> Tuesday, March 29, 1:30 - 3:00 pm

All levels,
\$30 + GST members/ \$35 + GST non-members

> Tuesday, March 29, 3:00 - 4:00 pm

Teacher debriefing/ Q and A – must have been in the workshop or the Tuesday class.
Cost: \$25

> Tuesday, March 29, 7:00 - 8:30 pm

All levels,
\$30 + GST members/ \$35 + GST non-members

> Wednesday, March 30, 4:30 - 6:00 pm

Pranayama,
\$30 + GST members/ \$35 + GST non-members

Intermediate Teacher Training Workshop

by Adia Kapoor



After invocation



Guest teacher Louie Ettling, Shirley Daventry French, Ann Kilbertus



Louie adjusts Krisna Zawaduk in urdhvadhanurasana

It was a fantastic week of study, sharing, and experimentation in the “learning lab” that Shirley, Ann, and Louie created. Shirley stated on Day 1 that we can all improve our teaching skills, whether we plan on advancing in our level of certification or not. And the way to improve our teaching was to improve our seeing – for it is from learning to first see what our students are doing that we determine how to adjust our teaching. So we spent a week seeing each other, and learning to see better through more experienced eyes. And by the end of the week, I did see more! I can feel already how that improves my teaching. While I may not yet see as well as Shirley, Ann, and Louie (and, certainly, I may never see as well as Gurujii!), the seeds are planted. And I am grateful for the inspiration of these knowledgeable teachers! ॐ



IYCV Open House

Free! Come one, come all!

*Featuring free yoga classes,
Bhavantu Sound, chai tea
and goodies.*

SATURDAY, SEPT 12

11:30 am Kirtan with Bhavantu Sound: Tia Benn, Ty Chandler, and Chris Simons

1:00 pm Intro Yoga – Adia Kapoor

2:00 pm 55+ Yoga – Wendy Boyer

3:00 pm Yoga – All Levels, All Traditions – Lucie Guindon

4:00 pm Yoga Philosophy – Shirley Daventry French and Dr. Derek French

Meet all the teachers, too!

SUNDAY, SEPT 13

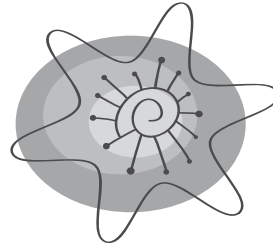
1:00-2:30 pm Discover Iyengar Yoga Basics – Ann Kilbertus

A short workshop designed to acquaint students new to the Iyengar method with the fundamentals of yoga as taught in the Iyengar tradition. Students who have never taken an Iyengar class and students who have been away from the Iyengar Yoga Centre for 6 months – this workshop is for you!

Pre-registration required for workshop only. Max 35 students.



Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
250-386-YOGA (9642)



Thank you to

- Bruce Cox for the very handsome wooden stands for the Moneris machines at the front desk. You have made a great improvement in transactions between staff and students!
- The many hands that made loading/unloading/loading/unloading props to and from the Salt Spring Centre of Yoga for the 31st Annual Salt Spring retreat with Shirley Daventry French: Sheila Redhead, Jill Williams, Stan Michalak, Johanna Godliman, Bruce Cox, Gary Wong, Bev Kallstrom, Greg Gale, Derek French, Dorothy Liedtke, and Caren Liedtke. Additionally, thanks to Sheila and Jill for transporting the props and to Rachel French de Meija for documenting the classes.

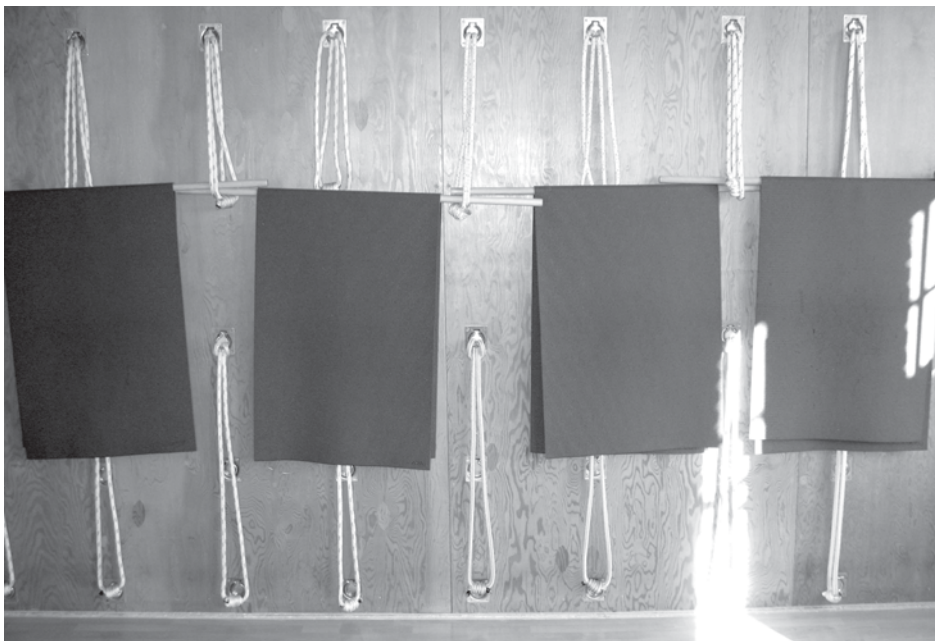


Fluffy blankets

- Glenda Balkan Champagne for leading the practice for the first International Day of Yoga on June 21st. And to Janine Bandcroft for taking photos at the event and missing some of the practice to do so!
- Anil Kapoor, Vicki Kapoor, Sharon Warren, Lisa Tang, and Donna Wilson for helping transport all the blankets and mats back and forth to Scubby's Laundromat for cleaning over the

Canada Day holidays. And to Jane Mcfarlane for removing, cleaning, and restoring the bolster covers.

- Stacey Frank for keeping our kitchen towels laundered and Ian Bate for laundering objectionable blankets.
- Scott Poole and Laurie Kelley for donating a collection of books to the library.
- The Program committee for their ongoing work and a very special thanks to Lauren Cox who is retiring from this committee after serving for MANY years. We appreciate her enthusiasm and willingness to help plan events and sponsor workshops.



Mat dryer



Winter Solstice Workshop With Ty Chandler

December 20 and 21, 2015

FIRST NIGHT: forward bend practice with inversions.

SECOND NIGHT: backbend practice with inversions.

Not recommended for beginners.

Fees:

One night: \$30 + GST IYCV members,
\$35 + GST non-members;

Both nights: \$55 + GST IYCV members,
\$65 + GST non-members

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



Family Yoga

Children attend to their parents in *savasana*. There will be free Family Yoga class on four Saturdays in September and October.



Members' Practice

All current members of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria who attend a regular class or have received permission from the practice monitor are welcome to participate in an open practice every Sunday afternoon from 12:30-3:30 pm.

There is no instruction given in this self-directed practice session. Props, books and other resources are available for the use of anyone who attends.

Come for 20 minutes or stay for three hours!



Learning the Ropes

WITH LAUREN COX

All levels

October 24, 2015

11:00 am - 1:00 pm

\$30 members/\$35 non-members

Come explore the classical asanas with the support of the ropes!
Registration opens September 1, 2015

To register, drop by or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,
202-919 Fort St., Victoria, B.C.
250-386-YOGA (9642)



Become a member of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria and enjoy the following benefits:

- Receipt of four newsletters per year. Our in-depth newsletters are eagerly anticipated by over 500 people worldwide.
- Discounts on classes and workshops.
- Early registration for classes and workshops.
- Scholarship eligibility for various workshops.
- Library borrowing privileges.
- Free practice space on Sunday afternoons.
- Opportunities for members to contribute insights and apply to sit on the board of directors.

The one-year membership fee is \$42 CDN and is renewable each January.

For a one-year membership, please complete this form and mail or drop it off at our office 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 Canada

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

PROV/ STATE: _____

POSTAL CODE: _____

COUNTRY: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

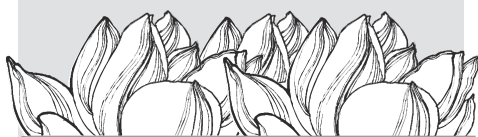
☐ Please mail my newsletter.

☐ Please email me the link to the newsletter.

☐ Sign me up for monthly yog-e email news.

☐ Unsubscribe from monthly yog-e email news.

☐ Receipt required.



Calendar

September

- 12 Open House
- 25-27 Weekend Workshop with Victoria's Senior Teachers

October

- 16 Practice Enrichment Series
- 17 Teacher Meeting
- 24 Learn the Ropes workshop

November

- 20-21 Going Deeper with Shirley Daventry French

December

- 4 Practice Enrichment
- 5 Teacher Meeting
- 13 Guruji's Birthday
- 20-21 Winter Solstice

JANUARY


- 1 New Year's Day Timed Practice
- 29 Practice Enrichment
- 30-31 Heart of Yoga

February

- 26 Practice Enrichment
- 27 Teacher Meeting



International Yoga Day, June 21, 2015 on the Summer Solstice



NEW YEAR'S DAY

Timed Practice

With Ty Chandler

ALL LEVELS

January 1, 2016,
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Free for 2016 IYCV members – Renew Now!
\$40 + GST for non-members

Not recommended for beginners

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

Scholarships and Bursaries

Members' scholarships are available for:

Weekend Workshop with Victoria's Senior Teachers, September 25 - 27,
deadline for applications: September 10

Going Deeper, November 20-21,
deadline for applications: November 5

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

Applications for both are available at the reception desk.
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria | 202-919 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3 | 250-386-YOGA (9642)



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

Do the asana with such quality that Gururji appears in your body.



N E W S L E T T E R W I N T E R 2 0 1 5

Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Presents

the Heart of Yoga

January 30-31, 2016

An Intermediate Workshop
with Shirley Daventry French
and Ann Kilbertus

Saturday 10:30 am - 1:30 pm
Saturday 4:00 - 6:00 pm
Sunday 12:00 - 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.

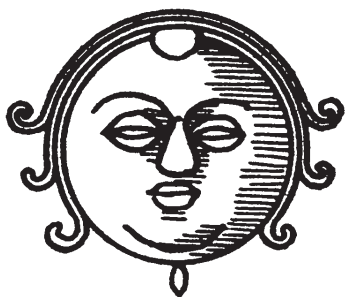
Ann has been a student of Iyengar yoga for over thirty years studying mainly with Shirley Daventry French. She has been teaching since 1988 locally and nationally. Ann began going to Pune, India, in 1992 and returns every few years to study with the Iyengar family. Her experience as an occupational therapist offers a valuable contribution to further understanding of this work.

Fees: \$168 + GST members
\$184 + GST non-members

Registration opens:
Tuesday, October 20, 2015

To register, drop in to or phone
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 \$50.00 cancellation fee.



Winter Solstice Workshop With Ty Chandler

December 20 & 21, 2015, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

FIRST NIGHT: forward bend practice
with inversions.

SECOND NIGHT: backbend practice
with inversions.

Not recommended for beginners.

Fees:

One night: \$30 + GST IYCV members,
\$35 + GST non-members;

Both nights: \$55 + GST IYCV members,
\$65 + GST non-members

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



NEW YEAR'S DAY

Timed Practice

With Ty Chandler

ALL LEVELS

**January 1, 2016,
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

**Free for 2016 IYCV members – Renew Now!
\$40 + GST for non-members**

Not recommended for beginners

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

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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.
3. Priority will be given to advertisements regarding IYCV events, IYCV sponsored events, and IYAC events.

REGISTRATION

Please visit our website:
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca for full information on classes and workshops.

Drop in: 202-919 Fort Street,
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3

Phone: (250) 386-YOGA (9642)



Reflections

by Shirley Daventry French

“There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth; not going all the way, and not starting.” – *Buddha*

“Can there be such a thing as *partial* truth?” One afternoon in the library of the Institute in Pune, Guruji looked up from his desk and shot out this question. On that particular day I happened to be seated at a table very close to him which is why, on this occasion, his question was directed to me. After many visits to Pune and some familiarity with Guruji’s approach, I was not unnerved by this rather loaded question and as he appeared to be waiting for some response, I said “NO!” He nodded and I waited, because I knew that in all likelihood he would have more to say on this topic.

Afternoons in the library were a favourite pastime of mine whenever I was in Pune, and have been an integral part of my yoga *sadhana*. Sometimes I would be there for a specific purpose: research, reading or rereading some of the texts and papers locked away and preserved behind the glass doors protecting the library shelves. Occasionally I might have a question to ask Guruji if I got the opportunity, and as I occupied myself would be watchful for a suitable moment to approach him which might or might not happen on that afternoon. Guruji naturally had his own agenda.

However events unfolded, the hours spent in the library are among my most vivid memories of studying yoga in Pune. Guruji would be there most days if he were in Pune:

going through a pile of correspondence which arrives daily at the Institute, reading, writing, talking, or delivering an impromptu discourse on topics of interest.

Daily, a procession of people passed through this small space: maybe someone had arrived to interview Guruji for some publication, or an injured cricketer or hockey player¹ was seeking help. Some days a Government minister or VIP had come to pay tribute to this great man or was suffering from some ailment and in need of Guruji’s skills! There might be a supplicant seeking financial support, a writer or broadcaster looking for an interview or informed opinion to support an article or book. And, of course, there was an abundance of yoga teachers and students from all over the world wishing to meet Guruji. Almost all of these people would want to have their photograph taken with him, and most often he obliged them. If you were in the midst of some business and he had invited you to sit down at his desk, you might be lucky enough to be offered a cup of sweet tea.

Guruji was incredibly open and approachable for a great man. He was generous with his time, although if he did not want to be disturbed it was abundantly clear. At such times I thought he exemplified the *sutra* about invisibility² and was impressed that someone with such outstanding presence,

However events unfolded, the hours spent in the library are among my most vivid memories of studying yoga in Pune.

1 In India, in contrast to Canada, “hockey” refers to field hockey, which is popular in India.

2 “By control over the subtle body, the yogi can suspend at will the rays of light emanating from himself so that he becomes invisible to onlookers” (Sutra III.21, *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* by B.K.S. Iyengar)

impossible to ignore in his teaching mode, could withdraw his energy if it suited him and be unnoticed.

Guruji has published many books and written an immense number of articles. As he became more and more involved in his own writing projects he would sometimes read out loud from a piece he was working on, and might tap our brains. Many of Guruji's students were experts in their own field and would be questioned on their area of expertise. Always eager to learn, Guruji never ceased to expand his knowledge.

From my own experience of writing and editing for Guruji, I discovered how open he was to listening to suggestions, eager to understand finer points of usage of the English language.

Guruji learned from everyone, everywhere all of the time! This consummate teacher, undisputed master in his own field, was at the same time always a student involved in a constant search for truth. There was no dichotomy here. His was an awakened life lived to the fullest whether he was trying to bring a glimmer of understanding to a dull student, or deepening his own understanding of the meaning and purpose of life. If he considered you a mature student, as he explained a new insight, he would often say (with good reason): "You never thought of that!"

One of my most treasured memories from Pune is from 1991 when I was privileged to do some editing on the manuscript for *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. On previous occasions, Guruji had spoken to me about a book he was planning to write on the *sutras*, how he would approach it

His was an awakened life lived to the fullest whether he was trying to bring a glimmer of understanding to a dull student, or deepening his own understanding of the meaning and purpose of life.

in a practical way so it would be a guide for his pupils. When I went to the Institute on the first Monday of this 1991 visit to attend class, Guruji was standing in the lobby, greeted me and spoke of his progress on this book. Out of interest, and knowing he had previous experience of my writing and editing plus the fact that up until that time no native English speaker had scrutinized the manuscript, I offered to be of any help that I could while I was there.

He did not accept my offer right away, but the following afternoon when he saw me sitting in the library, he came over and gave me two hand-written foolscap pages along with a lined legal pad. He asked me to go through them and write down any suggestions for improvement. I got to work right away and left my suggestions on his desk. When I returned the next day he handed me the entire manuscript asking me to go through it in this way.



IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

**The Annual General Meeting
of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
will be held Sunday February 21, 2016
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 to appreciate our Board and volunteers for all the work that they do.

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.



IYAC/ACYI ASSESSMENT DATES

March 4-6,
Intermediate Junior I,
Kelowna, BC

May 13-15,
Intermediate Junior II,
Edmonton, AB

June 10-12,
Intermediate Junior III,
Victoria, BC

As I was only going to be in Pune for a month and could not extend it, I had no time to lose. Guruji was unexpectedly teaching morning classes, and I did not want to miss any of those.³ Otherwise I spent every free moment in the library. On Sunday the library was generally closed, but I was given a key. When the meaning of Guruji's words was not clear to me, I was able to question him and clarify if it were my lack of understanding of the *sutras* and inability to grasp a concept that was causing my confusion, or if the language could be improved to convey Guruji's meaning more clearly.

One day, during another visit, a long time student of Guruji came into the library and spent some time talking to him. After he left Guruji looked up and shaking his head said: "He is a good student. He practises. But he keeps hurting himself. He has vibrancy but no illumination!" Vibrancy is one of the *trigunas*, and an essential quality on the spiritual path but it can be very addictive. Guruji was always directing and redirecting us towards the light of illumination. His entire *sadhana* was founded and focused on this quest.

I have a lot of old notebooks and many of them have empty pages. This morning, wishing to make some notes for this article, I took out one which happened to be dated 2004. On its first page I had written the following quotation from a book

Guruji was always directing and redirecting us towards the light of illumination. His entire sadhana was founded and focused on this quest.

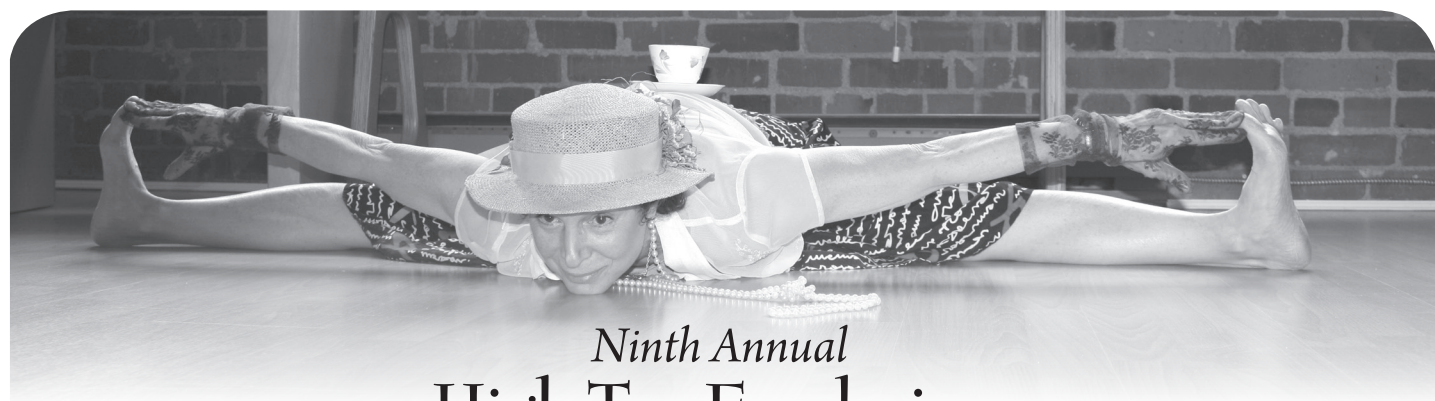
called *An Instance of the Fingerpost* by Iain Pears which I must have been reading at that time:

"The mind of man unaided cannot grasp the truth, but only constructs fantasies and fictions which convince until they convince no more, and which are true only until discarded and replaced."

In August 2014, when I learned of Guruji's death, I was away in a quiet villa high above a beautiful valley and lake. Naturally I was very sad, but my primary feelings were overwhelming gratitude for Guruji's life, his work and my great good fortune to have been his pupil. What an honour to have had such a consummate guide on the path of Yoga. Guruji had the courage and commitment to explore this Path of Truth, and the skill and patience to train his pupils to make their own personal pilgrimage.

In deepest gratitude,
Shirley Daventry French ॐ

³ I had travelled to Pune to join a Dutch/German intensive with the understanding that it would be taught by Geeta. On the first morning, as we were waiting to begin class, Guruji entered, took off his dhoti, stood in front of us, hands on hips and said: "Your good fortune is my bad fortune. I am going to be your teacher." One of Geeta's sisters had just given birth and, since their mother was no longer alive, Geeta was going to assume this traditional duty.



Ninth Annual High Tea Fundraiser

Hosted by Students from the Special Needs Class
Thursday, March 17, 2016, 2:45 - 4:45 pm

\$20 per person | Free for children

Please note: Payment of the ticket price does not qualify as a donation. Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$20 or more.

Enjoy a variety of delectable teas, scrumptious, homemade sweets and savories. Win something amazing at our silent auction and draw. Feel free to wear your favorite hat!

Proceeds will assist the purchase of new props, the replacement of old props, and fund bursaries for Special Needs classes.



Jawahar Banger Intensive

*The IYCV is pleased to welcome
Jawahar Banger back to Victoria*

Jawahar has been a direct student of B.K.S. Iyengar for many years. In 1984 he accompanied Guruji on a western Canada and U.S. tour. At that first visit, Guruji inspired local teachers with classes at the local YMCA. He and his entourage were honoured at a gala dinner at the Crystal Gardens. This was the start of a series of lectures, teaching tours, and demonstrations during the '80s and '90s when Jawahar was fortunate enough to accompany Guruji on his international

jaunts, which included visits to Edmonton and Toronto.

Jawahar teaches in Mumbai and is presently a trustee of the Light on Yoga Research Trust and partner in Yoga, which among other things, publishes *Yoga Rahasya*.

His years of dedicated practice and study have helped make him a teacher who inspires us to move deeper into our understanding of Iyengar yoga.

All levels intensive – pre-requisite: knowledge of set up for shoulder stand

March 25 - 28, 2016

\$365 + GST members

\$395 + GST non-members

FRIDAY 9:00 am - 12 pm, 4:00 - 6:00 pm

**SATURDAY 9:00 am to 12:00 Noon,
4:00 - 6:00 pm**

SUNDAY 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

MONDAY 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Registration opens January 25, 2016 for 2016 members and February 1, 2016 for non-members

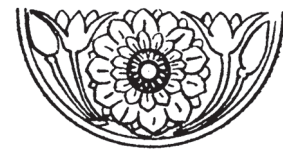
Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee.

Not able to attend the Intensive with Jawahar?

There's still a chance to take a class with him. Check out these options:



- > **Monday, March 28, 5:30 - 8:30 pm**
Intermediate and above class,
Free for those registered in Monday night class.
\$65 for non-registered students.
- > **Tuesday, March 29, 1:30 - 3:00 pm**
All levels,
\$30 + GST members
\$35 + GST non-members
- > **Tuesday, March 29, 3:00 - 4:00 pm**
Teacher debriefing/ Q and A –
must have been in the workshop or the Tuesday class.
Cost: \$25
- > **Tuesday, March 29, 7:00 - 8:30 pm**
All levels,
\$30 + GST members
\$35 + GST non-members



Members' Practice

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There is no instruction given in this self-directed practice session. Props, books and other resources are available for the use of anyone who attends. Come for 20 minutes or stay for three hours!

The Body is the First Prop

“Balance in the body is the foundation for balance in life...
in whatever position...one is placed.” – B.K.S. Iyengar (*Light on Life*, 43).

by Jane McFarlane

In September, three of our Senior teachers, Shirley Daventry French, Ann Kilbertus, and Marlene Miller, led a weekend workshop with the thought-provoking title: The Body is the First Prop, an aphorism from Mr. Iyengar. At the Victoria Iyengar Yoga Centre, we are fortunate to have a well-established community (founded by Shirley) with many teachers who have regularly studied directly with the Iyengar family as well as maintained a dedicated and devotional practice for decades. The weekend was divided into four modules: *Asana for Pranayama*, *Pranayama for Asana*, *Organs of Action*, and *Balance*. It was a weekend marked by quiet attentiveness and an atmosphere of *svadhyaya* (self-study). The main texts referenced were *Light on Life*, *Light on Pranayama*, as well as notes from Pune.



Bhujapidasana

Marlene began with *Asana for Pranayama*, on Friday. She explained that *pranayama* is not just breathing, it is the generation and distribution of energy throughout the body. She asked us to reflect upon the body in *asana* as a prop for the flow of *prana* (universal

life force), and to reflect in turn upon the flow of *prana* as a prop for the flow of mind. She chose longer holdings of symmetrical lengthened-spine poses, where the flow of energy was amplified by ground and gravity, if the action/mind set of the *asana* was maintained; e.g. *supta tadasana*, *adho mukha svanasana*, *adho mukha virasana*, *supta virasana*, *tadasana*, *uttanasana*, *sirsasana*, *sarvangasana*, *savasana*.

Marlene continued with *Organs of Action* on Saturday. She explained that the muscles of the spine are propping and vibrating the spine. She asked us to investigate and feel this in each pose. She showed how to use external

*...the senses are cultured
away from external
desires through the
actions of asana.*



Anantasana

props to assist the muscles of the spine. Marlene is one of the teachers at our Special Needs class, and can use anything at her disposal to encourage a body to come to the form of an *asana*; such that breathing, muscle tone, skin tone, and facial expression are all affected. She said Mr. Iyengar does not advocate withdrawal to a cave to withdraw our senses – instead, *asanas* have been developed to direct *prana*, and where *prana* goes consciousness follows. Thus the senses are cultured away from external desires through the actions of *asana*.

Shirley emphasized skin awareness as a tool for self-observation.

Shirley taught next on *Pranayama for Asana*. She showed how the adjustments we make in lying and sitting for *pranayama* further refine our organs of perception towards inner awareness. The adjustments for *pranayama* challenged the class to identify and observe more precise and more inner areas of the body, e.g. posture of the anus, quality of the abdomen, actions of the floating ribs, false ribs, position of shoulder ‘yoke’, skin of the nape of the neck, posture of the tongue, tilt of the skull, quality of the throat and jaw, posture of the eyes, posture of the ears, location and extent of the breath. Shirley emphasized skin awareness as a tool for self-observation. Ultimately, our sensitivity to our current state defines the limits of our ability to modulate our organs of action.

Ann concluded the weekend on Sunday with *Balance*. Rhythm and harmony came to the forefront. Although the *asanas* moved more quickly in this class and demanded more instant adjustment and effort, the quiet tone of the weekend was preserved. The movements/efforts of poses like *parivrtta ardha chandrasana*, *lolasana*, and *bhujapidasana* brought smiling comradery to the surface rather than competition. Ann explained that stability of the body requires the development of a sense of balance – within a posture, within a sequence, within a day, within a life. She said that the basic sequence for cultivating a sense of balance is *sirsasana*, *sarvangasana*. Her concluding words were from Mr. Iyengar: “Balance in the body is the foundation for balance in life...in whatever position...one is placed.” (*Light on Life*, 43). ॐ



Pascimottanasana 1



Pascimottanasana 2



Pascimottanasana 3

“Real Yoga” and the Summer Student Intensive

by Anne Glover

ANNE GLOVER IS A VICTORIA-BASED INTERNATIONAL STORYTELLER AND PERFORMER. SHE HAS BEEN IN AND OUT OF THE VICTORIA IYENGAR WORLD SINCE THE EARLY 1980S AND SOMETIMES MANAGES TO KEEP A YOGA PRACTICE GOING WHEN SHE’S ON TOUR.

The restaurant is buzzing. Servers weave through the lunch crowd. Along the far wall, a lively group of about twenty tuck into their meals and converse with gusto. When anyone gets up to leave, others rise for goodbyes and hugs. Edging past us, the server rolls his eyes. “There is a bit too much loving going on here,” he says. Half grumble, half joke.

We are having lunch together at the end of the summer intensive. We’ve spent the week under the sage and dynamic tutelage of Ty Chandler and Lauren Cox. My neighbor at the table explains this to the server, who casts a doubtful eye at our instructors. He wouldn’t know what they can do, how brilliantly they teach, how sensitive and tough they are. His chin goes up with the cockiness that comes naturally to the young and beautiful. “I can show you some real yoga!” he crows in Lauren’s direction. Lauren smiles joyously. “I’m sure you can teach me a lot,” she replies. Her eyes are dancing.

It would be silly to sign up for a week of yoga just for the reward of the Friday



salabhasana variation



Urdhva hastasana in virasana



Uttanasana

lunch, but if you did, it wouldn’t be a mistake. The Students’ Intensive that wraps up the summer is worth whatever trick it takes to get you there. For me, this year, it was about developing a home practice. With a nomadic lifestyle that precludes attending regular classes, I made a commitment to myself three months ago to practice on my own daily – wherever I might be – and to attend the intensive for further guidance and inspiration.

What I did not anticipate was that within the first two days of the intensive, everything that goes wrong with my

body would go wrong. I hobbled in on Monday morning with knee pain, only to learn within ten minutes that I had been hyperextending my knees. Ah! Correction brought relief over the next days. Meanwhile, that temperamental muscle in my shoulder went out, followed in short order by a string of strained and misaligned junctures up and down my spine, and culminating in sacroiliac grief.

None of this is new. These are old friends that drop in from time to time. Although their appearance was discouraging, it also gave me the chance to get expert input, and to knuckle down

to the serious business of doing yoga with the body I *have*, rather than the one I *used to have*, or the one my delusional self imagines I have. It is a fine metaphor for life, this learning to work with and within our limitations; to attune to what is *real*: here, now.

The week provided a necessary balance to my fledgling home practice. The time I'd spent alone on the mat had brought up questions I was able to answer by watching, listening and practicing through the week. Ty and Lauren also offered alternate *asanas* when I needed them.

I've taken this intensive a couple of times before, and many things were familiar: the supportive community that develops in the group; my absurdly

talkative mind; the intensity of poses explored from new angles; the pms-ish irritability that surfaces as we work our way through layers of resistance, shedding toxins.

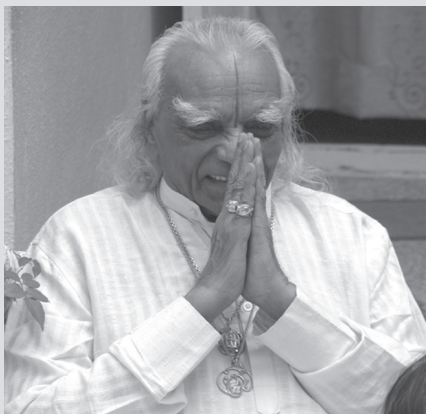
There were also new aspects to the week, from fresh takes on *asanas* to the "bee song" in *pranayama*. But most of the surprises happened inside: realizing that my little bit of home practice has already increased my resilience; feeling curiously energized at the end of the day; discovering that even on two hours' sleep I can work well. ("Don't assume it will be a problem," advised Ty. "It's just fatigue.") I experienced *pranayama* as part of me, rather than some kind of external assignment. In the stillness of *savasana*, even my busy mind settled, ever so

slightly. The subtle shifts are sometimes the most rewarding.

The summer intensive was a conclusion to Chapter One in my project of building a home practice. Now it's up to me. In the days after the intensive, my chest is open, I feel tall, my shoulders are light; yet my whiney resistance to daily practice is still there. I remain in the real world of human complexity where there are no easy answers. All I know is that I have tasted something very fine, and I want more. Meanwhile, I keep thinking about that server at the restaurant. I really, really want to be a fly on the wall when he shows Ty and Lauren *real* yoga. My eyes are already dancing. ॐ

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In the Light of Yoga



Come celebrate the anniversary of Guruji's birth with a special class taught by Shirley Daventry French. There will be time for discussion and questions after the practice.

After 2 pm Tea and Birthday Cake Served!

Sunday, December 13, 2015, 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm
All are welcome at this free event.

Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,
 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
 250-386-YOGA (9642) www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

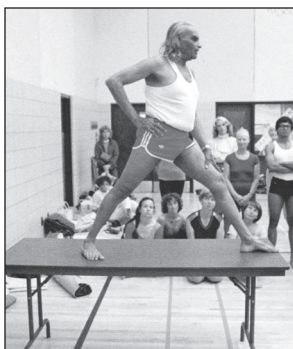
In the Light of Yoga

**An Anniversary Celebration
 of B.K.S. Iyengar's Birthday
 Sunday, December 13, 12:30 - 2:00 pm, Free**

Everyone is warmly welcomed to join the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria in our annual celebration of Guruji's life. Each year our Centre invites students from any Yoga tradition to practice together in acknowledgement of the tremendous contribution that B.K.S. Iyengar has made to the manifestation of the ancient Yogic traditions in the lives of so many of us alive on the planet today.

We are honoured to have Shirley Daventry French lead the practise this year, and afterwards there will be birthday cake and beverage for all. Please bring family and friends as we remember our respected teacher, his work and life continue to inspire and generate much valuable wisdom and insight. His yoga family participate in this event worldwide.

Born in India in 1918, B.K.S.



Iyengar practised yoga up to his death, at the age of 95, in 2014. Mr B.K.S. Iyengar is recognised as the yoga master who brought yoga to the west. "It was he, not any ancient sage, who figured out how to show people the world over the safest way to stand on their heads," said a *New Yorker* article in 2014. ॐ

Hooked on the Ropes

by James Bratvold

I came to yoga, a little over one year ago, seeking relief from years of lower back pain. Luckily the yoga I came to is Iyengar Yoga with its' use of props and focus on alignment. When I started I did not know one type of yoga from another or that there was more than one style.

Soon after beginning classes I experienced *adho mukha svanasana* in the ropes. In addition to supporting the pose, it seemed to allow me to get a bit of non-traumatic traction of the spine, which felt good at the time but also provided some extended relief. I was also fortunate in having one of the instructors extend the opportunity to try inversions in the ropes. I had noticed the Wednesday ropes class in the IYCV schedule but initially was not able to fit it into my schedule.

Eventually my time availability changed and I was able to take



PHOTOS: JANE MCFARLANE

Utthita trikonasana in the ropes

advantage of the rope class offered by Lauren Cox. I was hooked and have been attending this class regularly for several months.

On October 24, 2015, Lauren offered a two-hour rope workshop.



Adho mukha svanasana in the ropes

Many of the participants were regular attendees from the Wednesday classes but there were also some people new to use of the rope wall. We went through a series of familiar poses plus some new variations. The extra time allowed exploration of the poses in a little more depth and also brought forward, for me, an awareness of some of the aspects that I need to work at (most everything).

I need to mention that Lauren's good humour ensured that we had lots of laughs. It was fun! ॐ

JAMES IS A MEMBER OF IYCV AND A REGULAR AT LAUREN'S ROPE CLASS.



Lauren makes a rope pulley



Ardha parsvakonasana in the ropes

Ropes Workshop

by Sarah Alpert

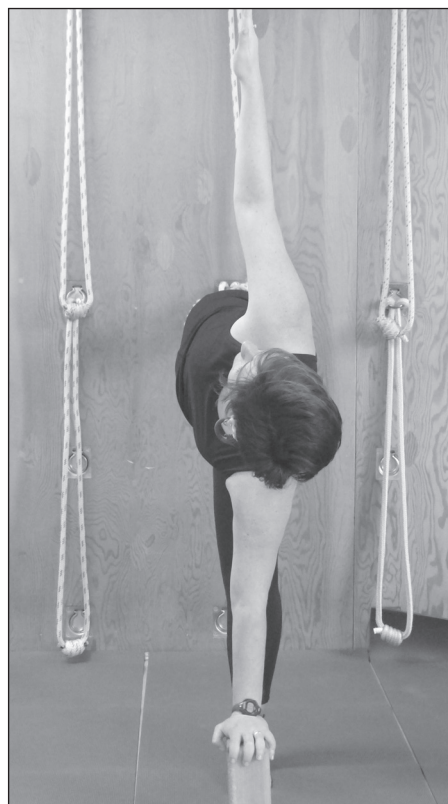
Ever since moving to Victoria and attending classes at the Iyengar Centre, I have been a fan of the ropes. Ropes allow me to hold poses longer, and by using ropes and gravity, the stretch is deepened in a way that lifts the body and the spirit. My favourite poses on the ropes involve going upside-down and challenging my muscles to work beyond the point of strain to find the sweetness in the pose. As a result of my life and the path that I am on, I have had to put my weekly attendance to the centre on hold. When Lauren graciously invited me to the ropes workshop, I was nervous about what impact my prolonged absence would have on my ropes yoga practice. As soon as I took our first pose, *adho mukha svanasana*, my

body and muscle memory took over!

The workshop focused on standing poses and achieving right angles with our limbs. In addition to using the ropes, various poses used the wall and floor to help us achieve the right angles to heal and strengthen. Lauren emphasized the concept of keeping our muscular skeletal systems within the boundaries of vertical and horizontal planes and maintaining lift towards all axis to strengthen and fine tune our poses. We constructed pulleys to lift our limbs and deepen our stretch within the poses. At the end of the workshop, hanging upside-down and in the company of so many ropes fans, I realized that while I had been gone, the community that I left was still as supportive and open as when I had left. While my schedule will not permit my immediate return to the ropes, it was an amazing breath of fresh air for my muscles, bones, brain, and spirit. ॐ



Utthita hasta padangusthasana with rope pulley



Ardha chandrasana

Atha Yoganushasanam

by Guruji B.K.S. Iyengar

REPRINTED FROM YOGA RAHASYA, VOL 22, NO. 1, 2015

The yoga *sutra* begins with *atha yoganushasanam* (1.1). This *sutra* covers the entire scope of yoga. *Atha* means 'now' and *ushasanam* means 'codified disciplines to be practised'.

Yoga is a discipline that removes all dualities and divisions. It integrates body with breath, breath with mind, mind with intelligence and intelligence with the soul. Yoga makes one penetrate from the outer skin towards the core of being and conversely links the core of being to the periphery. Yoga is both an evolutionary path (outward journey) and involutionary path (inward journey), in the quest of the soul.

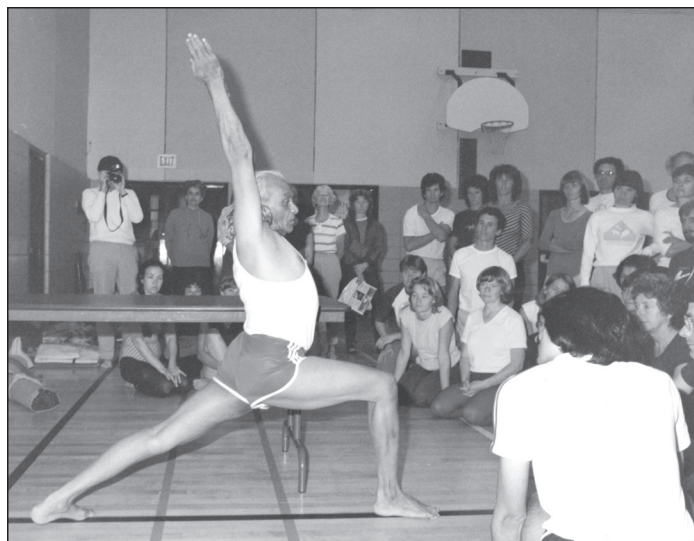
Yoga is meant not only for gaining health but for encountering the vision of the Self (*darsana*).

Our energy is often sapped by desire, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and hatred (*kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada* and *matsarya*). Our thoughts move in these six spokes of the emotional wheel creating inner disturbances while yoga minimises these turmoils. Like the waves of the sea, our thought waves, knowingly or unknowingly, move from one end of the body to the other, hitting the physical and spiritual bodies, creating psychological problems and physical diseases. The waves move either from the soma to the psycho or from the psycho to the soma. These are known as *pancavrtti* (fivefold modulations of consciousness) and *pancaklesa* (fivefold afflictions) in yoga.

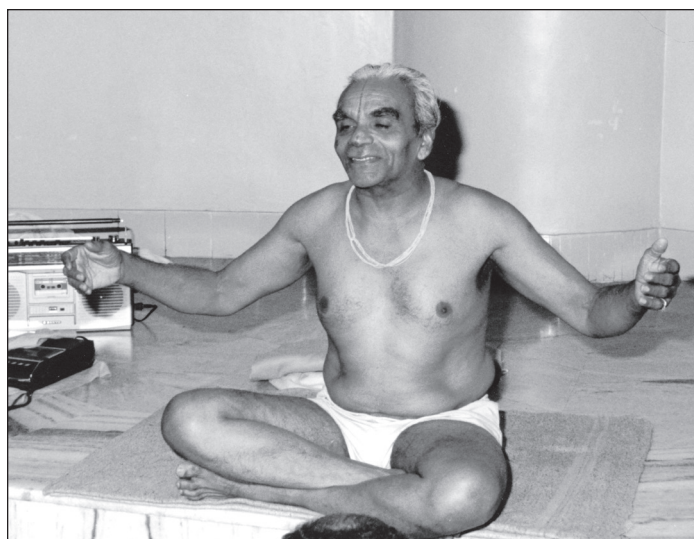
The mind is a big cheater. It is said that the mind is a friend and foe. Often it proves to be a foe. You need to befriend it by the discipline of yoga. Caught in the spokes of organs of action and senses of perception, the mind flies like a kite with the thread of attachment in the sky of pleasure, not knowing that pain and pleasure lay side by side. It is very difficult to liberate the mind from this attachment to pleasure and aversion to pain. It keeps on oscillating and fluctuating between them.

Your practice has to change the physical body, nervous system, behavioral patterns, character, psychological interaction and sublimation of 'I'. Therefore, Patanjali has introduced *yama* as the first aspect. Through *yama* and *niyama*, he asks you to check your behavior and action.

Yoga is a discipline that removes all dualities and divisions. It integrates body with breath, breath with mind, mind with intelligence and intelligence with the soul.



Guruji demonstrates in Victoria



Guruji in discussion at RIMYI

Asanas have been evolved to ensure that every muscle, nerve and gland in the body is exercised. It secures a fine physique, which is strong and elastic without being muscle-bound and keeps the body free from disease. It reduces fatigue and soothes the nerves. But its real importance lies in the way it trains and disciplines the mind. They transform the mind, intelligence and 'I' to go from outside in.

Through *asana* and *pranayama*, Patanjali wants your body, mind, intelligence and I-consciousness to be transformed towards deeper and higher knowledge. Discipline is the first fundamental quality required for the transformation.

I have often said that yoga is my guru and I assure you that yoga is going to be your guru. The tenacity to stick to a regular practice is very important. It requires tremendous tolerance, patience and mental discipline. This cultivation of discipline

strengthens the willpower. Otherwise, willpower is of a short duration. I want you all to build up the culture of practice and not the cult of personality. Get established wholeheartedly in what you have started to learn, then experience its hidden wealth.

Self-study (*svadhyaya*) is the re-examination of one's thoughts and habits of the mind, involving the subtle and finer parts of yoga, *pratyahara*, *dharana* and *dhyana*. By this we reduce our tendency to err. Surrendering to God (*Isvara pranidhana*), transforms the consciousness to allow the radiance of the purity of Self. There cannot be freedom without discipline. Without morality and discipline, spiritual life is an impossibility.

When Patanjali speaks about various impediments that come in the way of realising the soul, he guides us with compassion by ways and means to eradicate them, so that we cultivate strength and vigour to face the Self with courage. Even highly sensitive intellectuals with their intellectual intoxication get frightened when they come face to face with the Self, because they do not train the mind for stability. Patanjali indicates the unsteadiness of the intelligence and calls this unsettled state *anavastha*. When stability gets disturbed, fear of facing the immortal self sets in, but the intellectual pride or ego momentarily covers this fear. Even intellectuals may face this fear but appear on the surface to be stable personalities though remain unstable and empty within. Only through the stable growth of the intelligence is the emptiness within eradicated.

A mirror covered with dust does not reflect properly. Similarly the *atma* or the Self, when tainted with *vrutti* (thought waves), gets veiled, preventing the Self from revealing its own state. As a result of the closeness of the Self the thought waves get involved with the fluctuations of the consciousness which in turn build up imprints as *samskara* (latent imprint) for future life.

When the mirror is left uncleaned over a long time, it may not reflect clearly at all. Though one takes more time to wipe it, some particles may stick and tarnish the mirror, refracting the image. Similarly, when the Self identifies with the continual imprints of the objects seen, it develops an impenetrable veil (*avarana*) that may take lifetimes to move. Therefore, in order to see that the Self is not covered by the dust of thought waves or mental rambling, Patanjali speaks of yoga *anushasanam* – the stable, ascetic and devotional practice of yoga. Yoga needs *anushasanam*, which shows the ways and means, through proper guidance, to recover and rediscover what we have lost in our mundane thoughts.

The ramblings of the *citta* go on moment to moment. We do not know in what thought wave we were a few seconds before and how one thought wave jumps to another, without any link. This is how disturbances in our thought waves



Guruji sharing a moment with Abhijata

Yoga is a journey from the body towards the mind and from the mind towards the soul.

continuously take place. In order to control these unlinked thought waves, Patanjali gave a mantra in the very first *sutra* of *Samadhi Pada*: *Atha yoganushasanam* (eight syllables), meaning “Follow the discipline which is comprised of eight petals”.

The practice of yoga minimizes or controls not only the physical disturbances but also mental modifications. One even gets freedom from onslaughts of mental disturbances and bodily afflictions, which originate from our actions (*karma*) and their reactions (*parikarma*).

Tatah klesa karma nivrutti (Y.S. IV.30) – yoga is meant to end all afflictions of *karma*.

If *karma* brings psychosomatic diseases, *parikarma* in the form of yoga makes us regain balance and harmony in body and mind. From *cit* (soul) comes *citta* (consciousness). The sprout of the *citta* is *asmita*, or pure “I-consciousness”. It projects as a duplicate in an unripened intelligent man. Besides the duplication, intelligence (*buddhi*) springs forth. From *buddhi*, the mind, the senses of perception and organs of action spring out. Like this, man is like a healthy tree. As the fragrant fruit comes out at the top from a healthy tree, the essence of life flows from the top of the head to savor through yoga. Yoga is a journey from the body towards the mind and from the mind towards the soul. The discipline I approach is from the body and I make each one of those who come to me to move step by step to the higher levels of yoga. If I consent to the demands of the seekers, then they may think in their minds that I am a spiritual teacher. I am neither a religious teacher, nor a money making teacher, but I am a teacher with religiousness in my *sadhana*. ॐ

Glimpses of Geetaji's Radiance during Yoganushasanam

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE TO ATTAIN YOGIC DISCIPLINE
REPRINTED FROM YOGA RAHASYA, VOL.22, NO. 1, 2015

Getting internal alignment

With open eyes feel the uprightness of the body. From inside you have to feel the navel area getting lift and supporting the thoracic chest in order to get the uprightness. Head straight neck straight. Do not have any tilt.

The spine, each area, each vertebra of the spine has to be taken inwards so that it supports the trunk. Head straight, neck straight, do not have any tilt. When you sit straight your eyes should not move. You look straight in front of you. That makes you sensitive from within to see whether your body is in a straight position.

To be with yourself you should always keep the eyes straight and looking forward

To be with yourself you should always keep the eyes straight and looking forward. That improves the sensitivity from inside as far as the uprightness is concerned or going inwards which is essential during *dharana*, *dhyana*.

That is what Lord Krishna says, "Do not allow your eyes to go here or there, don't look to the side, don't look up or down, you should be looking straight and straight within yourself."

When palms are in *namaskar mudra* raise the inner walls of the sternum chest and the folded palms in *namaskar mudra* will come close. There will be an understanding between each other. If one of the palms drops then the other one gets the indication. In the beginning, the chest and palms have to be close enough to feel the inner lift. That is why the *basta mudra* or the position of the hand is in *namaskar mudra* for meditation.

This is the position where your alertness has to be sharpened; your attention has to be sharpened with the eyes looking straight in the front. See that from the base of the spine to the apex of the spine, you keep it straight. You have to feel that there is an alignment from the anal mouth, the anus up to the top of the head and also feel that there is an inner connection which was referred to as *nadi*. So this inner *nadi*, inner space has to be always connected from inside so this connectivity makes you to be in an upright position.

Slowly bring the upper eyelids down towards the lower eyelids. Keep the pupils of the eyes sharp going inwards towards the back of the head. As though the back of the head [you can call it brain or inner walls of the skull] is like a screen and all your attention is focused at that screen at the back. To give you an example, you look at the screen in the front when



Geetaji taking questions during Yoganushasanam

you look at a picture. Now you are going to see the picture/cinema from inside. You will see your own picture. Keeping the eyes closed make the pupils of the eyes to go towards the back of the head as though there is a big screen behind and you are reflecting on that big screen to see your own pictures.

That is why, (it is important to) have that connectivity as far as the anterior body and posterior body is concerned. If you sit like that after a while you begin to feel what Lord Patanjali says or talks about the mind, the intelligence, the "I" consciousness or the *citta*; all that has to be seen on that screen through your own eyes. So everything, all the apparatus is within us. You don't need the outer screen; you don't need the outer camera. It is all within, rolling inside. And a time has to come where nothing is picturized on the screen; it is just white. In that manner the back of the head or the back posterior inner trunk has to be like a wide screen. No pictures on that; and maintain that state with all that quietness where there is no disturbance. We are as though seeing nothing except the illumined screen.

The art of sitting

Guruji started his classes with standing *asanas* and not sitting because it is not possible for everyone to sit straight. You don't sit so straight. You have been taught earlier and that's why you could sit. Never should the practice begin with a sitting posture. Why? Because the spine in sitting posture does not become as alert as it should be. A kind of laziness sets in.

Never should the practice begin with a sitting posture. Why? Because the spine in sitting posture does not become as alert as it should be. A kind of laziness sets in.

Today, I started only with sitting *asanas* for you to understand how you have to work in that area. So tomorrow when you have to sit in *pranayama*, I cannot spend so much time on explaining on the sitting posture because I have to teach *pranayama*.

Do you understand the process of teaching? If I make you to sit for one hour without any adjustments or understanding then *pranayama* won't come. If your *asana* goes wrong, then *pranayama* goes wrong; if *pranayama* goes wrong, *pratyahara* will go wrong, if *pratyahara* goes wrong *dharana* will go wrong. It is a thorough process.

The approach to practice

The bearing on the mind is very important for students. When you are a yoga student it is not okay for you to say, 'Oh I was trying something!' Your trial should have some meaning as your teachers have already guided you.

To learn *sarvangasana* and other inversions, you first do *asanas* like *adho mukha svanasana*, and *prasaritta padottanasana* where your head, your inner organic body gets used to that flow of the blood towards the brain.

If there is a problem and you do not look into it then injuries are possible. It is not that yoga is harmful or *asana* is

harmful. If the way of understanding that *asana* is incorrect then it is harmful. You need to understand that.

Each and every student should have to bear in mind that the approach to your practice should be correct even if it takes a little longer time.

For you to learn *sarvangasana* and other inversions, you first do *uttanasana*, *adho mukha svanasana*, *prasaritta padottanasana*, so that your head, inner body-wise or organic body-wise gets used to that flow of the blood towards the brain. If you suddenly do inversions then the head becomes heavy.

You cannot just jump to some *asana* or the other and say you are trying to do it. I am against this word, "I will manage". When students come to the class and say I will manage - I am against that. This management in the class is not going to help you at all. Your management, even if it's on a small scale should be the correct one.

Learning and teaching thoughtfully

As a teacher with my nearness to Guruji made me to understand you cannot be callous, you cannot be careless. You cannot just stand as the teachers and helpers and wait for things to happen. You have to have an eye on the students or the group of students and attend to the students who need help immediately.

Many times teaching takes place thoughtlessly. They jump onto something. I see a person doing all kinds of back arching *asanas* and when it comes to *sirsasana*, he says that he cannot do *sirsasana* as his neck is paining. You were doing *urdhva dhanurasana*, *viparita dandasana* and then you cannot do *sirsasana*? What does that mean? Oh my neck!!

That means that you cannot do the back bending which is advanced back bending if you have a neck problem in *sirsasana*. You have to first solve that problem and then proceed towards rest of the back bending. So how am I to believe that the classes are going correctly? First learn *sirsasana*! Forget your *viparita dandasana*! Forget your *urdhva dhanurasana* but do *sirsasana*!

Inversions: the best gift of yoga

These poses which we call inversions – *sirsasana*, *sarvangasana*, *halasana* are so important in life if you want to really keep your mental balance. Inversions are essential to keep your mind channeled for your yogic practices. That is the best gift of yoga.

I made you to do by changing the interlock of the fingers in *sirsasana*. Why change the interlock of the fingers once you've got accustomed to one type of interlocking? Once I interlock with the left little finger down, once interlock with the right little finger down so the pressure differs on the finger and you should be able to learn that.

The shoulders, the fibres of the shoulders, muscles of the

Practice Enrichment Series

Friday afternoons 2:00 - 5:00 pm
January 29, February 26

Commit to this series to advance your personal practice of *asana* and *pranayama*. The series is designed for serious intermediate and advanced students in the Iyengar Yoga tradition. Students will be guided in a strong practice over each three hour session. Each month will build upon the previous month's work to unlock individual challenges.

With Ann Kilbertus and Ty Chandler

Note: Instructor permission is required to attend.

\$45 each session

shoulders, shoulder blades, spinal area differs when your interlocking changes. So we have to train every little muscle of the asana so that the energy is balanced.

It is only through asana that you understand the balancing of the energy on both the sides evenly.

The armpit – the seat of determination

While sitting, open the armpit chest by moving it forward with the help of the thumb – by rotating it from the back to the front. That armpit skin is very tricky. We open up the armpit but the skin hides behind. The skin falls, it shows the deterioration and it pulls one back from determination.

Though we say that the quality of determination is in the head, the determination comes through the armpit. You keep the armpit chest forward, you are firm.

How to build up will power, how to have determination? This is the area that you have to open. We do not directly tell you while teaching but we do give you the clue. These are some of the secrets.

The armpit and the mind

When the palms are in pronation on the thighs then the side armpits drop. There is a slight fall and relaxation of that area. Arms remain passive but at this point of time we don't need the relaxation of the arms. We don't want to be dull. So when the palms are in supination, when you turn the palms, that armpit area opens. And when that armpit area opens, the sinking that happens in your mind stops.

If the mind sinks then depression is the problem. A slight sinking of the mind makes your mind to wander. You say, "Oh I was not attentive; my mind wanders." This is a simple thing that happens to everybody in life. But, when your mind wanders, how are you going to control it? Open that armpit chest forward, shoulders roll back and see that you bring the skin of the armpit which wants to hide back, forward either using the instrument of the arm, thumb or opening it from the back of the trunk to come forward. That will make you to sit correctly and make your mind steady and determined for *pranayama*. ॐ



The Centre is awarding all scholarships and bursaries in memory of Corrine Lowen in 2016

The Centre awards over \$3000 a year for scholarships and bursaries, for regular and special needs classes, based on financial need. Students are eligible after they have attended one term of classes at the Centre and the bursary applies for a term.

After Corrine's death, relatives, students and teachers made donations in Corrine's name. The Centre decided to award all scholarships and bursaries in this coming fiscal year in memory of Corrine.

Scholarships and Bursaries

Members' scholarships are available for:

**Heart of Yoga with Shirley Daventry French
& Ann Kilbertus,
January 30-31. Deadline for applications: January 16**

**Jawahar Bangera Intensive, March 25-28.
Deadline for applications: March 11**

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

Applications for both are available at the reception desk.
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria | 202-919 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3 | 250-386-YOGA (9642)

Blue Props from Bangkok

by Leslie Hogle

Justin Herold who lives and teaches Iyengar yoga in Bangkok, Thailand, recently donated a collection of props to me and to our centre.

Some years ago, I taught in his studio, and got to know him and his students. Since then we have sent him our newsletter.

*If you are ever in Thailand,
Iyengar yoga is there.*

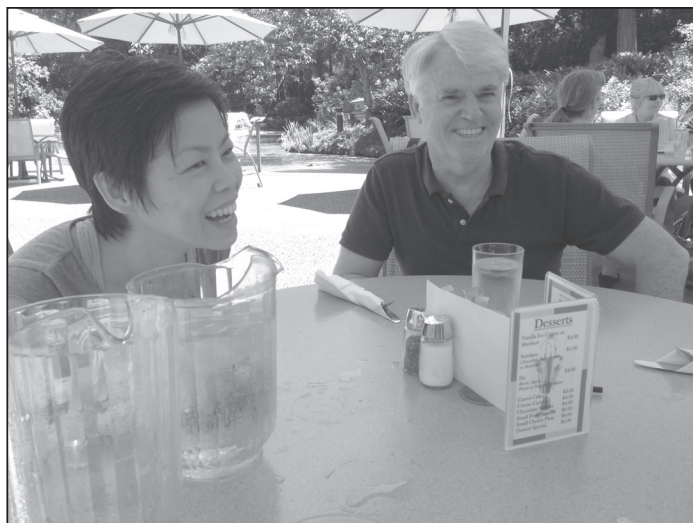
If you are ever in Thailand, Iyengar yoga is there. You can drop into a class in his well-designed studio. His wife, Lek, also teaches at the studio there.

Justin and Lek visited here this past summer, and spent some time practicing at our centre.

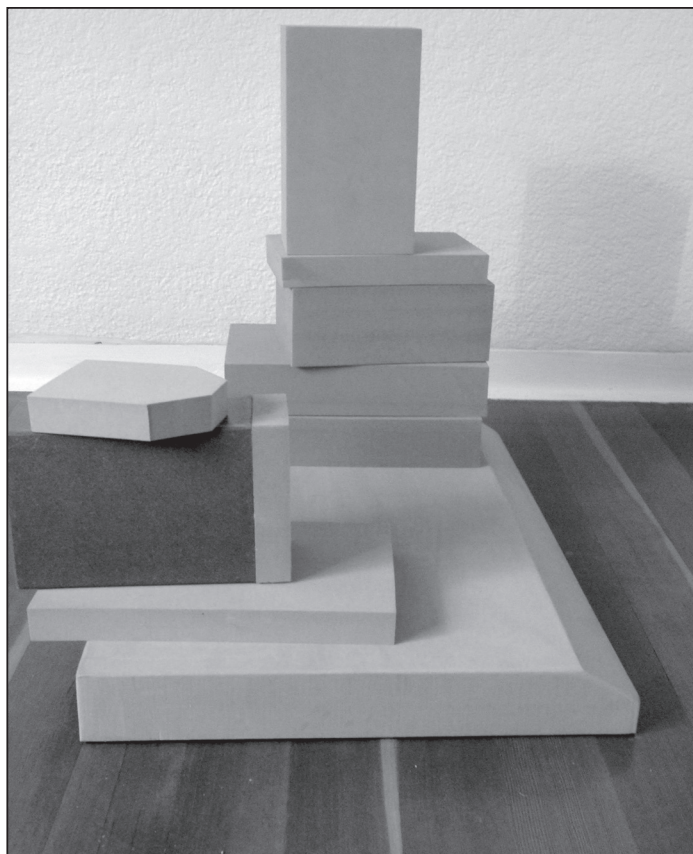
When he returned to visit in the United States recently, he sent us a box of props, some of which are pictured here.

I am enjoying the large shoulder stand platform, and a wooden block with a foam end. This is a nice addition for *setu bandha sarvangasana* on a block. His students often complained about the hard wood of the block, so he devised this option.

The beauty of the Iyengar system is that wherever you go in the world, if there is an Iyengar teacher, there you will find a universal level of commitment to Gururji's work and teachings. ॐ



Justin Herold and his wife Lek



Congratulations to Al Reford, winner of the early registration draw for the September/October term of classes.



The deep imprint that Gururji has left in our hearts will never go. Not only in this life but in the coming lives too, Gururji will be deep within us.

Clearing Misconceptions: Asana is a form of exercise

by B.K.S. Iyengar

On account of want of knowledge, many people consider *asana* as an exercise, which is just because of their imagination. The word for exercise in Sanskrit is *vyayama*. It means extension and expansion so as to draw the energy with different movements in different directions. It also means to make efforts to scatter the energy to various parts of the body. *Asana* helps in gathering and filtering the energy in order to distribute it evenly all over the body.

Yet, I cannot deny the fact that when a beginner starts to practise *asanas*, it seems somewhat similar to ordinary exercises. The body which is in a state of inertia needs the energy to vibrate. Hence, it needs movements. Movements like extension, contraction, adduction, abduction and circumduction in the muscles are considered as exercise. The muscles cannot be flexed, extended and rotated well without the complete functioning of the joints. The life force cannot be regenerated without right movement. Hence, in the beginning, practice of *asana* appears as physical exercises.

When you attend primary school, the teacher teaches you the alphabets. When you attend the yoga classes for

The beginners on the path of asanas are like a baby. They move the body but they do not know how to make the right movements in the muscles, how to create energy and use it without any wastage.

the first time, you are taught the basics and not the higher aspects. The teacher teaches *asana* at the rudimentary level where movements assume prominence. Initially, there is very little or even no sensitivity. Not a single moment passes without movement. A newborn baby moves its body without knowing why it is doing so. The beginners on the path of *asanas* are like a baby. They move the body but they do not know how to make the right movements in the muscles, how to create energy and use it without any wastage.

Beginners show intense interest in yoga but it often dies before the interest sprouts. It takes time before yogic practice can integrate the body, mind and self.

To start with, *asana* acts as an exercise disciplining and channelling the movements of the body in-order to develop sensitivity in the body. This ploughing of the body is called *vyayama*.

The quality of practice of *asanas* differs with aspirants as some may be mild, medium, intense or supremely intense. The practice may range from rudimentary to the finest points. Generally the *sadhaka* does not apply his mind to incorporate in his performance all the changes needed to grasp the depth of each *asana*.

Though Patanjali's sutras seem to be very disciplined, they have a soft spot for some human beings. In *Samadhi Pada*, he asks the consciousness (*citta*) to have an eagle's swoop to pounce whereas in *Sadhana Pada* he asks the *sadhaka* to swim like a kingly swan. If *Samadhi Pada* is meant for the advanced souls, *Sadhana Pada* is for the average intellectual human beings. Therefore, he asks the *sadhaka* to uplift himself from the physical level to experience the higher levels of growth in him. In *Sadhana*

Pada, the *sadhaka* has to make all efforts, in the whole of *ashtanga* yoga. Practice of *ashtanga* yoga strengthens the faculty of determination and sows the seed of will power.

Practice of *asanas* may be slow or fast and quick according to one's way of thinking and acting. Sometimes in the *asana*, the body and mind act together willingly and at other times the body wants to act but not the mind. Sometimes the mind acts but the body does not. The way of doing *asana* has to change as the body and mind play the game of hide and seek.

As a beginner, the consciousness wanders (*vyutthana*) and the practitioner is restless. He lacks the determination to continue practice. So, I make such students do the *asanas* in quick succession so that their minds have no time to calculate. If their minds are lazy, dull, lethargic then I change the sequences to make them dynamic, alert and restful.

Diseases alienate the mind too. In case of depression, I make the practitioner do *urdhva dhanurasana* or *viparita cakrasana* in quick succession. Similarly *halasana* and *pashchimottanasana* cycles. Practicing in this manner brings alertness and freshness both in body and mind.

By the practice of *asana*, the power of vital energy (*prana shakti*) is stabilised and established before one proceeds towards *pranayama*. It is worthy to note that in the practice of *asana* alone, there is a vast scope to deal with the body, mind and energy.

It is said in the Yoga Chudamani Upanishad, *pradipika asanani rajo hanti* – the practice of *asana* destroys *rajo guna*, and helps *sattva guna* to expand. In average people, the *tamo guna* is predominant. What they therefore need to do is to decrease the influence of *tamo guna* and increase *rajo guna*, later

decrease the predominance of *rajo guna*, increases the dominance of *sattva guna*.

When the *tamoguna* is dominant then the practice of *asana* is like exercise. When one transcends to *rajo guna* and *sattva guna* then the *asana* becomes a position. It is a position where one reposes to penetrate the mind deep within the body.

Vyayama is external but when the energy is spread within the body then it becomes *prana ayama*.

Water is purified by boiling, filtering and cooling. Similarly, in *asana*, the body heats up, refined subtle adjustments are made which culture the cells of the body. Blood circulates and reaches the remotest parts of the body. *Asana* avoids all unwanted movements wherein the body is cooled and quietened. This is firmness (*sthirata*) and steadiness (*sukhata*).

Those who practise *asana* at the level of beginners are like the boiling of the water. Then, with the filtering and cooling in the body and mind occurs then one reposes in that position. The Brahmasutra says, *asinat sambhava* – it is possible for those who are established well in the *asana* to realise Brahma.

Asana for people whose mind is petty and contracted is exercise. Once the mind opens and spreads, then the *asana* is no more a *vyayama*.

It is *yogasana*. ॐ



Ty Chandler helps a student in supta padangusthasana

What will I teach?

by Leslie Hogya

Each week I plan what to teach in my classes, and keep a record of what poses I cover. There is a whole list of *asanas* (poses) I would hope to at least touch upon in an eight-week term. Each week, I build on what was taught in the days before. For beginners, there are introductory poses. For my continuing class, the scope is wider, and I can teach any pose for which I am certified. The level and interest of the students guide me.

Prashant Iyengar has said that we can only be advanced in the more beginning poses. We study these poses year after year and can then begin to delve into the intricacies. The more complex knotting, balancing poses may be more “advanced” looking, but one may only be able to do them in a rudimentary way without the depth of understanding.

As Iyengar teachers, we progress through various levels of certification. And when we take our certification exams, we are tested on a syllabus set by Gururji B.K.S. Iyengar for each level. As Iyengar teachers, we are bound to teach within the level we have thus far achieved.

The introductory syllabus is comprised of mainly standing poses, a few seated poses and introduction to the inversions. Over the years, I have studied the sequence of how the poses are introduced and marvel over and over at Gururji’s genius.

Here is a partial list of introductory poses and as you can see they are done in any level of class:

tadasana (mountain) with all kinds of arm actions

uttitha trikonasana (triangle)

virabhadrasana I and II (warriors)

ardha chandrasana (half moon pose)

prasarita padottanasana

(wide leg standing forward bend)

adho mukha svanasana (downward dog)

dandasana (staff)

virasana (hero’s pose)

marichyasana I, *bharadvajasana* I (simple twists)

halasana (plough)

sarvangasana (shoulder stand) and some variations

savasana

Geeta Iyengar explained why classes begin with standing poses in *Yoga Rashaya*, a journal published in India. “...you have to stand first to awaken yourself.” The standing poses help remove the *tamasic* (dull) nature. “...the feeling of activeness has to come first. Activeness has to come to the surface for that dullness to go.”¹

Traditionally in the final week of a beginner’s session, I introduce simple breathing, or rudimentary *pranayama*. The goal of yoga is to still the fluctuations of the consciousness. *Pranayama* is a tool towards that goal. *Pranayama* is recommended after the *asanas* are mastered, according to Patanjali. So for beginning students it is more breath awareness.

At home you can start to practice on your own. Use the sequences you were taught in class, and begin to see the connections from one pose to the next. Consult your teacher on what to practice if you are unsure. There are also Iyengar books to borrow from our library.

There are also many resources on line. Our Facebook page often posts interesting videos and articles from around the world. Note: check out the Iyengar Yoga Centre’s Facebook page posting from November 2, 2015. There is a clip of Gururji talking about yoga becoming convenient. But he sums up with: “Yoga has been shining for centuries, it will continue to shine.” ॐ

1 *Yoga Rahasya*, Volume 18 No. 4; 2011 pg 11. (this article was also published in an earlier newsletter.) Issues of *Yoga Rahasya* are in our library.

Thank you to:

- Ronald Lecuyer has donated a prop kit for a student starting out a full home practice.
- **Tom Kendall** and **Patty Rivard** for building, installing, and donating labour for the construction of the new retail cabinet.
- **Boni Hoy** for donating photocopier paper.
- **Stacey Frank** for volunteering to maintain our schedule on the yellowyogi website.

Thank you for donations to our library:

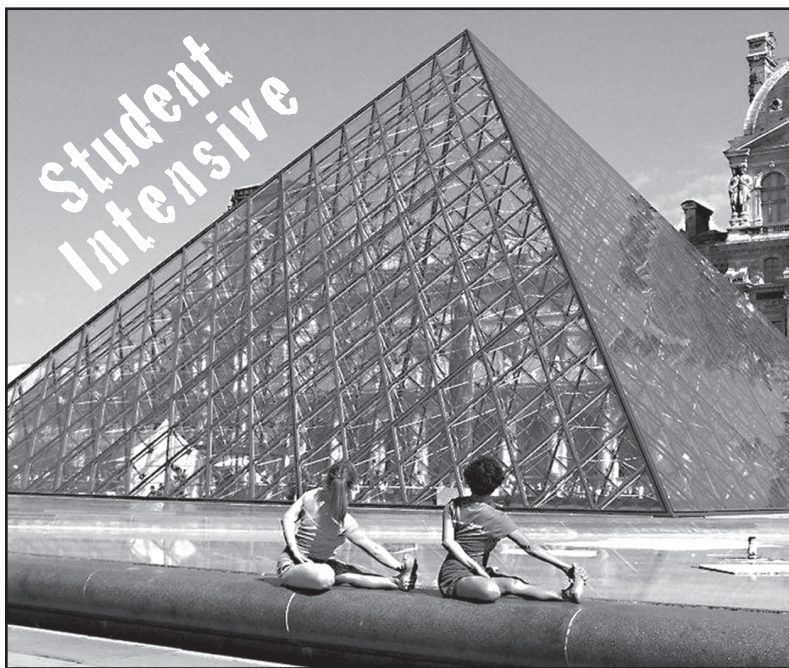
- **Dianne** and **Ray Brooks** for 2 copies of the book *Blowing Zen*.
- **Ronald Lecuyer** for two textbooks.
- **Scott Poole**, **Laurie Kelley**, and **Francisca Cartagena**.
- The family of **Marion Fontaine** for their donation of books and yoga props.



Thank you to all who made the Open House a great event.

In particular:

- **Amanda Mills** and **Stacey Frank** who greeted, cleaned and stayed all day;
- **Sheila Redhead** who contacted the bakers to bring all those tasty cookies and came at the end to help,
- **Jane McFarlane** for the tasty chai and both **Jane** and **Johanna Godliman** for getting everything ready and then cleaning up afterwards,
- **Bhavantu Sound** with **Ty Chandler**, **Tia Ben** and **Chris Simons** – always a hit!
- The teachers: **Adia Kapoor**, **Lucie Guindon**, **Shirley Daventry French**, **Derek French**, and **Wendy Boyer**.
- The Bakers – not sure who they all were, but their sweet touch is a big attraction.
- **Britta Poisson** for her constant competence! **Hilary McPhail** for your feedback.
- **Jeanette Merryfield** and **Johanna Godliman** for flyer distribution.
- The Open House had some stiff competition this weekend: awesome weather and other good events in the city. Many new students still chose to come and sign up!



With Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler

August 29 - September 2, 2016

9:30 am - 12:30 pm

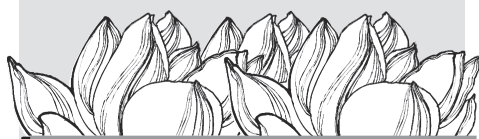
Each day there will be an introduction to pranayama along with philosophical and spiritual discussions. Two hours of yoga asanas, including a timed practice, yoga kurunta work, restorative poses, and inversions follow.

Registration opens April, 2016

Fees: \$235.00 + GST for IYCV members
\$260.00 + 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 \$50 cancellation fee.



Calendar

December

- 4 Practice Enrichment
- 5 Teacher Meeting
- 13 Guruji's Birthday
- 20-21 Winter Solstice

Interim classes will run during the holidays, Dec 21 - Jan 3.

See www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

JANUARY

- 1 New Year's Day Timed Practice
- 29 Practice Enrichment
- 30-31 Heart of Yoga

February

- 21 AGM
- 26 Practice Enrichment
- 27 Teacher Meeting

March

- 17 Special Needs Tea
- 25-28 Jawahar Bangera Intensive
- 28-29 Jawahar Bangera Classes

April

- 22-23 Teacher Meeting

June

- 3-5 SSI Retreat

Iyengar Yoga Teacher Intensives



INTENSIVE FOR INTRODUCTORY TEACHERS IN TRAINING

July 11-15, 2016

Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus and Ty Chandler

Daily asana and pranayama practice, peer teaching, philosophy and anatomy are included in this intensive for trainees preparing to become Iyengar yoga teachers.

Leslie Hogya and Ann Kilbertus are experienced teachers certified at the Intermediate Senior level. Ty Chandler is an experienced Intermediate Junior III teacher. Leslie, Ann and Ty have practiced and studied for years under the mentorship of Shirley Daventry French. Leslie and Ann travel regularly to Pune to study with the Iyengar family. Ty has travelled to Pune and to France to continue her studies in the Iyengar tradition.

Daily schedule runs 9:30 am to 5:30 pm.



INTENSIVE FOR CERTIFIED IYENGAR TEACHERS

August 8-12, 2016

Shirley Daventry French and Ann Kilbertus with guest teacher, Louie Ettling

Take this opportunity to work with master teacher Shirley Daventry French along with two senior Canadian colleagues, Ann Kilbertus and Louie Ettling. This course is designed for teachers seeking to refine their skills at junior and senior intermediate levels.

Shirley Daventry French is a direct student of B.K.S. Iyengar. Since 1979 she studied with him regularly in India, North America, and Europe. Shirley has been teaching and training teachers for 45 years in Victoria and internationally.

Ann started her studies in the tradition of Iyengar yoga in 1984. Ann's training as an occupational therapist enriches her teaching perspective.

Louie Ettling is the Director of The Yoga Space in Vancouver. She has been a keen student of Iyengar Yoga since she started her studies 28 years ago.

Ann and Louie have studied regularly with B.K.S. Iyengar and his family in Pune. Both hold Intermediate Senior certificates.

Daily schedule runs 9:00 am to 5:00 pm with a two-hour lunch.



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

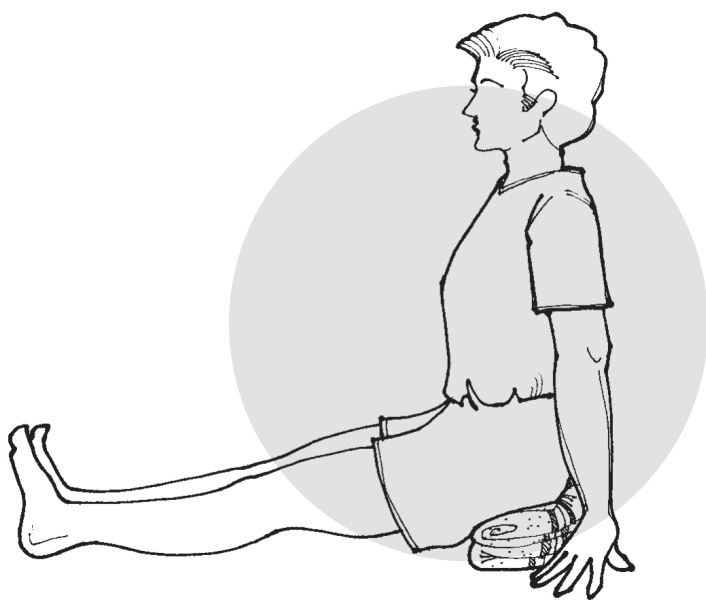
Fees for each course:
\$610 CDN + GST IYCV members
\$650 CDN + GST IYCV non-members

Cancellations prior to June 1 are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee. From June 1 on, refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled.





Become a member of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria and enjoy the following benefits:



- Discounts on classes and workshops.
- Early registration for classes and workshops.
- Scholarship eligibility for various workshops.
- Library borrowing privileges.
- Free practice space on Sunday afternoons.
- Opportunities for members to contribute insights and apply to sit on the board of directors.

NEW! Membership PLUS

In 2016, the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria is offering a new membership option, the Membership PLUS.

Receive all the benefits of an annual membership, PLUS six copies of the newsletter mailed to you. Ideal for teachers with their own studio! This membership is available within Canada for \$55.75 (\$55 + GST)

The one-year membership fee is \$42 CDN (\$40 + GST), renewable each January.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

PROV/ STATE: _____

POSTAL CODE: _____

COUNTRY: _____

PHONE: _____

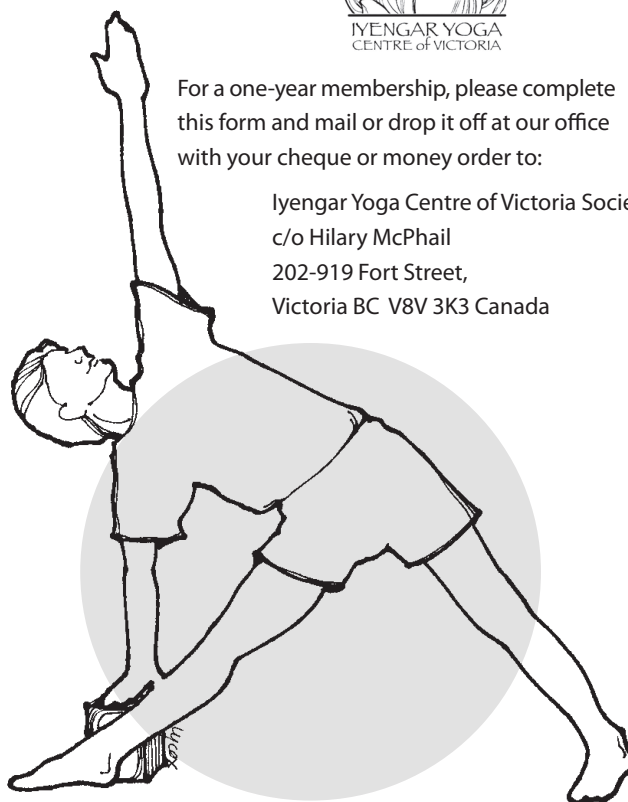
E-MAIL: _____

- ☐ Please mail my newsletter.
- ☐ Please email me the link to the newsletter.
- ☐ Sign me up for monthly yog-e email news.
- ☐ Unsubscribe from monthly yog-e email news.
- ☐ Receipt required.



For a one-year membership, please complete this form and mail or drop it off at our office 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 Canada



Yogashtha

One who is firmly and completely established in Yoga

-- Sameer Kulkarni

[translated by Abhijata Sridhar from the original Marathi article published in *Anubhav*]

It has been three weeks since Guruji left. I have not been able to gather myself after this personal loss.

An inner urge to write about this great man takes me towards my computer. His life spans across my mind. I am a direct witness to glimpses of his life for a small part of his lifetime, which is about 17-18 years. The rest of his life is historical and I gather about it from the myriad of interviews and articles in publications ranging from small local magazines to the internationally renowned Time magazine. There are innumerable people who knew him and I am certain that each one will have unique stories revolving around him.

Is there something besides and beyond all this that I deem fit to be authored?

I am certain that I do not want to make a drama out of even a single episode of his life, do not want to amplify any of his deeds in a way that will alienate him by giving him a divine identity, and do not want to blow my own trumpet by publicising my interactions with him. Yet, I want to write about him.

Now what do I write? What is it about him that quietly shouts at me from within to put my pen on paper.

Stephen King, the author of a book, "On writing" says, "If you want to understand any person, look into yourself. Dig into your life that has gone by. Look for deep-rooted essence of him in your life. Clean up the soil around the roots and you will realise that the character you are trying to look for outside is actually a substance within yourself.

I am sitting looking at the blank screen of my computer looking into my bygone days.

This is a story of 20 years ago. My formal education of medicine was coming towards its end.

"As a student pursuing medicine, a lot of importance, time and efforts were given to understanding diseases. However if one looks into the period when one is not afflicted by an illness, can one get clues towards fathoming the secrets of health?"

Searching for an answer to this question that troubled me for a long time, I wandered window-shopping from gyms to spiritual programmes. The result of this was only temporary satisfaction which would spurt like soap bubbles, a mistaken belief that something significant has been done and gathering matter that can be discussed in social gatherings. I could comprehend nothing beyond this.

In my tea-time chats at home, I casually remarked, "I am thinking of learning yoga". My elder brother immediately got up, brought his copy of Light on Yoga and gave it to me. This book,

authored by B.K.S Iyengar had beautiful photographs, an attractive layout and papers that were beautiful to touch. The book was top-notch. In the first page, my brother wrote, "This is a book for study, not just for reading. If proper study of this book is undertaken, reading any other book becomes redundant."

"Aye! If so, why did you not give this to me before", I asked him.

"Everything needs commensuration with time. Anyway, you start your study. If you follow the instructions given in this book to a tee, it is impossible for you to go wrong." Without any scope to pursue the conversation, he walked away.

I started my study. In due course of time, I felt I got a hang of all the primary instructions pertaining to the body. I also began to have fun while performing the simple asanas.

"All right about the book. But why don't you go to Guruji himself? Why don't you go to the institute? People from all over the world come reverentially to learn from him and you can't go a few kilometres?", he asked with deep concern tinged with exasperation.

He was right. Such confrontations happened 4-5 times and yet I remained lackadaisical. "I should go, but I don't have time, it is not possible". Many reasons would be contrived. My estimate gathered strength as I even gained solace from friends for all those reasons. What was the reality? What was I apprehensive about? What made me weak in my knees to not go there? Only I knew deep inside what the real reason was.

In my college days, there were two luminaries whose lives occupied my mind. I borrowed the opinions of authors of articles and posed those as my own. No need to point fingers at the author, the fault was mine.

The first luminary was Vinoba Bhave.

He was a simpleton who wouldn't understand the questions of the contemporary minds. That he could go into *shoonyavastha* was reason enough to ridicule him. It was fashionable for the cafe-intellectuals to remark absolutely anything about him. I fell a victim to that 'fashion'. By reading not even a single letter of his literary works, I heedlessly passed so called expert retrogressive imaginative comments. Ten years had to pass by before it dawned upon me that I was being foolish and stupid.

The second luminary was BKS Iyengar. If you went to him to learn asanas, he would beat you, sit on you and break your back. This was the notion that I borrowed from articles in newspapers and magazines. (On his 95th birthday, Guruji said on the dais that in the olden days BKS was popularised as an acronym for 'Beat, Kick and Shout Iyengar'). The stark reality was that I was apprehensive about just his impression which I settled to - that of an intense, short-tempered and stern yogi from whom who you could get a kick even if you just looked at him.

However my brother was persistent. Somehow, I finally took admission to the classes in the institute.

When I first went to the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute 17-18 years ago, Guruji was close to 80. By then, Guruji had stopped teaching in the general classes. However one could always see him in the therapy classes. At other times, his tryst with his chosen subject was on. His practice time was fixed and he could be seen in the hall practising in those time slots. He assumed his position of asanas often with the use of sticky mats, bricks and bolsters. I instinctively deferred

from going close to him while he was in practice. Just seeing him was such a magnificent treat. Even if he was silent, even if he did not teach anything, one could somehow sense that he was around a great man. An inexplicable driving force was there by his mere presence.

"Body is my temple and asanas are my prayers." Along with the memory surrounding this statement, Guruji's dedicated practice exemplifying this statement comes to my vision even today.

However back then, I would see him only from a distance. This was so for many years.

Actually, I am a student of Prashant Iyengar. While learning from him, the fear of the subject of yoga was put to rest. There is a relationship between the body and yoga, but that is not the end of it. It is a complete Darshana that transcends the body - this realisation came to me because of him. The questions for which I was looking desperately for answers were cleared because of his teachings.

One day in class, he made us do Eka Pada Rajkapotasana. We pulled the leg to the head with awkward faces, holding the breath and biting the teeth and lips. Prashant sir saw our battle for sometime and said unexpectedly sharply, "Release the asana."
"Come here", he led us towards a photo in the hall.

In the main hall in the institute, there is a display of many blown-up photographs from Light on Yoga. Prashant sir stood near the photo of Eka Pada Rajkapotasana. We followed him. He pointed towards that photograph. How Guruji did what we were trying to do was palpable. Beauty and a master-piece that cannot miss one's eye. Whatever Svati maram has mentioned in Hathayoga Pradipika - angalaghava i.e lightness of the body etc.....all that was crystal clear. Nothing needed to be said.

"Don't look at the pose", Prashant sir posed an impenetrable wall. Naturally I was also bewildered. "Take note of his face. There is not a single freckle on his forehead, eyes are passive and pure. Examine his entire body and its senses, every nook and corner of it. It is all a clear reflection of how relaxed he is. Understand this peaceful condition. Understand the quietude. His sensitivity is alert, aware and total even in this difficult position. Can you realise this? We do the asana, and Guruji actualises yoga - this is the essential difference between Guruji and ourselves. "

In a moment I felt as though someone lit me up with an intensely sharp and bright torch. The darkness was gone.

On the next day, I went to the institute hall at a time when none would be there. Believe it or not, I checked each and every photograph in the hall. What Prashant sir said was absolutely glaringly true. The peaceful composure was not disturbed in even a single asana. Not even a single part of the body or not even the skin showed any looseness or stress. (These photographs were taken in 1962 - in the days before Photoshop happened. There was no possibility of any editing or touch-up. Even if the face of any asana was pasted on to the body of any other asana, it would not seem

out of place - such a profound singular serenity. An equanimity of the highest character that Tadasana turned topsy-turvy became Sirsasana and Sirsasana turned, indeed became Tadasana!

"We do the asana, and Guruji actualises yoga". I have rarely heard a statement that gives such a clear understanding.

I still remember how mesmerised I was by Guruji's performance of Padangushtha Dhanurasana in his later years. I felt strange that a man who could do such a mesmerising Padangushtha Dhanurasana lived close-by. It felt queer that he still lived in that house.

Just then I heard Guruji laughing heartily. Just outside the house, he was saying something to someone and was laughing rapturously and earnestly. He wore on his lower body a garment that is called a 'veshti', a silk Kurta covered his trunk, white silken hair was cleanly combed backwards, fierce eyebrows blazed forth and there was a long bright red mark on his forehead called 'Sricharan'. It was not just his face, but his entire being participated in that laugh.

I came down and prostrated.

"Namaskar.....Namaskar", he said hastily, I thought.

It was only after some more years passed by I realised that whenever I touched his feet, he would very lovingly say 'Namaskar' twice consecutively.

"You are practising regularly, aren't you?", he asked while taking his hands off me after blessing me. While we were not acquainted, that was his first question to me. I just nodded my head in a way that would not express a 'no' and stepped aside. He then turned towards the conversation which he was having and again laughed aloud.

Guruji faced life whole-heartedly. Guruji who faced living full of life had cast a spell upon me. I was enchanted. "Guruji knows what yoga is. He knows Patanjali's teachings from within. Even if you follow him blindly, you will reach from wherever you are to such higher **planes**", my brother told me while giving me his copy of 'Light on yoga sutras'

I soon started studying Guruji's other books earnestly. I also saw DVDs of his teachings of many years. I keenly listened to every word that he said. In order to understand that, I tried to implement his teachings in my own practice. When he was practising in the institute I would just spend hours seeing him and taking cognisance of whatever he did.

A realisation dawned upon me. If I had to learn something from Guruji it was his relationship with life and living. This is yoga.

The first instance when I saw Guruji teach live was during his 85th birthday. In that course, on a couple of days I sat in the steps during the lesson. Here is what comes in waves of my memory of those lessons:

"We have created the system of 4 castes in our own body - Brahman, warrior, tradesman and slave. We give the status of Brahman to the head because our intellect functions from there. The work of undertaking the functioning or trade of the body is bestowed upon the neck, chest and stomach - to take in something, extract nourishment from it and to discard what is not needed. If

you look at your hands, you will recognise that they belong to the class of warriors. Their purpose is for protection. If there is an attack, the onus is on the hands to respond. The legs are the slaves of the body. They have to bear the whole body throughout one's life, without any objection. However have you ever given a thought that you should break this caste system prevalent in your own body?"

I was not quite sure what he wanted to convey. For a moment I was in jitters whether he was trying to endorse the caste system.

"Why don't you make the head do the job of the legs at some point in time or guide the hands to go hand in hand with the stomach? Do you have those internal connections? When we go to Sirsasana...", he turned towards the student on the platform and said, "Go to Sirsasana". Such a grounded instruction, I had never heard. The force and clarity with which he said that was so significantly special that it was as if Sirsasana would come alive with that coarse voice itself.

"What do you mean when you say, 'I do Sirsasana'? Just stand on your head? Manage balance? On one plane, of course we do so. However the bigger lesson is we make the head to experience what it is to do the job of the legs. Understand what a distinctive feat it is to bear and balance the entire weight of the body and how the legs do so without any hesitation. You have done Sirsasana for so many years. What have you learnt? When you bestow the responsibility of the head upon the legs, what do you convey to them?

You tell them to look into the space all around. Let eyes of sensitivity sprout forth from your skin. With their assistance, can you gauge your position in this time and space? At other times, how instantaneously your brain does this...do you realise that? When roles are interchanged, we understand the value of each role. Just see. We change the context and the entire understanding changes. This is what Patanjali tells you when he says, '*vitarka badhane pratipaksha bhavanam*'.

There were a couple of people from overseas who were sitting next to me in the stairs and they were engrossed in taking notes. Their speed of writing did not match with Guruji's speed of talking. Yet, they did not give up. The race was on. It amused me.

"We fail to understand these intricacies because we are not sensitive. Can you see, feel and perceive? Unless and until every system, every organ and every cell in your body works in co-ordination, everything will be fragmented. Asana does not just pertain to this physical body, but it is something which shapes and moulds our intelligence, mind and thoughts. It is an integral process and the only process which develops good communication skills within the establishment of your own body. It changes the texture of your chitta, cultures your intelligence and sharpens your sensitivity.

Guruji was speaking like a waterfall. He wanted to convey a multitude of things at a single point in time. Finally, the lady sitting next to me gave up her stubborn resoluteness. She closed her notebook and looked at the stage. After some time, she looked towards me and quipped, "Guruji's gestures speak much more than his words, don't they?"

Years later when I met Guruji while translating his book, 'Yoga Sutra Parichaya' into Marathi, I was reminded of this incident.

The same energy and the same burning zeal.

"SamK, life is like the river of Amazon", he said gesturing with his hand the flow with such power that the river itself emerged in front of my eyes. "It flows incessantly.

Jatyantara parinama prakrityaapooraat. Your translation should vibrantly flow like that."

Translations should be such. Why just translation? It could be anything ranging from any art form to living to any work that one has taken up - each and every thing should be so alive and flowingwhat a clear all-encompassing instruction!

When I came home and told my brother what Gurujii said about sensitivity and how amazing that was, my brother immediately cut me short and said, "Never just hear Gurujii's words. If you do, you will be trapped. Listen to the intention, intensity and purity of what he is saying. Look at the bigger picture, or else you will miss the bus. His words are so enchanting and precise that it will pull you towards that matter. But you should learn to take in the essence and the substance of his statements. He is beyond words. Many people fail to understand that. Yehudi Menuhin understood it and hence called him his best violin teacher. You try and explore what Menuhin meant when he said so. He has paraphrased it beautifully", he told me.

I felt smaller and retorted, "Eh! If you understand all this, then why don't you come to the class? Why don't you learn yoga?". "Hmm...not in this birth", he put a full-stop to the conversation.

Yehudi Menuhin was a world class violin maestro. He had gifted Gurujii a watch in which is encrypted, "To my best violin teacher". I got a chance to see that watch and was reminded of the conversation I had with my brother. I began to wonder why indeed did he say so. Menuhin was one of Gurujii's students in his early formative days. He has written a foreword to *Light on Yoga*.

We can be certain that Gurujii did not teach Menuhin the technique of playing the instrument. He excelled in that already and it was a gift he was born with. Playing the instrument is a vital part of the art of playing a violin, but it is not the only part. Gurujii must have taught him that the violin is just an extended form of his own body, his awareness and his sensitivity. Gurujii might have brought to his conscious plane the feeling that the meeting between the violin and himself, and the sound that emanates from that meeting are but acts of yoga. Gurujii deepened Menuhin's sensitivity of the art further and further and might have thus made him aware as to how he can express himself wholesomely through his art.

By making him see the relationship between art and the dynamic energy of life through the practice of asanas using the instrument of the body, he must have taught Menuhin to perceive the relationship between that dynamic energy of life and his art using the instrument of violin. Gurujii must have showed Menuhin that the expansion in understanding of the art takes one to the exploration of the Self and a splendid grandeur.

As a part of Gurujii's 90th birthday celebration, we made a pothi, on the first page of which is printed in Gurujii's handwriting, "Yoga is not a religion. It is the science of religion which makes you understand your own religion better". This statement is like Menuhin's - neatly formed and precisely expressed. Though it takes within its realm the entire subject of yoga, each individual, according to one's capacity will still find it pregnant with great potential.

In one of the interviews we had with Gurujii, he said, "I had to go in depth to find out what language to use, what words to use while instructing students about yoga. I had to find out which words provided the desired effects. I began to ascertain and fine tune them. Thus came a specific

style of language for teaching. Sometimes to find the correct word for a particular experience, it took me 30-40 years. If you have to dive into any art and understand its core, you have to be ready to face difficulties."

The screen on my computer is still blank. I keep moving the mouse so that the machine doesn't go to 'sleep mode'. What to write still doesn't strike me. Rather, I am unable to decide what to select and what to omit. Everything that occurs to me now is valuable, my intelligence however cautions me that this is not the way. I open a folder with photographs. In that folder are photos of Guruji in Bellur. There are photos of Guruji sowing a plant, seeing children of the Bellur school do asanas, performing a pooja, worshipping Patanjali and practising. I go through these photographs again and again. Maybe I am trying to look for a way to bring me out of this quandary. The first thought that comes to my mind is what an unbelievable life this man has lived!

He was born in a poor household in a small village called Bellur which was not even on the map back then. As a child, he was stricken with diseases like TB and while visiting his sister in Mysore, his sister's husband who was none other than the great yogi T Krishnamacharya advised him to do asanas to gain health. As he stayed on with his sister to learn the asanas, two years passed by. T Krishnamacharya at the behest of a Mr Gokhale, sends him to a strange land called Pune to teach yoga. In Pune, Guruji had neither family nor mere acquaintances. He did not even know the local language. His teacher told him to do so and without raising a finger, this boy obeys as though following a Divine doctrine. This boy takes an aluminium box, leaves with a couple of clothes and travels with a ticket bought with borrowed money. On reaching Pune, he begins to teach in a club called Deccan Gymkhana. He stays in a lodge nearby. Who keeps him company there? Huge wrestlers. Logic cannot explain any of this.

In a few days, his family thinks they should get him married and so he gets married. Marriage brings into his life a girl called Ramamani. Her involvement in Guruji's Yoga sadhana proved vital. She helped him shape the science of asana and pranayama. It is after her that the world renowned Yoga institute is named.

Every story here is fit enough to be cinematised. How did he manage to live such a life which may easily appear to be scripted or tailor-made in hindsight? If someone gives me the freedom to script a character any way I want, a character who can begin anywhere and go anywhere, a character who can do anything, even then, I will not be able to produce a fine character like this boy from Bellur. Here is a character who I have come in direct contact with, and a life such as this came his way in reality.

Whether I have settled down or not, with the next photo a barrage of questions come upon me.

This man started life with his wife with the help of a few borrowed utensils. With such a meagre income, did a thought to try his hand in something other than yoga never enter him? There were 5 daughters and a son in his life. Out of frustration, did he not feel shattered enough to give up on yoga and take up a salaried job in the Ammunition factory, in order to run the wheel of living? (I say Ammunition factory because I am told that in those days, jobs were easily found in that factory in Khadki.) It might have no doubt been a Herculean task to even make errands meet. Yet,

teaching Yoga to anyone who came by, cycling almost 20-25 miles at a trot to teach someone yoga was an everyday affair. How did this 'madman' as his neighbours used to call him, find the strength and courage to pursue his chosen subject even though survival was at stake? How on earth did a young girl find the maturity to support this unreasonable decision? On what basis did this so-called uneducated couple not give up, because of the so many hurdles that came their way and not fall a prey to worldly desires? How did these two people have a single-minded purpose of taking yoga to the people?

He did travel all over but in the beginning it was not all a bed of roses. Everywhere, his strength was his actions. Through demonstrations which may number in thousands he captured the hearts of people. He showed what would not have made sense by just speaking and he spoke what he showed. Thus he has hoisted the flag of yoga all over. How did he hold all of this as the most supreme aim in life? His work has brought him students from over 70 countries and made millions of people fall in love with yoga. The essential beauty is because thousands have devoted their own lives to this single cause. How can a simple man facilitate so much?

What is the answer to all these questions? Can there be an answer to all these questions? They just render us spellbound.

It is not even like he started teaching and name, fame and prosperity came to him. Battles and fights were always on. Battling for survival and fighting against all odds. Come to think of it and the subject he was teaching was yoga - mystical, deep and spiritual, and all of this branded it as not for common man. So, the people who claimed to be yogis of those days would have vociferously showed their disapproval.

"When I taught, I would demonstrate what I wanted or what I expected them to do, because back then my vocabulary was limited, much limited. I did not have the proper expression. So, my two forked sadhana was on. On one side, I was bent upon mastering the asanas and on the other side I was trying to give birth to appropriate verbal expressions. Otherwise, my teaching would not have had this clarity. I could not have shared what came my way or what I experienced. If what I say is improper, how will my student come to experience what has to be experienced?" On hearing Guruji say so, it may come off as a linear process, but a student of yoga and a teacher of yoga will both have the sensibility and sensitivity to comprehend that it is not so.

Guruji's experience was his testimony and this methodology did not go down well with people back then.

"This is not adhyatma. It is just a circus of body movements. What kind of a spiritual master or student of yoga is he? He is just an acrobat".

All such ridiculing remarks were passed.

Guruji was not affected by these comments. He did not waver and was firmly established in his principles. He only taught what he experienced and he felt was right. He never blindly accepted the words in books. He never posed those as his own teachings. He did not even blindly follow Patanjali assuming that what Patanjali has said must be yogic. What Patanjali has said, he continuously experimented intensely in the lab of his body, chitta and consciousness. Whatever resulted was again tried and tested. He developed from by this process the path of yoga, not just for himself, but for one and all.

Commoners viewed yoga as something for the sages and saints in Himalayas who have left their homes and families and have dedicated themselves to the tapas of yoga in seclusion. Guruji cut asunder this myth and made yoga available you and me. This is his contribution.

In the later phase of Guruji's life, T Krishnamacharya came to Pune and visited Guruji. He also saw one of the classes that Guruji taught. T Krishnamacharya was overwhelmed and asked at the end of the class, "From where did you learn all this, Sundara?" (Guruji's first name was Sudararaja)

Once, his grand-daughter interviewed him, in which Guruji said, "My mother-tongue is Kannada. My formal education was very limited. I used to teach primarily in Pune, Mumbai and overseas. Many a time, those who came to my classes were scholars or pundits. If I erred, the blemish would have come to yoga and my guru. I could never take that. Hence, practice was and is always on. My practised involved awareness of what I am doing and sensitivity to what all is happening. I relied only on my experience and my primary duty was to share that in the form of teaching. So my practice never stopped and never will. I am a yoga sadhaka."

Unrelenting practice, practice, practice. It is now clear that he took this as his mantra back then and since then as the only means for survival. That he accepted this wholeheartedly is clear. Guruji followed Ramdas's template - "**Abhyasoni prakatave** - Let it manifest through practice" as it is. Patanjali speaks of sarvabhauma mahavratam. For Guruji, yoga itself was the mahavratam. It was his own dictate to himself that at any point in time and in any given situation the mahavratam had to be practised and will be. This he followed till his very last breath.

Here is an incident that took place a couple of months before his demise. He was on medication, but his condition did not improve significantly.

He told Abhi, his grand-daughter, "Bring two Viparita Dandasana benches for Savasana.". Two such benches that owe their birth to Guruji himself were brought. They were kept facing each other and cushion in the form of bolsters, blankets and pillows were placed in the space between them in a distinct manner such that a very mild support was created. When Savasana is done on this set-up, because of the support that the back gets, the chest spreads. Breathing happens easier with freedom.

Guruji got into the pose and gradually settled in Savasana. "When I am in an asana, I become the asana" - this statement came alive right there in front of my own eyes. Abhi and a couple of others stayed around so they could be there if he needed something. When he opened his eyes, he saw these youngsters standing there. He gestured to them with his hands to go and closed his eyes again. However these children couldn't get themselves to leave. In spite of Guruji's indication, they stayed on.

After quite some time had elapsed, Guruji opened his eyes and there he saw these children still standing. "Did I not tell you to go and practise? Why are you still standing here? If you stand here like this, I will stop my practice". He said this with quite a strong intensity. Guruji was very disturbed that they were missing their practice by trying to be around.

When I met him a few days after this happened, he said, "Patanjali has said in his own words - abhyasa has to be long, continuous, uninterrupted and with reverence. Only then will it be deep-rooted. First chapter, samadhi pada, 14th sutra".

sa tu deerghakala nairyantarya satkarasevito drudhabhumi"

On his face was an expression which said, "Can we not follow this simple instruction? "

The last file in the folder that I am playing with on my computer is that of Guruji doing Kapotasana on a chair. His age is clearly seen, but the way in which his hands are going towards his legs is striking. A gentle curiosity heralding communication is so beautifully evident that I still cannot come to terms with the fact that this man is no more. It occurs to me that it is high time I wrote at least something. So, I begin, "If I had to use minimum words while describing Guruji, only three words will actually suffice - alive, flowing and vibrant."

Here is a story when Guruji was 93.

He was helping an old man who was in the therapy classes complaining of a bad back ache. He stood next to the old man and modified his way of standing, sitting and lying down so that he could give the patient some relief. Guruji was adjusting him in a supine pose with different props for quite a while so that the old man could find some ease in breathing. The teacher was at times using his own hands, legs and back to achieve the desired position. A witness to all this was Abhi with her hands entwined behind her back.

"Abhi, you people can never help anybody...", he said after many attempts to help the old man and finally satisfied. Abhi was confused as to what her grandfather meant. "You are all scared of touch", he said passing a checking glance on the old man again. "Without touch how can you understand somebody's pain? Come here. See", he pulled her towards the old man and made her touch his chest. As the patient came out of his pose, Guruji said, "Touch his back. How agitated it was before. It was angry. See how it is now. Can you perceive this transformation?". Moral and ethical principles begin here. Abhi whose concept of sensitivity was at stake now was trying to understand what her grandfather was telling her.

The student's face which was shrivelled due to distress now showed some signs of relief. His rhythm of breathing improved. Guruji kept his hands on the patient's eyes and said softly, "Relax. The minute you touch the patient, you can feel the vibrations in his body. At that moment you have to leave your body and enter the student's body. Nothing mystical. This is not my words. Patanjali says, *bandhakarana shaithilyat pracharasamvedanachha chittasya parashareeraveshah.*"

Ever so gently, Guruji lifted the patient's head and gave a blanked that he himself folded meticulously and the man heaved a sign of relief again. A long exhalation. "You should enter the student's body and understand what is happening to him. Where is the pain? Why is the pain there - you have to trace the problem from within you. You have to feel that pain and then find out how to solve the problem. Only then will a clear solution to the problem come to you. By keeping your hands behind your back, you can never help anybody."

"Guruji, did it never occur to you that you could have patented your props?, I had asked him. "Why?", he retorted instantaneously. "Did God ever file a patent for his creation? Air, space, water is for everybody. So too are the props. If God hasn't done so, what right, do I, a mortal, have to do so? Should not our mind have compassion for the one who suffers? How am I going to help you - should not one have this thought?", Guruji probably did not understand my intention behind the question.

"Body is my first prop", Guruji said so almost 50 years before the aforesaid incident.

Geetaji told me a few hours after his demise, "I feel how did *Anna* survive for so many years? He has used his body so much, you can never fathom. Anyone may come and tell him, 'Guruji, I have this problem', and that was enough for him to get up to go and help. Constant struggle....constant struggle....".

August 2014. Guruji's house.

Guruji was not keeping very well for some days now. He did not want to go to the hospital. The doctor started medication at home. His health deteriorated more than what was apparently seen. All were distressed with doubts.

"Now, you all decide what is to be done. I am not going to decide to not go to the hospital. You decide what you think is right", he told his children and grandchildren who were around him.

While saying this, there was not a tinge of ego or sense of accomplishment that he had not seen the face of a hospital for himself in the last 95 years. Not a current of adamance that I will decide what is to be done, none of you shall interfere. Neither was there an expression of dependence that whatever you decide will be the correct thing. A straight clear instruction.

On the face of it, this is not a significant story. Or one may feel that anyone in his place would have done so. What hits me is the awareness and carriage of that situation with that awareness even in that difficult time. On one hand is the slowly weakening thread of life and on the other side is a situation that he has never faced before - only a future that one has imagined. Guruji was at that moment which was exactly between these 2 threads. To be alert at that precise moment and introspecting with that awareness. Deciding and executing the decision with detachment is such a difficult thing. Though one may reckon so, it is only with a reference of the individual and limited memory.

Patanjali uses the term 'abhinivesha' for the desire to live and the fear of death that exists in human beings. Abhinivesha is the most rampantly manifest klesha amongst the five klesas, the others being avidya, asmita, raga and dvesha.

te svarasavahi vidooshopi tatha roodhobhniveshah II.9

The subtlest of subtle afflictions is inherent attachment to one's existence and fear of losing it. This fear of death does not leave even the wise men as the instinctive fear which is common to all is also present in them.

Patanjali thus clearly mentions that even the learned are not spared from the clutches of this klesha.

Being in the profession of medical science, I have encountered death many a time. It is not new to me. My personal experience is instead of studying a person's life, if one examines how a person dies and how he faces death, it will tell us more about his living, his values and his core. Many people falter markedly in this exam.

Those so-called evolved people who throughout their lives, being obsessed with themselves, creating an illusory halo around themselves, beat about their drums thinking that only they have understood the deeper meaning of life and that the rest of the world is completely useless and shallow face death utterly pathetically. At the threshold of death, the assumptions and total facade of philosophy that have gone skin deep just vanish. Their protective shield and the masks worn wither away. At that point, yearning for death to turn her face away, they are ready to do anything, just anything. There is not a 'no' to put anything at stake. They are not even aware that while doing so, their so called intelligence, or accumulated knowledge, apparent wisdom and logical and analytical ability are all put to shame. 'I should be alive and life should hang in there' - this is their ultimate aim in that moment. So, it becomes very clear why Patanjali puts abhinivesha in the first place among klesas.

On the other side of the spectrum are those unnamed people who have struggled in every step of life and still make no noise or show about it, haven't had any acclaim and very naturally receive death. This unspoken grandeur in them makes me bow my hands and head to them with all **humility**. At the light of death, light is thrown on their total living.

"Yoga undoubtedly teaches you how to live; however the superior lesson is it teaches you how to die", Prashant Iyengar has expressed so quite a few times in the class. He seems to be talking about abhinivesha.

Standing valiantly at this step, Guruji was detached from his body and gave it to the others, as though it were theirs. He very easily crossed over this threshold which was abhinivesha.

For medical reasons, it was decided to take him to a hospital.

On reaching the hospital, the doctor examined him and routinely informed the course of action, its intended effects, the duration and the possible consequences. "Anything you may need, please tell us. I have informed the staff here. You can even telephone me, here is my number", the doctor reassuringly told his family.

Even though he was unwell, he listened aptly to everything that the doctor said. He told the doctor with his hands folded in Namaskar, "Oh doctor, you are taking so much trouble for my sake...thank you...thank you." It didn't end here. He added, "One thing is certain. These afflictions are always going to be there for the body. One only has to face them all. There are no shortcuts. But these are all pertaining to this outer body. If the time has come to change the clothes, so be it. I am inside, quiet and peaceful."

What can the doctor, or anyone for that matter say to this?!

Even though it may sound unimaginable, Guruji saying this was not just for the sake of it. That is not him. He would even caution his students, "Teach only what you know. What you have not experienced, don't say a word. This is fooling them. Every single thing that I have taught in my life, I have experienced it. What I have not experienced, I have never taught." He is a man who is so clear, who relied only on his experience....and was completely honest with and to that experience.

When the same grandfather tells the doctor, "I am inside, quiet and peaceful", he is really 'inside', 'quiet', and 'peaceful'.

Hospital. I.C.U

His children and grand-children all took turns to be with him, day and night. There he is, at peace, lying on the bed with eyes closed. Next to him, is Abhi sitting on a chair. Medical reports say that the situation is serious. The response of the body to the treatment is unfortunately only mediocre.

Time passes. Guruji opens his eyes and looks at his grand-daughter. He smiles pleasantly. She leans forward and asks him, "Do you want anything, Tata?" Guruji nods his head and waves his hand gesturing a 'no'. "Abhi...I am thinking.....the last 95 years.....whatever reason God has sent me for, how much of it have I completed?", he tells her wondering ignorantly. Abhi didn't immediately grasp her grand-father's intention. It was just for a moment, but then Abhi recognised that it was the same watchful face from his practice sessions.

While teaching asanas, he has stressed this many many times, ...why he has stressed this every time, "Be watchful. In Janu Sirsasana, watch what your bent knee is doing..how is the straightened knee....how is the stomach turning...is the chest sinking.....where is the pull...and which is the area where there is no action happening.You have to observe. Don't just stop there. In and through Janu Sirsasana, how does the vital energy, the consciousness flow? Take your mind there. That flow of Chaitanya....It should flow like a river. Universal life force which is Chaitanya and the flow of this life force inside the body should be congruent. Yoga is to unite, to yoke, to join. Yoga is to exist in relationship. Feel that. And in that be alert, vigilant and watchful."

Abhi is overwhelmed with the situation. Here is a man who has always told every student and anyone interested in yoga, "Never give up practice. Your practice should always be undertaken with a watchful and alert mind." This man, who is her grandfather did not swerve from the path of yoga, even at this juncture. She holds his hand.

"I am telling God, 'If you have to get any more work done from me, keep me here' ". She has now understood what her grandfather was coming to. She did not have the strength to hear what her grandfather would say next. She did not want to hear him say anything about him dying. She restlessly stays on for what was to follow. A nurse enters and using that, she walks out.

August 20. Yet to dawn.

My mobile which is next to me on my bed rings and lights up. The first thought which comes to me is that it is probably Abhi. If it was her, I knew what I was going to hear. To tell you the truth, every call that I have received from her in the last couple of days has always been with this doubt.

"SamK (a name which my close friends have given me)....", Abhi says. No more words. I hear her controlling her tears. A few seconds of silence and then a shaking voice, "Sam K...Tata....", it was as if she didn't want to say anything else.

Abhi's face comes to my mind. It is not difficult to imagine what she is going through. It is not just her..everybody in the family, students, pupils, people ranging from simple households to royal families, to all those that held his heart, yoga practitioners from all over the world....this is news that will plunge them all into sorrow.

"I am leaving", I tell her after a long pause in which I have gathered myself. As I leave, my wife's voice reaches my ears, "Guruji?". I say, "Yes, just a short while ago."

When I recollect this, unknown to me, my hands leave the keyboard of my computer and receive my face which hangs down and wants to hide and my eyes become moist.

One eternal truth about this body that is born is that death is certain. It is spoken about as if one has completely understood that. Each of us has a direct experience of someone's death and so we can make sense of Madgulkar's statement - "Logic ends at the concept of death".

However one cannot predict what it is for a man to die; what is death - this conundrum remains. Death is the disappearance of the life-force. Even if we define so, where have we had an experience of this life-force? Being alive does not amount to experiencing this life-force. It is only its manifested effect.

What is this life-force? 'This' leaves the body with death - what does 'this' mean? Where does 'it' go? Where does 'it' originally come from? We describe death with various attributes that are actually symptoms of death - heart stops functioning or organs like brain and kidneys stop working, breathing does not happen. These are actually details of what happen with death. What is certain is that the addition of all of these does not comprise of death. Like the enigma surrounding 'Om', there is another factor that contributes. What is that?

In Kathopanishad, Nachiketa asks Yama, the Lord of death, a rightful question about death, a quest to understand the truth about death, a question that man has not been able to answer.

kshanatatkramayoh sayammat vivekajam jnanam || PYS III.53 ||

What we construe as time is actually a congregation of moments. Without losing the link between the moment and successive moments, if the yogi only maintains attention on the continuous flow of moments, he frees himself from the limitation of time, place or space and acquires exalted wisdom.

The man who has written so in his commentary on Patanjali left the plane of space and time on August 20, 2014 to never ever return. I stare at my computer screen with a strange void.

The truth is Guruji's demise is not untimely. It is not unexpected.

It is in the offing that the body that has endured severe hardship for 95 years is going to get grieved. The hope that nothing should happen was of course there, but there is a thread of underlying inkling that something is about to happen. Though on one hand, the intellect grasps all this, the emotions of the heart speaks a different language.

The famous writer PG Wodehouse saw the death of his daughter. During the burial, he said while laying the soil over the coffin, "I thought she was immortal". It is the same story about Guruji.

If I come to speak of it, I experienced Guruji's death not once, but twice. The first was when his health deteriorated significantly. It was in my mind. The second was when it actually happened.

Being in this field of medical science, I am of the opinion that if you slightly stretch your imagination you can experience anyone's death twice. One is before the incident, in your mind. To a certain extent, we can predict the possible outcome or reaction of a certain occurrence. Amongst these, what has to be done and what has to be avoided can be decided. Thus the chaos of an emergency can be avoided in a limited range, though. The second time is of the incident itself. Unfortunately, what is predicted is what actually happens in reality too. The details may change, the core remains the same.

When a lot of parameters of Guruji's body went in the downward trend, a wave of Guruji's death came to my expectation. At that time, I was however torn apart between being a doctor and being a student of yoga. When insights of science hit me, I was forcing myself to keep them away. I was saddened that I was feeling such an ado in trying to balance these two.

In his commentary on the Gita, Vinoba says, "Between the mind and intellect, the intellect has to take decisions and the mind has to obey the order. But what we do is we make the mind to take the decision and force the intellect to follow that."

With this in mind, I battled against myself to keep my mind separate and drew a clear picture.

There was certainly a mark in my mind as to how sad I will be if Guruji indeed passed away. However my despondency is in a far greater measure than my expectation. When I realised this on introspection, the question that lingered on is "Why so?". I had an idea of all possibilities, I had assessed the situation well. But why is this so? My ego had been stung.

The last file in the folder that I am playing with on my computer is that of Guruji doing Kapotasana on a chair. His age is clearly seen, but the way in which his hands are going towards his legs is striking. A gentle curiosity heralding communication is so beautifully evident that I still cannot come to terms with the fact that this man is no more. It occurs to me that it is high time I wrote at least something. So, I begin, "If I had to use minimum words while describing Guruji, only three words will actually suffice - alive, flowing and vibrant."

I am sure this is not just my story, but the story of the millions of yoga students around the world.

I reached the institute. Guruji's body was kept in the same room that he would sit in. His body looked far purer than what I had expected.

"If you balance in the present, you are living in Eternity."

When I saw him for that final time, Guruji's statement came back to me.

I was discerning the subtle difference amongst the following - Guruji in Savasana in the practice hall, the plethora of photographs of him in Savasana, the props that he designed for Savasana and the final surrender of his body which was in the lap of Mother Earth. My friend who was a

designer on seeing photos of Guruji in Savasana which was taken during his 90 birthday had told me, "At the most, I can look at this Savasana for two seconds. It is haunting."

For a moment, I quivered. "This is a dead body,not the asana dedicated to the dead body. The awareness of witnessing of oneself by oneself is not there here. The peaceful state of the individualised form of the Universal force and the absence of the force itself is the difference between those two. The Universal force which gives life to the body has left for eternity. This is just the vestment of the body that has digested 95 years, that has lost life from what was alive, that has crossed over from that contact."

The news was still not out in the world.

There was only family and a handful of others. The family was of course shaken that they lost the lion amongst them that was their own blood. Yet, beyond all this, none was disconnected from the fact that they were a part of the final journey of a great yogi of this era. Everybody now understood that ever since the father, the grandfather went to the hospital he was nearing his last days, there was no choice for his body but to move towards that condition from where it could go to death. I am a witness to the fact that each one there took utmost care that nothing awkward should happen from them in that situation. Just a signal and there could have been an assemblage of lakhs of people in all their capacity. But here was a family that on that day put under cover Guruji's speciality and went about the things in a very simple manner.

After a few days of Guruji's demise I had to go to the hospital where Guruji was. I was sitting in the chair waiting for someone when a Bohri lady came up to me. Her relative was admitted there for some time now. So we had begun to recognise each other by face when Guruji was in the hospital.

She told me with a sad expression, "Your patient, ...bad eh....I heard...very sad. I am sorry". I nodded. She asked me compassionately, "He was your grandfather?". "Indeed", I said, "....but more importantly, he was Guruji...yoga's Guruji".

"Ah! Another Yogacharya also expired a couple of days ago...I saw in the papers...saw on the television too".

I realised this lady didn't realise it. "He was the same man", I said.

She was astonished, "What do you mean?".

"Madam, in the room next to your patient was the same man, Yogacharya...BKS Iyengar".

She was shocked, "Don't tell me. That grandfather. He was Yogacharya? He was so simple. His family also. But Yogacharya was so famous. Doesn't he have so many followers?". That lady could not digest that next to her had been Yogacharya Iyengar himself.

"Oh! You should have at least told me. I would have at least had his darshana. Such a great man.....and so simple", she kept murmuring.

A heavy shadow of sorrow loomed over the institute. Everybody was plunged into a heavy sad state and none moved. Like birds in the rains, they sat scattered.

I received a WhatsApp message from my niece in America, "Guruji? What happened?". What am I going to tell her? A friend's text from Mumbai, "Very sorry. Guruji's news is flashing as breaking news on TV. A big man has gone, my friend".

It was now out there. People had begun to gather. A queue was being formed.

I had written on the computer initially "alive, flowing and vibrant" Like a schoolboy, I write under it-

"Why do I so strongly feel recurringly that Guruji should have stayed on?

I feel so because I think men like him, who were full of life, complete and vibrant in being and in everything they did, are very few; can be counted with one's fingers. The passing away of such people is not about their age, but just their presence, just by being seen, one gets comforted, the faith in life stays on. Hence I feel he should have been there. The truth is it is my selfishness which yearns for him."

We should realise that we are in these days cultivating an image about the society that it is concerned only about 'oneself' and 'only oneself' and is completely immersed in only 'oneself'. This attitude misleads us into assuming it is a good trait. The sphere of living does not look beyond 'me, myself and I'. We go about living with a precaution that we neither touch anybody's life nor do we allow the current of anybody else's life to touch us. We live by building a wall - a wall of rejecting. We live without taking in anybody into ourselves.

At such a time, the passing away of a rare man like Guruji who going beyond himself touched the lives of so many people, who took other people into his life and who laid his life for the benefit of others makes me realise how much his roots have diffused into our own selves. What a wide range of people have been bereaved!

Everyone of us feels this loss so personally as though he were a part of us. It is unbearable to imagine living without him.

I read this again and again and I feel I should bring this on paper.

To write an article, I raise my hand to type. On the screen appears, 'Guruji'. Yet again, I sit staring at it. I feel this will be a public mourning of a very personal loss. I need something which is at the sharp core. I delete that word and write 'yogastha - one who is firmly and completely established in yoga'.

This is my mental image of Guruji. He was prolific and at the same time steady in his awareness - this is the characteristic of a man who in spite of reaching great heights remained simple.

Now, writing will be relatively an easy task
