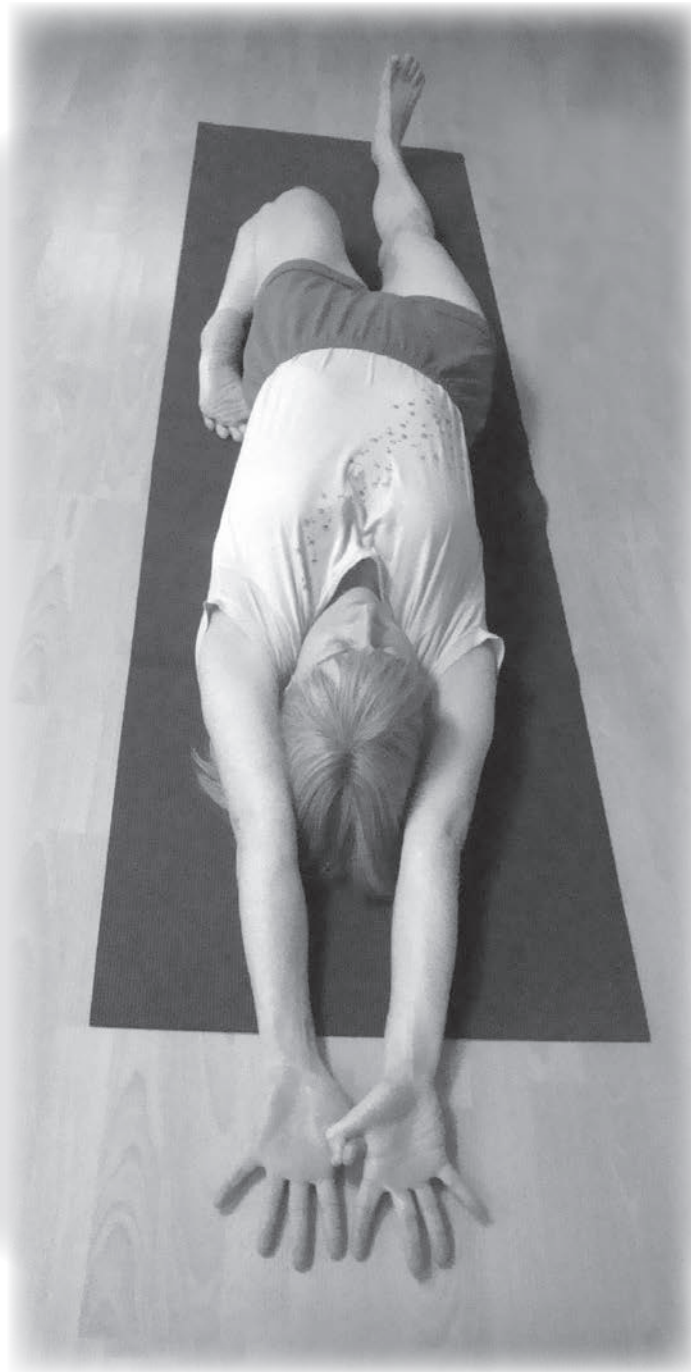




IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA



Britta Poisson in ardha supta virasana



Ninth Annual High Tea Fundraiser

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.

Hosted by Students from the Special Needs Class

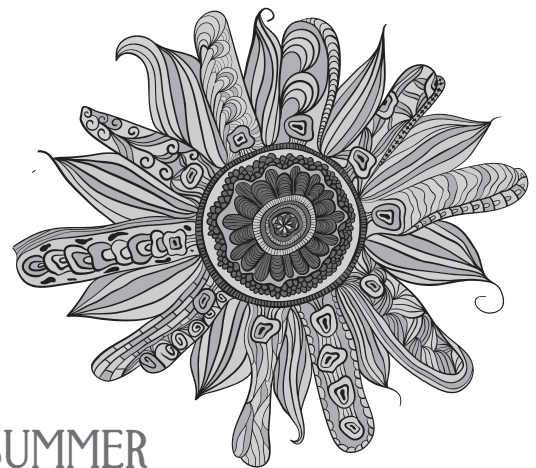


An All-Levels
Workshop
with Lucie Guindon

Saturday, April 30, 2016 | 10:45am - 1:30pm

Beginners –
this workshop is for you, too!

\$40 Members
\$45 non-members



SUMMER Early Morning PRACTICE

Jump into summer with this early morning week of practice with Lauren Cox.

Monday to Friday, July 4-8, 2016, 7-8 am

Members \$55, Non-Members \$60

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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

B.K.S. Iyengar visited Canada three times: in 1984, 1990 and 1993. First he came to three cities with growing Iyengar Yoga communities and senior teachers who had studied several times in Pune: Vancouver, Victoria and Edmonton. These visits directly followed an International Iyengar Convention in San Francisco. In accepting our invitation, he stated categorically that *he* would not teach. Rather he wanted to see Canadian teachers teaching.

In Victoria, three classes were scheduled to run simultaneously and he went from class to class which came to be known as ‘Guruji’s walkabout’. In England in olden times, it would have been called a ‘Progress’: if Royalty was involved a ‘Royal Progress’. Despite his vow not to teach, in each city after some time observing local teachers, he brought the whole group together and taught a mega-class. Not a minute was wasted, and the experience was so intense that when he left the room there was a collective exhalation and a smile on every face. Such intensity was rare. Those of us who had studied at his institute in Pune already knew that here was a genius in the field of yoga. There was no doubt about it: Guruji was Yoga Royalty.

In Canada—as in San Francisco—there were some who did not like his direct, penetrating, no-nonsense approach and used their energy to justify their resistance. Others put their egos and self-importance aside and learned so much in such a short time. From coast to coast throughout North America a potent force was being unleashed in the tradition of Patanjali with his devoted pupil B.K.S. Iyengar as the messenger.

In each classroom Guruji showed so much in such a limited time. As he viewed my teaching, I felt I had stepped into a speeded-up old-fashioned movie—like the Charlie Chaplin movies of my youth where Charlie moved rapidly from experience to experience

without pause. We scanned groups of students and focused intently on individuals and how to help them. Teachers were encouraged to look more closely and received guidance in what to look for. A nod of the head and perhaps an “ah ha” would occur if he were satisfied, which would be immediately followed by questioning about what you intended to do next.

I was not particularly nervous, although my awareness was heightened from the moment he entered the classroom. I did not want to miss anything! In addition, I trusted that if I were on the wrong track he would correct me. Clearly, his purpose was to teach us to teach. When he indicated that it was time to move on to another local teacher, he motioned me to stay with him and observe as Marlene Miller took over the role of ‘teacher’. Of course, when such a Master is in the room he or she will be *the teacher*! I relinquished responsibility to Marlene with a smile and exhaled very deeply!

It was not my first experience of intensely focused energy but definitely one of the most penetrating. Guruji’s knowledge of yoga was phenomenal, his ability to pack so much into a limited timeslot was extraordinary.

Such energy! This was a common refrain after exposure to Guruji. Classes where he was teaching rarely ended because of his exhaustion and certainly his knowledge and curiosity were never exhausted. They would end when he saw the students’ eyes glazing over and understood that *they* could not absorb anything more.

In his presence at all times not a moment was wasted. In the car, around the dinner table, waiting for an airplane, waiting for anything, he would launch into impromptu discourses on yoga—sometimes accompanied by practical demonstrations. One afternoon, when he was staying with Derek and me, we all walked down to the waterfront park just below our house. He stood on a rocky promontory, took some very deep breaths and expanded his chest looking out to sea, commenting on and very satisfied with the freshness of the air. Footing was a bit tricky as we descended a rutted path towards the water and I

*There was no doubt about it:
Guruji was Yoga Royalty.*

asked a question about feet, which resulted in my being asked to remove my shoes and socks and having pebbles of varying sizes placed between my toes. In Guruji's life each moment was savoured. Each moment was lived!

During this visit he also commented on how fortunate Derek and I were to live in such a beautiful spot which he said had a special energy, and that we should not move from there unless it were to somewhere similarly blessed. (Words my husband in particular has taken to heart!)

It is worth noting that the indigenous people of this part of the world also saw this area as a sacred place and there are many artifacts in the area from their presence in earlier days!

In 1990 Guruji returned to Edmonton as chief guest at a Canadian convention. Again he visited classes taught by Canadian teachers, and one day he taught small groups of teachers in rotation: first standing poses, then forward bends, followed by back bends and finally inversions as the rest of the conference participants watched. There were also a couple of question and answer sessions and memorably one man asked a question about energy in the practice of yoga. Unequivocally Guruji responded: "Don't use that word. You don't understand what it means!" He did not answer the question and dismissed this man who withdrew looking rather crestfallen.

I did not know this man or anything about him, but I had learned to suspend judgment when I did not understand

Yoga is a spiritual practice which is often described as a search for the self or soul, and I was not comfortable with the idea of a soul—other than in literary terms.

Guruji's response because so often future experience would shine light on my uncertainty. However, this moment remains fresh in my mind because of my personal ongoing search for understanding of the energy which fuels my life, behaviour and all my endeavours. Yoga is a spiritual practice which is often described as a search for the self or soul, and I was not comfortable with the idea of a soul—other than in literary terms. This presented me with a dilemma.

I had taken up the practice of yoga not to become fit because I already was quite fit, but rather because, despite a "good life" consisting of a pleasant place to live, a husband and children whom I loved, and sufficient resources to live well, I was not content. At the same time I also realized I did not have a clear definition of who or what my self was. What was fuelling this unrest?

The 32nd Annual

Retreat at the Salt Spring Centre

June 3-5, 2016

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 closes Friday, May 27, 2016

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



IYCV Members:
Shared accommodation \$415 +GST
Camping \$375 +GST
Commuting \$335 +GST

Non-Members:
Shared accommodation \$435 +GST
Camping \$410 +GST
Commuting 370 +GST

The yoga classes and practice of yoga asana subdued much of this restlessness for a while, long enough to dig a little beneath the surface. They also directed me to Swami Radha who encouraged reflection on the questions: *Who am I?* and *What is the meaning and purpose of my life?* Swami Radha's guru was the renowned sage, Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, whose widely stated maxim was: *Know yourself and be free!*

Words, words, words! Coming from an erudite background, words, language, speech played a large role in my growing up. I was encouraged to express myself in my own words and did not hesitate to do so. Therefore, it came as a surprise when the first time I met Swami Radha face to face, she asked me a question and when I responded with confidence and (so I thought) eloquently, her answer surprised me: "You're very quick with words!" And without a shadow of a doubt I knew this was not meant as a compliment!

In their teaching both Swami Radha and Mr. Iyengar would give clues to the meanings behind words, actions or inaction. Swami Radha spoke of body, mind and speech rather than the common adage "body, mind and spirit" which in Eastern teachings was often interpreted as "body, mind and self". She stated that while most species were capable of communication by sound, we were the only species on earth capable of speech. It was human kind's most noted accomplishment. Unfortunately all too often we used speech to isolate or protect ourselves or to diminish others rather than as a spiritual tool to know our self. Again this pesky word 'spirit' entered my domain. Again I had to look inwards for the source of my discomfort and discontent.

As I persevered with the practice of yoga I was drawn more and more towards philosophical texts and treatises on this subject, becoming convinced of the limitations but also the value of words; which brings me back to the word "energy".

I had been surprised in 1990 when B.K.S. Iyengar told a questioner not to use the word "energy" and had given considerable thought to possible reasons for this admonishment. Thirteen years later, in 2003 I was fortunate to participate in a course taught by Mr. Iyengar on the *panchavayus* or five vital energies within the human body. Before leaving I did not know what the focus of Gururji's teaching would be on this particular visit, which was not at all unusual. I do not recall the exact criteria for applying for this course, and all I did know was that it was in honour of his eighty-fifth birthday and he wanted only experienced students. I had also learned to seize every opportunity I could to be in Gururji's presence.

This course was to be shorter than most of the previous courses I had attended and would culminate in celebration of his birthday on December 14th. One significant difference this time was that we were encouraged to bring our notebooks into the yoga hall, and I left with

Swami Radha's guru was the renowned sage, Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, whose widely stated maxim was: Know yourself and be free!

one of the most precious set of notes in my possession. Energy was front and foremost in this course!

Gururji had selected a dozen of his most trusted students, most of them Indian, and placed them on a special platform built for this course. He proceeded to teach them as a group; but much of the time was spent observing him work with individual students in yoga *asana* and *pranayama* showing where and why their energy was not flowing well or possibly was overflowing in one area at the expense of another and in detriment to the whole. Being a consummate teacher he not only identified the problems but also gave direction in how to solve them. Those of us forming the audience watched and listened, gradually deepening our understanding of energy and its uses. We had to fit our own practice around his teaching in our apartments or hotels and, of course, we were expected to practise and develop our own seeing and understanding!

It was a very full week because each evening Gururji's son Prashant went over the morning's work for the benefit of Indian students who were not able to attend during the day. This also provided those of us who *had* been there in the morning with the opportunity to go through the material again. Prashant outdid himself in fulfilling this task, and showed what a worthy disciple he was.

Energy and its manifestation took on a whole new meaning! The practice of *asana* and *pranayama* was illuminated and the means of using these limbs of *astanga* yoga as primary tools in a more complete and refined practice was clearly demonstrated. When such practice goes hand in hand with the fifth limb of *pratyahara* (refinement of the senses) the student has built firm stepping stones to the three contemplative limbs of *dharana* (concentration), *dhyana* (meditation) and *samadhi* (absorption). The practice is integrated. The body has become a spiritual tool. ॐ



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

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!

Pune International Meetings with Geeta and Prashant Iyengar

Regarding Teacher Training and Assessments

November 30, December 1-2, 2015

by Louie Ettling and Ann Kilbertus

During December 2015 Geetaji and Prashantji gathered with one hundred delegates from many countries around the world.

Five participants from Canada were accepted: Three delegates from our professional development committee (Louie Ettling, Ann Kilbertus & Karen Major) plus two individuals who wrote directly to the Iyengar family to request attendance (Leslie Hogya and Teddy Hyndman).

As Geetaji said in her introduction – it was the first time that the institute invited people to have meetings and conversations with the Iyengar family in this manner. It was also the first time since Guruji's passing that there was a coming together of so many of his long time teachers.

On the wall at the centre of the stage was a large photo of B.K.S Iyengar, a garland around his neck and a larger one around the frame. He was not there practicing in his corner, although many of us probably expected his astute comments from the side during the discussions.

After almost fifty years since the first assessments were started by Guruji, Geetaji explained, the time had come to re-evaluate what we were doing and how we were doing it. Geetaji asked countries to make presentations, explaining how teacher training and assessments evolved, given the particular history in each country. It was emphasized that we also talk with honesty about what had not been working in our countries. There was time made for questions from the floor. Birjoo Mehta from

Mumbai chaired the meetings with punch and discipline. He had the challenging task to move speakers along when they lost focus and to stir thinking when conversations became rote. Abhijata was never far from Geetaji's side. There were light moments, times of serious contemplation about the nature of Guruji's and our work and times of painful realizations.

Geetaji guided us purposefully, so that the underbelly of some of our organizational dynamics could be brought to the surface a few times. Throughout the process we all stayed the course. We sat on the floor for three days. We listened. They listened. Sometimes who the "we" were and who the "they" were shifted, and towards the end we were more informed, more empathetic, more focused and more connected – even to those who came before us and were not at these meetings.

After her opening remarks, Geetaji moved with Prashantji to the side of the room, near the stairs. They sat side by side, patiently listening to their questions being answered for hours on end. Every now and again they would take a microphone and share insights or answered concerns. They were peacefully working together and it became clear over the three days that they were not only presenting a united front, but that they had indeed come to similar conclusions about how to proceed now that Guruji's death is an increasingly tangible reality; we have come to the time that Guruji called the new beginning after his end and it needs to be handled with care and with the best possible communication.

The opportunity to spend such solid time with the Iyengar family outside of a yoga class is very rare in modern times,





Marlene Miller, Ann Kilbertus and Leslie Hogya in Pune 2015.

although early teachers who first visited Pune from the west in the fifties and sixties and even the seventies had such opportunities. Before our departure from our homes for these meetings, our countries were abuzz with guesses about what could possibly be the content and outcome of these meetings. Nothing could have prepared us for the cellular understanding that came out of being together for these days.

Not much is going to change with regards to how teacher training and assessments are done for now, although Geetaji will make some changes over the next years as part of creating a more universal system internationally. It was clear that Guruji had to be creative as he involved people in his process – countries in South East Asia started assessments decades after the first ones (U.K and South Africa). Now we are ready for the next stage; one of “harmonization”.

The main message from the Iyengar leadership was very clear: get your priorities straight. Yes we need to study, upgrade and assess, but let that not become our “raison d’être.” Prashantji said: “When we sleep we are all the same” Our perceived differences regarding identity men/women/class/race/ethnicity/ young/old dissolve. We all know Prashantji’s motto: “Be a student of Yog”. Yes, we need to practice, but not solely on posture and posturing on the mat.

Geetaji urged us to be more collegial, to take secrets from behind iron curtains, to share with each other within

The main message from the Iyengar leadership was very clear: get your priorities straight. Yes we need to study, upgrade and assess, but let that not become our “raison d’être.”

and between countries. During the meetings the Iyengars guided each country differently in how to proceed. As in yoga sadhana, there is not always a “one way fits all” when it comes to organizational work either. Each situation requires intelligence and creativity. Constant vigilance is required as we proceed to reflect and act upon the guiding principles set out. This involves facing paradox and confusion at times.

Some countries’ presentations were very insightful and touching. We learnt about the psychological challenges for students, teachers and organizations in countries new to democracy or still devastated by recent wars. History absolutely needs to be respected in international organizations like ours, otherwise we colonize anew, instead of supporting upcoming students.

“Be a student of Guruji. You will never be Guruji”, said Prashant. “Stop saying he told me this and he told me that. He said many things to many people”. Geetaji said more than once, “Stay with the practice and be humble. Help each other.” It seemed as if the Iyengars also had a glimpse into the realities of the lives of those who had to take on the burden of forming associations and developing systems, based on Guruji’s Pune bylaws. We have come closer. We need to move from here and put the past behind us.

In his moving final remarks Prashantji said, *Heart-felt gratitude. Your teacher training and assessing is only due to your gratitude, dedication, and devotion to Guruji...in*

doing so you have opened yourself up to a lot of negativity. This is a great sacrifice. I hold you all in high esteem because I have never been in this role. Guruji did prolific work in finalizing the certification process. I can’t imagine how it was done. I just marvel at it – how Guruji trained you to teacher train, to assess, to mentor, to spread Iyengar yoga across the globe because of what you do with assessing and teacher training. It is thankless and unpaid. For the volume and intensity of your devotion to Guruji, I and the entire Iyengar family thank you from the bottom of our hearts. You do all the thankless work, and we get all the thanks. Start developing the fabric of yoga, it will grow in quantum leaps.



“Ours is a practical philosophy, and we have to make it an ethical practice,” Geetaji urged. How can we best continue to develop the true fabric of yoga in this light, here in Canada? ॐ

The Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada/Association canadienne de yoga Iyengar is Canada’s national association which brings together students and teachers in the tradition of Iyengar yoga.

Its constitution was based on an international document called the Pune constitution which came directly from Guruji. Each country which forms an association uses this constitution and merges it with the laws of their own country. General membership in this association helps to support the maintenance of the high standards of practice and teaching set out by Guruji. This year’s annual conference will take place in London, Ontario in October.

For further information on how to join check out the website: www.iyengaryogacanada.com.

A Birthday Message

On the occasion of Guruji’s 97th birthday at the International Meetings in Pune

by Leslie Hogya

In December 2015, I was in Pune for the International meetings, and Geetaji’s special course on *pranayama* and *asana*. During the week, I was approached by Abhijata (Mr. Iyengar’s granddaughter) to speak at the ceremony for Guruji’s 97th birthday. I joked that the reason I was being asked, was because I was the oldest one there from Canada.

We arrived at Govinda Gardens December 14th, and I was told I was to be the first speaker, I stood, and looked out at the sea of probably 1,000 faces. After thanking the family I showed a letter for Geetaji and Prashantji from the president of the Iyengar association, Drew Perry, outlining our association’s goals and accomplishments.

I recalled the last time I was in Pune, on the occasion of B.K.S. Iyengar’s 95th birthday. He told us then, that B.K.S. stands for beauty, knowledge and serenity. These three words then became the inspiration for my talk.

I told some of the stories from Guruji’s three visits to Canada:

- In 1984, the protocol committee decided to bring Guruji over from Vancouver to Victoria by private sailboat and soon had people hanging upside down from bunk beds and any other supports as soon as someone said there was no room to practice!

I recalled the last time I was in Pune, on the occasion of B.K.S. Iyengar’s 95th birthday. He told us then, that B.K.S. stands for beauty, knowledge and serenity. These three words then became the inspiration for my talk.



Leslie Hogya and Parizad Zarthoshtimanesh at Govinda Gardens for Guruji’s 97th birthday event Pune 2015

- As his plane landed in Canada he announced, “I am the only one here who speaks “Kanada”. (Kanada is the language of his home state of Karnataka.)
- His roller coaster ride at the West Edmonton Mall, and
- The time he went riding the ‘Maid of the Mist’ in the river below Niagara Falls.

Then I recounted my personal connections to Guruji, which often happened in the library. You never knew what might happen when you entered into that intimate space. He might be sitting quietly writing in long hand on one of many books or articles. Other times, an interview might be going on, and everyone was able to listen to any interactions taking place. Sometimes, the worktables would be covered with archival materials and interesting discussions would ensue as we were organizing or pasting things in books.

I was fortunate to be able to go on the Magical tour to Bellur and Mysore for his 90th birthday. There were red carpets strewn with flower petals to greet us. Many events were planned like lectures, picnics, a yoga demonstration performed by the children at the school in Bellur, a tour of the clinic, and Sunita chanting sutras at the new Patanjali temple. We



Clockwise from left: Leslie speaking at Govinda Gardens Dec 2015; Jawahar Bangera at the birthday celebrations 2015; Yoga demonstration by the children in Bellur - they attend the school built by Guruji's trust, during the tour on Guruji's 90th birthday.

travelled by bus to beautiful temples and palaces. He had to cut down on the itinerary because we were all exhausted, but not him at 90!

My last visit is a very poignant memory from two years ago. I had written to see if I could come, I was seeking his help to overcome a severe shoulder injury, with torn muscles, and dislocation. When I wrote, he answered with: "Do not come unless you are willing to face unbearable pain." Well, that got my attention! And I did not rush to buy a plane ticket. It took me a long time to decide to travel to the institute.

I am grateful every day for his help, for his beauty, knowledge, and serenity. Namaste. ॐ



IYAC/ACYI **ASSESSMENT DATES**

May 13-15,
 Intermediate Junior II,
 Edmonton, AB

June 10-12,
 Intermediate Junior III,
 Victoria, BC

September 30-October 2,
 Introductory II,
 Saskatoon, SK

Victoria Iyengar Yoga Centre Annual Report

Message from the President of the Victoria Iyengar Yoga Centre 2015/2016

Submitted by Laine Canivet

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 steps in to help.

As a charitable organization we are mindful of every penny we spend. As a result, we rely heavily on the generosity of everyone associated with the Centre. We are grateful for all of the people who donate their time and expertise to making this Center the unique place that it is.

Volunteers bring much to this organisation; skills, advice, experience, friendship, vision, leadership, inspiration; the list goes on. All of these skills are brought to us by volunteers. But time, their time, is given - one of the most precious resources in their lives. That hour given volunteering will never be available to that volunteer again.

So today, I'm taking a little time to acknowledge and thank all who donate their time to our yoga Centre. In looking over the wonderful newsletters that were published this year, I noticed a great number of volunteers are acknowledged for contributing to just about every activity. Sometimes individuals are mentioned; other times it is a group of unnamed individuals. But in every newsletter the thank you list is remarkable. So, truly, thank you, everyone, for your most generous donations of your time and energy. We really would not be here, now, without our volunteers, past and present.

And to complete the cycle of giving, I'd like to mention that we, the Yoga Centre, also donate what we can to others. Just as I am doing today, there may be other organizations in Victoria, at their AGMs, recognizing donations they have received. And we, the Iyengar Yoga Center of Victoria, may well be on their thank you list of generous donors. Over the year, we donated free classes to, among others: the Bowls of Hope, Women in Need, Lioness Club, Victoria Chinese Commerce Association, the Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra, and the Vitamin Shop Fair.

It is truly an honour and a pleasure to be serving on this board.

2015 AGM – Report from the General Manager

Submitted by Wendy Boyer

Class revenue was the largest source of income in 2015, which means the Centre had a strong number of long term committed students last year. The Centre's adherence to a common goal over a long history lends credibility in a saturated, competitive yoga market. The Iyengar Centre is certainly no longer the only downtown centre customized for yoga! Victoria is unique in the Canadian Iyengar community for the concentration of highly certified teachers. In December, Leslie, Ann and Marlene travelled to Pune to attend international meetings on teacher training with Geeta and Prashant.

The Centre finished 2015 with a small deficit due to a few surprises in the workshop schedule. The largest fiscal impact was the cancellation of Chris Saudek's workshop due to visa complications. The struggle with Customs and Immigration continues for any visiting teachers.

Passes for classes is our best marketing tool. The popular Unlimited Yoga pass sold 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 2015, the Centre offered a six month pass between March 2nd and September 4th.

The Centre's website, new in 2014, thanks to designer, Peggy Cady, markets who we are and what we do. In 2015 we distributed posters and schedules to promote classes, workshops and open houses; placed bi-monthly ads in *Focus* and *Monday* magazines; sent regular e-marketing updates; posted on Facebook; made 70 bolsters in-house, and offered first-class free to promote the Centre.

For the first time in 2015, both open houses were on Saturday and Sunday and attracted an average of 90 people, many of whom signed up. On Saturday we offered three yoga classes, plus philosophy with Shirley and Derek French. On Sunday, we added Discover Iyengar Yoga Basics, a free two hour workshop with Ann Kilbertus. Bhavantu Sound with Ty Chandler, Tia Benn and Chris Simmons gave us wonderful Kirtans; our generous bakers made tasty treats and savories; and Jane McFarlane brewed excellent chai. As part of the March open house we offered discounted rates on non-prime time beginner classes for the March/April term; free community classes; free teen classes; and free prenatal classes.

In 2015, we celebrated as a community with three well attended events: the New Year's Day Practice in January, the 1st Annual International Day of Yoga in June, and In the Light of Yoga, a celebration of B.K.S. Iyengar's birthday, in December.

In 2015 the Centre had 351 members, 43 of whom are life members, seven international members and 23 of whom reside outside of BC but within Canada. We mail 97 newsletters, and encourage local students to pick up or read the newsletter on line.

The largest cost saving in 2015 came from our most committed volunteers: Jane McFarlane manages Centre maintenance and Theron Morgan does bookkeeping. Johanna Godliman joined the maintenance crew in 2015. Jane and Johanna cleaned and maintained the props daily. Jane repainted the Centre throughout, over Christmas. Theron, our bookkeeper, contributed countless hours keeping the finances in order. We salute you!

Many people contributed items to the Special Needs silent auction which raised more funds in 2015 than ever before. The photocopier donated by Sandra Harper in 2014 saved the Centre several thousand dollars in printing costs in 2015. Roger Champagne donated beautiful handmade pots for a December fundraiser. The annual appeal was down slightly this past year. Thanks to all who donated to our fundraising events!

The biggest operational change to the Centre came last September with the implementation of a waiver on the advice of our insurer. Waivers must be signed each term, by all students, before attending their first class. Writing the waiver, in consultation with a personal injury lawyer, consumed many hours of my time over six months. In September we put the waiver in place. Waivers must be stored in hard copy for three years, then scanned and held for another two years, which consumes hours of staff time.

Staff also provides administrative support for the Centre's many activities. Two new staff people joined us this year: to our delight, Monica Dimofski rejoined the staff after eight years, assuming some of Bruce's evening shifts so he can be home for dinner!

Bob Maher is a huge asset working Thursday mornings and covering for holidays. Thanks to Britta Poisson who manages the office; Bruce Cox who maintains the website and Hilary McPhail who handles membership registration. Jane McFarlane is stepping away from reception – huge thanks for your creativity and dedication at the front desk.

My time as general manager is spent administering the overall operation of our busy Centre.

Thanks to the board for supporting the Centre. Special thanks to our president, Laine Canivet, whose creative leadership we appreciate. Kudos to continuing members Bev Kallstrom, Amanda Mills, Carole Miller, Sheila Redhead, Stacey Frank and Ann Kilbertus. Ann Nolan leaves the board this year because she is moving to Sooke, but Ann says she'll be back!

As with any registered charity and not for profit, the Centre has many dedicated volunteers; I can mention but a few here. Thanks to Shirley and Derek for ongoing leadership, the teachers at the open houses, the workshop coordinators and the programming and newsletter committees. Kudos to Adia Kapoor for managing the programming document which is the hub of our programming wheel and to Lucie Guindon for proofing the many spokes in that wheel including the website, newsletter, flyers and Yog-e news. Thanks to Ty and Gary for supervising the members' practice; to Lucie for coordinating billets; to Linda Poole and her crew for making bolsters; to Ty who posts to Facebook and to Johanna Godliman and Jeanette Merryfield who distribute posters. Patty Rivard and her husband Tom renewed the library and gave the lobby a facelift with the new display case. We thank you both so much.

Treasurer's Report, Year Ending October 31, 2015

Submitted By Bev Kallstrom

Our year end financial statements have been prepared by the firm of Sterling and Gascoigne with notice to reader signed off by the president, Laine Canivet and treasurer, Bev Kallstrom on December 22, 2015.

Our budget for the fiscal year of November 1, 2014 to October 31, 2015 was prepared based on actual revenue and expenditures of previous fiscal budget and projected changes. Our goal was to fund expenditures through our annual revenue, while supporting our mission to encourage the physical, mental and spiritual growth of our members through the study and discipline of Iyengar Yoga.

This year, we were within 5% of the budgeted revenue and expenses and ended the year with a small deficit of \$922.

Revenue

Total revenue for 2015 was **\$377,218** including gains on investments and foreign exchange within 10% of previous year's highest revenue below:

2014 - \$391,446
2013 - \$371,324
2012 - \$402,491
2011 - \$412,601

Class revenue for the year of **\$258,759** was slightly over budget.

The Workshop income was below our budget forecast because we were unable to have the planned Chris Saudek workshop and the big workshop was under budget, however our teacher training intro intensive, student intensive and junior intermediate intensive workshops all were well attended and exceeded our budget forecast.

Annual appeal and donations of **\$30,292** also exceeded planned budget.

Expenses

Total expenditures for 2015 were **\$378,689** – close to the forecast budget despite the forecasted increase in class costs over last year and the development and launch of our new waiver. We are able to lower printing costs due to the donated copier.

Expenditures continue to be managed prudently. Previous years expenditures are provided for comparison as follows:

\$375,706 - 2014

\$372,278 - 2013

\$403,532 - 2012

\$410,290 - 2011

Our General Manager, Wendy Boyer and our staff continue to work hard managing the centre.

Statement of Financial Position

The Statement of Financial Position documents our assets and liabilities as of October 31, 2015. At year end our short term funds were invested as follows:

\$25,943 GIC @ 1.3%
maturing November 5, 2016

\$50,623 GIC @ 1.6%
maturing January 8, 2016

\$25,977 GIC @ 1.4%
maturing January 8, 2016.

Overall the financial health of our centre remains strong. The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria renewed the lease in our current location for a further five years, which provides further financial stability. Our financial reserves permit

us to carry on the Centre's objectives and activities.

Thank you to the members of the Board, IYCV membership, our General Manager, staff, volunteers, accountants and contributors to our annual appeal for their support and for all their efforts.

Finally, thank you to our teachers for their inspiration, work, and contributions and to our members and students who support our centre. I am grateful to be part of this great community of people. ॐ

Back to Basics

By Carole Miller

On a beautiful chilly Saturday afternoon twenty of us were the enthusiastic participants in a back to basics yoga workshop, facilitated by Lucie Guindon. From the very beginning, Lucie provided a clearly thought out context for the work as she described the practice as being more than the physical work in the poses; it is the physical that provides us access to the mind and an awareness of how the mind influences the body.

Lucie's use of visual cues to remind us of the proper rotations of the legs and arms as they apply to the specific *asanas* gave us all a new awareness. Her clarity of instruction, coupled with the prompts and markings, provided a different focus of understanding.

By her attention to detail, she ensured that the abilities of the entire group were taken into consideration and made it possible for all to participate; a environment of both challenge and acceptance. The sense of the dynamic created by simplicity and depth was evident throughout.

Lucie's extensive experience and engaging personality allowed us all to share in a wonderful workshop as we move into the renewal of spring.

Thank you, Lucie for your generosity. ॐ

Lucie Guindon supports and demonstrates during Back to the Basics.



Anushasanam

December 11, 2015

by Geeta Iyengar

THIS IS A TRANSCRIPT OF THE SAVASANA GIVEN BY GEETA IYENGAR PRECEDING A PRANAYAMA SESSION.

In *savasana* the body has to be absolutely fluid and not solid. You place the body in the correct position, and having the clear contours of the body, every other portion has to relax. A kind of irrigation happens in every cell of the body as the passages are freed, a kind of smoothness in the flow of energy.

From the crown of the head to the bottom of feet you have to feel every other cell is in a restful state.

Nowhere you have to puff the abdomen, so let go the abdomen soften it, the skin fibres all over the body soften as though each pore of the body exposed in its own direction.

Don't hold yourself anywhere tight especially palm, fingers, and the throat region.

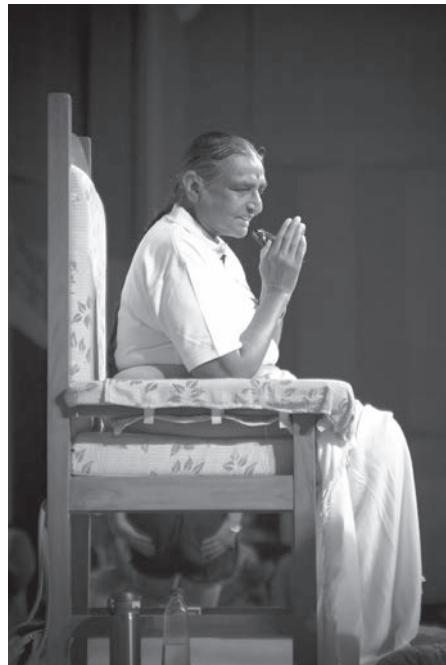
The lower jaw away from the upper jaw, no pressure in your mouth cavity. The skin all over the body getting elongated so there are no knots which from inside otherwise become tight.

As you place the body the skin has to open up everywhere and recede and at the same time it recedes in its place.

The pores of the skin open but the skin recedes from that body from every corner.

Jaws passive, lower jaw away from upper jaw. The position of head has to be correct:

Back of the skull adjusted and the bottom jaw released from the upper jaw.



Geeta Iyengar

PHOTO: NATASZA MOSZKOWICZ, ENAWAY@GMAIL.COM

These are the areas where the stress points are saturated. Release the lower jaw. The tongue is in a restful state in the lower jaw. Both temples descending downwards towards the back of the head.

The upper portion of the forehead descends to the eyebrow region of the forehead, as though its flow is downward.

The inner corners of the eyes going deeply inward. If they surface, the dryness will be there.

Deep inside, the inner corners of eyes against the nose are going backward so wetness will be there.

Otherwise dryness will be invited. The pupils will be completely receding.

The throat wall has to be adjusted especially when you have got the cough: Don't go for the deep breaths.

Breathing happens in the abdomen region going up and down.

Cough makes the throat get swollen inside. Open it and spread it from inside.

If there is inflammation it doesn't recede. It's like a tube, a tunnel area.

Like a tunnel you have to be in the space of the tunnel not on the walls so the breath doesn't rest on any part of the throat. There has to be depth in the throat. Normally the throat surfaces upward and its own hollow passage will be blocked. Whereas, right from the mouth cavity to the bottom of the throat you have to feel the passage clear. Absolutely a silence from inside so the vessel of the ears, vessel of the eyes, that means the tubes around that area, everything has to be calm and quiet.

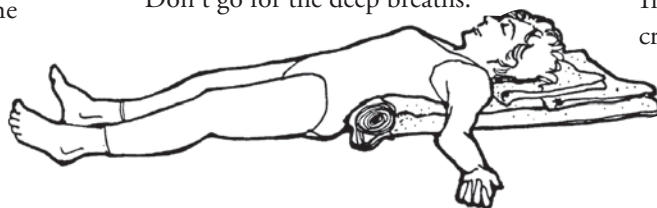
The existence of yours you have to feel at the centre chest region. Don't stay in your head.

Don't allow that space to get occupied with any kind of thoughts. Let that be in a state where there is no thinking process going on.

If your mind is calculating something, the throat will be affected. Always remember that.

We talk about the chakras, but if there is interference from the thoughts, all that gets shattered.

The passage has to be kept clear from the crown of the head to the bottom of the spine. Let go in that area. In a good *savasana* you feel that the inner body



has only just space. The cylindrical body remains as it is. Every other area you have to surrender to the mother earth and that creates a kind of empty space within: *akasha tattva* inside.

Don't make anywhere solid as such. Fluidity itself is sufficient for the space to be invited inward.

That space is such that as though from crown of head it goes deep into the brain. Both the eyes as though they recede inward, as though that is a tubular area where the space is available.

Like that every sense of perception, the organs that we have, have to be feeling the inner space.

Don't allow that space to get occupied with any kind of thoughts. Let that be in a state where there is no thinking process going on. Invite that kind of emptiness where space itself is the interior and nothing else. Surrender from inside with that exhalation. Don't hold anywhere tight with that rigidity of the mind. The body is relaxed and the mind rigidity has to go. Otherwise it hops over the thoughts.

Let go in such a manner that there is an empty space within. Your presence should be felt at every other area of the body for the space to be present there.

Silence for a while.

Slowly with that exhalation, gradually open the eyes don't shake the body at once.

Bring the palms on the trunk.
Bend the legs one by one.

The jerks avoided to maintain the river of the peace flowing inside.

Slowly turn yourself to the side.
Then be seated. ॐ

Sadhana

by Geeta S. Iyengar

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM YOGA RAHASYS VOL.22, NO. 3, 2015

My dear yoga friends,

Today, we are all friends. I am a teacher when I am on the platform. There, I have to act as Guru. But, today we are all practitioners. We are friends of yoga and our practice should continue in that manner. Practice means *sadhana* and *sadhana* is the base, the important base, the fundamental support on which we have to tread on the path of yoga. Without *sadhana*, it is meaningless. This path of *sadhana* has been given to us by Guruji.

He is not with us today but still I feel that he is always with us. The way to practice has been very clearly shown to us by Guruji. Perhaps it may not be sufficient for us to grasp what he has given even in our whole life time.

I was quite surprised when I received letters from all the corners of the world after Guruji's demise. I realised how people have received his message in different ways; they have been touched by the inner core of his teaching. Language has its limitations but despite that from what they expressed, I realised that he has touched everybody's hearts through yoga. His yoga has touched each student deeply; irrespective of whether they are direct or indirect students. I have received letters from his indirect students who could not meet him in this life; those who have met/seen him in this life are indeed lucky. He has inspired the lives of so many people. Even those who learnt with him in 1936 may not be here but people do come and say that their father, grand-father had studied with him. This means that his message has gone from generation to generation.

There is a teacher available to you when you come to the Institute. It could be Prashant, myself or a junior teacher. They conduct the class, teach you, inform you, make you to do or they themselves do and show you. I cannot demonstrate now but there was a time when I could do and show what has to be done. Age puts a limit but even then I have learnt that process so although we cannot demonstrate ourselves, we make the students work so they can reach up to that level.

Guruji was with his Guru T. Krishnamacharya for only two and a half years. But, that must have been a blessing of his Guru. He made him teach in different areas of Karnataka as well as Maharashtra. He then said be on your own and teach what you want. Guruji asked, "What about *pranayama*?" He said that it's not meant for you. You just go and teach *asanas*. That is how Guruji came from Mysore and continued his journey towards Pune and established himself facing all the difficulties.

Some of the doctors in Pune wanted him to teach since he had a "divine hand" to give health back to the patients. I say it was a divine touch but he never said it was a divine touch. His practice was so strong. He dealt with his body totally to find out how if he does something somewhere the effect is found somewhere else. That is how he says, to have a journey in a body is like a journey of thousands of kilometres as you have to touch each area. It appears to some extent as a physical approach but it is not so; because, normally our mind doesn't penetrate inwards.

Fear touches the mind and stops the mind. It doesn't allow the mind to move inwards. But that was not so in his case. He approached the body fearlessly with open-mindedness and reached the state where he could find refinement in the process of doing. It was not just refinement but the penetration that taught him how to handle, how to make even those people do – those who could not do or manage to do anything or think that they cannot do anything. Yoga for him was breaking this limitation. If you

have to unite yourself with God then you have to break all the limitations. Only then you would be able to reach that which is eternal. So, even he used to say knowing very well that death approaches human beings.

You have to know the eternality of the body itself. After all what ends is the physicality of the body. In this physical body is the elemental body which leaves imprints somewhere deep inside. We receive those deep imprints through the *sukshma sarira* (the subtle body). The gross body is going to vanish. But, if this gross body touches the subtle body then even after losing the physical body, the subtle body will carry the message, the imprints, the *samskaras* for the next life. So, know this when you practice *asanas*.

Normally, we recognize that he taught us *asanas* and *pranayamas*. It is true that he taught *asanas* and *pranayamas* because our objective knowledge doesn't allow us to look further. But for him it was not objective knowledge; it was the subjective knowledge that he imparted. He starts by teaching *tadasana*. The preliminaries would be to get our feet together, toes together, shoulders back, chest up, spine straight whatever, whatever. Shift the weight, distribute the weight etc. But, in that process he taught how the mind has to be taken inwards to look into oneself. In the beginning, we may use our feet, legs or other parts of the body as the teacher teaches. What Gururji did is that with that technique, with that expression, he made that mind go deeper inward so that we begin to look inside. Our eyes dissect our body from inside and every other thing that we come across is witnessed by us. As the *asana* becomes more complicated and advanced he made us to look with our intelligence to penetrate further. Our mind is such, "Oh! What you did is wonderful! It makes us feel that everything is fine." But, the intelligence is the one which makes us think that, "Oh! I think what I did was correct but some where there is a difference." So, it is incorrect. So what is that incorrectness? Can I bring correction in that? The 'special eyes', to look within ourselves, is his biggest gift. We need the openness of the mind. Our penetrating eyes should not stop. Today, when Gururji is not there – our penetrating eyes should not stop. Only then what is unknown will come to the surface. God has given us the instrument. It is not just the body. Our body is the first instrument that we must use in the proper way. Otherwise, if Gururji was not there, we would not have understood that our knees bend in so many directions, in so many ways. It would have been impossible. Just take an example his *kandasana*, *mula bandhasana*, *baddha konasana*, *padmasana*,

virasana, *yogadandasana*, the knees bend in so many directions. It would have been impossible for us to think of these possibilities.

People do ask why are there so many *asanas*? It is not the question about how many *asanas*? There are as many *asanas* as there are living beings in the world. This conveys a bigger message that we can move our body in so many ways with intelligence and penetrate deeper in. That is how for Gururji the body became a temple. He tried to move that body in different directions understanding its intelligence. The body is a treacherous friend and is very lazy.

He learnt to break the laziness of the body first. He found out why the body said 'no'.

Is it the mind that says 'no' or is it the body that says 'no'? That is how the first instrument of ours our body feels that it has limitations. He tried to break these limitations and that is why he could introduce yoga to so many people, so many aged people in so many ways. And, to an extent they could maintain their health as they could penetrate their body. The person who could not walk – he made him to walk. A person who could not stand he made him to stand, the person who could not sit he made him to sit. He even made bed-ridden people work gradually with their body. And, along with the body, he raised the hidden mind which has got its own energy and doesn't want to come up.

From there, he penetrated the mind. It is he who said that the mind which is closest to the body is extended deep inside the body. He introduced us to that mind which surfaces all the time. You are taught an *asana* and the moment you get that *asana* you are happy. Oh I got it! You say you got the *asana* but why are you stopping at that? Go further

to understand that mind, the deeper mind. Through *asana* and *pranayama* you build up your moral character. That is his message.

The more the mind penetrates deeper in your *sadhana* then the mind which is always attached to the external world – the mind which wants to go out all the time is sort of controlled and brought in.

Then the person can build up his character. That is how it gives the moral health. From moral health, he reaches up to the intellectual level. How can I be aware of myself when I am doing the *asana*? This new awareness doesn't come to a person who



practices from outside. In the beginning you become aware of your body then you question, “Oh my hand is stiff, my knee is stiff, my spine is stiff! What shall I do?” These are the questions. Then he penetrated in such a manner that each area, each cell of the body has to be awakened to that state. It is as though the reflection of the soul is felt in that self. That means the soul and the self [physically outside is the self and inside it is the soul]. The soul reflects up to the self like the mirror so you can see yourself in every cell of yourself. Once you see every cell of yours, you know exactly where you are going wrong; where you are life-less; where the pranic energy is not reaching. So, how to make the blood circulate in that area? This is how he connected the body to the intellectual level or intelligence coming in contact with the body.

Why am I saying this? We are all intelligent in the brain. We have been educated in that manner. If children are theoretically taught yoga in the school they will remember everything. If I tell them, yoga is meeting of *jivatma* with *paramatma*. They will catch it very easily. They do not know what is *jivatma* or *paramatma*. But, they will repeat it all the time. ‘Yoga is union of *jivatma* with *paramatma* or self-realisation.’ They don’t know what is self; they don’t know what is realisation but they still say yoga is union of *jivatma* and *paramatma*. This is in the intelligence of the brain.

What did Gururji do? He brought that intellectual level of human beings still down and said recognise yourself – your body, your mind, your intelligence – whether you can connect these, whether your consciousness can connect to your body. Gururji has given us this connection and that sheds light from inside. So I always say in class. If Gururji has said, “light on yoga,” you throw your light on your own body then you can have light on yoga. That is how the connection begins. So connect all this along with the conscience. We need to penetrate in that manner.

My message to the beginners in the Institute is to practice for two to five years to get established in the institute and know the basics. The five years of practice will give you some beginning to develop a yogic mind to look in and then as you proceed further you will know yoga. Yoga hasn’t got any limitation. It is not a grading process where you do for one year, for two years, for three years. *Satu dirgha kala nairantarya satkarseveto dradhbhumih*. Patanjali says that if you practice without measuring the timing or years of practice without a break (*dirghakala*) for a long time then the foundation would be laid and that would help you in yoga later.

Today, the mentality has changed. I have done yoga for so many years so why should I not start teaching? I don’t know why they feel like teaching. I feel enough is enough about teaching. We have to learn to teach ourselves first and then teach others.

Gururji was so strong with his practise that he could understand a problem in any part of the body and how to handle that problem.

So what I want to say to you newcomers is do not stop yourself. Continuity is very important. The process is that you have to practice to penetrate deeper. Penetration is not that easy.

Just imagine even to be an MBBS doctor if it takes so many years, it does not mean that he has experience. It is just the beginning. For you to become a teacher, first get the experience to understand how to handle the others when they are really suffering. What to adjust, how to adjust, where to touch, where not to touch, what to do. All these things take a long time. It cannot happen in a short course. As Gururji often used to say, “I still keep on learning!” When a new person comes with a new problem, an unknown problem, our usual mind will state, “Oh! Do this and you will be alright.” The habitual mind answers the question. You have a neck problem then do this and this. But that is not so. Each experience teaches us something else in a different way. Each experience makes us look at the defects in different ways. It is a never-ending process. How can it end until we reach the end? That is why it is a continuous process.

I wish that our beginners continue in that manner. Keep on practising. I don’t mind even if they have a wish to teach others but in the teaching process learning is most important. That is what Gururji said, “While teaching, I learnt a lot. What I do will not be understood by the one who is standing in front of me and perhaps what one is doing I may not have realised that this is also possible.” That is how he learnt looking at his own students. The students were well built; he learnt that their energy is quite different than his energy when he himself was under nourished. He learnt and brought himself to the level of nourished. And that nourishing and nurturing process took place through *asana* and *pranayama* and not with the food!

Asana and *pranayama* were like food for him. That is how his teaching became progressive; he started penetrating. In the beginning, the doctors used to send their patients to Gururji. The patients came with their problems and doctors used to accompany them. They feared that this man may do some twisting, turning and may break something. They watched him teach. Gururji had only done his schooling! ॐ

(To be continued in the next issue.)

Snapshots from a workshop: Yoga from the Ground Up

By Karin Dayton

This is the first workshop paper I've written, and I have discovered that it's impossible to include everything, even if I knew what "everything" was. Should the workshop notes be about the sequences and poses only, or a collection of quotes and points? How to follow the golden thread of Guruji's teaching, weave in Leslie's humour, her mythological references, philosophy, spirituality, spontaneity? The attempt to encapsulate somebody else's words, work, and experience within the right context is a serious responsibility. What follows then is an offering of a few snapshots from one observer's point of view along with gratitude for the opportunity.

A diverse range of participants attended the all levels workshop, from long time practitioners, to beginner students, as well as welcome guests.

A theme that Leslie would return to throughout the day was that of practice, the importance of it within the Iyengar tradition, and within her own life. We began the workshop sitting quietly in *siddhasana*, a pose recommended for both *pranayama* and meditation.

The title of the workshop, Yoga from the Ground Up was inspired in large part, by Leslie's own recent experiences with injury, (shoulder, then later foot, both now largely healed... thanks to yoga!). It was through her long steady process of recovery, that she learned more about the "accrued" benefits of her own *asana* practice over time. Additionally, she acknowledged the learning the injuries had offered her, "the one arm that's lagging needs to know the goal". "I discovered that the most basic poses were where I had to start," and described "how nice the massaging action of the foot pressing into the thigh" felt, the simple comfort. Leslie showed many ways to adapt poses, from basic to complex. She demonstrated *vrksasana*



Leslie Hogya demonstrates during *From the Ground Up*



with the wall as a prop, "use the wall as a measure to see if the hips are facing forward," then quoted Guruji who said of the same pose, "my hands look at the future, and the legs to the past, the meeting point at the lower end of the

sternum is the point where I am breathing in the now, the present". Leslie reminded us that we "could think of all the poses this way". There were moments of humour when learning the "peeling the paint off the wall" and "*supta* dead-bug" poses. On perseverance in practice, even in the face of adversity, she taught us that, "pain is the great philosopher trying to get rid of itself," and reminded us to "use the muscles God gave us," something she had to force herself to do to heal her broken foot.

However, the theme of practice expanded beyond *asana* when Leslie explained that in the classical tradition, Patanjali is acknowledged, and she directed our attention to Guruji's full explication of Astanga Yoga in *Astadala Yoga Mala*, Vol. 2, where he states that the method he has been credited with, is not Iyengar Yoga, but classical yoga. Leslie offered us two aspects: *satya*, the practice of truth, and *svadhyaya*, self-study and study of the sacred scriptures, and gave us another clue, "actions mirror a person's personality better than the words we use." Finally, in sifting through the workshop "snapshots," the one, perhaps best illustrating the theme of practice within our tradition, was Leslie's invocation of a moment from Guruji's final days, when he asked his granddaughter Abhijata if she had practiced that day. "No Guruji, I want to be here with you." His reply, "You should go and practice." ॐ

Workshop readings:

Astadala Yoga Mala, vol. 2.

Light On Life, B.K.S. Iyengar.

Light On Pranayama, B.K.S. Iyengar, chapter 9.

Heart of Yoga

By Jane McFarlane

The periodic traffic sounds often come to the foreground for me near the beginning of *savasana* in Arbutus studio. They go from higher to lower pitch, and mostly pass from left to right. Fort Street is a one-way street. The traffic sounds from Quadra (the cross street) stay to the left. Traffic sounds come to the foreground before the hum of the room, which I hear more in my left ear. If the hum of the room arises, I remember that the presence of the room can arise. Then I feel the absence of talking.

This January, I taped Shirley speaking at the beginning of the Sunday morning class at the Heart of Yoga workshop, led by herself and Ann Kilbertus. She asked us, “Besides torture, why do you think I chose to start yesterday afternoon’s *pranayama* class with *supta virasana*, no props?” People hypothesized various physical and psychological reasons, and they described their physical and psychological



Reflection with Shirley Daventry French and Ann Kilbertus

responses to attempting the posture without props. The primary motive suggested was encapsulated by one of the questions: “Were you disturbing our mental constructs?” The primary psychological benefit described was initial fear transformed into liberation from rigid preconception, whether or not the individual discovered that she had to take props.

In the fourth chapter of *Light on Life*, Mr. Iyengar tells us:

Patanjali, in his Yoga Sutras, chose to make the workings of mind and

consciousness, both in success and failure, the central theme of yoga philosophy and practice. In fact, from the yogi’s standpoint, practice and philosophy are inseparable. Patanjali’s first sutra says, “Now I’m going to present the disciplined code of ethical conduct, which is yoga.” In other words, yoga is something you do. So, what do you do? The second sutra tells us, “Yoga is the process of stilling the movements and fluctuations of mind that disturb our consciousness.” Everything we do in yoga is concerned with achieving this incredibly difficult task. If we achieve it, Patanjali said, the goal and the fruit of yoga will be within our grasp. [108]

Thus the process of yoga may be present with or without props, and, furthermore, the process of yoga may be absent, with or without props. But what is “the goal and the fruit of yoga”? Looking to the next *sutra*, Mr. Iyengar’s commentary for *sutra* three says, “When the waves of consciousness are stilled and silenced they can no longer distort the true expression of the soul.”

Shirley demanded to know, “Are the yogis crazy in their search for truth? They say that we choose to live in a confused state of consciousness because we mistake our true self – divine self, *atman*, *purusha*, soul – with our ego self that we need to function in the world.” Then she asked, “What are the spiritual aspects of *supta virasana*?” To which there was silence in response. The traffic passing on Fort Street comes to the foreground at this point on my tape recording.

Finally, one student responded, “Maybe my spiritual self is receptive to *supta virasana* if I take a simple “let’s see what happens” approach, without expectations or ideas.”

Ann said that Geeta Iyengar spoke about making space in our *asanas* at the recent world conference in Pune. Ann said, “Just look at the pictures in *Light on Yoga*; Mr. Iyengar shows adamant compactness with clarity [paraphrasing *sutra* III.47

Scholarships and Bursaries

Members’ scholarships are available for:

Jawahar Bangera Intensive, March 25-28.

Deadline for applications: March 11

Salt Spring Retreat, June 3-5.

Deadline for applications: May 20

Introductory Teaching Intensive, July 11 -15.

Deadline for applications: May 30

Certified Teaching Intensive, August 8-12.

Deadline for applications: June 27

**Student Intensive with Ty Chandler and Lauren Cox,
August 24-28. Deadline for applications: July 23**

Bursaries are available to all students
presently enrolled in classes.

To subsidize your term fees, please apply three weeks
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on perfection of body] rather than the narrow, brittle rigidity with which we brace ourselves. “ Shirley remembered Prashant Iyengar explaining that the *asanas* are iconic instruments for contemplation created by enlightened sages and saints.

The British poet and mystic, Evelyn Underhill, might as well have been speaking about *asanas* when she wrote the following words about contemplative practices:

You, if you practice them, will find after a time – perhaps a long time –that the hard work which they involve has indeed brought about a profound and definite change in you. A new suppleness has taken the place of that rigidity which you have been accustomed to mistake for strength of character: an easier attitude toward the accidents of life. Your whole scale of values has undergone a silent transformation...and because of this you possess great inward liberty, a sense of spaciousness and peace...As all scattered thinking was cut off in [self] recollection, as all vagrant and unworthy desires have been killed by the exercises of detachment, so now all scattered willing, all hesitations between the indrawing and outflowing instincts of the soul, shall be checked and resolved. You are to push with all your power: not to absorb ideas, but to pour forth will and love. With this “conative act”...the true contemplative life begins. [Practical Mysticism, A Little Book for Normal People, 1914; from Chapter Six]

We all meet physical limits. Even if we do not have gross external challenges, Shirley reminded us repeatedly that we will either get old or die young. She interprets “core strength” in Iyengar yoga as the brief spark of life within our limited bodies. Yet she believes that perfect symmetry, ease and joyfulness can be experienced by us all through all stages of life. Continuing from *Practical Mysticism*:

As the bodily senses have been produced under pressure of man’s physical environment, and their true aim is not the enhancement of his pleasure or his knowledge, but a perfecting of his adjustment to those aspects of the natural world which concern him – so the use and meaning of the spiritual senses are strictly practical too. These, when developed by a suitable training reveal to man a certain measure of Reality: not in order that he may gaze upon it, but in order that he may react to it, learn to live in, with, for it, growing into more perfect harmony...until...the clearness of his flame responds to the unspeakable radiance of the Enkindling Light. [From chapter 10]

Which naturally brings me to the Divine Light Invocation, shared with our school by teachers who studied with Swami Radha at Yasodhara Ashram. Shirley had to devote herself to one school. But as Mr. Iyengar says, “Like one ocean and one earth, yoga is a single unit.” So we can safely say that Shirley’s work is loyal to both teachers. Consider the “diamond body” described by the *sutras* and Ann. Witness the presentation of



Energy in Tadasana



Sense withdrawal in marichyasana I

Mr. Iyengar’s *asana*. Consider the “diamond body” distilled by *asana*. Here is the Divine Light Invocation:

*I am created by Divine Light.
I am sustained by Divine Light.
I am protected by Divine Light.
I am ever growing into Divine Light. ॐ*

Thank you to...

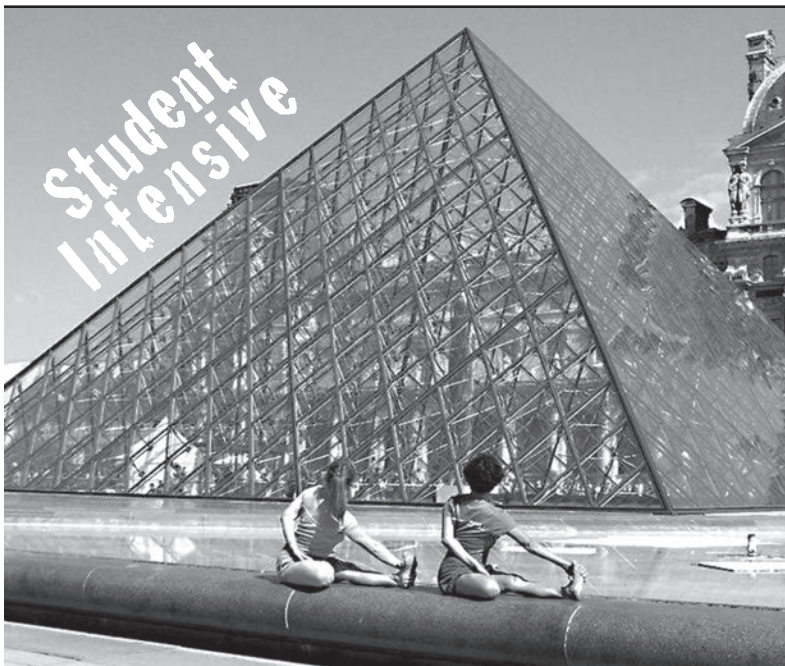
- Lynn Palfrey for her ongoing volunteer help in the Transition class.
 - Stacy Frank who is now listing our classes and workshops with YogaVictoria.ca.
 - Caroline Meggison for her donation to the library of "Light & Vibration: Consciousness, Mysticism & the Culmination of Yoga" by Swami Sivananda Radha.
 - Lauren Cox for her beautiful illustration of Guruji for the Winter 2015 long sleeve t-shirts. For over 15 years, Lauren Cox has been producing the certificates for every certified teacher in the country on behalf of the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada. Recently, it was announced that all certificates would be produced in India. Thank you for all the years of beautiful calligraphy.
 - Linda Poole, our "Queen Bee", who ensures the highest quality for each bolster made in-house at the IYCV.
- As well as Barbara Madison and Laine Canivet for extra duty with our latest batch of bolsters.
- Esther Silver and Denyce Krupa, two new volunteers who are helping to tidy props after Leslie Hogya's Tuesday class.
 - Hilary McPhail for form templates and membership list management.
 - Jane McFarlane who patched and repainted all scruffy walls and trim over the holidays.
 - Anil Kapoor and Jane McFarlane who transported blankets and mats to and from the laundromat.
 - Bruce Cox, Tom Kendall, Jane McFarlane, and Britta Poisson for their part in re-vitalizing the Centre's entrance, retail area, and library. A special thanks to Patty Rivard, our librarian, for coordinating these efforts and wielding a drill – with equal grace!



Canadian participants in Yoganushasanam 2015

Thank you to all who made Guruji's Birthday a great event. In particular:

- The sixty-four people who came to the birthday practice!
- Our beloved Shirley honoured Guruji, weaving stories and philosophy into the 90-minute practice that was mat to mat.
- Billie's awesome mango cake from Spice Jammer restaurant, Ann Nolan's delicious spice cake, and the vegan chocolate cake – all disappeared quickly!
- Thanks to Laine Canivet, Ann Nolan, Amanda Mills, Sheila Redhead, Bev Kallstrom, and Wendy Wimbush for set up and take down. And to Gary Wong, Marilyn Sheppard, Linda Benn.
- Huge thanks to Britta Poisson for coordinating this year's event, with help from Jane McFarlane and Johanna Godliman.



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: \$250 CDN +GST IYCV Members

\$275 CDN +GST IYCV 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.



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 **\$57.75 (\$55 + GST)**

The one-year membership fee is \$42 CDN (\$40 + GST), renewable each January.

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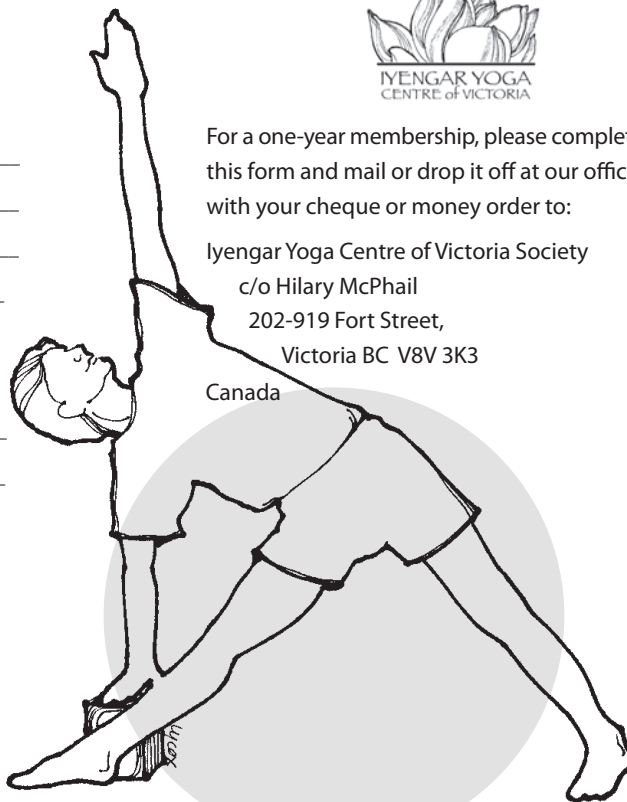
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- ☐ Unsubscribe from monthly yog-e email news.
- ☐ Receipt required.



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



Iyengar Yoga Teacher Intensives



INTENSIVE FOR INTRODUCTORY TEACHERS IN TRAINING

July 11-15, 2016

Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus and Ty Chandler

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August 8-12, 2016

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

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\$680 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.



Calendar

March

- 17 High Tea Fundraiser
- 25-28 Jawahar Bangera
Intensive
- 28-29 Jawahar Bangera
Classes

April

- 23 Teachers meeting/PD
Saturday
- 30 Improving Basic
Poses

June

- 3-5 SSI Retreat
- 10-12 Assessment at IYCV
for level IJ III
- 21 International Day
of Yoga

July

- 4-8 Summer Early
Morning Practice
- 11-15 Intro Teacher
Intensive

August

- 8-12 Certified Teacher
Intensive
- 29-Sep 2 Student Intensive



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA



N E W S L E T T E R S U M M E R 2 0 1 6



SUMMER Early Morning PRACTICE

Jump into summer with this early morning week of practice with Lauren Cox.

Monday to Friday, July 4-8, 2016, 7-8 am
Members \$55, Non-Members \$60

Refunds offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$15 cancellation fee.

Scholarships and Bursaries

Members' scholarships are available for:

**Certified Teachers' Intensive,
August 8-12.**

Deadline for applications: June 27

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with Ty Chandler
and Lauren Cox,**

August 29-September 2.

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To subsidize your term fees, please apply three weeks prior to term.

Applications for both are available at the reception desk.
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Teaching Enrichment

Teacher training is an important part of the work we do at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria. We have a teacher training committee of seven teachers, all of whom have considerable experience in yoga. It includes four of Canada's seniormost teachers. In addition they all serve as assessors for the national association or have served in this capacity in the past. This committee consists of: Shirley Daventry French, Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hogya, Marlene Miller, Lauren Cox, Linda Benn and Ty Chandler.

Initially most of the work involved Introductory teacher training, which still continues. Now, a large number of certified teachers on Vancouver Island and throughout British Columbia continue to train under our auspices. Consequently Intermediate teacher training is a large part of our work these days.

Throughout the year teachers from Victoria and throughout the Province gather here for special training events such as our three summer intensives:

- an *Introductory Teacher Training Intensive* in July with Leslie and Ann;
- an *Intermediate Teacher Training Intensive* in early August with Shirley, Ann and Louie Ettling of Vancouver;
- a *Student Intensive* in late August with Lauren and Ty.

A few years ago we added a series of special training sessions consisting of a *Practice Enrichment* course with Ann and Ty, and *Professional Development Saturdays* where senior teachers take it in turns to present topics associated with teaching. These weekend sessions have been well attended and received.

We are pleased to announce that next season we are adding another



course to this series of Yoga Teacher Education which we are calling *Teaching Enrichment*. This new series will be launched on November 6th and be led by Shirley Daventry French working in association with other members of the teacher training committee. The topic will be *Seeing and Understanding Bodies*, a skill which lies at the heart of Mr Iyengar's work and the art of Yoga! ॐ

SEE THE FALL ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER FOR MORE INFORMATION.

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: AUGUST 15, 2016

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IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the *Society Act* of the Province of B.C., whose purpose is “to encourage the physical, mental, and spiritual growth of its members and other interested persons of the society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga.” The Society owes its inspiration to Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

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

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

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Newsletter Advertising Policy

(Adopted February 20, 2004)

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

1. Advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the newsletter of the IYCV.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar yoga.
3. Priority will be given to advertisements regarding IYCV events, IYCV sponsored events, and IYAC events.

REGISTRATION

Please visit our website:

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

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



Reflections

By Shirley Daventry French

*The aim of yoga is to discover
our immortal Self.*

– B.K.S. Iyengar, *Light on Life*

My first inclination to venture into yoga was born in a shower at the Victoria YM-YWCA in 1970. These showers were not private stalls, but three or four in a row; utilitarian, unadorned and taking up less space. Same day, same time, each week, would find me there after an exercise class followed by a swim. The exercises were led by a man who had been the diving coach of the Canadian Olympic team. For some reason, he did not have anything to do with the swimming part of this course and when it became known that I had some history as a swimmer plus life-guard training, I ended up in charge of the pool for those exercisers who wanted a swim.

When I left the pool I generally found myself alone in the shower room. I have no idea what the other swimmers did; perhaps they went home smelling of chlorine! The Y did have another changing room which you could use if you paid more money, but I was quite content with my lowly bank of showers.

Then one week there was another young woman taking a shower at this time, and she was there the following week and the one after that! It began to be a habit and we progressed from nods, to verbal greetings, to conversation. As an immigrant from London, England I was used to being told I had an accent but my new friend really had an accent! It turned out she was also an immigrant, from Brooklyn NY! I learned that her name was Carole Miller and we had much in common in our

predicament of trying to adapt to life in a small town as opposed to one of the world's great cities.

Casual conversation turned into deeper explorations and one of the things I learned about Carole was that she was at the Y taking a yoga class. I liked Carole, liked what she said about the teacher and the class, and decided to join her and find out more about it. It was 1970, forty-six years ago.

I had joined the Y after my son was born, my third baby in four and a half years. I kept fit by walking a lot, taking the children to the park, the beach and other outdoor activities, and also exercised daily at home using a set of exercises devised by the Royal Canadian Air Force called 10BX. From friends I had heard about an exercise and swimming course at the Y which was very popular and had a waiting list. I added my name to the list, enquired about baby sitters (there was no official childcare in those days) and eventually got a place in the course.

Aware that I needed some time to myself, little did I suspect that this venture would lead well beyond personal health and fitness, to a voyage of discovery!

In his book *Light on Life*, Gurujī tells us early on that “The aim of yoga is to discover our immortal Self”. Had I been told this at the start I doubt I would have joined the yoga class. However my teacher, an English woman who had grown up in India did give short talks every now and then about the philosophical background to Yoga. She was a practising Roman Catholic having converted as an adult, and one talk I do recall was her saying that while yogis believe that God is within we know differently that he is out there (and as illustration she used her arm to point upwards)! Even in my state of spiritual ignorance I instinctively felt she was wrong. What the yogis were saying made some sense to me because I had a vague memory from my churchgoing adolescence that Jesus Christ had told us: “The kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17.21)

To tell the truth, I did not concern myself with any of this at first, I simply enjoyed the quietness of the class, the uninterrupted time to focus on myself and the physical and mental well being I felt on leaving the class.

*... I did not concern myself with any of this
at first, I simply enjoyed the quietness of
the class, the uninterrupted time to focus
on myself and the physical and mental well
being I felt on leaving the class.*

In this process I learned that yoga is a spiritual journey consisting of various practices which take you on an inward bound journey to the heart of yourself and discovery of your real Self!

Swami Radha came into my life a few weeks after I had started yoga. I hadn't looked for a yoga class. I wasn't seeking to take it further, However I have always been curious, and after reading the brochure about her visit which would consist of a series of talks—I signed up for one of them out of curiosity and loyalty to my teacher who had invited her. Fascinated by the first morning, I signed up for the afternoon, and then the next day and ended up attending each one. It seemed to me I had never heard so much common sense in my life, and I was thirsty for more.

My thirst was soon to be quenched because shortly thereafter, Swami Radha returned to give a smaller more personal weekend workshop. A dozen of us were given the opportunity to attend and Carole and I both took this opportunity. I jumped at it; Carole would have to speak for herself about her motivation.

Appropriately this workshop was held at the Queenswood House of Peace established to provide a residence for nuns from the order of St. Ann's who were studying at the nearby University of Victoria. A spiritual centre, it provided a tranquil oasis for us to learn a little more about the subject of Yoga.

For several who attended this weekend it turned out to be far more than they wanted to know and ended their flirtation with yogic studies but for me it was a signpost to go on.

This weekend workshop was called a Straightwalk and involved being sent to a given place and instructed to

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walk up and down for a certain length of time (about half an hour, I believe) and then write about your experience. When my walk was over I was eager to write about it. I have always enjoyed writing of one kind or another and this time was no different. I finished this task, returned to our communal meeting place and waited to see what came next. Having previously been told we would get together and read our paper out loud, I was excited and eager to read what I had written—in fact, could hardly wait. I had got a lot out of the experience and wanted to hear Swami Radha's reaction to my paper.

Swami Radha decided on the order in which we would read our paper and, as it happened, mine was the last! By this time I had observed how difficult it had been for some individuals to read what they had written, how nervous and uncomfortable they appeared. I read my paper with the confidence of someone who loved words and was experienced in writing and performing. And what came next couldn't have been more of a shock. "You're very quick with words!" was Swami Radha's unequivocal riposte!

So began the process of going behind the words and the posturing and the antics and uncovering what lay underneath. In this process I learned that yoga is a spiritual journey consisting of various practices which take you on an inward bound journey to the heart of yourself and discovery of your real Self!

Ask who am I? Know thy Self and be free? This is a maxim that has been stated by many seers from Socrates to my own direct teachers B.K.S. Iyengar and Swami Radha. In his treatise on Yoga, Patanjali addresses this dilemma right away in the first few *sutras* stating that "Yoga is the cessation of fluctuations in consciousness" (*sutra* I.2). Those who can still these disturbances identify with the true Self or Soul, otherwise we identify with and are subject to the pulls and pushes caused by these fluctuations of our mind. Our equilibrium is constantly disturbed.

Pretty simple, really; but, because many of us are slow learners, the *sutras* go on for four more chapters (196 *sutras* in all) spelling out the benefits of persevering with this simple but gargantuan task of stilling the mind, and highlighting the many obstacles which lie along the way and how to deal with them. The grail at the end of this quest is *kaivalya* or liberation!

Life is truly the stuff that myths are made of. Many demons and dragons have to be slain along the way. However, there are a huge variety of ways and means of accomplishing this quest of self-discovery which lies at the heart of Yoga! Practice (*abhyasa*) and Renunciation (*vairagya*) hone the skills required for this journey and strengthen our judgment on how and when to use them judiciously.

Words when spoken out loud can be such a destructive weapon in the hands of a despot such as Hitler. However, they can be an inspiration in the mouth of a Jesus Christ

or Buddha. Coming out of our own mouths and silently forming a constant flow in our minds, unless there is some process of restraint and self-discipline, words are major obstacles to peace of mind. On the other hand, their importance is stated clearly in the first verse of the gospel according to St. John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Swami Radha often spoke of body, mind and speech rather than body, mind and spirit because, she said, speech is mankind's greatest achievement which puts us apart from other species who have sound but communicate in other ways. Only the human race (so far) has speech!

My facility with words, which in the early 1970s Swami Radha saw as a potentially dangerous obstacle could also be transformed into an asset on my spiritual journey. Since then, this task has been one of my principal spiritual practices.

The practices of Yoga are not primarily physical as widely perceived today, they have to be practised in thought, word and deed at so many levels. When yoga Masters speak of constant vigilance, they mean it! However much we advance in some areas, the ego with its cunning is always searching for another way of intruding on any progress we have achieved.

For instance, this weekend at my home, we have a visit from my daughter and her husband. They are sleeping in a spare bedroom in our house which used to be her bedroom during her teenage years. This morning she came into the kitchen and told us that during the night she had awakened and it was like being back in those years. She could hear in the walls the pitter-patter of some tiny four legged creature, probably a field rat come in from the cold of a mid-May night who managed to find a small hole through which to shelter inside either the floorboards over the crawl space below or one of the walls. This used to happen quite often at one time until sealing up all the cracks and holes we could find, plus cementing the crawl space and putting in an ultrasonic device seemed to put a stop to it. Clearly more vigilance needs to be applied to get rid of this unwanted intruder and any companions he has invited to join him, plus either a new ultrasonic device or a new battery in the old one!

In the practice of yoga we have to be similarly on guard against unwanted intruders who make good use of any opportunity we offer them to seize the day!

Yoga is a pilgrimage in search of the Self. The Self is our constant companion from birth to death which serves us well if we allow it to be our guide on this journey of challenge and discovery. ॐ

Sadhana

By Geeta S. Iyengar

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM YOGA RAHASYS VOL.22, NO. 3, 2015

(Continued from Spring, 2016 issue)

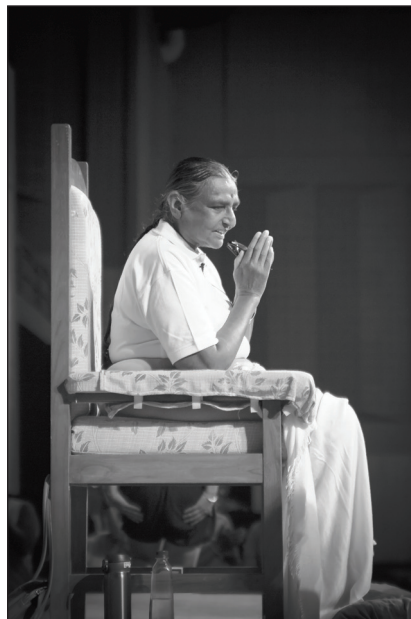
There is no other explanation in any text even *Gheranda Samhita*, *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* on which *asana* is good for specific diseases. Gururji brought that connection. If a person has acidity then how can acidity reduce with the *asanas*? Those texts haven't mentioned so many *asanas* but enumerated only a few. He brought the connection between the *asanas* and their effects so that he could help the patient. He was sure about what to do, emphasise on that area which needs the touch of the *asana*.

He had that confidence in his method and we have to learn to get that confidence in the process of doing properly. This education is not like the education that is given in schools and colleges that is given in books. That is conveyed, you study more, you read and you can enhance your knowledge. But this is practical. How to penetrate deeper inside? For that penetration to happen, your mental force, your mind, your intelligence, your consciousness, your conscience all have to get together to penetrate deeper inside. This is to awaken that which is always in a sleepy state and hidden inside.

It doesn't want to surface and has to be brought out. The teaching process also has to be such that what is hidden has to come to the surface. Some new students may feel why do the teachers shout, why do they repeat? We need to do that because only then penetration is possible. As a teacher if you say, OK keep on doing whatever possible then are they learning anything?

If your child goes to school and cannot write or does not study, would you give up your hopes or would you make them to work a little more? Would you not say, 'write this alphabet repeatedly so that the mistakes may not occur.' The process may be slow but you will do it until the child finally learns. That is how yoga has to be learnt using all these instruments of ours.

Coming to the eight aspects of yoga, some people say that Gururji taught *asana* and *pranayama*. Many of them say that he did not teach meditation. It is a wrong to say that! Meditation cannot be taught. You cannot say that close your eyes and I will teach you meditation. That is not possible. It's an inner instrument, which is part of *antahkarana*, inner consciousness.



That means there is a mind, there is consciousness, I-consciousness, the *chitta* and the intelligence. All these are aspects of inner consciousness which has to surface in meditation process.

There is no question about "meditate upon what?" What is this body? Is it just the outer body? Of course, there is the outer body. You have to accept that in meditation there is the outer body, your limbs, your spine, your position of the body, the structure of your body and all this has to be penetrated and there is a deeper penetration with the skin, with one of the *jnanendriyas* or senses of perception, your eyes, your ears, your nose. There is a process of going inwards. That according to Gururji is meditation. All these vehicles of the soul have to go inward. It is not just about sitting

with your eyes closed.

Gururji's process was, sit in one position whether its *virasana*, *padmasana*, *swatikasana*, *baddhakonasana* or any other *asana* like *trikonasana*, *parsvakonasana*, *ardha chandrasana* or any *asana* and your mind should go from one end to the other end. Suppose, we take *ardha chandrasana*, then you cannot penetrate that much deeper inward from head to the foot. He taught us how to penetrate from the head to the foot – the bottom foot to the top lifted foot. Your consciousness has to spread in the body in such a manner that you know what is happening; front of the body, back of the body, top of the body bottom of the body. That is meditation.

When you sit quietly you have to watch your body; you have to watch your mind which pervades everywhere; when your mind fades, your intelligence pervades everywhere; then the intelligence fades and consciousness pervades everywhere; when consciousness fades the conscience comes on the surface and it pervades everywhere. So this pervading process makes you understand how to go into meditation.

He never said just meditate on God. If God is not felt by you, if God has not touched your mind, if God hasn't touched your consciousness then how will you know God? Suppose, you see Patanjali as an idol or you see Krishna as an idol or Christ as an idol then that idol gets fixed in your mind. Then if I say pray to Sage Patanjali or pray to Lord Christ

then the mind has to grasp the whole picture of that idol and then the mind becomes only the idol and nothing else. The consciousness becomes only the idol and nothing else. That means that instrument like consciousness has to be understood by us at the first stage. I hope you understand the depth of this.

It is with this depth when you practice *asana*, *pranayama* *pratyahara*, *dharana* then you find that *dhyana* is possible. Knowing this you have to practice and go further deeper in. Then, when you close your eyes, how you watch, how you think; that is how your practice gives you a good depth, a good understanding. You have to have this depth of feeling, depth of this understanding as you come out from that.

My message to all of you today is that never think of a small period of one year or two years. Continue practicing and you will find that depth further deeper inside. Your penetrating energy will penetrate deeper and then you will understand the fruits of yoga.

Read Guruji's books which explains what Guruji's way of penetrating was. He practiced *asana*, *pranayama* and *dhyana*.

You have not seen that but he used to practise at home and he explains that in his books. He gives a depth to that understanding on how your mind changes through the practise; how it becomes broad with that practise. It has got its own depth inside with this practise.

If you practice in this manner then you will really know the depth that Guruji has given to the subject. I don't think that others have given that much to this subject. The others have done their practises too, they have written the books but here Guruji was with us just as a human being. He has penetrated into the subject so deeply. There was something deep in his classes, in his technique, in his methodology that itself is a great guidance to us.

We have to remember what Guruji has given us. We have to practise. We have to further develop and not forget what message we are supposed to carry outside so that people will be introduced to the right methodology. ॐ

THIS IS THE EDITED TRANSCRIPT OF GEETAJI'S TALK ON JUNE 21, 2015.

Congratulations!

The following candidates achieved Intermediate Junior I certification at the March assessment in Kelowna:

Tracy Forsythe, Kelowna BC
Adia Kapoor, Victoria, BC
Waruni Maya Wensvoort, Uxbridge, ON
Terice Reimer-Clarke, Whitehorse, YK
Suzanne Tremblay, Victoria, BC
Gary Wong, Victoria, BC

The following candidates achieved Intermediate Junior II certification at the May assessment in Edmonton:

Patricia Fernandes, Richmond, BC
Janette Hook, Edmonton, AB
Mei Chua, Edmonton, AB
Corinne Milroy, Edmonton, AB
Morgan Rea, North Vancouver, BC
Cheryl Joseph, Vancouver, BC
Niren Pandya, Toronto, ON



International Day of Yoga

Join us for the 2nd Annual
International Day of Yoga
on Tuesday, June 21

12 noon All Levels Yoga with Leslie Hoyga
7 PM All Levels Yoga with Adia Kapoor

Celebrate with yogis around the world.
These classes are FREE and open to the public.

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.

Practice Enrichment Series

Friday afternoons
2:00 - 5:00 pm

November 4,
December 2,
February 10,
March 10

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

Congratulations!

Natalya won a free term of classes from the waiver draw. Thanks, as well, to everyone else who completed their waiver by May 1st.



Gulnaz Dashti

By Leslie Hogya

Gulnaz is a long time student at the Ramamani Iyengar Institute in Pune, and now one of the teachers there. She made a brief stop over here on her cross country tour.

She gave two dynamic classes at the centre, one for beginners/55-plus students and one for general students. Every word and instruction was full of intent and purpose. We used the body as a prop to change our *uttanasanas*, among many others.

Gulnaz brings her warmth and humour to help us move more deeply into the poses, "Go! Go!" and we had no choice but to go further down.

Why was she here only on one weekday? We recently had a longer intensive with Jawahar Bangera, so our calendar was already full. The trip was organized through the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada, and



they kindly agreed for Gulnaz to visit us for a day on her way from east to west. ॐ

Preparatories for Pranayama

By Prashant S. Iyengar

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM YOGA RAHASYA, VOL. 21, NO. 1 2014.

Go for the preparatories; go for the transformation of the embodiment matter, body matter, mind matter, sense matter, body condition, breath condition, sense condition to be doing something as *pranayama* or so called *pranayama*. Evolve the breath awareness, breath advertence, breath sensitivity, breath sensitivity culture. So, become breath aware, and become embodiment aware by the breath. In the process see that you 'breathisize' the embodiment.

Start using the exhalations particularly in such a way that you will go for the required transformation, transition, transmutation. The entire embodiment should be of a respiratory nature. See that the entire embodiment is aspected by the breath and the breath awareness. It should be a total cultural revolution in you that all embodiment is under an association, influence, aspectation of the breath.

Start breathing in that way. I have often been using the expression here, breathe like watering the field, watering the plants. You should be breathing as if the body is the field and the breath is the water and you are trying to water the field. The body-mind complex is the field. So, breathe in such a way that you will be able to carry out this. Evolve this condition.

*Breathe as if the body is the field
and the breath is the water
and you are trying to water the field.*

Do not just try to inhale and exhale for the lungs. Most of you have conceived, construed that breath is something to do only with the lungs, and therefore you try to become lung aware, chest aware.

Evolve the condition of mind stuff. Thereby you will be commencing not with the expression "I am going to do *pranayama*" or "I am doing *pranayama*". As long as there is such an expression, or such a condition, that cannot become *pranayama*. The "I" cannot be there. Your "I", "personal

I" should be totally transformed to such a condition state that it will not become a subjective entity. According to the culture of *pranayama*, the *pranayama* should be done on you. You have to have a condition whereby the expression will be spontaneous that "the *pranayama* was done on me" rather than "I did *pranayama*". "I did *pranayama*" is the EGO culture.

"*Pranayama* was done on me" will be more essential culture of *pranayama*.

In a major way, that "I" should be conditioned; "I" should be addressed; "I" should be set right so much so that the "I" no longer remains "I". The "I" merely remains just a locus of consciousness.

See that the breath is a conditioner for body-matter like skin, flesh, muscles, bones, tissues, cavities as well as your mind, mind-matter – the EGO aspect of the mind, the "I" subjective pronoun "I", emotions, mind, intelligence, sensitivity, observation. So, the state of being, which is more pertaining to the mind, should be transformed.

Every aspect of your body, the skin, flesh, muscles, bones, tissues, as well as organs, the senses should all become respiratory organs, participating and receiving and come to a state of mind which

is not a personal mind, not delimited mind, not having caste, class, creed, gender, status, stature, etc.

With your preparatory you have to obliterate all those conditions which are there in our conscious state.

Now inhalations:

Do not go for deep inhalation necessarily, but see that you are using that inhalation to completely change the inner ambience, inner atmosphere, whereby you are a transcendent being and not a worldly, materialistic being. You have to see that you have the transcendence, see that your mind stuff is totally docile, not only dispassionate, but impassionate.

Like the burning of incense transforms the atmosphere in the *puja* room, where it becomes a sublime atmosphere; sanctity, purity, is radiated by the incense when you burn it. Similarly your breath should be like the fume of incense which is turning out a noble atmosphere within you, a transpersonal



*Tasmin sati means thereafter – after mastering asanas.
Mastery of asana is when the mind becomes
transcendent and undisturbed by dualities.*

atmosphere within you, a transcendent atmosphere within you, sublime, sanctified, chaste, pure, pious, noble, magnanimous. You have to learn this in two or three stages.

For a while you can go to normal breathing, mechanical breathing, and again start, try to do the second round of it, which should be more profound having got oriented.

You want to do *savasana* for a couple of minutes, and switch to *pranayama*, go to *pranayama*. No, that is not the proper way at your hierarchy, because your syllabus of *savasana* is so profound, that it cannot be accomplished in one round. So, you can have a break in between and again proceed for the preparatory process. Having got oriented you will do better; having done something, you will do further better; having done further better, you can do further and further better.

The preparatories should be so profound for you, at your hierarchy, that you cannot accomplish them in one go, in one round. Do your *savasana* for a while. When you see that is not evolving sufficiently, wait for a while, return to mechanical, normal organic breathing for a while, and again proceed to *savasana* process and try to make it more profound. Because unless your *savasana* has become sufficiently more profound you cannot really start that so called *pranayama* or *pranayama*. Therefore you have to have a pedantic approach.

When Patanjali says: *Tasmin sati svasa prasvasayoh gati viccheddah pranayamah* (YSP 11,49), “*pranayama* is the regulation of the incoming and outgoing flow of breath with retention. It is to be practiced only after perfection in *asana* is attained.”

Tasmin sati means thereafter.

Thereafter! What after? What does thereafter mean?

Most of you have wrongly conceived that you have to master *asanas*. And, your concept of mastering an *asana* is to do a wonderful *asana*; beautiful *asanas*; with physical symmetry, physical alignments, ease and comfort in executing an *asana*; ability to smile in *kapotasana*; gentle smile of the lips in *vrksikasana*; you think that this is mastery of *asanas*.

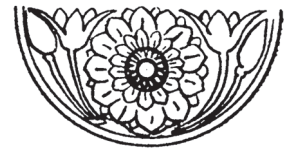
What is mastery of *asanas*? Mastery of *asanas* means to come to a state of mind which is transcendent. You are not you, delimited by your caste, class, creed, gender, status, stature conditions. As long as I am Prashant, I do not qualify to be doing *pranayama*. As long as I am a man, of a particular age, etc. I do not qualify to be doing *pranayama*. I have to transcend these barriers.

Tasmin sati (thereafter) is that.

Tatah dvandvah anabhigatah (YSP 11,48)

From then on, the *sadhaka* is undisturbed by dualities. Should I not have locus for duality? Why do we have duality? Because you are either a man or a woman. Because you are either a child, young, adult, old, decrepit. Therefore you have the duality. As long as the duality potential is there, you cannot really start *pranayama*. ॐ

(To be continued next issue.)



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!



From chatush padasana towards urdhva dhanurasana

Self Reflection: A Journey with Shirley Daventry French

By Melissa Hadley

Commitment and uncertainty

The small, brightly coloured flyer caught my eye: Explore Yoga Philosophy with Shirley Daventry French. Discover the ancient wisdom of Yoga and its application to practice and daily life. Open to all students and teachers. Like most of Shirley's students, I have missed her active presence at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria since her injury last fall. And while I'm not sure I'm ready or have time in my schedule for a mid-afternoon lecture series, the magnet of spending time with Shirley overpowers my self-talk: I pull out my debit card, and sign up.

As March deadlines approach, I begin to wonder whether a philosophy lecture is more important than the *asana* practice that it will ultimately displace. My confidence wavers; self-talk kicks in. [What is philosophy, anyway?] I turn to Wikipedia:

Philosophy is the study of general and fundamental problems, such as those connected with existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language. It is distinguished from other ways of addressing such problems by its critical, generally systematic approach and its reliance on rational argument.

[My work life is already filled with research, analysis, reasoning, and rational argument. Don't I need *asana* more?]

Exploration

Fortunately, the draw of Shirley overcomes my uncertainty, and on March 30, I join the others in Birch Studio, sitting on bolsters, blankets, and blocks. The seasoned members carry dog-eared copies of *Light on the Yoga Sutras* by B.K.S. Iyengar and other books



I don't recognize. [This looks serious—will there be homework too?]

Shirley greets us with her signature twinkle and invites us to pick up some handouts as we settle in. We begin by taking turns reading aloud 20 verses from a section called "Contrary Ways" in *The Dhammapada*, which Wikipedia informs me is an assemblage of 423 melodious Pali verses, uttered by the Buddha on about 300 occasions, to suit the temperaments of the listener in the course of his preaching tours during his ministry of forty-five years.

We go around the circle, reading each verse, building our understanding.

What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: our life is the creation of our mind.

If a man speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering follows him as the wheel of the cart follows the beast that draws the cart...

...If a man speaks or acts with a pure mind, joy follows him as his own shadow...

He sorrows in this world, and he sorrows in the next world: the man who does evil suffers in both worlds.

'I have done evil', thus he laments, and more he laments on the path of sorrow.

He rejoices in this world, and he rejoices in the next world: the man who does good rejoices in both worlds. 'I have done good', thus he rejoices, and more he rejoices on the path of joy.

I enjoy the rhythm, the repetition, and the relevance of these aphorisms to my experience. [This is not the dry rusk I had anticipated.] Like a yogic amuse-bouche, the readings excite our taste buds and offer a glimpse into Shirley's way of teaching.

Next, we travel to the *Samahdi Pada*, chapter one of Patanjali's *sutras*, where the sage defines yoga and the movement of the consciousness:

With prayers for divine blessings, now begins an exposition of the sacred art of yoga.

Sitting in this circle of new and familiar faces, these formal words feel like a form of "grace" before the meal we have come to share. I close my eyes to better hear the Sanskrit of the second verse:

Yogah cittavrtti nirodah: Yoga is the cessation of movement in the consciousness.

This *sutra* is often cited in our *asana* classes, where *asana* is offered as a tool to help us focus and find stillness. Shirley notes that Patanjali refers to fluctuations of 'consciousness' or 'mind', depending on the translation. Eyes bright with

curiosity, she queries: “When you use the word ‘mind’, what do you mean?” With a fractional pause, she continues, “The other day Derek asked me to do something. It went out of my mind. How do you use ‘mind’ and what are you talking about?”

We answer: “Thinking’, ‘in my head’, ‘being watchful’,”

Next question: “When you think of ‘consciousness’, what do you mean?” [She waits for us and seems really interested to hear what we have to say].

We answer: “‘Breathing’, ‘pulse’, ‘dilation of pupils’, ‘connection to the mind’, ‘awareness.’”

Shirley comments on how language defines the world for us, noting that “If we are going to look at a philosophy that talks to us about calming or stilling the mind, or changing thoughts and attitudes, we need to know ourselves in our use of language.” In typical Shirley fashion, she enriches this concept with a personal anecdote, this time from her long relationship with Swami Sivananda Radha, a pioneer in the development of yoga in the West, and founder of Yasodhara Ashram (Kootenay Lake, BC) in 1963. “In one of our discussions, Swami Radha suggested that I was a person of extremes [laughs] and not to use extreme language—e.g., ‘I hate cabbage’. I had to look at how my language connected with my emotions going up and down. She suggested that my language might have something to do with that.”

From here, we move to “Some Thoughts on Thinking,” excerpts from *Raja Yoga* by Swami Vivekananda (published posthumously in the 1920s). With Shirley’s guidance, we explore the three levels of thought: unconscious (instinctive, reflexive), conscious (reasoning, judgment), and superconscious (beyond reason). We



discuss how the act of new thinking opens new channels in the brain—the fewer the channels, the more conservative the brain, and the more it will struggle against new thoughts. Shirley offers a personal example of channels that are not open to her (scientific things), because she may have closed her mind to them when very young.

Together, we ponder the channels we build, the channels we block, and the opportunities for change, sharing experiences and insights. Shirley fuels our quest with powerful questions that encourage us to probe more deeply how these yogic teachings manifest in our lives. Some examples:

- What is your interpretation? That’s what’s interesting...
- Where does our language limit us?
- Are we satisfied with the level of thinking in the channels of the brain?
- What ideas are our brains resisting right now, or taking in and savouring?
- When you have a strong reaction of dismissiveness, why is this?
- Why do some things disturb us; is there something to learn from them?
- What makes you step out of your comfort zone?
- What do we have the ability to affect?

In closing, she challenges us to look closely at our lives and how we function. “The real point in all this is to see how these teachings are relevant to you and your life. That is the value of yoga. It is a

personal practice, even though it can be done in a group.”

Recommendation

This pattern of readings, questions, *sutras*, discussion, and more questions has characterized each session. And as I look forward to session six, I can report that the journey has been remarkable.

Yes, there is homework—of a kind that is inspired rather than assigned, draws from within rather than being directed from without, and will continue when the current sessions end. I am grateful to Shirley for sharing herself and her wisdom, and for providing this guided tour. I have indeed learned that yoga is more than a physical practice, and I recommend this exploration with all my heart. ॐ

Thank you to

- Soo Ham for teaching a yoga class and promoting the Centre at the Pacific Paddling Symposium.
- Lucie Guindon for donating her teacher fee for the Improving the Basic Poses and Principles workshop in April.
- Roger Champagne, our Editor, for his years of commitment to editing the Newsletter on a volunteer basis and to his dedicated committee.
- Newsletter’s behind-the-scenes workers: Lauren Cox, Leslie Hogya, Johanna Godliman, Jane McFarlane, Hilary McPhail for putting together the content; Peggy Cady for design and production; Adia Kapoor and Krysia Strawczynski for distribution

Pearls of Wisdom: Commentary on the Yoga Sutas of Patanjali, Part 1

By B.K.S. Iyengar

Mr. Iyengar's Commentary on Patanjali

The following is Mr. Iyengar's address on Patanjali's *Yoga Sutas*, given at the Iyengar Yoga Institute in London, England, July 15, 1990. The address first appeared in *Dipika, Journal of the Iyengar Institute* (No. 24, January 1993), London, England. It included an introduction, entitled "Pearls of Wisdom", and a commentary on each chapter of the *Sutas*, in which Patanjali describes the different paths that characterize yogic ascendance to *Samadhi*.

The article will be presented in three parts in three issues of the newsletter.



PEARLS OF WISDOM THE YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI

*Yogena cittasya padena vacam
Malam sarirasya ca vaidyakena
Yopakarottam pravaram muninam
Patanjalim pranjaliranato'smi*

*Abahu purusakaram
Sankha cakrasi darinam
Sahasra sirasam svetam
Pranamami Patanjalin*

Patanjali

I salute Patanjali, the revered sage,
Who brought yoga for serenity of mind,
Grammar for clarity of speech, and
Medicine for purification of the body.

I salute Patanjali,
Whose upper body has a human form
Who holds a conch and discus in his hands, and
Who is crowned by the thousand-headed, shining cobra.

The sage Patanjali, the "father of yoga", lived in India approximately 2,200 years ago. A great scholar and philosopher, he was the author of classical treatises on yoga philosophy (The *Yoga Sutas*), Sanskrit grammar (the *Mahabhasya*) and Indian medicine (*ayurveda*). Patanjali showed his mastery of yoga and language by codifying the entire yoga system (*darsana*) in just 196 *sutas*.

Tribute is made to Patanjali in the above traditional *sloka* (verse). The second verse describes Patanjali's symbolic form. The thousand-headed cobra represents infinity, the conch calls us to yoga practice and the disc symbolizes the wheel of time and the law of cause and effect. In reciting the *sloka* we pay respect to the three aspects of Patanjali's work – *yoga*, *pada shastra* (grammar), and *ayurveda* – and to Patanjali himself.

Friends, to speak on the subject of Patanjali's *sutas* is not easy. As you all know it is a concise and concentrated book. Without Patanjali's blessings it is difficult to penetrate the essence of his words. But today is a happy day, and you have a chance to learn about this great book. So may the blessings of Lord Patanjali be on you, may his wisdom dawn on you, so that the flash of his understanding may come to you.

My request to you all is, when you start your classes, if you cannot attempt the recitation of the Sanskrit original, that you recite the translation of this *Patanjali sloka*. In this way we may invoke his presence at the time of our practices. We do this for the simple reason that he is the father of yoga. I have become convinced after many years of practice that we should think of this great founder who gave us grammar for right speech, medicine for health and yoga for the mind so that our minds may be tuned to the good thoughts of this great man.

Before I start, you should know a little of the background of Patanjali. He is said to have been born some time between 800 and 200 B.C. Nobody can give the exact date because in India, the dates of the lives of the great sages were always given approximately. Similarly in some of the books they say Patanjali was born in Chidambaram in South India and some say he was born in Bengal. Nobody knows for sure but everywhere there is a temple of Patanjali, all over the south and all over the north.

Patanjali is a *svayambhu* (svaya-ambhu – with one's own will-power). He came into existence by his own will. He has no parents and, according to Indian mythology, he is the incarnation of Lord Adisesha. Adisesha is a great King Cobra who gives his body as a seat for Lord Vishnu. It is said that once Lord Shiva, king of dance, invited Lord Vishnu and other deities to see his famous dance, *Tandava Nrtya*. As Lord Shiva danced, Lord Vishnu's body began to vibrate to the graceful movements of Lord Shiva. As Lord Vishnu was seated on Adisesha, the great cobra became breathless under the weight and started to gasp for air. When the dance came to an end Adisesha asked the Lord, "How is it that you were so heavy when you were dancing, and as soon as the dance stopped you became light?" He replied, "I was so completely engrossed in the movements that my nerves and body vibrated as if I was myself dancing. That is why you felt it". Seeing how impressed the Lord was with the dance, Adisesha decided to learn dance himself. (That is why many dancers in India say that Patanjali is also the father of dance). However, Lord Vishnu said, "You must wait. Lord Shiva is going to ask you to do some work. At that time you can be incarnated on the Earth and then you can learn dance." That time arrived and Lord Shiva asked him to write a commentary on grammar. Adisesha saw that his master Lord Vishnu's prediction had come true and he accepted. Then he looked for a woman who was both a yogini and a *tapasvini* (one who had done much yoga and fervent penance) to be his mother. He waited to find the right person, someone who would allow his goals to be fulfilled. After some time he found a lady called Gonika who had no children and who had done penance for several years. She was praying to the rising sun, saying, "My time has come to an end and whatever knowledge I have gathered it was only through you, O Sun God. So, as I have no son or daughter to pass it on to, I return my knowledge to you". She took some water to offer as an oblation, and she closed her eyes to pray. Then as she opened her eyes to make her offering of water to mother Earth, she saw a small worm moving in the water in her palms. She was terrified and said, "What polluted water I have taken!" Then immediately the worm began to take human form and begged the yogini to accept him as her son. She was astonished that he could speak and she accepted him as her son.

This story is the origin of Patanjali's name – *pata* means snake or fallen and *anjali* refers to the folding of the hands during prayer; thus Patanjali means "in the form of a snake that fell into the palms at the time of prayer".

As he grew, Gonika became more and more impressed by the boy and she passed on her knowledge to him. Eventually Patanjali completed his first duty, the commentary on grammar. It is very hard nowadays to imagine how one man could be a master of grammar, a master of medicine and a master of yoga. Because of this some Western scholars have conjectured that Patanjali, the author of the grammar, which was based on the

work of the grammarian Panini, must have been the son of Panini. However that is not so according to the Indian tradition.

Next, Patanjali determined to learn dance because he wanted to please his master. As he was learning dance, the idea struck him that the various movements of the body could be used for the improvement of health. The name of the system he then devised is *ayurveda*: *ayus* means life and *veda* means knowledge, so *ayurveda* is the knowledge of health, not the knowledge of medicine. This is an important distinction (Patanjali was also the writer of *Sushruta Samhita* which deals with the surgical branch of Indian medicine). He realised the value of health through dance and he produced a book on the subject of "life" or "energy" and thus gave us the "knowledge of life".

When he had finished these two great works he was very unhappy; he thought, "I have given the grammar for the use of right words and I have shown various ways to develop health, but I have not said anything about cultivating the mind. Some commentators say this is why the first *sutra*, *Atha Yoga anusasanam* begins with the word *atha* which means "now". Some people translate this *sutra* as "Now, the exposition of yoga", interpreting the "now" to mean that yoga had not been in existence before. But Patanjali was not creating yoga; instead, he was bringing what had been in the past into the present. In this *sutra* "now" does not indicate a new idea. It is like in our classes, when we say, "Now, come on, do *trikonasana*" or "Now, do *parsvakonasana*!" Don't we say that? This use of the word "now" is to bring the hearer's attention to the present situation. So Patanjali was bringing the attention of his readers to a past tradition, which had been evaded or neglected. Also, in the original language *anusasanam* did not mean exposition (as it is usually translated in English), but referred to the oral tradition of the sages (sayings passed down). *Sasana* also means "code of law", like the law codes of this world. However, this book is a code for human spiritual development and contains directed instructions for a code of living, a code of conduct. So, the *sutras* begin, "Now, what is the code of conduct?"

So Patanjali thought, "I have dealt with two parts of the body, how to speak and how to keep the body healthy; now let me speak about the mind. Then he integrated the different texts referring to yoga, which are scattered among the different *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, and he systematized them and presented yoga as a subject which would be comprehensible for those who are truly interested. Then, when the book was finished he disappeared from this world, in order to please his master and to dance before him and so this ancient text has survived to this day. As I said, there is still discussion about the exact date of its writing, but as students of yoga we are concerned about what Patanjali said, not when he was born. ॐ

(To be continued in the next issue.)

The Lyrical Language of B.K.S. Iyengar

By Laurel Rayburn

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I was lucky enough to be with my teacher and much of our Boston yoga community when Guruji's body passed from Earth last summer. In the midst of so many stories and memoirs, Patricia Walden spoke of the need to preserve B.K.S. Iyengar's language and, in particular, the images through which Guruji imagined and experienced *asana* and the path of yoga. I don't know that it is possible to fully pay tribute to a man who rendered the muscles of the legs "free-flowing rivers," the rib cage "tigers' claws," and the pores of the skin "inner eyes." These images will live on as long as we feel them in our cells.

But as a student of both Iyengar Yoga and poetry, I am interested in how or why such images—and Guruji's "poetry" in general—have the power they do. While we take the beauty of Guruji's poetic language for granted, what exactly do we mean by "poetic" in this context? What do we hold to be true about poetry when we say that B.K.S. Iyengar's language is "poetic" or "lyrical"? How might his language work on us the same way lyrical language does? And finally, what does "poetry" have to do with feeling on a cellular level? My hope is that in more closely examining the lyrical qualities of B.K.S. Iyengar's language, we might better understand his philosophy of yoga *asana*—the means through which the body becomes a "divine instrument" for the realization of the Self.

Literal and Imaginative Possibilities

Any practitioner of Iyengar Yoga will attest to the precision of the method in general; for B.K.S. Iyengar, precision in language is directly correlated to the precision of the body. And yet, almost as frequently, his language is regarded as poetic. The two terms seem to contradict one another. If precise or direct language suggests an attempt to make language efficient, then "poetic" implies the opposite. "Poetic" gives away the language game, swerving the listener's attention from what is being communicated to how the communication is accomplished. Mr. Iyengar's language of *asana* is rife with poetic device, from anthropomorphism, personification, and apostrophe



ILLUSTRATION:
CURTIS SETTINO

to hyperbole, chiasmus, simile, and metaphor. Such figures of speech are hardly ever mistaken for direct language. How do we make sense of such a paradox?

As an Iyengar Yoga student, I have certainly been on the receiving end of language that feels like a direct address to my body. As a poetry student, I know that language is *never* direct.

Language always misses its mark, swerves, redirects, fails. Poetry was practically invented to call our attention to this fact. In poems, words are no more important than the white spaces among them. Poetry honors the gaps, double-meanings, silences; it calls our attention to the way words either say too much or never enough. One thinks of Emily Dickinson's famous injunction: "Tell all the truth but tell it slant

— / Success in Circuit lies."

Mr. Iyengar's language of *asana* is rife with poetic device

To take a common example: In *Basic Guidelines*, Mr. Iyengar and Geeta Iyengar instruct teachers that their words should "shoot like arrows to the part of the body [they] are teaching." This instruction declares an allegiance with precise language. Comparing words to arrows suggests that the moment one grasps for language that is direct, efficient, and unencumbered by figurative trappings is the exact moment in which figures of speech are necessarily summoned. The very attempt to evacuate language of its symbolic or associative function produces more symbols, more associations. The instruction continues: "Charge their body with your verbal explanation and charge your own body to show them. Do not use ambiguous words such as 'charging.'" Here, they call attention to the way they are depending on linguistic indirection to achieve their meaning. "Charge" is the wrong word to use if a teacher wants to achieve the effect of charging!

*...if Orpheus' song inspires stones to move,
Guruji, from the dullness of bodily tamas,
awakens intelligence.*

Guruji's language resists deciding between literal and imaginative possibilities. The instruction to "extend the inner edge of the big toe away from the foot," for example, is absolutely direct; the student's attention is immediately drawn to a concrete and specific part of the body. Still, depending on the experience and sensitivity of the student, this language may be as much "poetic" as it is "precise"; the instruction may indeed lead to a physical shift in the body but also might remain at the level of the student's imagination. Whether or not the *sadhaka* can literally move the skin on the inner edge of her big toe, the assertion that she must, right now, take her attention to that tiny, specific site is an imaginary leap that shifts her to a different place altogether; "Can I feel the skin of the big toe? Is it moving? Is that the muscle or the skin?" Whether or not the outer form appears different, the psychological landscape of the *asana* has changed completely; the change in psychology in turn can have a physiological or emotional effect. If the figure of speech misses its first mark, its refracted trajectory nonetheless moves the *sadhaka* to a state of deep concentration—a state of "toe intelligence." We might say that indirectness appears in the guise of directness, and yet the *sadhaka* performing *asana* is moved toward a meditative state.

Description Versus Direct Address

Directing an instruction to the inner edge of the big toe is one example of Guruji's play with modes of address. This is where, to my mind, his language truly becomes lyrical, in the technical sense of the term. Such modes of address flaunt one of lyric poetry's great devices—the call to an inanimate object or absent being. Lyric forms address anything and everything. (While most often the addressee isn't the big toe, there is no reason why it couldn't be.) Consider the well-known lines from the Beatles' "Blackbird":

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these broken wings and learn to fly,
All your life
You have just been waiting for this moment to arise.

The lines address a being that cannot possibly respond—at least not in language as we know it.

In our everyday lives, we are less likely to initiate such a calling. We don't commonly find ourselves speaking to a blackbird as in the lines above or conversing with a snail as American modernist Marianne Moore does or praising a pair of socks as in the ode by Pablo Neruda or instructing death itself as in the poem of John Donne. Importantly, in all of these instances, the lyric speaker endows an inanimate object with life in the very gesture of speaking to it. And in fact, this role of the lyric poet can be traced back to the story of the Greek god, Orpheus, who

The beauty of Guruji's images and his penchant for figurative language is everywhere in his writing and continues in the voices of our senior teachers.

was said to move even rocks and stones through the beauty of his music.

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* tells of the way that even the trees, hearing such singing, uprooted themselves to converge in the place where he played. The lyric poet, epitomized by Orpheus, thus shifts the terms of the world itself: What is once still and stagnant gathers motion; what was once rooted unbinds itself from the earth.

Although my claim is that Guruji's language positions him—or any Iyengar Yoga teacher—in this role to appreciate what address can do, I want to turn to an example of a nonaddress.

In one of my favorite passages from *Light on Life*, Guruji describes the innermost layer of the self as a doorway toward which *prafriti* longs: "An opening is like a doorway, and there is no such thing as a doorway that you can only go through one way. Yes, we are trying to penetrate in, but what is trying to come out to meet us? It is the light of the innermost sheath and bliss (*ananda*), which wants to shine out." The beauty of the passage perhaps derives in part from the image of a living, breathing *purusa*, greeting us as if we were long-lost travelers. The image of the doorway led me back to one of my favorite poems. Jean Valentine's "Door in the Mountain" describes a weary body, running through valleys and (literally) carrying the burden of death:

Never ran this hard through the valley
Never ate so many stars.
I was carrying a dead deer tied on to my neck
and shoulders
deer legs hanging in front of me heavy on my chest
People are not wanting to let me in
Door in the mountain let me in

In some ways, the poem rewrites Guruji's passage, but here, the emphasis falls on the one running toward the door; we don't yet have a vision of the one who will "come out to meet [her]." There is another important difference between the two excerpts, however, which has nothing to do with the content of the poem and everything to do with the address—the trajectory that the language takes. Guruji describes the image of "opening" as a doorway; he is addressing us as readers and students. The

poem's speaker, however, addresses the door in the mountain directly; she turns away from the reader to talk to the door itself. The difference may seem small, but in the world of poetry, everything can turn on the distinction between description and address. Consider the difference in the context of *asana* instruction: The description of an action in *asana* isn't as powerful as a direct address. Description reports on what's there: The outer heel presses into the floor. Direct address has the power to invoke an action: Press the outer heel into the floor.

While we do not know exactly what a door in the mountain could be, we assume that both doors and mountains are inanimate, at least in the world as we know it. They do not move on their own. The call to the door in the mountain asks for a kind of cooperation that would defy the laws of physics; it asks something inanimate to move or act or open. The "I" in the poem presumes that calling to the door might, in fact, accomplish its opening. In this way, lyric forms assume the power of voice to invoke—to invoke motion where there was stasis, to invoke speech where there was muteness, even to invoke silence where there was restlessness or violence. In this sense, the job of the lyric poet is not to represent the thoughts or feelings of a speaker whose presence precedes the poem but to act out the somewhat outlandish attempt to animate presence from absence. B.K.S. Iyengar's language of *asana* mimics this ambition of the lyric poet. We have heard it again and again—the invocation of the cells to awaken, to activate, to pierce through their dullness. Referring to *asana* practice, Guruji tells us in *Light on Life*, "Never repeat. Repetition makes the mind dull. You must animate." If Orpheus' song inspires stones to move, Guruji, from the dullness of bodily *tamas*, awakens intelligence.

As one instance of a poetic trope, lyric address is a mode of language that is constantly turning or shifting the attention of the reader or listener. (Indeed, the Greek root of the word "trope" is "to turn" or "turning.") Lyric address often results in a play of voice trajectories—a poet invokes an inanimate object, an "I" calls out to a "you," a speaker turns away from his audience to address the sky, the sunset, the clouds. In the previous example, the speaker seems to be describing her actions to her readers until she abruptly turns to address the "door" itself. The position of the reader shifts quickly as she becomes an eavesdropper to a different conversation altogether. We see this also in the mystic poets. In one instance, the Sufi poet Rumi begins the first stanza of his poem "No Longer Drunk but the Wine Itself" describing to us, his readers, an image of a gnat drowned in wine:

the gnat
is in the wine jar
he is no longer drunk
he is wine itself.

By the last stanza, however, he abruptly shifts to make demands on the innermost "soul":

speak!
o soul of the soul of the soul
o face that renders
every created atom
articulate with love!

Our attention swerves from the image of the wine bottle to this sudden and urgent injunction. We do not know in the end whether this innermost soul "speaks," but we know our attention is moving in a different direction altogether.

Guruji's language takes a similar form when he renders parts of the body into addressees, listeners, or potential speakers themselves. This gesture is consistent with his teaching that awareness is blocked if we experience consciousness only in the brain. In one passage in the "Stability" chapter in *Light on Life*, he goes so far as to give voice to parts of the body. Instructing in how to work with the body's limitations, he tells us, "Your brain may say, We can do it.' But the knee may say, 'Who are you to dictate to me? It is for me to say whether I can do it or not.' So you have to listen to what the body says. Sometimes the body cooperates with you, and sometimes it thinks things over." Like Valentine's "door" and Rumi's "soul of the soul of the soul," the brain abruptly becomes the object addressed. This example in particular shows how addressing a (presumed) inanimate entity renders them potential responders. Although initially the brain has its say, the logic of lyric address implies that the very fact of its speaking to the knee endows the knee with the power of response. The throwing of voice—the shift of address—enacts the hierarchal reversal. And of course, this is exactly the reversal that Guruji asks us to pursue: a shift in awareness that renders the brain as the observer—or the listener—rather than the actor.

The beauty of Guruji's images and his penchant for figurative language is everywhere in his writing and continues in the voices of our senior teachers. And yet, when we are at home, practicing alone, our bodies also hear his words. Our bodies are addressed. This is the lyric moment: the invocation to animate, the perpetual call to our cells that endows the smallest parts of our bodies with the capacity to think, respond, awaken. From our first *tadasana*, he has written, we begin to move toward the innermost sheath. He has called to our dullest places, and we are calling back: Door in the mountain, let me in. ॐ

LAUREL RAYBURN (INTRODUCTORY II) RECEIVED HER PH.D. IN ENGLISH FROM BROWN UNIVERSITY, WHERE SHE DEFENDED A DISSERTATION ON 20TH-CENTURY AMERICAN LYRIC POETRY. SHE TEACHES ACADEMIC WRITING FOR THE HARVARD EXTENSION SCHOOL AND FOR THE COLLEGE PROGRAM INSIDE THE WOMEN'S PRISON IN WASHINGTON STATE.

A Personal Thank You – for the 2016 Remedial Class Tea

Hello everyone,

We had a delightful and lovely tea, with Robin's full regalia Tea Pose – this time hanging from the ropes, delicious food, background music, and a touching rendition of three songs from Mae Brown (a student in our remedial class). This year's tea raised over \$5,400 in funds. All the silent auction items were purchased. Each year the Centre raises more funds for the replenishment and purchase and upkeep of our props. Our collective efforts help the Centre not only financially but also socially; good will, camaraderie, and community support are very present at this event.

The tea takes much energy and volunteer time from many people. I want to thank all those I can remember for their extraordinary effort:

- To the Remedial Class teachers, Marlene Miller and Linda Benn, who teach the class along with me, and the many volunteers who teach each week without whom we couldn't function.
- To the students who attend the classes.
- To Robin Cantor for the overall organization of the tea – a job that begins months in advance of the event. Thanks for fundraising in your home studio; borrowing cups and table cloths (and laundering them); picking a stunning array of flowers; finding the team of volunteers and delegating the work to manage the kitchen and food. It was quite an event watching you hanging from the ropes poised to have a cuppa!



Spring Tea finery



Robin Cantor in Dwi Pada Viparita Karana with her 'cuppa'



Annie Kitchen with Ann Kilbertus



A goodie laden table for those at the Spring Tea

- To the bakers, flower arrangers and greeters – the food was wonderful. It made the tea a sweet and savoury event!
- To Jayne Jonas for picking up the tea Silk Road generously brewed and donated.
- To Laura Johnston for flower arranging.
- To Patty Kallio and Wendy Wimbush for meeting and greeting guests.
- To Darwin Miller of the Renaissance Retirement Residence for loaning all the linens and dishes and to Jim Pask for toting these to the Centre and Karin Dayton for toting them all back.
- To Annie Kitchen with her assistant Shauna Johnson, and helpers Laine Canivet and Keiko Alkire took on the huge task of organizing the Silent Auction. Many thanks!
- to all who donated the items – it gets more difficult every year to keep the treasures and services coming. Bids were much increased from last year by over \$800 to a total of \$3,372.
- To Dawn Cox, Jess Paffard, Johanna Godliman and Jane McFarlane, Laine Canivet for kitchen duty and cleanup. The kitchen was so packed with people, food and dishes – felt like a big family gathering.
- To Kayla Smith, Al Reford, Jaya Malaviarachchi, Laura Johnston, Karin Dayton and all those who helped with set up and pouring tea, and clean up!
- To Jane McFarlane, Caroline Meggison, Laine Canivet, Al Reford, Melissa Hadley and Johanna Godliman for helping with set up and take down. To Johanna Godliman for sweeping and mopping the studio floor after the tables were down.
- To Krysia Strawczynski (and her neighbor Ron Beckett) and Billie Essa for loaning tables to us.

*With gratitude for your collective and harmonious efforts in the light of yoga,
Namaste, Ann Kilbertus ॐ*

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

Saturday-Sunday, October 1-2, 2016

Explore asana and pranayama with some of Victoria's senior teachers: Shirley Daventry French, Leslie Hogya, and Marlene Miller.

Saturday morning: 10:30 am - 1:00 pm

Body, Mind, And Breath – The Essentials for the Yogic Journey with Shirley Daventry French

Saturday afternoon: 3:00 - 5:30 pm

From the ground up with Leslie Hogya

Sunday afternoon: 12:00 - 2:30 pm

Discovering balance in every asana with Marlene Miller

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

For one section: \$55 +GST Members/

\$60 +GST non-members

For whole weekend: \$150 +GST Members/

\$160 +GST non-members

Refunds offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$15 cancellation fee.



IYAC/ACYI ASSESSMENT DATES

June 10-12, Intermediate Junior III, Victoria, BC

September 30-October 2, Introductory II, Saskatoon, SK

November 11-13, Introductory II, Fredericton, NB

November 18-20, Introductory II, Calgary, AB

Patanjali and Rope Sirsasana, a workshop with Jawahar Banghera

By Suzanne Tremblay



Jawahar overseeing the students in chaturshirdhasana

Have you ever wondered why Gururji introduced *parvritta trikonasana* immediately after *trikonasana* in *Light on Yoga*? I remember being surprised when I was looking at that book for the first time, years ago. Jawahar gave us the answer. In 1954, when writing *Light on Yoga*, Gururji assumed everyone would put the same intensity of practice into yoga as he did....

Of course, said Jawahar, we know this is not the case, and when he concluded as such, Gururji revised the syllabus for teaching and learning *asanas*...and *parvritta trikonasana* is no longer introduced immediately after *trikonasana*.

This brief insight into Gururji's mind and the evolution of his thinking are examples of the many interesting moments Jawahar shared with us during his five-day workshop in Victoria in March, 2016. What a privilege it was

to be with someone who lived and worked so closely with Gururji for so many years. Not only did Jawahar amaze us with his profound and in-depth knowledge of *asanas* and *pranayama*, he wove yoga philosophy through practice connecting what we do and why we do it directly back to Patanjali.

Sutra 1.30: *These obstacles [to self-realization through yoga] are disease, inertia, doubt, heedlessness, laziness, indiscipline of the senses, erroneous views, lack of perseverance, and backsliding.*

We were asked to check within ourselves. Are we becoming complacent in our practice? Do we practice *asanas* mechanically, out of habit? Or, is our consciousness constantly focused, attentive and evolving as we journey on in yoga?

Jawahar brought our attention to both the silhouette and the profile of an *asana*. The silhouette is what you



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At the open house, we will celebrate 15 years in our current location on Fort Street.

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Saturday, Sept 17

Free classes.

Schedule to be announced

Sunday, Sept 18

Ann Kilbertus will give a 90-minute free workshop for new and returning students.

Pre-registration is required for workshop only.

Max. 35 students



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250-386-YOGA (9642)

see when looking at the *asana* from the front, but, to get the full picture, Jawahar showed us that we need to look at the profile of the *asana*. It is the profile that shows how well aligned we are in the pose. When we achieve a perfect alignment, we get the benefits of the pose. An *asana* may look fine when seen from the silhouette side, but when viewed from the profile, we realize the student is leaning forward. To get a complete view, we need to look at both silhouette and profile.

Jawahar reminded us that *asanas* are perfect, it is us who are imperfect. Yet we tend to blame *asanas* when we develop pain associated with practice: "Here goes the banner in the *New York Times*," said Jawahar, "*sirsasana* is bad for your neck." It is not true that *sirsasana* is bad for the neck, *sirsasana* is perfect, but perhaps we have not learned to turn the neck properly in preparatory poses such as *trikonasana* and we carry this improper neck turning in *sirsasana*, resulting in neck pain after *sirsasana*." The pose is perfect, it is us who fail to do it perfectly. We fail to maintain the spread across the pelvic diaphragm in *trikonasana* and *parsvakonasana*, and



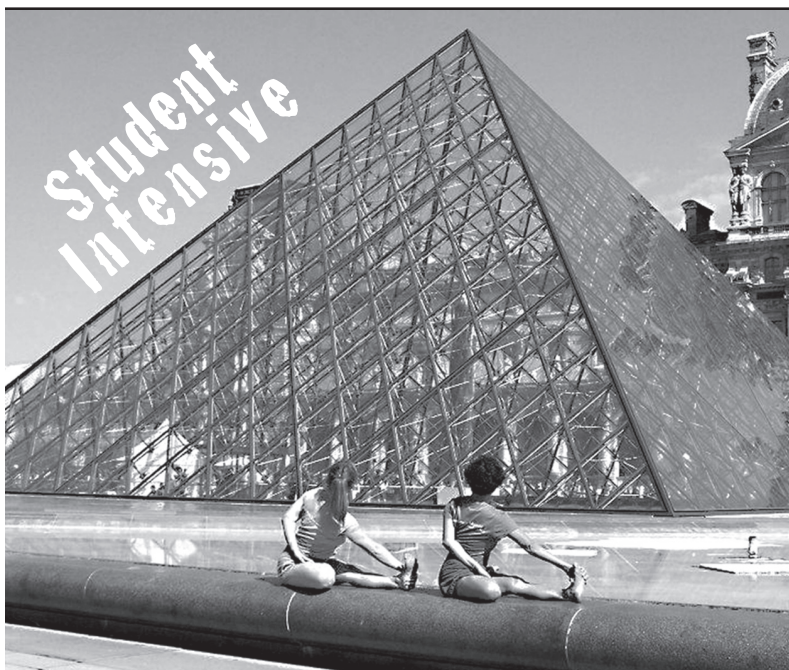
therefore we fail to turn from the base of the spine, resulting in strain in the neck.

Jawahar constantly reminded us of the importance of working from the foundation. He told us, "Make your students understand that they must move their joints, not just their muscles. They are aware of their muscles. If they move the joints, the muscles become fluid. Elbow joints for the arms, arms for the chest. Stress the importance of the arms. If they don't engage their arms, the chest will collapse. When the chest opens, we become more stable emotionally. That's because the more the lungs expand, the less stress there is on the heart. An open chest creates a calm mind because the left and right brains

are balanced. You cannot put enough emphasis on opening the chest!"

Constantly stressing the inter-relatedness of body, mind, and various body parts and how *asanas* are linked to one another, Jawahar shared some insights in the syllabus of Iyengar yoga poses. For example, we know that *virasana* provides great work for the legs, knees and feet. Jawahar pointed out that *virasana* helps correcting the deformities of the legs, and therefore is excellent preparation for inversions, even in straight legs poses such as *sirsasana* and *sarvangasana*. This is why we learn and teach *virasana* before we learn and teach *sirsasana* and *sarvangasana*. In the same line, Jawahar stressed the knee action in *dandasana*, as the same knee action is carried over to *sirsasana*.

Guruji said that to teach is to see. Jawahar has an uncanny ability to see. He himself said, half seriously, that he does not actively try to find faults in our performance of *asanas*, but his eyes are immediately drawn to the person who presents a problem. Having identified such a situation, be it the need to roll inner arms outwardly to broaden the top shoulders in *adho mukha svanasana*, or scoliosis in one participant, he then



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: \$250 CDN + GST IYCV Members
\$275 CDN + GST IYCV Non-Members

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(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.

capitalises on this particular situation to make it both a teaching moment and correct the problem for the individual. I think we were all impressed with how he addressed the scoliosis. He said, jokingly, that he had just saved the participant a doctor's visit and X-rays. He positioned the student in one top rope, for a tight and intense suspended *sirsasana*, and oriented the extended arms sideways, keeping the shape of the pose by resting the hands on the floor, to effectively correct the scoliosis. "The pains that are yet to come can and will be avoided." (Sutra 2-16)

There was another thing that spoke to me of Jawahar's consummate teaching excellence. Before he started the class, he said he had not prepared anything. He wanted to see what the group was capable of, and move from there. During a three-hour session, we perhaps worked on ten *asanas*, if that many. He is able to break down the *asanas* in finite components and incrementally add one element on top of the previous one in a very effective way, making us work at a very deep level.

I particularly liked the fact that Jawahar wove the *sutras* into the *asana* work we did, and informed our practice of its deeper philosophical underpinning. When I thanked him for that, he humbly said that all he did was simply to continue the work of Guruji. Guruji had asked him to go and teach, and that's what he was doing.

As any good teacher, Jawahar was a demanding teacher. He wouldn't be satisfied by an *asana* mediocly performed. For example, on the second day as we were working on *virabradhasana* II, and he was insisting that we ought to keep the two sides of the torso equally long, he granted us 110% for our effort on this pose! Needless to say, we were delighted and relieved...however he added that we were lacking in intelligence in connecting actions from one pose to the other! With this last comment, he was



Jawahar showing on Gary Wong how to support the openings of the shoulder girdle and the top chest

making sure that our ego would not get a boost!

We learned new ways of teaching and performing *asanas* during this workshop, for example, going into *dwi pada viparita dandasana* to release the neck and shoulders after a long *sirsasana*. However, he had us extend our arms laterally, at shoulder height, instead of having the arms reaching under the chair seat; this was done to release the neck and shoulders after a long hold. After having held *dwi pada* for a while, we came back up to sitting in the chair, and hung our chest over the back rest of the chair with our head and shoulders hanging, to complete the release.

While there were innumerable elements for learning, the benefits of

this workshop go beyond that. Here are some of the benefits, in no particular order. We shared the joy of spending five consecutive days with a great master and being inspired in this tradition, practicing and learning yoga with friends from Victoria and further afield, thereby building our yoga community. We felt greatly motivated to continue learning and journeying on our yoga path, and we experienced an increase in admiration and respect for B.K.S. Iyengar's phenomenal work. Truly, we are very blessed to practice in this yoga tradition and to have our yoga community and this yoga centre. Let's not forget that! ॐ

IYCV Calendar

JUNE

- 3-5 SSI Retreat
- 10-12 Assessment at IYCV for level IJ III
- 21 International Day of Yoga

JULY

- 4-8 Summer Early Morning Practice
- 11-15 Intro Teacher Intensive

AUGUST

- 8-12 Certified Teacher Intensive
- 29-Sep 2 Student Intensive

SEPTEMBER

- 17-18 Open House

OCTOBER

- 1-2 Body is the First Prop

NOVEMBER

- 4 Practice Enrichment Series
- 6 Teaching Enrichment

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Workshops: iyengaryogacentre.ca/workshops

Events: iyengaryogacentre.ca/events

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- Early registration for classes and workshops.
- Scholarship eligibility for various workshops.
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- Opportunities for members to contribute insights and apply to sit on the board of directors.

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Happy birthday to Shirley Daventry French who is celebrating her 85th in October.

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

Saturday-Sunday, October 1-2, 2016

Explore asana and pranayama with some of Victoria's senior teachers: Shirley Daventry French, Leslie Hogya, and Marlene Miller.

Saturday morning: 10:30 am - 1:00 pm

Body, Mind, And Breath – The Essentials for the Yogic Journey with Shirley Daventry French

Saturday afternoon: 3:00 - 5:30 pm

From the Ground Up with Leslie Hogya

Sunday afternoon: 12:00 - 2:30 pm

Discovering Balance in Every Asana with Marlene Miller

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

One session \$55 members/\$60 non-members
Two sessions \$110 members/\$120 non-members
Three sessions \$150 members/\$160 non-members
Add GST.

Refunds offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$15 cancellation fee.



IYCV Open House

Free! Come one, come all!

September 17-18, 2016

Featuring free yoga classes, chai tea, and goodies.

Saturday, Sept 17

Noon **Intro to the Rope Wall**
with Lauren Cox
Pre-registration required.
Max. 12 students. Please note: this class is for *new students only.*

1 pm **Intro Yoga**
with Adia Kapoor

2 pm **55+ Yoga**
with Wendy Boyer

3 pm **Yoga for All Levels, All Traditions**
with Lucie Guindon

4 pm **Yoga Philosophy** with
Shirley Daventry French
and Dr. Derek French

Meet the teachers

Sunday Sept 18

1 - 2:30 pm
Discover Iyengar Yoga Basics with Ann Kilbertus
This free workshop is for new and returning students. Pre-registration is 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)



IYAC/ACYI ASSESSMENT DATES

September 30 - October 2, Introductory II, Saskatoon, SK

November 11-13, Introductory II, Fredericton, NB

November 18-20, Introductory II, Calgary, AB

January 20-22, Intermediate Senior I/II/III, Victoria, BC

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: NOVEMBER 15, 2016

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IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the *Society Act* of the Province of B.C., whose purpose is "to encourage the physical, mental, and spiritual growth of its members and other interested persons of the society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga." The Society owes its inspiration to Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

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

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

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Newsletter Advertising Policy

(Adopted February 20, 2004)

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

1. Advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the newsletter of the IYCV.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar yoga.
3. Priority will be given to advertisements regarding IYCV events, IYCV sponsored events, and IYAC events.

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Reflections

by Shirley Daventry French

Twice last week I had to use taxis for the trip from the yoga centre to my home, a journey which can take as little as half an hour or almost an hour depending on the time of day. There is one taxi company which I prefer whose service is generally prompt and whose drivers are generally pleasant, albeit some of them are very eccentric. For instance, one elderly man (so far the have all been men), who had spent most of his life in the Canadian navy but now aspired to become a country and western singer, played a sample CD of a song written and performed by him!

Last week my first driver was polite but taciturn which, after a day's teaching, was fine with me. The second was more conversational. That evening the traffic was heavier than it had been all week so our journey was a long one.

This journey took place on a Thursday, and I remarked that this particular week I was working in

town each day until late afternoon and this was the heaviest traffic I had encountered so far. In response he enquired about the work I was doing and I hesitated a moment before answering. The current stereotype of a yoga teacher is a young scantily dressed woman with long hair and a slender lithe body. Yoga is assumed to be all about fitness and flexibility. Teachers are trained in a few weeks and in one extreme case in a weekend!

In casual social situations I rarely talk about the philosophy and practice that has absorbed my interest for nearly fifty years, but something about this driver led me to say: "I teach yoga"! His initial response was a common one: "So you can twist yourself into a pretzel!" which would generally lead me to say "ha ha" and let it go! But again I didn't follow my usual pattern and responded that although that is a very common image of yoga, it really is a very small part of the subject. It was the philosophy of yoga which attracted me to pursue it seriously.

This led to another question: "Is it a religion?" And when I answered that it was not, he told me that he had just returned to the Catholic church after an absence of many decades. An articulate quietly spoken man, he went on to describe the enrichment he was experiencing in his life as a result of this. There was no attempt to justify himself nor to convince or convert me.

And so an interesting dialogue ensued without self-justification or proselytizing. We discussed the importance of finding fulfilment, living a life of meaning and purpose, and undertaking a spiritual journey or quest towards what yogis would call the *Self*, and Christians might describe as *Jesus* or *God* or *Soul*.

This led to discussion of books we were currently reading. My taxi driver was obviously a prolific reader and among many others he mentioned a book on the scientific and political obstacles to overcoming Malaria and Yellow Fever and a two volume treatise by Mark Twain on Joan of Arc. I had never heard of this last one (in common with many others as I discovered when looking it up online) but it is one I may well read. Many of those who had read it expressed astonishment that it was actually written by "The Mark Twain" because it differs greatly from his many other books, and almost without exception readers were full of enthusiasm.

What an unusual ride this was! The rush hour crawl seemed to take no time at all and I arrived home less tired than when I left the centre, ready to host the dinner party we always hold on the penultimate night of this yoga teacher training course. The weather which had been unseasonably cool the previous week suddenly decided to return to summer allowing us to sit outside enjoying the ocean and mountain

Teaching Enrichment Series for Iyengar Yoga Teachers and Trainees

This series will advance your personal practice of asana and pranayama, refine your skills as a teacher, and deepen your understanding of Iyengar Yoga with some of the country's most experienced and respected teachers.

November 5, 10:45 am – 1:45 pm

March 11, 10:45 am – 1:45 pm

April 7, 2 – 5 pm

Each session \$35 +GST

view and fresh Pacific air while eating delicious Indian food prepared by a long-time yoga student at our centre who runs a restaurant just across the road from the centre.¹ Conversation was lively and laced with humour exemplifying B.K.S. Iyengar's maxim "*Love, Labour and Laugh!*"

Guruji himself lived this maxim every day, and I thought to myself that he would be pleased to see his students coming together as we had that week, working hard to open body and mind and liberate ourselves from self-imposed limitations on all levels.

This intermediate course attracts experienced teachers from across the country and sometimes from other countries. For some it was their first visit to the West Coast. In addition to myself, two other senior Canadian teachers comprised the teaching faculty: Ann Kilbertus of Victoria and Louie Ettling of Vancouver. From the very first contact with Guruji, he encouraged us to come together, work together, support each other, and establish a community of yoga practitioners—first in our local community, then nationally and internationally, while maintaining our link to the source of these teachings in Pune. As far as Canada and particularly here on the West Coast is concerned, we are literally half a world away from Pune geographically and aeons apart from India socially and culturally.

Writing this article I was reminded of another personal experience of the coming together of East and West where I made a connection on a spiritual level with the most unlikely companion.

It happened many years ago when I was travelling to Yasodhara Ashram where I had spent many hours practising and studying yoga and where, on this occasion, I had been invited to teach a workshop as part of their Yoga

Development Course. I had been a student in this three-month residential course myself in 1976 and it was a seminal experience which, among many other things, sewed the seeds for a pilgrimage to Pune.

It was winter in Canada and although here on the West Coast we have a temperate climate and generally experience little or no snow except in the mountains, Yasodhara Ashram lies on Kootenay Lake between the Selkirk and Purcell mountain ranges on the eastern side of British Columbia. Their winter is generally colder and snowier than on the coast and travel by road or air is often restricted. As I checked in for my flight to Castlegar (the closest airport to the ashram), the Air Canada agent looked at me and said: "Oh you mean *Castlescratch!*" He did give me a boarding pass but sure enough, we flew part way only to abort the flight in the Okanagan Valley over 400 km short of our destination. We were to go the rest of the way by bus.

On the bus I found myself sitting next to a smartly dressed man whom I guessed was a few years older than I was. Apart from a cursory greeting as I sat down, we did not exchange words for some time until he enquired where I lived and what was bringing me to the Kootenays in winter. From experience I was hesitant to say I was going to an ashram to teach yoga. It was the hippie era of "dropping out and tuning in", often with the help of drugs; in those days a common response would be along the lines of "What on earth is possessing a sensible woman like you to disturb your nice comfortable life?"

However, there was something about this man which made me reluctant to lie to him so I simply told him the truth. In response he told me he was a Baptist minister and theologian who was also on his way to do some teaching.

My heart sank! Oh dear, I am trapped here for the next four hours with a puritan! Was I going to be subjected

to a lecture about opening myself to unsavoury practices and the devil? Quite the contrary!

His response and the fascinating discussion which ensued broke down many of my stereotypes about puritanical Christian disciplines, opinions based on little study and experience. A professor at a seminary in the outskirts of Vancouver, he had been to India himself several times where he had studied and practised many aspects of eastern philosophy, including prolonged stays in Hindu ashrams and Buddhist monasteries. In fact, where eastern spiritual studies were concerned, he was far ahead of me and, moreover, quite open-minded.

Interested to learn I had been a practising Anglican during my youth and this was of my own volition since my parents did not hold any affiliation to any church, he made many interesting links between Christian philosophy and practice and eastern spiritual discipline.

This bus journey took place in the early 1980s by which time I had made several trips to Pune for two and three month stays as well as training with Guruji on his visits to Canada and the United States.

As the journey from Penticton to Castlegar continued through the mountainous snowy terrain in the darkness of a mid-winter evening, I was completely absorbed in our conversation. We arrived at our destination and went our separate ways; however, when I arrived home from the Ashram, it was to find a parcel waiting for me from this man the Reverend Vernon Middleton. It contained a book called *Turning East*² by a Harvard theologian called Harvey Cox who was a friend and colleague of my bus companion.

1 Billie Essa is the owner and chef at Spice Jammer restaurant, 852 Fort Street, Victoria

2 *Turning East* by Harvey Cox Ph.D. was first published in 1977. Professor Cox is one of the preeminent theologians in the United States who served as Hollis Professor of Divinity at the Harvard Divinity School, until his retirement in October 2009.

Professor Cox was at first sceptical about Western obsession with Eastern spiritual practices, but he opened his mind and enriched his life, his learning, and his own Christian faith. More aware of the promises and perils of what he described as “the new Orientalism”, he returned from his pilgrimage “better able to act out his Christian beliefs than he had been at the start”.

Guruji never encouraged us to become Hindus although we were urged to become familiar with texts such as *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* and the *Bhagavad Gita* which are fundamental to yoga.

At the same time we were urged to dig deeper into our own spiritual traditions. In the East, Jesus Christ is revered as a great Yogi although, sadly, some of the less liberal thinkers in the Christian church, see this as an insult. Others, in common with Guruji and secure in their own spiritual tradition, show respect for all others.

As I discovered in the unlikely form of a taxi driver and during a night-time bus ride through the wilderness in the company of a stranger, spiritual enrichment is available constantly when the mind is open. God does indeed

work in mysterious ways. I have already started rereading *Turning East*.

At Yasodhara Ashram, a common refrain (often in the form of a prayer) was the necessity to make all of your life spiritual life. So often the spiritual side is compartmentalised—for instance the question: “Have you *done* yoga today?” As long as you live, yoga will never “be done” and then who knows? And until that day a common goal for a yogi or any spiritual seeker has to be constant vigilance so the opportunity for enlightenment is not wasted. ॐ



Thank You to:

- The Teacher Training committee for organizing the Professional development days four times a year for teachers to work, study, and learn together.
- Shirley Daventry French for leading a session in April on the *vayus* – energy and *pranayama*. A record attendance number was hit – 45 people from as far away as Alberta, many from Comox and Nanaimo, plus the local teachers.
- Vicki Kapoor for mounting some archival photos of Mr. Iyengar.
- Britta Poisson, Monica Dimofski, Johanna Godliman, Adia Kapoor, Leslie Hogya, and Wendy Boyer for all your work for the 2nd Annual International Day of Yoga.
- Nancy Reed who donated a small statue of Nataraj.

- Ray Brooks and Dianne Brooks for donating 10 copies of their new book, *The Shadow that Seeks the Sun*, now available in our retail area.
- Gillian Garcia for donating several titles to our library.
- Everyone who was involved (either willingly or by coercion) in the Intermediate Junior III assessment. So many people in our community donated their bodies as students, food to nourish, and time to organize. Special thanks to Glenda Balkan-Champagne, Adia Kapoor, and Annie Kitchen.

For the 32nd Annual Salt Spring Retreat in June, thank you to:

- Shirley, for your astonishing leadership! The Salt Spring Centre has a cookbook called *The Salt Spring Experience*. Our book would be called *The Shirley Experience*!
- Derek French, for accompanying Shirley every year.
- Vicki Kapoor, Anil Kapoor, Janine Beckner, and Ann Churchill for transporting props.
- Johanna Godliman and Jane McFarlane for bundling and unbundling the props.
- Vicki Kapoor for taking some great photos

Practice Enrichment Series

Friday afternoons 2 - 5 pm

November 4, December 2,
February 10, March 10

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.

\$35 + GST each session

\$140 + GST for Full Series

Early Bird Special: sign up for the Full Series by November 4, 2016, for \$120 + GST

Congratulations to Shirley on her 85th Birthday

Friend, Mentor, Teacher, Colleague

by Leslie Hoya

Shirley Daventry French is all of these things and more to me. I wrote an article that began with these words 15 years ago, on the occasion of her seventieth birthday. Shirley began as my colleague in classes at the Y. After some years of her dedicated practice and visits to the Yosodhara Ashram to study with Swami Radha and then trips to India to be taught by B.K.S. Iyengar (Guruji), she became my teacher. In the meantime, I had been busy with a young family and a school teaching career.

Early on in the Victoria yoga community, Shirley was the organization! She was the main teacher, typed the newsletter, organized classes at the Y, invited teachers to give workshops, mentored other teachers and so on. All this she did out of her home, and through classes at the Victoria YM-YWCA

Inspired by the news of a first international Iyengar yoga convention in 1984 in San Francisco, I travelled with a group from Victoria and got to experience Guruji's teaching first hand. With Shirley's encouragement a year later, I traveled to India for the first time as part of a Canadian Intensive. This was a massive undertaking without the internet, long delays when using postal service to India, phone calls that echoed over the wires and many other challenges.

While in Pune, Shirley again broadened my horizons when she asked me to participate in the interview she arranged with Guruji

for our newsletter (reprinted for our newsletter, the Commonwealth Interview). This was indeed an honour and a privilege to sit quietly in an intimate setting with Guruji and be permitted to speak to him directly.

A few years later, when Victoria needed a representative to the Canadian National yoga association, Shirley looked at me and said, "Why don't you do that?" This step pushed me into worlds that I had hitherto avoided! And soon, I was on the board of directors.

With Guruji's inspiration as her guide, Shirley has worked tirelessly on many projects for him. Her name appears as one of the editors in *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. She spent countless hours in meetings, and on phone calls, and writing documents to begin teacher training, and assessment in Canada after he requested that Canada begin certification. She was host to both Guruji and Geeta in her home on their visits to Canada. This, again, is no small feat! She helped smooth the way, setting proper protocols in place for these historic events when the Iyengars travelled around the country.

Through the years, Shirley encouraged and inspired me and others in our centre to develop new abilities and cross into new territory and overcome obstacles in our path. Her strength, dedication and her own clear goal to follow the path of yoga have brought vitality to Victoria and the national yoga community.



Shirley unrelentingly using her body as a prop to get the thighs down



Shirley Daventry French in the centre, still inspiring and encouraging as Ann Kilbertus (left) and Louie Ettling (right) listen.



Shirley and Leslie teaching during Footsteps of Patanjali workshop

Shirley's words, and more importantly, her example, have helped me to be more definite, more clear in my own purpose. Thank you, Shirley, for faith in me, for all the doors you helped open, and your direct and indirect teaching. ॐ

Reflections on Shirley Daventry French

by Derek Leonard French

“I love life. I’ve always loved life.” Shirley spoke to me at a quiet celebratory dinner and I believe the remark captures the essence of this remarkable woman.

The enthusiasm, the God within, was obvious from an early age. Her mother observed, “Shirley has a lot of spirit,” and this tolerant admiration, “The gleam in the mother’s eye”, must have provided a secure base for Shirley to begin her exploration of life. This strong sense of self would stand her in good stead when, at the age of eight, she was separated from her parents as all London children were evacuated at the beginning of World War Two.

There was less tolerance and less admiration from an authoritarian high school headmaster who commented at a parent-teacher interview, “that Shirley is a born leader, but unfortunately seems to lead in the wrong direction.”

Her zest for life attracted a crowd of eager adolescent young men. These biological interviews seemed to be of short duration and were terminated with a dispatch that formed a daunting background to our first meeting in the autumn of 1946. We were both fifteen. To my surprise, for at that time I thought of girls as alien creatures, I enjoyed her conversation, lively intelligence and good humour. We became friends.

To my surprise, for at that time I thought of girls as alien creatures, I enjoyed her conversation, lively intelligence and good humour. We became friends.

The course of true love did not run smoothly. Shirley’s energy coming through an emotional *chakra* is a force of nature (or as our children would say, “Mother is having a spazz”). But Shirley has described me as the rudest boy she ever dated, so perhaps we were evenly matched. In the summer of 1953, after a cycling holiday, we separated for the umpteenth time only this time it was final. Two months later we were engaged and we married on May 15, 1954.

An Odyssey began: London – then to the warmth, blue skies and white buildings of Tripoli in North Africa – back to England and a year in cold, dark damp Manchester. A difficult



year, that in retrospect marked the first tentative steps on the yogic path, the move from the unreal to the real. The marriage was changed forever. The Manchester year was a catalyst in the decision to emigrate to Canada. Another year spent in London, then the boat and train journey to Canada, arriving in Victoria harbour on the old Canadian Pacific ferry in June of 1959. It was a glorious sunny day, an auspicious beginning.

We wanted to start a family and with three children in five years, Shirley was quickly immersed (submerged?) in the joy and fatigues that only a mother can understand. A desire to preserve her health and sanity took Shirley

to the downtown Y, at first to reconnect with her earlier love of swimming and later to join Archie McKinnon’s ladies in an exercise class.

By 1968 Shirley presented the outer appearance of the glamorous and successful wife and mother who had adapted to her adopted country. Our family was photographed and interviewed by Canada Immigration to participate in an advertising campaign to attract doctors to Canada. A project that did not proceed when we critiqued the outrageous prose style of the interviewer. But Krishna’s flute was playing softly and some Divine dissatisfaction with the status quo was beginning its work. Some thrashing around ensued trying to change the universe but eventually it became clear that it was inner change that was required. The game was afoot.

Encounter groups were an initial catalyst in self awareness, but in 1970 the ballet class at the Y was cancelled and together with fellow ballet orphan Carole Miller, Shirley ventured into a yoga class. A light went on. The first teacher was Jessica Tucker, one of only two people teaching yoga in Victoria at that time. Jessica was instrumental in bringing Swami Sivananda Radha to Victoria to give workshops on personal growth and the philosophy underlying *asana* practice. Also at this time, after what would now be considered a very brief apprenticeship, Jessica asked Shirley if she would consider teaching.

Acutely aware of her lack of knowledge, Shirley pursued her studies with various teachers and eventually decided to deepen her study with Swai Radha at the three month residential Yoga Teachers Course at Yasodhara Ashram in the Kootenays.

Asana practice and practice teaching was a part of the course – usually a rather relaxed style. One morning, after perhaps a

too generous helping of Sarah's marvellous sticky buns, the class was confronted with a different teacher, an ogre who insisted that kneecaps be pulled up and warrior poses be held for an eternity of sixty seconds. A first experience of yoga Iyengar style. Later, the ogre would metamorphose into a charming teacher called Hilda Pezzaro, but the first contact was imprinted indelibly.

On a later visit to the ashram Shirley was to meet Norma Hodge, an Iyengar teacher from the Vancouver community. For two years Norma would spend a weekend every month drilling the Victoria community in the basics of the Iyengar tradition. It was Norma who encouraged Shirley to travel to India in 1979 to study at the source with Mr. Iyengar, the first of many such visits.

Shirley's newfound passion and focus on yoga was not without its effect on the rest of the family. We live in the Western community of Greater Victoria and whilst it has a goodly share of its own eccentrics, the values are fairly conservative. At school the children would be teased by their friends because their parents seemed to be different. The three months absence at the ashram presented the children with an opportunity for their own emotional maturation that was only appreciated some years later.

On one occasion our son Adrian was taking one of his friends up to his room; on an upstairs landing he encountered Shirley practicing a headstand. "This is my mother," he explained as he ushered his friend into his room as quickly as possible. This may have led to his rather wistful complaint to Shirley, "I wish I had an ordinary every day mother." Shirley being Shirley took this as a compliment.

And the work goes on. It has been our privilege, honour and pleasure to offer our rambling family home to host many illustrious teachers; Swami Radha, Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar, and teachers from around the world. On her first visit, Swami Radha observed, "You have a big house, use it well." And so we have opened the house to early Yoga Centre meetings, workshops, picnics, dinners for intensive course students, and, one of my favourites, the crazy dances held after the Centre AGMs.

As I write this article, the house is filled by Dr. Geeta Iyengar and her entourage. Ostensibly a rest stop between conventions in Vancouver and Pasadena, but as often happens with yoga events, the food is marvelous, laughter echoes through the house, and the air resonates with the teachings.

Geeta commented favourably on the large number of teachers and students who welcomed her at the airport and also



Shirley Daventry French teaching at the Salt Spring Centre



came to the house to chop vegetables and carry water under the watchful eye of Khairon, guru of the cooking and tyrant of the kitchen (beginner, intermediate, and advanced certificates in chopping will be issued later.)

The enthusiasm of the karma yogis serving Geeta in the house is a reflection of the vibrant energy of the Yoga Centre flowing today from both the members who were present at

the birth of the society twenty-five years ago and the new generations of teachers and students. At the centre of the Centre is Shirley Daventry French, a founder of the society, who has offered her guidance and teaching over the years, a service that has deepened with her own evolving wisdom and maturity.

The grumpy old headmaster was half-right.

Shirley has been my teacher too. The intensity of the crucible of a long-term marriage has called me to learn acceptance, tolerance, forgiveness, gratitude, and love; after all if these qualities are not developed in the human dimension, where is the possibility of union with the Divine? As Geeta might say, "Is it not your duty?" As another yogi observed, the path of the householder is difficult. How difficult is brought to mind by an interview with Mrs. Runic, the wife of a previous Archbishop of Canterbury; asked if she had ever considered divorce she paused for a moment then replied, "Homicide sometimes, but divorce never." The smile that this story evokes reflects more than her good humour.

When Lauren Cox asked me if I would write an article about Shirley for the newsletter my first response was an emphatic if unspoken NO. I value my privacy as does Shirley

and self-revelation is a much overdone art form. However the request set in motion a prolonged reflection on our life together and I realized with love and gratitude what an enormous privilege it is to witness the growth of a headstrong young girl into the fullness of a mature woman and teacher. Whilst Shirley has many long term friends in the yoga community it occurred to me that many students have seen her mainly in the role of teacher. I find her life story inspiring and perhaps it will help others who walk the razor's edge that is yoga. Besides as Theo Pezzaro would say to his obedient wife Hilda, "You owe me."

Shirley and I exchange birthday cards each year. Her card to me is always filled with meaningful prose about our life together. I lean towards a minimalist approach with original lines like Happy Birthday Shirley. Herewith, after much "hunt and peck" typing effort is the Mother of all birthday card enclosures.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY SHIRLEY

With Light and Love, Derek ॐ

THIS ARTICLE IS A REPRINT FROM A PAST NEWSLETTER AND BIRTHDAY.

Farewell to Two Long-Time Students

Eileen Collier



Eileen practiced yoga faithfully for over 40 years as well as working decades as a well-respected registered nurse and volunteering for many organizations. Always active and with varied interests, she was

most likely to be found on a tennis court, walking trail, or garden.

A long time student at the Centre, Eileen died on April 25th at the ripe age of 92. She was a delight in our seniors' classes - her Irish accent and keen wit gave everyone a lot of joy.

Obituary:

<http://tinyurl.com/jukna7u>

Jane Faulkner



Jane first discovered yoga in Vancouver, became a full-time student in Calgary, then re-discovered it in Victoria some years later. Her passion for physical fitness led to teaching exercise classes and a career in sport facilities management.

Jane was a high energy person, with a great sense of humour and an easy laugh. She travelled extensively, including to India, and had a keen appreciation of nature, art, food, and music. Jane died on June 8th at the age of 68.

Obituary:

<http://tinyurl.com/z7694gf>

We would like to thank both families for asking for donations to the Centre in lieu of flowers.

Pearls of Wisdom: Commentary on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, Part 2

by B.K.S. Iyengar

Mr. Iyengar's Commentary on Patanjali

The following is Mr. Iyengar's address on Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, given at the Iyengar Yoga Institute in London, England, July 15, 1990. The address first appeared in *Dipika, Journal of the Iyengar Institute* (No. 24, January 1993), London, England. It included an introduction, entitled "Pearls of Wisdom," and a commentary on each chapter of the *Sutras*, in which Patanjali describes the different paths that characterize yogic ascendance to *Samadhi*.

This is the second part of the article.



The Yoga Sutras

The *Yoga Sutras* are the seed for the total growth of a human being and in the first three *sutras* Patanjali sums up the essence of the whole work.

(I.1) *Atha Yoga anusasanam*

(I.2) *Yoga citta vrtti nirodhah*

(I.3) *Tada drastuh svarupa avasthanam*

As I said, *anusasanam* is a code, a discipline. What do you develop through this discipline? You are able to restrain the mind (I.2). But how can the mind (*citta*) be restrained (*nirodhah*)? It is uncontrollable, thoughts are uncontrollable. Before we can begin to control the mind, we must first understand the functioning of the mind. This understanding will come as we discover the profound meaning of the terms that Patanjali uses in this first *sutra*.

Patanjali concludes this summary by saying that when the mind is restrained, the core of the being surfaces and rests in its abode (I.3). This is like the cobra, which does not raise its hood unless it is awakened. Usually the mind prevents the hood of the self from surfacing. And that is why the mind must be restrained because only then can the soul (*drastuh*) be awoken and brought to the surface. The moment the mind is successfully restrained you enter a state of beatitude and freedom because the mind is dissolved in the seat of the soul and the soul acts directly.

It is very simple. In three *sutras* he has covered the whole subject. Then why the hundred and ninety extra *sutras*? The ancient texts of India always began with the conclusion and then moved onto the elaboration. Books today are quite

different; we begin at the base and move towards the summit. In ancient books the initial summary was there to attract the intellectuals, to allow them the freedom to ponder its meaning, and then to draw them into the main text.

Anusasanam in the first *sutra* is intimately related to *yama* and *niyama*. Patanjali explains later that these ethical disciplines are involved in the character building of *anusasanam*. We are made up of three *gunas* (qualities): *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*. The mind is sometimes dull, sometimes vibrant, and sometimes serene. You have all experienced these states. They come in a flash and disappear in a flash. Patanjali explains that how

through the science of Yoga we can learn to free our mind from the states of inertia and vibration and keep it everlastingly in a state of serenity. In order to maintain that serenity, what methods should we practise? To explain this, Patanjali has arranged the *sutras* in four chapters. In order, they are: *Samadhi Pada*, *Sadhana Pada*, *Vibhuti Pada*, and *Kaivalya Pada*.

Samadhi Pada

First let us examine the first *pada* (chapter) *Samadhi Pada*. *Samadhi* contains two words; *sa* means "alike", "similar", "auspiciousness", "goodness", and "virtue" and *adhi* means "the base". When Patanjali says in *sutra* I.3 that the core of the being should be awoken so that it finds its true seat, it follows that the virtuousness of that core should be diffused throughout the body, it should illuminate our fibres, our blood cells and our nerve cells. That is the meaning of *Samadhi*, not merely "trance". *Adhi* refers to the core of our being which is the base of

*When Patanjali says in *sutra* I.3 that the core of the being should be awoken so that it finds its true seat, it follows that the virtuousness of that core should be diffused throughout the body, it should illuminate our fibres, our blood cells and our nerve cells.*

our existence, and in *Samadhi* the goodness of this core fills the entire human system. So the first chapter, *Samadhi Pada*, deals with these internal practices (*antaranga sadhana*) and it is very difficult to understand these on the normal intellectual level. So why did he choose to talk about the most difficult subject first? He begins by defining the fundamental terms. Therefore he must first explain the constitution and functioning of the *citta*. I feel this is especially important for Westerners, because the Indian sages distinguish between several different aspects of what Westerners just refer to as “mind”. *Citta* includes three different aspects of the human being, which I have called “mind”, “intelligence” and “consciousness”.

Suppose the mind dominates the entire brain. Then the intelligence and consciousness are compressed, while the mind is enlarged and appears to be the whole of the brain. Suppose, however, you are given some deep thought to think about. Then the intelligence swamps the brain whilst the mind and the consciousness are compressed. However, if you are totally absorbed in something without the functioning of the mind or the intelligence, then it is the consciousness which appears like a ray of light shining from the soul.

This is where Westerners fail to distinguish between the various compartments of the “mind”. For them it is all the same. But Indians have precisely described the mind as the outer cover of the intelligence, the intelligence as the outer cover of the consciousness, and the consciousness as the outer cover of the soul. These are the three inner layers of the five layers they call the *annamayakosha*, *pranamayakosha*, *manomayakosha*, *vijnanamayakosha* and the *anandamayakosha* – which I am sure you are all familiar with – the anatomical body, physiology body, psychological body, intellectual body and the causal body.

Citta-Vrtti: The Fluctuations In Consciousness

These three layers – mind, intelligence, consciousness – that make up the *citta* all have their origin in the soul; they “sprout” from the soul. These different aspects of the *citta* create *vrttis* – usually translated as “thought waves”. It is the presence of these thought waves that creates what we term a “disturbed state of mind”. Patanjali analyses these thought waves and divides them into five types (I.5 – I.11). You can experience thought waves by direct contact (with objects), through the reception of ideas or where the mind works together with the senses to ensure correct perception (because sometimes the senses of perception can misperceive).

These are known collectively as *pratyaya*, the first type of *vrtti*. The second *vrtti* is known as *viparyaya*. Here the senses of perception deceive us. The example often given is of the observer who claims that the rabbit he is watching has horns. In the same way a jaundiced personality cannot see colours correctly. The senses are not well trained and wrong perceptions

arise in the form of various thought waves. The third type is *vikalpa*, “misconception”. In this case, although the senses of perception work, the mind cannot conceive correctly and thought waves are produced according to those misconceptions. The fourth *vrtti* is *nidra*, sleep. In sleep everything is silent. If there is no silence, sleep will not come. It is only when you wake up that you remember your existence, “Oh, I slept well”. However, that “I” is the witness who remained throughout. The yogi says that you must search for that part of you which witnessed your sleep. In this way a *vrtti* can be a guide to understanding. *Nidra* should not be confused with dream. Patanjali uses the word *abhava* – “*bhava*” means existence, “a” is the negative. There is no feeling of existence, only emptiness; so Patanjali is referring to deep sleep. For the ordinary person the part of their experience, which is nearest to the state of *Samadhi*, is sleep. In sleep there is no pain. Even a cancer patient sleeps. During sleep he or she is not aware that she has cancer. It is only when she awakes that the impressions return, “I am a cancer patient!” So sleep is the highest state that an ordinary individual encounters. If we can retain that mind free of fluctuations in our waking life; if we can achieve “consciousness sleep”, then that is *Samadhi*!

The last *vrtti* is *smrti* – memory. According to Patanjali, memory is both a friend and an enemy, a hindrance and a help. Later on Patanjali talks of the profound level of memory (I.20), but here he is referring to the superficial functioning of memory. He explains that this memory consists of the imprints which come from the other four *vrttis*, direct perception, misperception, misconception, and unconsciousness. How do you bring to the surface your past experience of these states? By using the memory. Can you use your memory to recollect these experiences and use them to cultivate yourself and bring illumination? This does not mean that you stay in those experiences. You use them as a springboard to move on from those previous experiences. That is the transformation of thought waves that takes place through *smrti*. So *smrti* must be understood in connection with the other four *vrttis*.

Vrttis and Their Associated Kleshas

Patanjali goes on to say that as there are five kinds of *vrttis*, so there are also five kinds of pain and five kinds of pleasure associated with them. The *vrttis* can be painful (*klisha*) or pleasurable (*aklisha* = literally “non-painful”); however it is more complicated than that since a pleasurable thought wave can sometimes result in pain and similarly a painful one in pleasure. We must then ask ourselves, “But what are these five pains and five pleasures?” The five pains are explained, fifty-one *sutras* later, in the second chapter. There he defines the five *kleshas* (II.3). *Klesha* is derived from the same root as *klisha* and although it is usually translated as “affliction”, has essentially the same meaning. You will see how difficult the Yoga *sutras*

are to understand; how the different parts of the work are inter-related in a complex way.

Avidya, the first *klesha*, means “ignorance”. He means specifically the ignorance of right understanding and spiritual knowledge. *Asmita* refers to the attitude of the know-all who, as someone is telling him something, before the speaker can even finish, says, “Oh, there is nothing to that, I know that!” These two *asmita* and *avidya* are intellectual defects, intellectual diseases, intellectual pains. The next two are *raga* and *dvesha* – “attachment” and “aversion”, respectively. The order he puts them in is important for joy leads to attachment and attachment then leads to hatred and pain. Patanjali describes the process but how do we avoid attachment in the first place? We must develop equipoise of mind. Otherwise we will develop these emotional and mental problems, which are now termed psychosomatic and psychological diseases. We run to the psychoanalysts for help. But we must be our own psychoanalyst and get to grips with the problems of *avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, and *dvesa* within ourselves. That is what Patanjali is saying.

The last *klesha* is *abhinivesa* (attachment to life). This is an instinctive defect. We know that sometimes the instincts rise to the surface. The yogi must transform this instinctive knowledge into interior knowledge – the core of being. What does intuition mean? It is tuition from inside. What teaches us from the inside? It isn’t our intelligence but something beyond that. It is knowledge communicated directly from the cells. This is intuition. So, by this process, instinct disappears and is transformed into intuitive knowledge. So when the yogic *sadhana* has conquered the cells then all the *virtis* are stopped.

Abhyasa – Vairagya: Practice and Renunciation

How do we stop these *virtis*? Let us return to the first chapter. In *sutra* I.12 – I.16 Patanjali says that we accomplish this by practice and renunciation. But why does the idea of renunciation appear so soon? Surely this is not practical? How can the uncontrolled mind be renounced? It is uncontrollable, is it not? So how can we renounce it? Patanjali has given the answer to this in the fourth *sutra*.

(1.4) *Vrtti sarupyam itaratra*

(Otherwise the consciousness is involved in the fluctuations).

Through restraining the mind you reach that exalted state in which you see the soul but you cannot maintain this state. The mind likes to be supreme, to have control, and as the mind reasserts itself, the *atman* (absolute consciousness) recedes. Like a powerful magnet that draws iron ore, the mind draws the self towards the thoughts. Patanjali says you must renounce that. As soon as you renounce this pulling of the self by the mind towards the thought waves, then consciousness will draw the mind towards the soul. Then there is a distance from the thought waves. If the soul goes towards the mind, you are trapped; but if the mind goes towards the soul, you are free.


This process is known as *abhyasa* – *vairagya* (practice and renunciation). These two aspects cannot be separated. You have to go on practising. What must you practise? He has not described any practice yet. He is referring to *anusasanam*, the code of conduct, discipline. As I said, *yama* and *niyama* are *guna vrtti nirodhah*. By conquering your habitual patterns of behaviour, your character, you stabilize the mind. If the character is stabilized so is the mind. This is the important connection that Patanjali makes. Now what is the practice?

(I.14) *Sa tu dirgha kala nairantarya satkara asevito drdha bhumih.*

When the effort is continued without interruption, for a long period and with devotion, the foundation of practice becomes established.

Everybody who comes here asks, “How long do I have to do Yoga before I experience these things? When will I achieve self-realization?” Isn’t that so? Patanjali has already answered these questions. Uninterrupted practice, for a long time, with dedication and devotion makes the foundation firm. He doesn’t speak of the final goal. He talks about the base. What is that base? He means that state in which the mind, which is the origin of all disturbances, becomes stable. He does not speak of *Samadhi* but of stability.

And when that stability comes, you can control the mind. He uses the word *vasikara*, which means keeping a grip (I.15). So, keeping a grip on that state is *vairagya*. *Vairagya* is negative as *abhyasa* is positive. In the same way *yama* is “what not to do” while *niyama* is “what to do”. So *vairagya* is to be free



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from attachment. In the second chapter he describes how happiness leads to raga (attachment) (II.7). *Vairagya* is to stay free from that *raga*. Again do you see the intricate connection between the chapters? But we must not jump about too much. However, it is good that you see how the different chapters are intertwined and that you understand how this makes an exposition of them very difficult. So *abhyasa-vairagya* is the practice of methods to keep the mind closer to the soul than to the body.

Types of Practitioner

Patanjali says that there are four types of practitioner (*sadhaka*): *mrdhu*, *mudhya*, *adhimatratvat* (I.22) – feeble, average and keen, and *tivrasamvegin* (I.21) – supremely enthusiastic. The *Hatha Yoga* texts also describe four types of practitioner. Many commentators count only the first three in Patanjali, but the *tivrasamvegin* is also a type; he is the supremely enthusiastic *sadhaka* who already has a restrained mind and for him true freedom is at hand. For him it is timeless but for the other three types this freedom is time-bound.

Many commentators have pointed out that for those who have succeeded in renunciation, freedom is quickly and easily realized. But each individual can only renounce so fast. It is only when they reach the highest level, the level of genius, that freedom is attainable. But they are geniuses as a result of their previous efforts. They have been practising in the way that Patanjali has described for many lives and the imprints of these previous lives have moulded their genius. We may say that we do not believe in *karma*, past lives and reincarnation. But are we not refining our actions every day? The process of refining has to continue; the quality of consciousness that we develop in this life is the seed of our future life. There is a continuity.

So Patanjali says “train!”, even if you have not had success. And we must encourage all: those who say, “Oh, I practise once a week”, those who say “I do it twice a week”, “three times a week” and so on. This is *mrdhu*, *madhyama*. And also those who say “I am practising five hours a day” – this is *adhimatratvat*. But remember, this does not mean hours of teaching, do not include teaching time, teaching is not practising, not *abhyasa*. So the student who devotes five or six hours a day to practice is the keen student. Intensity of practise can similarly be graduated. If you are at a low ebb when you practise that is *mrdhu*, average intensity is *madhya* and high intensity is *adhimatratva*. Whatever the hours spent or the intensity of the practise, Patanjali encourages all to continue; it will take time. ॐ

(To be continued)

Scholarships and Bursaries

Members' scholarships are available for:

The Body as the First Prop
with Shirley Daventry French,
Leslie Hogya, Marlene Miller
October 1-2, 2016

for full workshop registrant (not individual sessions).

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Yoga Spy

by Luci Yamamoto

LUCI YAMAMOTO IS AN IYENGAR YOGA STUDENT AND TEACHER IN VANCOUVER.
THIS ARTICLE WAS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN HER YOGA SPY BLOG, YOGASPY.COM

Yoga with Abhijata and a Thousand Classmates

I try to avoid formal gatherings, red-eye flights, checked baggage, and yoga classes too large to allow eye contact with the teacher. But I was curious about the 2016 Iyengar Yoga National Association of the United States convention in Boca Raton. I wanted to experience the teaching of Geeta Iyengar, who didn't teach during my August 2014 trip to Pune. When she had to withdraw, I decided to pack my yoga props and go anyway—to see Abhijata Sridhar, BKS Iyengar's granddaughter, take center stage.

I made the right decision. In her early 30s, Abhi is a remarkably mature teacher. She was completely in command of her audience, which included prominent senior teachers who were studying with her grandfather before she was born. Beyond her astute instructions, what impressed me was her instinctive common sense. While demonstrating poses onstage, she often directed the cameramen filming her: "Show from the side. They can see better that way." The screens were behind her, but she always knew when the camera was missing the best angle. Does she have eyes behind her head?

Abhi has an easy, unflappable poise. When students, lying supine, were bumping arms despite alternating directions (head to toe), she said, "Don't get upset with your neighbor. Maitri! Move your neighbor's arm into the right place. Then your pose is better, and the other person's pose is better." Managing little things like the microphone, clipped to her shirt, is second nature to her. Demonstrating Salamba Sirsasana, her voice suddenly boomed out as the mic flopped down toward her mouth. She calmly unclipped it, placed it on the floor, and then rose into a headstand, deftly showing two common errors, legs too far forward or backward. In her presence, one feels secure.

Abhijata Sridhar

In 2000 at age 16, Abhijata entered graduate school in bioinformatics at the University of Pune—and also began studying yoga with her grandfather, aunt, and uncle at RIMYI. She became her grandfather's main pupil and a junior teacher at the institute. Before one of her first solo teaching trips abroad, she asked her grandfather what she should teach. "I was nervous," she said. His answer: "Just teach what I've taught you."

She had an insight then that people aren't necessarily interested in what she (then in her mid 20s) had to teach.

They want to know what BKS Iyengar taught her. She realized that her value was her relationship with "this man." (She often used these very words: "this man." She had a dual relationship with him. He was her grandfather. He was her guru.)

She has a point. Although her grandfather died almost two years ago, Iyengar yoga is still deeply based on his words, on his ideas. She could probably continue to share his teachings for five, maybe ten, years to come.

And then?

Abhi told a story of practicing in the hall one day. She was sitting in Bharadvajasana. Her grandfather walked in and asked, "What are you doing? Why are you doing Bharadvajasana like that?" She was perplexed. She was doing the pose just as he'd taught her the day before.

When she tried to explain, he got frustrated with her. That was yesterday's pose; today is a new day. He said that she was doing not *yogasana* but *bhogasana*.

"Habit is a disease," he said.

You might already have heard this quote. Here, Abhi carefully parsed the words "habituation" and "disease." She initially didn't understand why habits are necessarily bad. Especially yoga. Why would daily practice be a bad habit? But she eventually realized that if done only by habit—by repeating what we already know—we are not really practicing yoga.



Abhijata Sridhar, B.K.S. Iyengar's granddaughter

The future of Iyengar yoga

At the convention, surrounded by a thousand practitioners, I listened to Abhijata's words; to Geeta on video, addressing the convention from Pune; to senior teachers' anecdotes and memories. Clearly, BKS Iyengar, while no longer physically present, still dominates the method that he created.

As Abhi pointed out, people are keen to know what "this man" taught her. Indeed, her history of direct study with him from 2000 to 2014 is invaluable. Those teachings will always be relevant and worth studying—same with the photos, videos, and writings of BKS Iyengar.

To honor his legacy, however, at some point we must also look forward. There must be a way to balance the fundamentals of the method with the exploration and experimentation that is the crux of Iyengar yoga. Being an Iyengar yogi can be a conundrum: On one hand, there are "rules" and "standards" (especially regarding certification and assessment) to maintain consistency worldwide. If teachers veer too far from established standards, they are not deemed Iyengar yoga teachers anymore.

On the other hand, rigidly following BKS Iyengar is the antithesis of his actual method. Many consider *Light on Yoga* indisputable regarding form and technique. BKS Iyengar did not. Published in 1966 when he was 48, it was a moment in his evolution rather than a be-all and end-all. Likewise, we must examine and reexamine and not blindly follow.

After classes with RIMYI teachers, do we quickly teach what they taught us? Abhi advised us to avoid immediately teaching what she taught at the convention. Instead practice a new approach on our own—for a long time. Otherwise we are only parroting others' words and ideas.

BKS Iyengar wanted Abhi to take his 80 years of knowledge and go further. Not to repeat what he has done. If Iyengar yoga is to continue as a "living" method, Abhi will eventually need to go beyond sharing what she's learned from her grandfather. Based on her teaching to date, she has enormous potential to do just that.

FAQ

Q: How many people attended the convention?

A: About 1,200, of which more than half (if I heard correctly) were first-time attendees of a US Iyengar yoga convention. Every day I met new "neighbors" around my mat—including those from San Diego, Omaha, San Clemente, Alexandria,



San Francisco, Billings, Nashville, New York, and even London—showing the reach of Iyengar yoga. Note: In the US, regional conferences are held annually, while a nationwide convention is held every three years.

Q: Describe doing yoga amid over 1,000 classmates.

A: Before this, the largest classes I'd attended were at the Iyengar Institute in Pune: 100 to 150 students. But, strangely, after the first few minutes, the mind adjusts. Doing asana, I was aware only of those immediately around me. To see Abhijata, there were two big screens in

front, and the group was divided into six groups that rotated around the room.

Q: What are the benefits of such a large group?

A: Today, any class with Geeta Iyengar or Abhijata Sridhar will guarantee a huge crowd. So, if you want to study with the Iyengar family, you must be realistic. You also must shift your expectations. You'll be "mat to mat" and you won't get individualized correction—unless you get pulled onstage!

Q: Did she demonstrate on students?

A: Abhi took only a couple of students onstage. The most memorable was a woman in Salamba Sirsasana. We had gone up and were balancing for a few minutes when, walking around, she spied a woman overarching her lumbar spine. "Everybody come down," she said. "You, come to the stage."

"Don't be nervous," she said, after directing her to go up. To the audience, she said, "She can do the pose and balance, but look from side view." The student's front ribs were protruding. (There but for the grace of God go I.) Standing behind her, Abhi gave verbal corrections:

"Move the front ribs toward the back ribs."

"More."

"More!"

"But keep the buttocks in. Legs must still go up!"

"Front ribs must go back some more."

And so forth. When she managed to straighten her spine a bit, the audience broke into spontaneous applause – to indicate that her form had improved and to give moral support. ॐ

NOTE: THE QUOTATIONS IN THIS BLOG POST ARE NOT EXACT. THEY ARE BASED ON MY MEMORY AND THUS SUBJECT TO MY INTERPRETATION AND CREATIVE LICENSE.

Early Morning Sadhana

by Elyse Mitchell Cleave

The first time I set my alarm, I thought I might be crazy. Signing up for an early-morning yoga workshop had seemed like such a good idea at the time, but as I set my alarm on Sunday evening for 6 a.m. the following morning, I wondered what had possessed me to register.

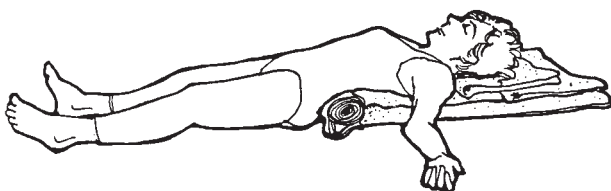
I signed up because — to use the phrase so many of my Millennial peers use — I was ready to take my relationship with yoga to the next level. I had spent four years splashing around in the shallow end of yoga, attending a class or two a week and, on very ambitious days, trying to establish an at-home practice. I hoped that a week of daily practice would give me the kick-start I was looking for. And the early morning aspect of it seemed appropriate: the small act of sacrificing an hour of sleep added an element of ritualistic self-denial that I hoped would bring me deeper in touch with a different part of myself through yoga practice.

Those romantic notions of sacrifice faded away extremely quickly the first time the alarm went off, and I admit I had a moment of doubt each morning as my feet hit the floor. But as I arrived at the studio, the city suffused with early morning light and quiet except for the birds singing in Pioneer Square, my doubts disappeared. Every fellow yogi greeted each other with a smile and a sense of camaraderie; we had each resisted the siren song of a lie-in and were here.

I won't describe the classes themselves, because each of us knows how a yoga class feels. All I will say is that the classes were exactly like every other class at the centre — which is saying something in itself. The early hour was quickly forgotten as Lauren's smiling face and laughing voice cajoled us through our practice.

On day 5, I realized that the change I had been looking for had happened, without me being aware of it. I was thinking of myself and the other attendees as yogis. Perhaps I had been before, but it took a week-long workshop of early morning wake-ups to see it in myself. ॐ

ED. THE EARLY MORNING PRACTICE LED BY LAUREN COX, RAN FROM MONDAY TO FRIDAY, 7:00-8:00 AM.



International Yoga Day June 21, 2016

We had two free classes to welcome the community for the second International Day of Yoga. Guruji inspired us with this quote:

“All that is required for success in yoga is cheerfulness, perseverance, courage, correct knowledge of the techniques to be followed, moderation on one's habits and faith in the practice of yoga. Then, the effect of yogic practice, follow....beauty and strength, clarity of speech and expression, calmness of the nerves... and a happy disposition that is revealed in a face full of smiles.”

— *Yoga Wisdom and Practice*, page 76

Congratulations!

The following candidates achieved Intermediate Junior 3 certification at the June assessment in Victoria:

Megan Jacobs, Aurora, ON

Sharoni Fixler, Calgary, AB

Skjei Sharma, Calgary, AB

Frema Bram, Edmonton, AB

Geraldine Primerano, Vancouver, BC

Tim Ruddy, Montreal, QC

Light on Photography

Light on Yoga is celebrating its 50th anniversary since publishing, 1966-2016

by Leslie Hogya

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM YOGA RAHASYA VOL. 11, NO.4: 2004.

Guruji had great difficulty in getting his manuscript of Light on Yoga published. The innumerable photographs and detailed methodology, which are the strengths of this book today, even after 40 years, were then considered its limitation. The publishers whom Guruji approached were doubtful whether such a book would ever have an international market. Visuals have a much stronger impact than any amount of words. Each photograph in Light on Yoga provides great insight into the practice of asanas as we start acquiring the eye for the details. Leslie Hogya, from Canada sheds some light on photography based on her interactions with Guruji on how the photographs for a book of this magnitude were shot; that too in an era where there were no computers to assist in photo-editing!

Eyes are the windows to the brain.

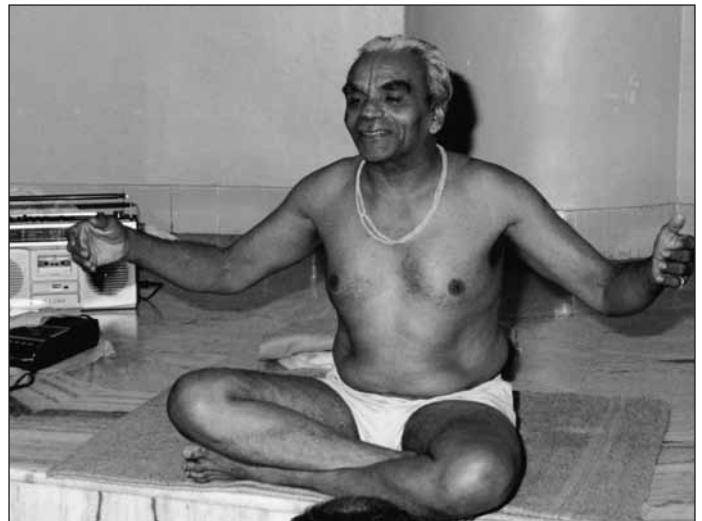
— Guruji B.K.S. Iyengar

Like many students and teachers of Iyengar Yoga, I too often refer to *Light on Yoga*. I look at the photographs over and over again to check on the proper positioning of the feet, the arms, the head and other body parts in the different *asanas*. Each time I look at these photos and read the adjacent text, I notice a detail that I had not noticed before. I always observe and learn something new each time.

I got a deeper appreciation of these photographs and the immensity of the task it was to produce them during my recent visit to the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute library this August. I was shown three giant photo albums containing all the 602 photographs from *Light on Yoga*. Each photograph was a massive 8 1/2 by 11 inch in size. It was indeed a treat to see all the plates from *Light on Yoga* at this magnitude.

I was assigned the task of attaching small strips of paper under each photograph with the correct plate number to correspond with *Light on Yoga*. I had to ensure that there were no typographical errors or omissions. My friends from the other countries also volunteered to assist in this task.

This job was a great learning experience as it gave me the opportunity to study and notice some finer details in the *asanas*, which I had never noticed in the smaller version of the photographs in *Light on Yoga*. Each photograph expressed the art of



yoga and the genius of B.K.S. Iyengar. I noticed the consistency in light, in form and in proportion in each photograph as I shuffled page after page. I could not resist asking Guruji on how long this photography session lasted.

“Three years” was the astounding reply.

In the first two years, he learned how to express each pose for the camera. He had to identify the correct angle from which the *asana* had to be photographed. The body would look too short or too tall, or display some form of distortion if the angle of the camera was incorrect. Appropriate external lighting was required so that the *asana* was visible and understandable to the reader. The extent of lighting was crucial so as to have good contrast without any excessive shadows. Any distortions or problems in presentation or lighting had to be identified and rectified with fresh photographs.

Guruji learned a lot about photography in these two years so as to present the *asanas* in the clearest possible way. He learned, for example, that blue light was more effective than white. These two years were a preparatory phase, like the alchemist preparing the necessary ingredients for the big discovery.

During his preparatory years Guruji learned:

- How each *asana* should be presented in a photograph.
- Which angle of the *asana* should be preferentially shown since it was not possible to present all the angles.

- Where the photographer should stand so as to capture the correct angle of the *asana* without resulting in any distortion in the body.
- Where the lights should be positioned to minimize shadows.
- How to present the details of the *asanas*.
- Which part of the body should the photographer focus the camera on.

The final photographs were taken in the third year. The photographs were developed overnight. Gurujii would then examine each one in detail for the correct presentation of the *asana*, the precise amount of lighting and the accurate angle of the camera so that the body would not appear distorted. If any errors were detected then the *asana* would be photographed again on the next day making amendments to the lighting or the angle. Messrs G. G. Welling are acknowledged as the photographers in the preface of *Light on Yoga*. If you have another look at these photographs today, you will notice the clarity of expression of each *asana*. There is no hardness in the abdomen, no tension in the face or any part of the body, not even in the little toes. The *asanas* are presented as yoga, not as a projection of Gurujii's personality.

And this was done in the 1960s when we did not have computers and remarkable photo editing software of the kind available today!

By the time Gurujii published the *Light on Pranayama* in 1981, he had acquired a lot of understanding and experience on how to photograph *asanas*. He knew what he wanted to show and how to achieve that. However, he still had great difficulties when he wanted to show the top view of *Savasana*. Many hours and rupees were spent getting the photograph from exactly the correct height so that the body was in proportion and no shadows of the photographer were visible.

Gurujii also pointed out to us that if we were to compare some of the views of his back in seated *asanas* in *Light on Pranayama* with that in *Light on Yoga*, then we could see the impact of his two accidents on his back. One can compare the plates 99 and 102 in *Light on Pranayama* with plates 85-88 in *Light on Yoga*.

Different editions of *Light on Yoga* have different quality of photographs even though they are from the same negatives. In the first edition published in 1965, the photos are all in the back of the book, as an appendix. The later editions have the photographs adjacent to the text. Some editions do not have the sharp contrast of the original edition which can be credited with the best quality of the photographs.

Fortunately, the quality of the photographs is much better in the new larger format from Harper Collins published in 2001. The photographs have been rearranged so that there is less text on the pages with photographs. The formatting of this edition is better because the plates have been grouped as per the stages of the *asanas*; the quality of paper and the photograph is



better. Gurujii had intended to have the photograph of the final *asana* presented in much larger size in the new version of the book but this did not happen, as the cost was prohibitive.

Today, take another look at the art expressed in these beautiful photographs irrespective of the edition or editions that you have. There is much to learn from close scrutiny of them. The visual impact and the insight that these photographs give is much more intense than any amount of words. I place my head at your feet Gurujii for your unbelievable eye for details! ॐ

Introductory Teacher Training Intensive July 15, 2016

by Mary-Ellen Hannah and Theresa Brookbank

Each summer in the introductory teacher training, the participants study an aspect of the yoga sutras. On Friday afternoons the participants have the opportunity to show us what they understood of the week's study. – Leslie Hogg

The *yamas* and *niyamas* are the ethical foundations of yoga and introduced in the second chapter of *Light on the Yoga sutras of Patanjali* by B.K.S. Iyengar. We attempted to explain their interconnectedness by creating a simple woven structure.

The *niyamas* – observances such as cleanliness, self study – are represented by the warp, the vertical strips; the *yamas* – moral injections such as non harming, honesty – by the weft, the horizontal strips. Each strip of the warp and weft were labelled with a *niyama* (the warps) or a *yama* (the wefts), so the weave, the whole, the universal truth was made up of five *niyamas* woven through five *yamas*.

In Sutra II.31 the *yamas* are pronounced the 'mighty universal vows', and by deconstructing this woven section we hoped to demonstrate that statement graphically.

First, we turned our attention to the *niyamas*. In explaining Sutra II.32, Mr. Iyengar writes "...*niyama* evolves from individual practices necessary to build up the *sadhaka's* [student's] own character." We reasoned that without a strong foundation in the *niyamas*, the *yamas* are unsustainable.

We asked ourselves if there was one *niyama* more fundamental than the others, a pre-requisite to practising the rest, and determined it was *svadhyaya*, self-study. We reasoned that without *svadhyaya* we wouldn't hold ourselves accountable for living by the rest of the *niyamas*, let alone the *yamas*. We then removed the central vertical strip, labelled *svadhyaya*, creating a void through the middle of the universal truth.



Mary Ellen Hannah (left) from Nanaimo and Theresa Brookbank (right) from Port Angeles, Washington presenting "interweaving of *yamas* and *niyamas*"

From there, the *yamas*, the horizontal weft strips were removed one by one, starting with *ahimsa* (compassion, non harming), as Sutra II.30 does, which may well be the most important social commitment. As the *yamas* disappeared, the *niyamas* were left in disarray, no longer part of a cohesive pattern, present but not contributing to or supported by a whole cloth, a social fabric.

We ended with this quote, sometimes attributed to Lao Tsu, "Watch your thoughts, they become words. Watch your words, they become actions. Watch your actions, they become habit. Watch your habits, they become character. Watch your character, it becomes your destiny." ॐ

(Many, many thanks to Laine Canivet for all the materials she so generously offered!)



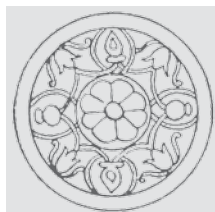
Jen Van de Pol in *uttitha parsvakonasana*

Certified Teacher Training Intensive

The Certified Teacher Training Intensive, where students from across Canada came to study with Louie Ettling (fr.l), Shirley Daventry French (centre) and Ann Kilbertus (fr. R.)



Turning the thighs in urdhva dhanurasana



Samantha Lloyd demonstrating urdhva mukha pascimottanasana I



Wendy Boyer, manager of the Centre, in conversation with Louie Ettling

Salt Spring Retreat 2016

by Heather Hobbs,
photos by Vicki Kapoor

I had all intention of writing a reflection on my first IYCV Salt Spring Retreat as soon as I arrived home in order to keep the experience fresh in my mind. Now as I sit down to write a full two months after, I look at the very point form notes I scribbled down, and feel a bit of gratitude that I've procrastinated, as I have the opportunity to sink back into my experience back in June and remember just how lovely those few days were. While I've been a student of the IYCV for what must be 13 years now, I've not had much opportunity to study with Shirley for a variety of reasons. What an absolute gift to not only spend hours at a time practicing in her presence, but to share some conversation and good food over lunch, and to soak up the generous energy that she gives to those around her.

The experience and concept of life energy or *prana* was certainly a theme that weaves together my experience on Salt Spring. Mr Iyengar talks about physical energies such as heat and light, as well as the energy in all beings, as being *prana* (see Chapter 3 in *Light on Life*). On Salt Spring I felt the vibrating energies of *prana* all around me, as I listened to the wind in the trees from my tent in the meadow campground; as I took in the nourishing food, the musical vibrations of our kirtan, and the soothing ayurvediac treatment I received; as I witnessed the spirit and intent of the Salt Spring Centre; and as I practiced and shared space with the kind energy of my fellow participants.

Shirley spoke of the *prana* each of us uniquely carries and how the spark of our true life force is present when we are born. When we leave the physical realm, this essential spark that ignites our *prana* lives on in our spirit, our words and deeds, and the teachings we

bring to others. So too do the *asanas* carry *prana* and it was this quality of the practice that Shirley asked us to focus on. She spoke of how we often get caught up in alignment and a particular way of practicing, either with or without props. When we are attuned to the energy of the postures, it is the *prana* we are tapped into and therefore connected to the universe itself. I was struck by Shirley's ability as a teacher to observe the pranic energy in our *asanas* so clearly: as I took the shape of *sirsasana*, Shirley identified immediately that I had energy in my legs but not my trunk, and to fully embody the pose I needed to bring energy to the base. What an apt metaphor and reminder for me in my day-to-day as I constantly must re-direct energy from the heady stress of my chosen profession into a more balanced sense of grounding with my heart and earth energy.

I'm so grateful I had the opportunity to soak up these and many other 'everyday epiphanies' that flow with Shirley's presence as a teacher – her eagle eyes, embodied knowledge of our practice, generosity of spirit, and easy laugh make connecting with the essence of *prana* more visceral, and what a gift that is. ॐ



Wendy Boyer, Shirley Daventry French,
Britta Poisson



Leslie Hogya and Wendy Boyer with
Tracy Silberer.



Anne Churchill in supine padangusthasana



Anil Kapoor in shoulder stand on chair

IYCV Calendar

SEPTEMBER

17-18 Open House

OCTOBER

1-2 Body is the First Prop

NOVEMBER

- 4 Practice Enrichment Series
- 5 Teachers Professional Development /Teaching Enrichment

December

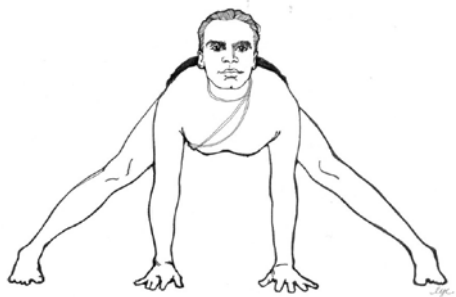
- 2 Practice Enrichment
- 3 Teachers Professional Development
- 11 Guruji's Birthday
- 21-22 Winter Solstice

January

- 1 New Year's Day Timed Practice
- 20-22 Senior Assessment at IYCV

February

- 10 Practice Enrichment
- 11 Teachers Professional Development
- 17-20 Jawahar Banghera Intensive



BOOKMARK OUR WEBLINKS:

Class schedule: iyengaryogacentre.ca/current-classes

Workshops: iyengaryogacentre.ca/workshops

Events: iyengaryogacentre.ca/events

Newsletter: iyengaryogacentre.ca/newsletter



SAVE THE DATES!

Jawahar Bangera Intensive

Coming February 17-20, 2017

*Details to be announced.
Check www.iyengaryogacentre.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!

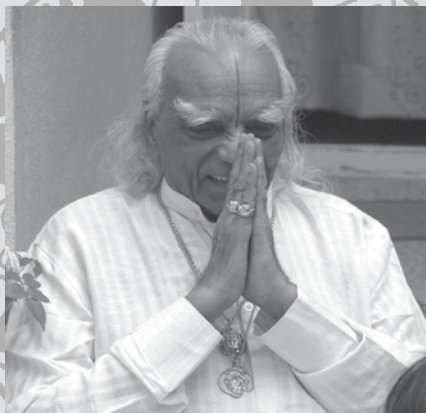


PHOTO: KEVIN MASON

In the Light of Yoga

Anniversary Celebration of B.K.S. Iyengar's Birthday

Sunday, December 11, 2016, 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm

12:30 - 2:00 pm All Levels Yoga
with Shirley Daventry French

After 2:00 pm tea and birthday cake served

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



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

Become a Member - Enjoy the Benefits!

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

- 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.

One-year membership fee: \$42 CDN (\$40 + GST), renewable each January.

Membership PLUS

The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria is offering a new membership option, 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 \$57.75 (\$55 + GST)

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

☐ **One-year: \$42** ☐ **Membership Plus \$55.75**

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☐ Please mail my newsletter.

☐ Please email me the link to the web newsletter.

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

☐ Receipt required.



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA



*Board Members (clockwise from bottom left):
Amanda Mills, Wendy Boyer, Shiela Redhead, Laine Canivet,
Bev Kallstrom, Stacey Frank, Carol Miller, Annie Kitchen, Ann Kilbertus*

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

**The Annual General Meeting
of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
will be held
Sunday February 5, 2017
at 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C.**



1:00 Asana Practice
2:00 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.

The 33rd Annual *Retreat at the Salt Spring Centre*


With Shirley Daventry French

PLEASE NOTE NEW DATES:

JUNE 10-12, 2017

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 at the front of the line for an opportunity to participate in this wonderful event.

**Watch for details in next issue
of the Newsletter.**



NEW YEAR'S DAY Timed Practice

With Ty Chandler

ALL LEVELS

**January 1, 2017,
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

2017 IYCV members: Free
Non-members: \$40 + GST
Pre-registration required

Not recommended for beginners

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



Winter Solstice Workshop With Ty Chandler

December 21 and 22, 2016, 5 - 7 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)

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NOTE:

We regret we cannot accept past issues of the newsletter, yoga journal, etc., due to space limitations in the Centre's lobby.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: JANUARY 15, 2017

EDITOR Roger Champagne

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE Roger
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Cox, Johanna Godliman, Leslie Hogya, Jane
McFarlane, Hilary McPhail

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IYCV LOGO Charles Campbell, Lauren Cox

PHOTOGRAPHY Laine Canivet, Lauren Cox,
Leslie Hogya, Vicki Kapoor, Jane McFarlane

Please note: omission from Fall issue: photos of
B.K.S. Iyengar on p 18, 19 of the Fall issue are
by Derek French

COVER PHOTO Vicki Kapoor

PROOFING Elyse Mitchell Cleave

ADS & ANNOUNCEMENTS Hilary McPhail

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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

On the edge of the wilderness, warm and comfortable, I am sitting in a room with wall-to-wall windows (double or triple pane no doubt), a gas fire across the room and geothermal heating under the tiled floor. Looking through the windows I have a panoramic view of a classic north Pacific beach, dotted with some very large logs. The wind is fierce and huge rollers pound the sand. The water is dotted with a few intrepid surfers in their wet suits.

No, this is not a dream. We are spending a week in a beach house adjacent to the Pacific Rim National Park on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

Our annual sojourn to the wild west coast has become a welcome reading and reflection break! We first came several decades ago when Derek and I were very busy with our respective work in Medicine and Yoga. In my youth I could not have imagined I would look forward to a retreat to a cold, wet,

wild and windy place; but we have come to love it. Once or twice I came here directly from a stay in Pune when the contrast in air quality was particularly welcome, as was the time to digest the brilliant teaching of Guruji, Geeta, and Prashant.

It is no accident that our fall trips encompass the November 11th Remembrance Day holiday. Having spent six years of our childhood in a country and city at the heart of the Second World War, those memories are a significant part of our history. My generation will never take peace for granted.

This year the whole week was particularly poignant as we digested the election news from our southern neighbour. For a few days we were joined by some members of our family including a college professor daughter and a physician granddaughter. We discussed and attempted to digest our disappointment that we were not celebrating the election of the first woman President of the United States, a highly qualified individual. Worst of all, I faced the realization that not only am I unlikely to see a female President in my lifetime, but it may never happen in the life of my daughter and quite possibly that of my granddaughter!

Coming to terms with such disappointments and learning to live a full life in the face of them is where yoga has played such a

prominent role in my life. But, as Hillary Clinton herself said after she lost the election, "Never stop believing that fighting for what's right is worth it!"

What is right for her remains to be seen; at least she will have many options along with the skill and intelligence to make a good choice for the next stage of her life. In the face of huge disappointment, this question will arise again and must be dealt with if we are not going to be destroyed, defined or unduly limited by it. For me, yoga came into my life at an opportune time when to many outside observers, my mother in particular, I seemed to "have it all". But I felt trapped!

My spiritual search began in my teenage years, towards the end of the war, when I tried out all the churches in my part of London and settled on a lively Anglican church full of music, ritual and vitality. I worshiped there regularly and the community became part of my social fabric outside of church. My parents neither encouraged nor discouraged me. My life had a spiritual dimension which enriched it immeasurably. This all ended when the fiery passionate Irish vicar was replaced by an uptight aesthetic Englishman. Later I came to understand that this first vicar was full of vibrancy, light and life, while his successor was fearful of its force. I left the church and it took more than thirty years for me to come across

Teaching Enrichment Series for Iyengar Yoga Teachers and Trainees

This series will advance your personal practice of asana and pranayama, refine your skills as a teacher, and deepen your understanding of Iyengar Yoga with some of the country's most experienced and respected teachers.

March 11, 10:45 am – 1:45 pm

April 7, 2 – 5 pm

Each session \$35 +GST

such brilliance again in the forms of Swami Radha and B.K.S. Iyengar.

Contemporary popular thought views yoga as a form of exercise or a wellness regimen, which is true to some extent; however, these are limited understandings. Its true nature is a practical philosophy for body, mind and self no matter what the circumstances. Yoga does not promise to make life easy, there are many other factors at work here which determine the journey of a lifetime. What yoga does posit is responsibility and possibility for each individual to make their life worth living, whatever the circumstances.

Yoga also brings you face to face with your personal limitations, both self-imposed or a fact of life such as mortality. It teaches how to remove the former and live and thrive within the limitations of the latter. We are shown how to make full use of this lifetime by cultivating awareness and raising the level of our consciousness.

In his seminal text, *The Yoga Sutras*, sage Patanjali defines yoga as the cessation of fluctuations of consciousness, and, throughout its teaching, addresses various issues which contribute to such disturbances. As they disturb body, mind, and breath they need to be tackled physically, mentally, psychologically, and spiritually.

For all these reasons, the first and foremost quality to be cultivated in a yoga student is the discipline of a personal practice. Traditionally this would be established under the guidance of a yoga master and only in some cases would it lead on to teaching. Even in the days when I was first learning about yoga, teacher training was never offered en masse, as happens these days. A student or devotee would have to prove their worthiness first. Each tradition of yoga would have its own criteria for receiving further training, and these would be demanding.

Gurus or Master Teachers dispense their teaching in accordance with their

perceptions of a pupil's needs, and definitely not because of the pupil's desires. The Guru would weigh the student's maturity, integrity, and sincerity in the spirit of Jesus Christ's warning from the Sermon on the Mount: "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces."¹

The irony of today is that everyone wants to be treated as a unique individual—a sentiment with which I heartily concur and is, in fact, exactly what yoga advocates. This means that the pearls of a guru's wisdom will be passed on at different times and in different ways, depending on the student's strength, stability, and spiritual readiness. As B.K.S. Iyengar has stated many times, he treated casual pupils casually! And this was a fundamental piece of advice given to those students of his who were themselves teachers of yoga.

Sadly, these days teacher training has become a moneymaking proposition with studios competing for trainees. I did not start to train teachers until encouraged to do so by Gurujī, and despite having been a teacher for many decades, the number of teachers I have trained is relatively small. With introductory training it is easier to work in larger groups because virtually all the students know little or nothing, but with higher levels of learning the approach has to be tailored on an individual basis. Many of my earliest trainees are now senior teachers in their own right. Their early work with me has been enriched by their own years of personal study and practice, and by many trips to Pune to immerse themselves in Gurujī's teaching and presence. This presence could also be called a *darshan* which shines light on deeper understanding of the meaning and purpose of yoga teachings, and awakens intelligence to make use of them in all aspects of life. Today much

of what is portrayed as "yoga" is really *bhoga* or sensual indulgence.

Trips to Pune to study with Mr. Iyengar were priceless gifts, and although he is no longer alive, the Institute continues to be a beacon of light under the direction of his daughter Geeta and son Prashant, whom Gurujī referred to as his foremost disciples. They are supported by others who were trained directly by Gurujī such as his granddaughter Abhijata whose promise, sincerity and intelligence led to her receiving priceless and intense yoga training directly from Gurujī in the last years of his life.

Study in Pune has long been a rite of passage for students of Iyengar Yoga and is fundamental to the development of teachers beyond entry levels. When I first went there in 1979 it was to take a three-week Intensive from Gurujī consisting of daily *asana* and *pranayama* classes, several discourses and question and answer sessions. On Sundays the Institute was closed and we got a welcome day of rest. In class, Gurujī was demanding and classes often lasted three or more hours, ending when he saw our eyes glazing over. At this moment he would proclaim, "Enough for Today!" and leave the room!

As Intensives with Gurujī became more and more rare, competition for places in any courses he was to teach became fierce. The early Intensives would be for students from one country or region and organized with Gurujī and Geeta by one of their senior students who had been to Pune several times before, someone known and presumably trusted by the Iyengars. My early visits were with Canadian students, first from the west coast and later from across Canada, and then came the chance to be in a special international course with Gurujī on his 70th birthday. Spaces were apportioned by country and Canada received four.

Working with his senior pupils from all over the western world, Gurujī's

1 Matthew 7.6

demands went up a notch, and classes were hard. For a few, this course ended their desire to pursue Iyengar Yoga but for me it only deepened my thirst. I made this pilgrimage as often as feasible for stays of varying duration. I joined other national and international intensives, attended special and general classes, celebrated many of Guruji's birthdays in India, created and seized every opportunity to study with him!

These times in Pune were always enriched by spending afternoons in the Library as Guruji did himself, reading, writing, editing, and listening to impromptu discourses from him.

In the days of the British Raj, it was not uncommon to see signs advertising that a doctor, lawyer, or other professional was "UK returned". For the worldwide Iyengar Yoga community, variations of the phrase "Pune returned" held sway.

The first group I took to Pune was in 1985 after several visits of my own. I had permission to bring thirty students, and there was so much interest throughout Canada that I ended up with a huge waiting list of more than fifty people, including some from the United States.

The moment the news got out that a group was being organized, it spread like wildfire. I was about to write to Pune and see if they would increase our number when a voice in my mind said: "Why don't you wait and see?" These groups were generally planned well in advance and many dropped out along the way. In the end all of those who had been willing to wait and had prepared themselves, including obtaining a valid

visa, did find a place—with one last minute replacement arriving on the day the course started!

It is a privilege to study at the source of the teaching. Personal circumstances and health issues prohibit some students from making this journey, but for those who are studying, and particularly if you are teaching Iyengar Yoga, it is a priceless opportunity. ॐ

Congratulations!

The following candidates achieved Introductory II certification at the September assessment in Saskatoon:

Diane Barker, Saskatoon, SK
Kelly Mawhinney, Janetville, ON
Teresa Tustain, Kelowna, BC
Suzanne Boucher-Chen, Edmonton, AB
Lynne Swenson, Calgary, AB
Usher Fleising, Calgary, AB
Mary-Ellen Hannah, Nanaimo, BC
Jean-Pierre Nicolotti, Ottawa, ON

The following candidates achieved Introductory II certification at the November assessment in Fredericton:

Fatemeh Zeighami, North York, ON
Abha Chawla-Humeniuk, Tiny, ON
Susannah Horgan, Calgary, AB
Petra Kuehl, Toronto, ON
Jillana Burgess, Dartmouth, NS
Roy Chan, Burlington, ON
Devin Joseph Waterbury, Dartmouth, NS
Mary Ann Juurlink, Chelsea, QC

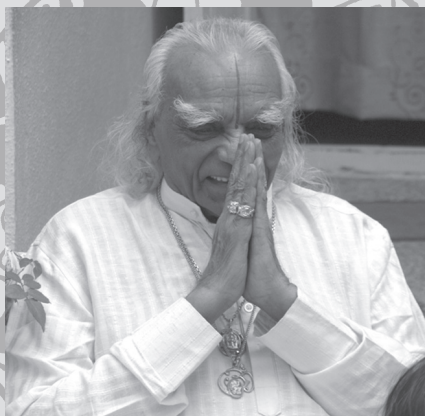


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In the Light of Yoga

Anniversary Celebration of B.K.S. Iyengar's Birthday

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On Guruji's Writing

by Leslie Hoggia

B.K.S. Iyengar became a prolific writer, overcoming many obstacles including debilitating poor health as a child. His first book *Light on Yoga*, considered a classic in the field of yoga, has been translated into at least 17 languages and celebrates its 50th anniversary this year (1996-2016).

After the success of *Light on Yoga*, it took Iyengar fifteen years to prepare *Light on Pranayama*, then came many more books notably *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, and *Light on Life* in 2005. He wrote countless articles, and during his life and gave many lectures and interviews. Many of these later works have been collected in an eight-volume set called *Astadala Yogamala*. I have been re-reading these tomes to search out their hidden gems. These books are in the Victoria Yoga Centre library, with circulating and reserve copies available.

Volume eight is a good place to begin, with four separate indexes which guide the reader into all eight books. There is a general index; a second one organized by Sanskrit words; the third is an index of *asanas*; and the last one an index by quotation.

Each volume has a wealth of interesting articles, photos and diagrams. Iyengar begins in Volume One with biographical details of his life. Each time he tells of his early journey, he elaborates with new details. In one article he says: "If yoga had not stuck to me and I to yoga, probably this

art would not have become accessible to average people nor would it have become popular." (p 20)

He also elaborates on the life with his Guru, T. Krishnamacharya. On page 55, he tells about having to learn the advanced back bends (at age sixteen) in three days and perform them at a conference. Krishnamacharya "never asked me again what I do, how I do, or whether practiced or not. "Iyengar begged his Guru to see how he should perform the postures, and he was told, "I will only see you on the platform." Iyengar's willpower got him though, and he was awarded Rs 50 for his demonstration. He said this tied him to yoga and to his Guru.

There is a story of his first public demonstration in Pune at Deccan Gymkhana. The organizers of the club asked him to give a demonstration to the audience who had come to watch a famous wrestling match – to the dismay of the crowd, the match ended in seconds. Everyone was restless so Iyengar took the stage and began by showing some of the 'fantastic' *asanas* to draw attention. (p 30).

Writing on *pranayama*, Iyengar tells how he was not practicing enough forward bends. He could not stay even for a few minutes in *janu sirsasana*. His spine resisted so much that he had unbearable pain. This meant that sitting in *pranayama* was very, very challenging, and his spine was shrinking. He was determined to change that, and since he could do back bends, then he vowed that he must also practice forward bends. He realized that they are essential for a complete practice. (p 65).

There are so many articles in each volume, such as a transcription from lecture entitled 'Yoga, A Universal Culture', given in the USA in 1979. In it Guruji says: "Yoga is to still the ruffles or ramblings of consciousness.... As the sun shoots millions and millions of rays in all directions in the form of energy to illumine and provide warmth to the universe, the consciousness also throws up millions and millions of rays in the form of thoughts. ...It is through yoga alone that one can bring these disintegrated and scattered ramblings of energy to reintegrate in consciousness. Yoga is meant to keep the conscious centre in a state of alertness without any oscillation, so the power of the self abides in its own grandeur." (p 81)

In the final section of Volume I there are some very helpful articles on Patanjali's yoga *Sutras*. For example, there is translation of all the *sutras* in English. It is a wonderful way for the yoga practitioner to get the whole scope of the *sutras* by being able to read them one after the other, through all four *padas* (chapters) without having to translate the Sanskrit.

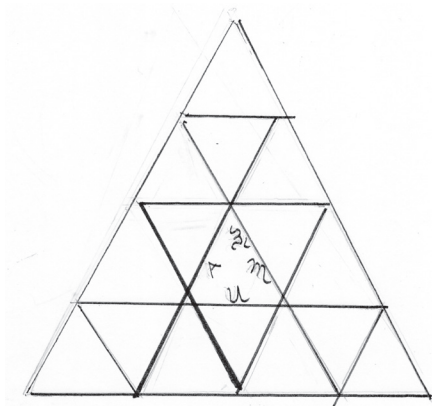
And the final article in the book groups the *sutras* by topic, such as 'yoga', *asana*, the *kleshas* (obstacles), consciousness, practice (*abhyasa*), *kala* (time) and so on. When reading a *sutra*, one way to get a better understanding of the Sanskrit words, is to find where the same theme is explored in other *sutras*. Sanskrit words are not always easily translated into English, so further elaboration can be very useful.

In Volume Two, one of my favorite quotes is in an early article titled *Yoga Dristi* (1988). "Be an example to your students. Practice with faith, practice with courage, practice with zest, practice with understanding, and practice uninterruptedly and reverentially." (page 35).

There are some interesting diagrams in this second volume. One article on *asana*, he elaborates on *Aum*, which

"If yoga had not stuck to me and I to yoga, probably this art would not have become accessible to average people nor would it have become popular."

is expressed in three separate sounds, and goes on to elaborate how many important concepts in yoga are in triunes. With *Aum* in the centre triangle (see diagram), how many concepts that come in groups of three can you use to fill in the blanks? (see page 238, Vol. II)



Yoga *vinyasa* is another topic covered in this volume. When Gururji was young, Krishnamacharya taught *asana* in fast succession (or jumpings.) Then over time, Gururji realized that to penetrate deeper into the practice, he had to slow down and he began to develop his unique approach. In this article, he also explains that a *vinyasa* can be slower and more deliberate in order to build towards *sirsasana* and cool down by reversing the flow of poses after coming out of head balance (page 249). And in the article he gives diagrams for a variety of *vinyasa* sequences.

These are just a very few examples and quotes from the first two volumes, and I hope this will encourage others to open these yoga garlands and delve into their rich depths. ॐ

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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.

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Pearls of Wisdom: Commentary on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, Part 3

by B.K.S. Iyengar

Mr. Iyengar's Commentary on Patanjali

The following is Mr. Iyengar's address on Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, given at the Iyengar Yoga Institute in London, England, July 15, 1990. The address first appeared in *Dipika, Journal of the Iyengar Institute* (No. 24, January 1993), London, England. It included an introduction, entitled "Pearls of Wisdom," and a commentary on each chapter of the *Sutras*, in which Patanjali describes the different paths that characterize yogic ascendance to *Samadhi*. This is the third and final part of the article.

The Four Aspects of the Brain

When the practice is continued, the controlled and uncultured mind becomes a cultured mind. In the cultured mind *pramana*, *viparyaya*, *vikalpa*, *nidra* and *smrti* are replaced. *Vitarka* (thought) becomes *savitarka* (auspicious thought) and *vicara* (analysis) becomes *savicara* (auspicious analysis); Patanjali is describing a controlled and auspicious way of using the thinking and analysing faculties of the mind. Not just analysing everything that comes along. As yet, he is still dealing with the code of conduct he has not entered the area of Yogic experience. As *savitarka* is auspicious thought and *savicara* is auspicious analysis so *asmita* becomes *sasmita* – the pain of egotism is transformed into auspicious self whilst *ananda* becomes *sananda*, auspicious bliss.

These aspects are found in the four parts of the brain; the front brain is the analytical brain, the back brain is the reasoning brain, the bottom brain is the emotional brain where pleasure and pain are experienced and the top brain is the seat of the soul. See how Patanjali's analysis mirrors the functional and structural divisions of the brain in modern medicine, although he does not use their terminology. So the analytical brain thinks rightly, the reasoning brain thinks reasonably, the emotional brain attains auspicious joy and the top brain establishes the stability of the self.

Of these four aspects, *asmita* and the related concept of *atman* are most difficult to explain. In the second chapter, *asmita* is translated as ego, but in the fourth chapter a different meaning is intended in *nirmana cittani asmita matrat* (IV.4). The meaning differs because he is describing a cultured mind. The mind, which has been created as intelligence through the methods Patanjali describes, acts as the individual self. It is an offshoot from the original consciousness so when it matures through practice it loses its identity. It is here in the fourth



chapter that people are unable even to glimpse the meaning that Patanjali intends by the word *asmita*. As long as it does not lose its identity it is *asmita*. So the *citta* which originates in the core of being has to be matured with wisdom. This is the seasoned intelligence, the *rthambhara prajna* mentioned in the first chapter (I.48). This arises when the mind is fully absorbed in an object of meditation. Since *asmita* is an offshoot from the absolute consciousness when it is completely mature, the sense of "I am-ness" is lost and *asmita* becomes soul. Through this process of cultivation the four parts of the brain, the analytical brain, the reasoning brain, the joyful brain, and that part which feels I-am-ness, come together. Then they blossom out; but they must first be brought together.

Virama Pratyaya: The State of Silence

When these parts are interconnected, Patanjali says that you experience a state of silence. This is known as *virama pratyaya*. There is a pause in the brain's functioning during which the four levels of the brain are integrated. Many commentators call this state *asamprajnata samadhi*; however, for me this is not a sufficient explanation. The word *asamprajnata* means only, "I am not aware of that state". Even in Vyasa's commentary it is translated as "It has not come to my surface, to understand what it is." However, the next *sutra* in Patanjali's account is an explanation; in it he says that the person who enters *virama pratyaya* experiences a bodiless state.

In sleep we all experience a bodiless state. Traditional commentaries have taken this *sutra* to refer to deities or angels, but Patanjali is always concerned with the situation of the practitioner, the development and understanding of each individual. Yes, deities and angels have no bodies; they are *prakertilyan* who are undisturbed by the five elements. But what happens in sleep? Is sleep not an *asamprajnata Samadhi*? Then why is it called *nidra*? Patanjali describes this experience we all have in sleep and then goes on to say,

(I.20) *sraddha virya smrti samadhi prajna purvaka itaresam*
(Continue with) faith, vigour, memory, complete absorption in practice, and total awareness.

He is telling us not to stop after we have had such experience but to go on working. You may experience the state of unconsciousness, of freedom from the body in this pause, this space between periods of consciousness. At this time the mind and the self are separate and in that state both can rest. But that is not the end, he says. You have had a flash of the divinity so now continue in your *sadhana* to establish your connection with that state. Continue with faith (*sraddha*) he says. He introduces faith here after 19 *sutras*, because in Yoga you do not start by simply believing; you experience. Subjective truth surfaces and so you gain faith. Faith comes after experience. From this experience you also gain vigour (*virya*). Further vigour and confidence come through the discipline that has been required to cultivate the four parts of the brain. You have done it and the truth has come out! So carry on with your practice.

Yoga and God

Next Patanjali introduces the idea of God, a God without form expressed in a syllable not by symbols. Patanjali was the first person in Indian tradition to develop this quality of God. The other five of the six orthodox philosophies, *Samkhya*, *Nyaya*, *Vaaisesika*, *Vedanta*, and *Mimamsa* are dependent on the authority of the *Vedas* not on God and there is no God in the two heterodox systems of Buddhism and Jainism. Patanjali introduced this alternative and he defines this God as he “who is free from the reaction of his actions” (I.24). Thus he has neither pains nor pleasures. God is invoked through the syllable AUM. You have “a”, “u” and “in” in your language, do you not? The original sound is known as *Sabda Brahman*. In order to communicate, you must first open your mouth, to continue you must move your tongue and when you finish communicating you close your mouth. Thus the base of all communication is A-U-M. That is why it became the seed syllable, the *bija mantra*. According to Indian spirituality if you

surrender yourself to this *bija mantra* you surrender yourself to the *Sabda Brahman*. You know, of course, that there are many *mantras* which develop from AUM and which convey many different meanings. However, that is a vast subject, which we cannot cover now. The important thing is that Patanjali takes that seed *mantra* and says “meditate on that” (I.28).

Meditation

The moment the word “meditation” is introduced, the present generation misinterprets it. They think this is an easy method. When you ask them what they are doing, they all say, “I am meditating”. But Patanjali gives a variety of methods because he knows that meditation is not possible for all. The *citta-vrttis* keep playing, wandering here and there and even if you have controlled senses and a controlled mind, you do not know at what time you may fall back. So he says, continue your *sadhana*. For intellectuals he says that meditation is the right method. But do you have the capacity to accept your weaknesses and surrender? Have you heard of Ramakrishna Paramahansa? When he was suffering from terminal cancer all his followers pleaded with him. “Sir, the *shakti* is under your control, why do you not ask the *shakti* to give you the power to expel this cancer?” And do you know what his answer was? “Have I done meditation all these years just to ask for this disease to be taken away?” Do we, you and I, have that kind of mentality? Now do you understand what meditation is? And yet we do not read Patanjali to see for whom he has given meditation as a method! You have heard of Ramana Maharshi – he also had cancer and the cancer had spread to such an extent that the doctors said that they would have to give him an anaesthetic in order to amputate his arm. He immediately said, “You want my arm don’t you? Well then, what do I want with an anaesthetic? Cut it off!” Do you have that courage? So the way of meditation is only for the *tivra samvegin*, for those who are supremely intense,

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who are very close to the soul. For them it is easy to achieve their goal. Do you see how jumbled up we are in our misconceptions about meditation?

Alternatives to Meditation

Then Patanjali asks, if meditation is not practicable directly what is the next step?

(II.34) *Pracchardana vvidliaranabhyam va pranasya*

An alternative way is by the retention of the breath after exhalation.

So he comes to *Pranayama*. Can you see the significance? In the same way the cancer sufferer only has two choices, to accept his illness and surrender or to fight it without negative thought, to challenge the disease, so Patanjali says that to surrender and accept is meditation. However, he adds, if you cannot achieve meditation then find other means. And what are these other means? The first alternative he gives is to watch your exhalation breath and stop it. What happens? As you exhale your mind moves into a passive state and in the pause before inhalation a deeper passivity comes – learn that state. Then you understand what it is to control your thought waves in a state of control – at least during exhalation.

Alternatively, he says, whatever subject attracts you, go wholeheartedly and completely into that (II.35). So I go totally into the *asanas*; I am totally absorbed in them. If you understand and accept what Patanjali says you cannot call *asanas* merely physical yoga. Any subject, if it attracts you enough for you to become totally absorbed in it can become a path to *Samadhi*. Look at the dedication of the greatest scientists. For twenty-four hours of every day their minds and bodies will be fixed on one subject alone. In that respect, according to Patanjali, they are yogis. In the same way I am involved in the *asanas* and *pranayama*. The terminology which my critics use to describe my practise is based on misconception. They are suffering from *vikalpa*, from misconception. Consequently they do not approach this subject, which they do not know, with an open mind. I am open to learning. Just as the scientist wants to break down the atoms to understand the workings of matter, so I am interested in breaking down the elements of my body to discover the internal processes. I have to continue exploring the quality of movement, the quality of effort. If I say, “My head aches but head-balance brings relief”, is that the end of it? No! What more can *Sirsasana* give? How can I forget the body in *sirsasana* while keeping the body alert? How can I draw my mind away from the body? Can you do that? I can and I have shown you the process. But this can only be understood when the student is ready. Then there will be total absorption.

If this is not attainable, Patanjali suggests another alternative.

(II.36) *Visoka va jyotismati*. Or contemplate the serene and luminous light in the heart.

What is this sorrowless light? This is *Atman*. But can we go directly to the *Atman*? Do you see how difficult this is? So the next *sutra* says, take those who have experienced and transcended sorrows for your object of concentration. Can you see the connection between these two *sutras*? He says, “Take ideal persons such as Ramana, Ramakrishna, Christ or any other; take them as examples. Develop your character by studying their ways of behaviour”.

Citta Prasadana: The Diffusion of Consciousness

When you use these approaches and begin to develop, what happens? Consciousness finds avenues and begins to diffuse itself, evenly, throughout the body at every level as water that is spilt spreads evenly over the floor. It diffuses through the system and find its resting level. He describes this process in the phrase *citta prasadana* (II.33). That means equating the *citta* with every part, every cell and every molecule of the body.

When that is achieved, he says, the mind loses its power because the memory has become broad. When you extend the whole body and experience the whole body as a single *citta*, a single consciousness then the memory loses its power to restrict and block.

(I.43) *Smrti-prisuddhau svarupa sunyevarthamatra nirbhasa nirvitarka*

When memory is purified (*smrti-prisuddhau*), memory and experience of the mind cease to exist. Then consciousness shines purely without reflection. This is non-analytical *Samadhi*.

Like a fruit that has fully ripened, memory falls from its previously held position. Since the mind and memory are inextricably linked they ripen together and fall together. They no longer function in the seat of the brain and when that happens, a new light dawns. A new knowledge dawns. Memory and mind lose their contact with the knowledge from outside world and instead contact the knowledge coming from the inner world, which is the soul. From that time on the *sadhaka* gains intuition and through this intuition comes that perfect intelligence and seasoned awareness which never wavers, *rtambhara prajna* (I.46).

Then when intelligence is unwavering, do not set your memory in motion again by saying, “I want such and such an experience” or “Oh, today I had a wonderful experience of a seasoned state of mind”. In such moments the memory takes charge and you are caught. The mind, which you have just brought to maturity and dropped, comes once more to the surface and rots in your head. So, Patanjali says, be careful. The knowledge you gain from successful meditation will also disturb you, so that must be thrown away too. Throw away your experiences and see what happens.

(I.47) *Nirvicara vaiisharadhye adhyatmaprasadah*
With the attainment of purity in non-deliberate contemplation (*Samadhi*) there flows a profound and serene spiritual light.

In that moment, instead of merely *citta* filling the body, now the soul, the very self engulfs that frontier which is your body. It occupies everywhere and there is no support from mantra, from concentration on inhalation or exhalation, or on an ideal human being. You are yourself in the sorrowless light. This state is known as *Nirbija Samadhi* because in it there is no support for the further development of the intelligence. And so he finishes the first chapter with this *Nirbija Samadhi*. Again it is important to note the unusual order of the four chapters. The first chapter culminates with this supreme state of *Nirbija Samadhi* and then immediately he begins the second chapter with basic instructions for unevolved souls. But is this not also for evolved souls, because although you may reach *Nirbija Samadhi*, you do not know when sorrows may come to you.

(II. 16) *Heyam duhkham anagatam*
The pain which is to come can be avoided.

You do not know what pitfalls lay ahead. There are nine types of diseases. They are physical diseases, mental diseases and spiritual diseases. They are described in *sutra* I.30. The last of these is *Anavasthitatva* (failure to maintain a level). You have reached the light, the seasoned intelligence has taken you to within sight of the soul and the Self has engulfed your body but you must recognize the possibility of falling from that state. You may lose the power you have gained: you may become a beginner once more if you lose that vision.

If you want an example, I will give you one. What about Rajneesh? You all know what heights he went to and where he ended up! He reached a certain state (*avastha*) and then he thought, "I have everything" and he forgot. He fell from that height but he would not accept his downfall and come all the way down to start once again from the base. That was his failure. There are so many examples of evolved souls who have fallen. They had genius but they did not keep cultivating it. The second chapter is for them as well. ॐ



IYAC/ACYI ASSESSMENT DATES

January 20-22, Intermediate Senior I/II/III, Victoria, BC
March 2-5, Intermediate Senior I, Toronto, ON

Thank You!



There was a lot of vibrant energy from the 147 people who came to the Centre for the Open House on a September weekend to drink chai, munch delicious treats, and attend classes, including the 50 who came to hear Shirley and Derek's talk.

THANK YOU TO:

- All the teachers: Lauren Cox taught ropes; Adia Kapoor taught Level 1; Wendy Boyer taught 50+; and Lucie Guindon taught All Levels; Shirley Daventry French and Derek French gave the Philosophy talk, while Leslie Hogya introduced them and led us in Happy Birthday to Shirley; finally, Ann Kilbertus who taught the Iyengar Yoga Basics workshop on Sunday.
- Laine Canivet for her usual fine job of coordinating on Saturday; as well as tidying the props and washing the floor after the Sunday workshop.
- Sheila Redhead for coordinating the baking and to Annie Kitchen for staying all day greeting and tidying up.
- Amanda Mills, Carole Miller, Stacey Frank, and Bev Kalstrom for clean up on Friday night and Saturday afternoon.
- Dale Draper for the lovely flowers.
- Our many wonderful bakers.
- Jane McFarlane made the most delicious chai, plus she and Johanna Godliman cleaned the props and floor.
- Britta Poisson, Hilary McPhail, and Bob Maher for working the desk.
- Laine Canivet, Stacey Frank, Bev Kalstrom, and Leslie Hogya for cleaning, tidying the props, and washing the floor after the Sunday workshop.

THANK YOU TO:

- Jane McFarlane for donating the *Yoga for Sports* book to our library collection.
- Our weekly remedial and transition class volunteers: Robin Cantor, Jayne Jonas, Johanna Godliman, Jane McFarlane, Jaya Malaviarachchi, Laura Johnston, Karin Dayton, Billie Essa, Lynn Palfrey, and Sheri Berkowitz.
- Krysia Strawczynski for storing important, but bulky, items for the Centre.

Interview With Geeta S. Iyengar, Part 1

by Joan White

THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN THE CONFERENCE MAGAZINE FOR THE IYNAUS CONFERENCE IN FLORIDA IN MAY, 2016. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR, JOAN WHITE, AND THE PRESIDENT OF IYNAUS.

Geeta S. Iyengar is the eldest daughter of the late Shri B.K.S. Iyengar. She was born on December 7, 1944. She began trying to do yoga poses while playing near her father while he was practicing. As a young girl she suffered from health issues and nearly succumbed to nephritis, a kidney disease. When traditional medicine failed her father stepped in and treated her with yoga. At the age of 9 he told her that if she didn't practice she would die.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SADHAKA FILM.NET & JAKE CLENNELL

I met Geeta in 1976 on my first visit to Pune. I was awed by the depth and breadth of her practice. We became friends in 1991 during the back-bend intensive when I talked with her about how much responsibility she had outside of the intensive itself. While most of us had the freedom to go back to our respective rooms and lie down, Geeta had to go home and manage all of her household duties and her editing chores without any time to rest. For those who know her only through her books, her teaching

JW: The interview is about practice you know. We wanted to know the story of how you started to practice from your own experience.

GI: So, how I started. OK. I tell you, it's my experience how I started. I was weak as a child. After having nephritis I became weaker, like a vegetable. After about a one year gap, I had jaundice, then I had typhoid, malaria, and influenza. Like that it went on and on. The weakness was there. I asked Gurujī, "What should I do because of this weakness?" He said, "Nothing. Just concentrate on your *Śīrāsana* and *Sarvāgāsana*." And I realized by doing those, at least the day went well. I didn't feel absolutely collapsed from inside. And that is how I started doing yoga. He said, "Keep on doing your other *āsanas* as well as *Śīrāsana* and *Sarvāgāsana*." At that time sequencing was unknown to him. I was just nine years old and Gurujī was busy with his work. He was not that free. But he said, "You just do *āsanas*, and only that will give you relief." He told me,

The courage was there from the very beginning. That is definite. How the courage was there, I don't know, but I was courageous. I was physically courageous, mentally courageous.

"Keep doing *āsanas*. If you don't do *āsanas* you'll die."

JW: Did he really say that?

GI: Yes, that is what he said. You have to remember do or die. And when he said this I just became disciplined and stuck with it. There's no other word I can use. The moment I started doing, I used to feel better. So I told my mother I would go upstairs—there was one balcony-type room upstairs—and practice. My mother knew what- ever time I got home from school even if it was past 6:00 pm I would do yoga and then come and have something to eat.

My mother saw that I was disciplined and she told my father that I practiced every day. There was no book I could read, and no picture album for me to look at when I started in 1954-55. I started doing whatever I knew, I was just practicing. My health came back to some extent. At least I could sit to do homework, and I could read. Other- wise all the time you can't imagine how fatiguing it was for me. Then I wanted to learn new *āsanas*. Gurujī had prepared an album in 1951 or 1954, but he had not let anybody see it. Gurujī's photographs were in the album and later when I asked to see it he said "you have to use it and put it back in the cupboard and not just leave it lying around."

So I used to be very careful. Whatever *āsanas* were in the album I practiced. Almost all the *āsanas* and more, like *Virābhadrāsana* IV were there, which he did not put in *Light On Yoga*. He wanted to put it in *Light On Yoga* but the publisher said the manuscript was too big, and he should take out the *āsanas* that were minor and just include the major ones. So all the *āsanas* were only in the album. I was curious – "I wanted to try this *āsana*, try that *āsana*, that were in the album." And as Gurujī had said, I practiced *Śīrāsana* and *Sarvāgāsana* very regularly. My body was supple and I was thin because I had not put on fat anywhere. Everybody whenever they used to see me would say "She is very thin," because my younger sister Vanita was looking better. They could make out that she was healthy but that I was not healthy. That was how I picked up the *āsanas* from the album. Then the interest came and I proceeded further.

JW: Is there any particular event from that time that you remember? Was it achieving some *āsana* – or anything that you remember that just stands out in your mind?

GI: Well the first that stands out is that I had diet restrictions. Accordingly, I ate the food my mother prepared according to the doctor's instructions. My father used to come home late around 8, 8:30, 9:00...so he didn't know what we did during the daytime other than going to school. I had a list of *āsanas* and I used to mark on the paper what *āsanas* I did that day so I would not forget. If I didn't do something there would be a cross next to the *āsana*. In the beginning, a little break was there but otherwise I practiced continuously. When I saw that I had practiced for thirty days I told my mother "Mama I did thirty days with no break, even Sunday when it was a school holiday." In that manner, when I practiced I was happy. Then my mother told my father, "Now she is very regular and she ticks there on her paper what she has done," and the first thing Guruji said was, "Whatever it may be just see that she eats one apple a day because some nourishment is required." And that is how I started eating an apple a day.

At the age of seven, before nephritis, I had given a demonstration with Guruji. It was in a public library in Pune called Nagar Vachan Mandir and Guruji did the demonstration and I stood behind him and followed him not knowing the names of the *āsanas*. If he was doing *Tāāsana*, I'd stand in *Tāāsana*; if he did *Trikoāsana* I did *Trikoāsana*; if he did *Ūrdhva Dhanurāsana* I would lie down and push up into *Ūrdhva Dhanurāsana*. And that was how I demonstrated even though Guruji said I should just stand there if I didn't know the *āsana*. So I did stand for some of them, but I did quite a few *āsanas* in that demonstration. And that was perhaps a turning point, in a way. I started liking yoga from the age of seven but because of the weakness at the age of nine, and after nephritis I had to find out what to do because my body was absolutely dry. My whole body felt dry from inside and I had tremendous dehydration. I had no strength to do my work but I used to work in the house because everybody used to say I was weak. So I said, "I must not show that I am a weak

person. So let me do the household work, so whatever was there I used to do. And my mother also said, "Keep on doing some work so that your body and mind remain engaged and it'll will be better."

Another event is when I had jaundice. At that time my father said, "Do a lot of *Jānuśīrāsana*." As I started doing *Jānuśīrāsana* I understood that when you stay in an *āsana* for a long time or repeat the *āsana*, it changes your state of mind. With jaundice there's a sort of heaviness you feel, Somehow *Jānuśīrāsana* helped me. I can't explain how it helped me but I used to do *Jānuśīrāsana*—right, left, right, left—continuing like that five times, six times, whatever times possible for me and that gave me a great relief. Then I understood that repetition of an *āsana* helps you to improve the *āsana*. And then I started repeating the *āsanas* for example I did one *Kūrmāsana* – OK, second time let me see if *Kūrmāsana* comes better. And that is how I started and improvement came in me to a great extent. One day I did only *Kūrmāsanas* because that was a difficult *āsana* for me.

It is a difficult *āsana* because the hands have to go inside, arms have to go backwards, or you have to cross your legs for *Suptakūrmāsana* etc., so as it came to me, in that first *Kūrmāsana* where the arms were just sideways, not even taken back, I felt I wanted to find out how I could still do better. This simply came from that understanding of what Guruji always used to say, "Stretch, extend," these kinds of words. I felt that I must press my upper arms with my thighs, pressing them I should just get the pose. And when I pressed them, my thighs and seat came up. And the moment they came up, the lightness I felt was great. You know, that's all experience, how the lightness comes. And when the lightness came to me I could extend my trunk forward in *Kūrmāsana*. Then it was easier to take the arms back, it was easier to hold the wrists at the back for *Suptakūrmāsana* and from there the brain started working that yes, you have to really sometimes knot the body in that manner. If I am clear it gives the freedom and then knotting becomes possible. That understanding came later but I understood that you just move the arms over and knot(clasp) and then it would come nicely like knotting in *Padmāsana*, knotting in *Virāsana*, so closeness I started experiencing. It's the same in all three poses. These are the three stages where I understood. Then when Guruji was teaching, I used to observe what he said, what he explained, and that gave me a further understanding about it.

JW: So that was when you were nine years old, 10 years old?

GI: Yes, absolutely. I remember that from seven years old, let me see, so in 1960, 61 that practice was very good. *Light on Yoga* came later – after 1961 it came. Then from the book I started understanding and I used to always check with the names in the book.

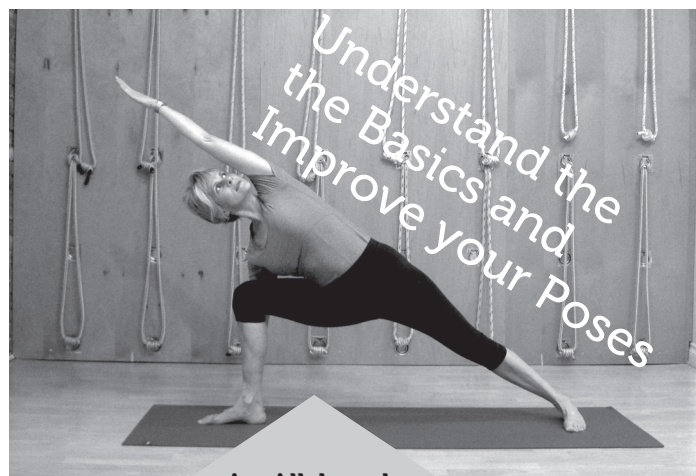


Guruji had given me work after the manuscript was ready. Before he took the manuscript to London to be published he made me and Vanita compare the actual photographs with the number, name and numbered plates in the manuscript. He said, "Check whether all the photographs and names of the *āsanas* tally. If anything is missing, you tell me." He had done that already earlier but he wanted me to sit and find out. So really I just took those photographs and tallied it with all the numbers.

The second job was giving right and left side descriptions while doing the pose. I don't know whether he wanted to examine me or what. "You do the *Trikoāsana* on right side and explain everything and while doing you have to use the word left. And then if doing on the left, you have to use the word right." That way, he asked me to check, and that I remember very well, I did that for the *Light on Yoga* book. And that's how I learned the names of the *āsanas*.

JW: Did that inspire you to try more and more *āsanas* because you were looking at them?

GI: That interest was there from the very beginning. Even seeing the album I would try on my own. How he was doing *Paryākāsana*, *Parighāsana*, where the hand was, you know, that kind of thing. And like *Yogadaāsana*, how he was doing, *Kaāsana*, even if it was not achieved, I would just at least try to see how it came. And then when it came, of course, that was an achievement.



**An All-Levels
Workshop
with Lucie Guindon**

Saturday, May 6, 2017 | 10:45am - 1:30pm

**Beginners –
this workshop is for you, too!**

**\$40 Members
\$45 non-members**

JW: That was a milestone.

GI: Yes, definitely. And by 1962-63 I had done all the *āsanas* from *Light on Yoga*. By 1963 I was doing all the *āsanas* I was able to do, but I was weak.

JW: How could you be weak and do all the *āsanas*? I don't understand that.

GI: Yes, later my health further deteriorated when my mother died. Then my responsibility increased in different directions. Up to that time my recovery had increased a lot when my mother was there. I could bear all the responsibility of the family because of that early health crisis, and the 10-12 years of practice and what I had achieved. I was 27 when my mother expired.

JW: 27?

GI: I was 27-28, something like that. But that responsibility was a very big responsibility. Because all the children were still young and in school. We had to arrange among ourselves what to cook, who will cook, who will make sure there is gas for the cooker, who would do the *pūjā* in the house, at least we had to light the lamp in front of the Lord. Vanita was married, so myself, Sunita, and Sujita, had to decide how to distribute the duties according to their college hours. Sujita had morning college, Sunita had afternoon college, and I had to go to my tuitions. In that way we adjusted. My mothers passing was a big loss not just physical, but mental.

JW: Losing a mother is the hardest...

GI: Yes, it was very difficult. Then the Institute came. In 1973 she expired, 1975 the institute building was ready. In 1974 the house was ready, so shifting, arranging, all that took a little time.

JW: What happened to your practice during that period of time?

GI: Practice I used to do regularly but the difference is now that if I have to walk from this door to that door, it takes five or seven minutes for me. But in those days, I used to be quick. If I had to do my balancings, it took me not more than 20 minutes to finish all the balancings. Similarly, backbending not more than 30 minutes or so – *Viparīta Daāsana*, *Maalāsana*, *Vśchikāsana*, everything. All the backbends as Guruji used to do with his sequences. I sometimes tell people what his sequence was when he used to do backbends. My body was quick to respond to *Śīrāsana*, *Sarvāṅgāsana* variations.

If I had to do *Padmāsana* in *Śīrāsana* that was not difficult for me. I would do *Padmāsana*, turn to this side, turn to that side, bend down, everything was possible. I learned at that time to do many things sideways, *Pārśva Piāsana*, *Śīrāsana*, etc. Problems were there. I mean looking after the house,



people coming and going, guests in the house. When Guruji was not available, I had to talk to them, you know, provide tea, coffee, refreshments whatever was required. And then I also had practice and teaching my class. My classes at that time were the school classes, national defense academic classes for the cadets. So that was how it went.

And one more story from that period. Guruji was teaching in 1955 in the National Defense Academy. The cadets were taught to do yoga, and because of that earlier experience, I was seven, Guruji asked me to demonstrate something I hadn't done before. He asked me to stand and drop back into *Urdhva Dhanurāsana*. I only knew how to do *Urdhva Dhanurāsana* from the floor. I never knew how to stand and drop back. Because all the cadets were doing outside on the

grass, Guruji asked me in front of them, "to show dropping back from *Urdhva Dhanurāsana*." And you won't believe it. I stood there and took my arms over my head and dropped back and showed them *Urdhva Dhanurāsana*. How did it come? I myself was surprised at how I could drop back on my arms. And then when I did that I got the courage. Now I can drop back. So when I came home I tried to drop back by putting a pillow under my head, or dropping with my palms on the wall to perfect the *āsana* so I was sure that I could drop the palms down in *Urdhva Dhanurāsana*. Accidentally I learnt *Urdhva Dhanurāsana*.

JW: That's a great story.

GI: The courage was there from the very beginning. That is definite. How the courage was there, I don't know but I was courageous. I was physically courageous, mentally courageous. Now as you see, I look sick in these last few years, this sickness has killed me. That was not there then. Though I was not well, the doctors also knew that this disease would change me. They said my muscles would fail. That's why earlier they said be careful of the muscles, but I never thought they would fail so much. ॐ

(To be continued in the next issue.)



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!

how to practice with Leslie Hogya

START THE NEW YEAR WITH A HOME PRACTICE

Saturday, January 14, 2017, 1 – 3 pm
For all levels

\$15 + GST for Members

\$30 + GST for Non-members

In this session we will
do a practice sequence together,
and you will be given ideas
on how to practice at home.
Bring your questions.



Jawahar Banghera Workshop

by Joanna Godliman

I was grateful to be able to participate in this year's visit from Jawahar Banghera; I shared the scholarship monies with other lucky ones over the weekend of March 25-29. We were filled to capacity yet Jawahar could easily see and assess us all. Having benefited from his excellent teachings last year, it was with anticipation that I joined the large group of students and teachers each day.

Among the many insights he passed on, one of my favourites with reference to tightness in the face, particularly the jaws: "Relaxation. Does not mean smiling." A valuable reminder, one that becomes hard to comply with when it is obviously said with humour. Gradually the effect of the consistent teachings — the gentle chiding and accurate observations — settled over us, and we, in turn, settled. Stern instructions, always coupled with a twinkle in the eye or a gentle physical reminder, were constant. Sometimes the corrections came silently, swift and unexpected, and took days to figure out.

Jawahar is watchful, observant, patient, and strong. His articulation of the crystalline teachings of B.K.S. Iyengar's *sadhana* brings the knowledge of the ancient *rishis* to life. There is no avoidance. Over a period of several days of refining and educating, often with physical examples and practical explanations, he introduced newness to allow light to penetrate, understanding to dawn. There were multiple references to the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*.

Over several days we prepared for backbends, opening the chest using the actions within the pose to bring harmony. A vivid memory seared to the bone by habitual tightness around my thumb joints came when the group took *utthita trikonasana* at the ropes, with a chair. Jawahar instructed us to hook the thumb underneath the top rail of the chair-back, turning the palm to face upwards. With the back of the hand pressing into top of the rail, and the thumb laced underneath it, the whole arm was firmly anchored. We opened the palm out while extending and rotating the upper arm bone around, inserting it back up towards and into the shoulder socket. The upper arms roll open like the action of extending up into *urdhva hastasana* or *adho mukha svanasana*. I could feel the immediate effect on the whole arm, anchoring the bony shoulder blade, well onto the back, and upper ribs. It was a dynamic stabilizer for the whole upper back, chest and sternum.

As we moved to come out and exit the pose, I turned my attention to my feet and legs to adjust my posture ready to jump back to *tadasana*. In that moment of distraction, Jawahar immediately saw my habits take hold. "See how quickly it changes?" he quietly asked as the large group was swinging



up out of the *asana*, shifting chairs and moving on. I hadn't realized until that moment just how quickly my habitual tendency, to allow my shoulder bones to round forward, closed my chest. I had fallen back into this habit, even though it was quite the opposite action to what we had just been performing.

Whether Jawahar was expounding on the physics of a pose, deftly weaving Patanjali's aphorisms and Guru's insights into his presentation, or calmly and modestly reminding us of the importance of right action in all aspects of yoga — Right thoughts; Right actions; Right habits; Right living; Right eating; and Practice (Practice practice Practice!) — his passion came through. It was so rejuvenating to have his presence here. The students and teachers (and student-teachers!), continue to explore his insights. Last week in class with my mentor, while in *salamba sirsasana* I was asked "Why did Jawahar step on your hands?" We had been discussing it earlier. I am still working on the answer.

A good teacher sees the whole room: this is what we are taught in preparation for assessment. He does. Jawahar has no need for pride. His teaching speaks for him. He shares humbly the knowledge of his teachers, particularly Gurujii. Words were not always needed. On the last day I appreciated this direct perception as he answered the teachers' questions on how he taught the final section of the workshop. We had a large multi-level group during the day, with a question and answer period afterwards. In the evening session, he seemed to seamlessly integrate many of the concerns and requests from the earlier Q & A into how he taught the basic poses. Whatever level we are working on, there is always more to learn, and for those

that had the extra attention of demonstrating, or individual correction, life long learning was instilled.

I hear rumour that this special ambassador of yoga, in all its aspects, is returning to Canadian shores. I am less sad to see him go if I know that he is coming back again. In the meantime I will

add to the practical, intelligent ideas that he shared from last year, like the blanket roll in *savasana*, and pass along to my students some of this year's interesting uses of the chair — to release the neck, and more. Thank you Jawahar, and thank you to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria for hosting him again. ॐ



Jawahar Banger Intensive

Friday, Feb 17- Monday, Feb 20, 2017

Jawahar is a direct student of B.K.S. Iyengar. In 1984, he accompanied Gururji on a western Canada and U.S. tour. He teaches in Mumbai and is a trustee of the Light on Yoga Research Trust and partner in Yog, 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.

\$395 + tax members / \$435 + tax non members.

PRE-REQUISITES:

5 min, head stand and 5-10 min, shoulder stand with variations (or, knowledge of how to adapt the inversions for yourself).

INTENSIVE SCHEDULE:

Fri 4:00 - 7:00 pm,

Sat 9:00 am -12:00 noon; 4:00 - 6:00 pm,

Sun 9:00 am -12:00 pm;

1:00 - 2:30 pm Q&A, PHILOSOPHY (bring snack)

Mon 9:00 am-1:00 pm

Registration opens: Monday, October 17 for members;
Friday, November 4 for non-members.

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

Victoria Iyengar Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC, (250)386-9642
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Class with Jawahar Banger

Not able to attend the Intensive with Jawahar?

There's still one chance to take a class with him.



Tuesday, February 21, 2017, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

All levels class

\$30 +GST for members

\$35 + GST for non-members



Learning the Ropes

Come explore the classic yoga poses with the support of the ropes to strengthen our stance in standing poses. Once we've warmed up with the foundational poses, we will open our hearts as we bend over backwards to welcome the return of spring

WITH LAUREN COX

**All levels, April 22, 2017,
11:00 am - 1:30 pm**

\$40 Members/\$45 Non-Members

Registration opens: January 9, 2017

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

Shirley Daventry French's 85th Birthday Celebration

by Bev Kallstrom and Jane McFarlane

Despite the typhoon warning, the party to celebrate Shirley's 85th birthday on Saturday October 15th was well attended by family, students, teachers and friends. Ann Hillyer's stunning home—designed and furnished with elegant entertaining in mind—was a fitting venue. Shirley looked elegant in a simple grey and black dress. A lovely array of small bites were provided by caterers, De'lish, and other attendees. Family members that gave tributes included Shirley's husband Derek and granddaughter Adriana. Adriana brought along a newspaper article written on the occasion of her 75th birthday, illustrated with Shirley doing a headstand. The article mentioned the unnamed yoga pose that Shirley is still working towards – 10 years later, the pose still remains a mystery.

Adriana Mejia-French radiated a deep joy of life and learning, which she attributed to inspiration by her loving and active grandparents, Shirley and Derek.

Carole Miller has been a friend of Shirley since 1970. She described Shirley as a mentor who believed in the highest potential of her friends, and Shirley's friends returned that faith. Although Iyengar Yoga was central to this association of friends, they were also united as parents raising children together, as women "raising consciousness" together, as well as aspirants studying *kundalini* together with Swami Radha at Yasodhara Ashram.

Leslie Hogya said that the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria's Newsletter would not be here without Shirley and remembered its various forms of production over the years. She also remembered all the different places that have served as places of learning – from Shirley's house, to the "Y", to Salt Spring



Glenda Balkan-Champagne receiving a round of applause.



Leslie paying tribute to Shirley's contributions to the IYCV's newsletter



Shirley blowing out the candles on the birthday cake as guests look on



A happy crowd enjoying the speeches

Island, to Mexico. The "Centre" has moved with the times and followed Shirley.

Sheri Berkowitz explained how Shirley has travelled across this country to share what she learned from Mr. Iyengar. She brought back teachings from India and encouraged others to go to India. She encouraged communities to associate with each other and to follow the teacher-training guidelines set out by Mr. Iyengar.

Amanda Mills described the "feminist consciousness raising" that had bonded the members of the "pre-Iyengar" yoga group. She has seen Shirley's leadership evolve into stewardship of Canadian Iyengar Yoga since those early days.

Phofi McCullough read a tribute from Kelowna Yoga House written by Melissa Perehudoff. Shirley was asked to provide teacher training at the Kelowna Yoga House approximately fourteen years ago. She agreed and subsequently has gone there every year to guide teachers with regard to *asana*,

pranayama, medical questions, philosophy, self-reflection, and application to daily life.

After listening to the other speeches, Derek French said that if we were aiming to canonize Shirley, we would need proof of a miracle. He offered their 70-year relationship as clear evidence of a miracle.

After being treated to Glenda Balkan-Champagne's rare and delightful voice, Shirley recounted that Glenda, an opera singer, had refused her numerous requests to perform at various events in the past. She mournfully told her once while they were putting on their shoes together, "I would love to hear you sing before I die." So on her 80th and 85th birthday, Glenda has honoured Shirley by singing for her.

Just as Glenda's voice with the accompaniment of yogi and pianist, Csinszka Redai, set the celebratory fire ablaze for the evening, Shirley ignited a project for the year by rousing the community to put together a history of our Centre.

Iyengar Yoga teaches us not only that the ongoing subtle miracle of life is organized and distributed from the centre line of individuals, but also that it can be channelled to support the spine of a community. Mr. Iyengar saw the potential of Shirley's unharnessed creative energy. Shirley saw the potential in her friends. Yoga has harnessed Shirley's creative energy such that she has been capable of raising a great family. ॐ



Shirley showing her appreciation to Leslie

Party Thanks from SDF

To all of you who came out on that wild and stormy night in October to celebrate my 85th birthday, I should like to extend my sincerest gratitude for the time and care and attention which went into its organization, as well as all the warm greetings and shared memories of our journey in yoga.

I am grateful to all those who directed, choreographed and stage managed this event, as well as the supporting cast always behind the scenes of any production. In some cases these are individuals I see on a regular basis and whom I was able to thank in person, but without guests there could not have been a party and you all played a role for which I am so grateful. In addition many of you who could not be with us on that particular night, sent cards and warm greetings for which I am also grateful.

Conversation was plentiful and lively. There was a beautiful music interlude by yoga teacher and operatic soprano, Glenda Balkan-Champagne, followed by a series of speeches, beginning with my granddaughter and ending with my husband. These made us laugh and brought a tear or two to my eyes. In between the two biological family members were members of my yoga family, longtime colleagues and friends reminiscing about our forays into yoga and personal growth and the fellowship and adventures we have been privileged to share on and off the mat—in Victoria, throughout Canada, and in India!

Our teacher, B.K.S. Iyengar has always advocated the importance of practising yoga in the spirit of a community: that the teaching we receive, the insights we acquire, the skills we master, only become "spiritual tools" when they are used for "one and all" (a phrase commonly spoken by Guruji). Clearly this message has been heard at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria.

Thankfulness and Gratitude are fundamental to Yoga. I am so thankful to be a part of our Iyengar community and value its diversity, skill in action and generosity of spirit.

With love and light, Shirley ॐ



Guests mingling



One of many joyful moments

Health From Within

by Lynn Holt

What is health? How do we find it and how do we maintain it? Most of us accept that we have good health if our body is not troubling us, or if we are not suffering from any illness or pain. We feel that our health is optimal if it allows us to achieve what we want to achieve and importantly find meaning and purpose in our lives. Is this true health?

Health begins with firmness in the body, deepens to emotional stability, which brings intellectual clarity, wisdom, and finally the unveiling of the soul. Our health has many levels – physical health, moral health, mental health, intellectual health, health of our consciousness, health of our conscience, and ultimately divine health. When we are free from physical disabilities and mental distractions the gates of the kingdom of Atma (Soul) are opened. This is health in the truest sense.

To practice for the sake of our health, as conventionally understood, is an external aspect of yoga. Our yoga practice requires us to ‘tune inwards’ so as to achieve good health at all levels. We have to be internally attentive and contemplative in our practice.

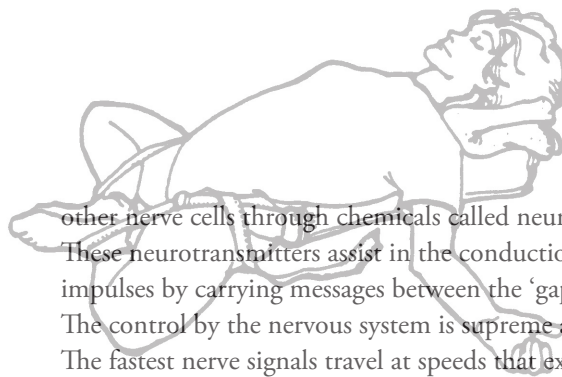
Without health of body, we cannot have a strong root in the mind.

Guruji has constantly reminded us in his teachings that a yogi never forgets that health must begin with the body, as our body is the child of the soul. It is our duty to nourish and train ‘our child’. It is only through our body that everything comes to the mind. The movements of the mind have to be stilled for us to know what the soul is. We have to create within ourselves the experience of beauty, liberation, and infinity. This is health and we will radiate from within when it is achieved.

The science of yoga deals with both the body and the mind and we have to know the unconscious mind, which expresses itself within our nervous system. If our nerves are disturbed then we will feel weakness of our mind. As long as the nerves are strong, stable and elastic then the mind is stable.

The nervous system

Our nervous system is one of the basic control systems in our body. At the most basic level the function of the nervous system is to send signals from one cell to other cells or from one part of the body to the other. The nerve cells interact with the



other nerve cells through chemicals called neurotransmitters. These neurotransmitters assist in the conduction of nerve impulses by carrying messages between the ‘gaps’ in the nerves. The control by the nervous system is supreme and very quick. The fastest nerve signals travel at speeds that exceed 100 meters per second.

At a more integrative level, the primary function of the nervous system is to control the body. It does this by extracting information from the environment using our sensory organs and then sending signals that encode this information into the central nervous system, processing the information to determine an appropriate response, and sending out signals to muscles or glands stimulating them to respond. The sophistication of the nervous system makes it possible to have language, abstract representation of concepts, transmission of culture, and many other features of human society that would not exist without the human brain.

The practice of *asanas* and *pranayama* have a tremendous impact on the nervous system, especially when done with attentive awareness wherein one works on the nervous system which in turn controls the other systems of the body.

The nervous system and the endocrine system cause the other systems to operate in harmony with each other. The nervous system can also influence the endocrine system by stimulating secretions from the endocrine glands like the pituitary glands with the hypothalamus acting like a link between the nervous and the endocrine systems.

The endocrine system secretes hormones into the circulation which can act on organs which may be very distant to the site of secretion. The control of the endocrine system is more sustained and slower as compared to the nervous system, but it does not work independently of the nervous system.

Each cell of our body has its own intelligence and a vital force. Wherever our intelligence reaches in the body, the flow of the vital force in that part of the body improves.

In *asana* and *pranayama* practice, the unification of cellular intelligence with vital force brings enriched extracellular fluid in contact with the cells and thereby improves our cell metabolism.

The cellular activity is controlled by the autonomic nervous system (nadis and chakras) and our endocrine glands while we do our *asana* and *pranayama* practice. The control of the higher conscious brain is removed. This is natural bio-feedback training for the cells and our functional system. Our respiration is also used as a master key to change our psycho-mental state. This is achieved by stimulating different autonomic nerve impulses.

Our yoga practice gives formidable strength to the nervous system.

The cellular body can easily be disturbed. Our yoga practice gives formidable strength to the nervous system which can hold any amount of stress and wield any amount of strength and speed. Tremendous willpower is initially required to achieve this in our practice. Willpower is not just in the mind but it is in our bodies too. With will power we can elongate the muscles and bring intelligence. Willpower is really nothing more than willingness to do. Therefore we have to generate our own willpower and energy within our practice for the health of our nervous system and ultimately our health.

Action is movement with intelligence. It is introduced in an *asana* and excites the intelligence. We have to learn to adjust and balance the body gently from within by feeling and sensing our body. We begin to train our intelligence. The moment we lose the feeling in the skin the *asana* becomes dull, and the flow or 'current' of the intelligence is lost. The brain instructs our body, but our heart has to feel it too. The intelligence of the body is a fact. It is real. The intelligence of the brain is only our imagination. The inner cooperation between the intelligence of the body and the intelligence of the brain is essential.

Our changing health

As we become older our lives change and our bodies change. Never underestimate the value of *asana* and *pranayama* in all of our life stages. In our *asana* practice, observation and thoughtful application of the mind is required. The keys to unlocking our potential throughout our lives are the qualities of purity, sensitivity, and internal cultivation. This can be achieved if the practitioner, while practicing *asanas*, connects the intelligence from the core of his being to the skin again and receives it from the skin towards the core.

In our *asana* practice the intelligence has to spread evenly within our body so that we become within ourselves.

There has to be a dialogue essentially between the self and the intelligence. This means that the intelligence has to spread evenly within our body so that we become within ourselves. This is *dhyana*. All the limbs of yoga get involved. The blood circulates; the cells are purified, sanctified, and consecrated with energy. This is how Guruji has taught us to practice. Our intelligence has to touch everywhere in our body.

Geetaji continues to remind us to spread our awareness. This cannot happen immediately and takes a long time. It is not a quick fix or a quick process.

Each one of us has to really be open to learn this each time we practice. We have to be a student always in our practice. This means that we have to repeat what we are trying to learn ten times if necessary to really learn and to understand deeply. This is a lifelong process of learning.

We have to listen to our body. We have to pay attention to every nerve fibre, muscle fibre and skin fibre. We have to learn how to hold and support our organic body.

An insightful example was demonstrated by Geetaji in early February when she was teaching standing *asanas* and the importance of the opening of the groins in standing *asanas* for menopausal women. This means that we all have to pay attention to every nerve fibre, muscle fibre, and skin fibre in our practice. We have to 'listen' to our body, in this case the groins, when we practice. We have to be mindful what happens when the leg turns out in *Trikonasana*, to extend our trunk and our hand down to only such a level to our leg that we can feel where our body is open or not, while continuing to really listen to our body and learn from the process. We also need to observe what happens to the frontal thigh and groin when the back leg groin opens.

We have to learn how to hold and support our organic body, and this is especially so as we age. Our technique of practice will change as we change with the process of aging and we learn in the process.

Pantanjali has given us ways to train our mind that will take us from negative health to positive health. The universal code of ethics leads us towards positive health not only of the body but also of the mind. It is essential that the body is cleansed; the senses sublimated and the mind purified to obtain the joyful consciousness so that we can realize the self. ॐ

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Astadala Yogamala, Vol 4, 5 & 8.

Geetaji teaching in February, 2015.

Approaching Intermediate Poses

with Glenda Balkan-Champagne

Iyengar yoga develops poses in a clear and systematic way from your first Beginner's class to Level 3, 4, and beyond. This workshop will help you advance in stages so that you can access some of the Intermediate poses safely and at your own level of comfort. For students taking level 2 Iyengar classes, familiar with headstand and the prop setup for Shoulder stand.

Saturday, March 25, 2017, 1-4 pm

\$48 +GST for Members, \$53 +GST for Non-members



IYCV Calendar

December, 2016

- 2 Practice Enrichment
- 3 Teachers Professional Development
- 11 Guruji's Birthday
- 21 Last day of term
- 21-22 Winter Solstice

January, 2017

- 1 New Year's Day Timed Practice
- 3 First day of new term
- 14 How to Practice Workshop
- 19-22 Senior Assessment at IYCV

February

- 5 Annual General Meeting
- 10 Practice Enrichment
- 11 Teachers Professional Development
- 17-20 Jawahar Banghera Intensive
- 21 Beginners Class with Jawahar Banghera

March

- 10 Practice Enrichment
- 11 Teachers Professional Development
- 23 10th Annual Spring Tea
- 25 Approaching Intermediate Asanas Workshop

April

- 7 Teachers Professional Development
- 8-9 Heart of Yoga
- 22 Ropes Workshop

May

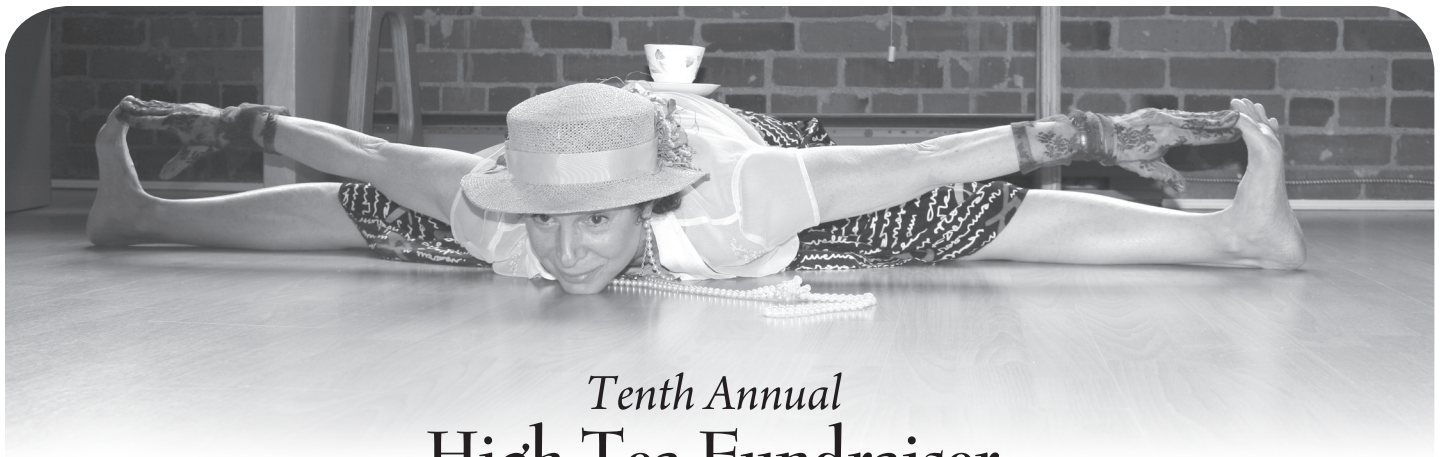
- 6 Understand the Basics & Improve your Poses Workshop
- 13 Teachers Professional Development

July

- 10-14 Introductory Intensive for Teachers In Training

August

- 14-18 Intensive for Certified Teachers



Tenth Annual High Tea Fundraiser

Hosted by Students from the Special Needs Class
Thursday, March 23, 2017, 2:15 pm- 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.

All memberships expire
at the end of the year.
IT'S TIME TO RENEW!



Be a Member and Enjoy the Benefits!

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

- 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.

One-year membership fee: \$42 CDN (\$40 + GST), renewable each January.

Membership PLUS

The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria is offering a new membership option, 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 \$57.75 (\$55 + GST)

Please complete this form and mail or drop it off at our office with your cheque or money order to:

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

☐ Receipt required.

Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Presents

the Heart of Yoga

April 8-9, 2017

Saturday, April 8, 10:30 am - 1:30 pm
and 4:00 - 6:00 pm

Sunday, April 9, 12:00 - 3:00 pm

Fees: \$175 + GST members
\$195 + GST non-members

*We are missing the gold if
we do asanas as a physical
practice only.* – Geeta Iyengar

Steady in shoulder stand and
ready to learn headstand?
This workshop is for you!
A weekend workshop with
Shirley Daventry French
and Ann Kilbertus for
Level 2 students and above.

Registration opens:
Tuesday, January 10, 2017

To register, drop in to or phone
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202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
250-386-YOGA (9642)
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Refunds will be offered only if your space
can be filled and are subject to a \$50.00
cancellation fee.

