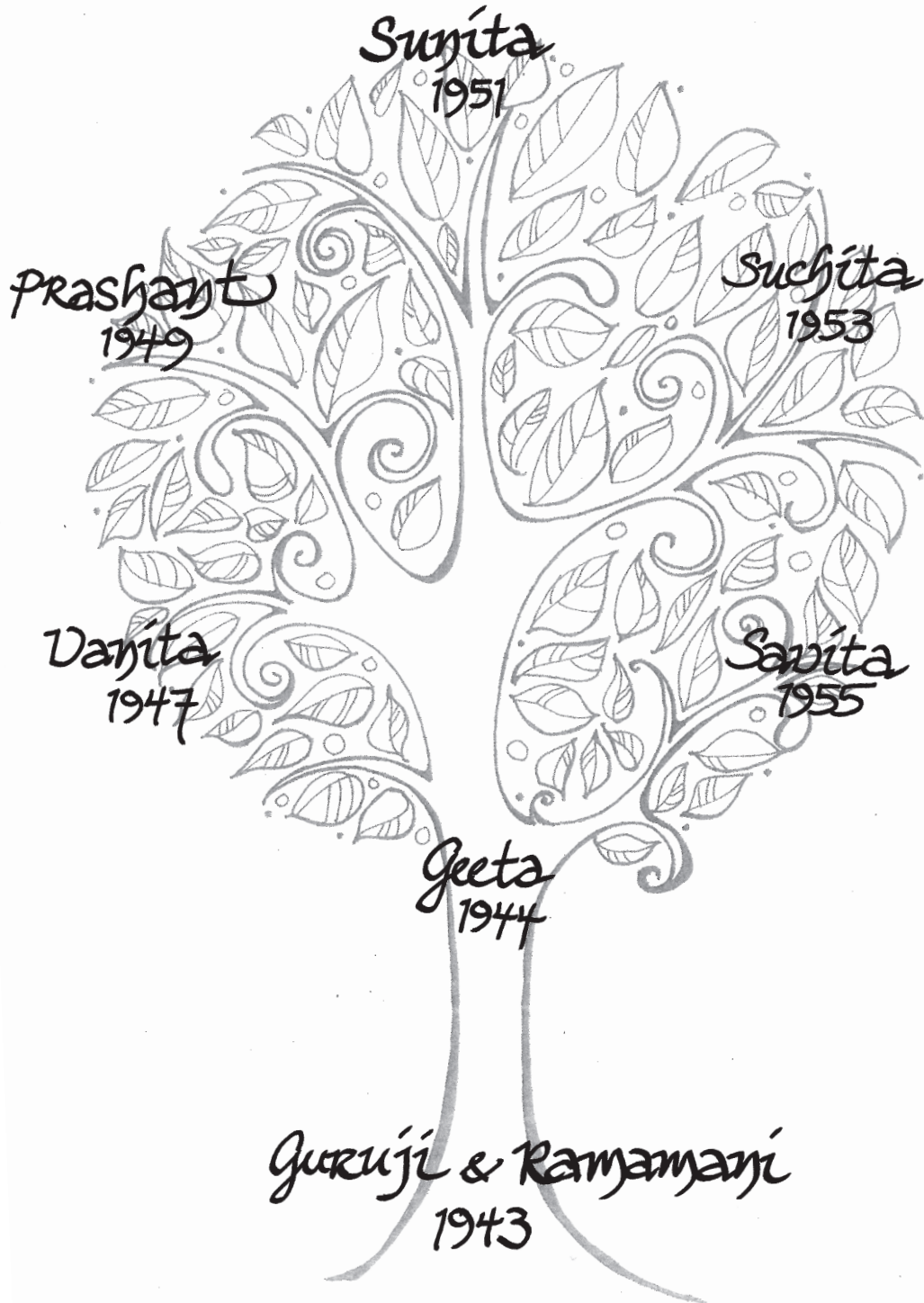




IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE OF VICTORIA



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

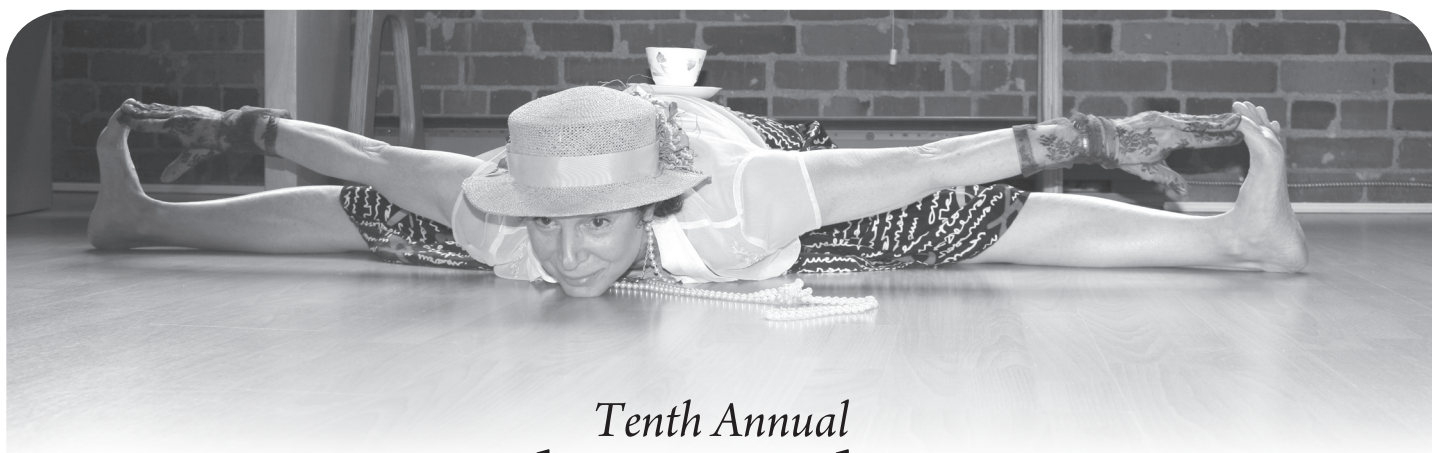
We are missing the gold if we do asanas as a physical practice only. – Geeta Iyengar

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 now open.

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

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



Tenth Annual High Tea Fundraiser

Hosted by Students from the Remedial Class
Thursday, March 23, 2017, 2:45 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 Remedial classes.

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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:
MAY 15, 2017**

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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,
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Reflections

by Shirley Daventry French

The epic *Star Wars* began with the refrain: “A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...”. Remembering this catchphrase and checking online for its accuracy, I learned that it is part of “an opening crawl,” something used in all *Star Wars* films with the exception of the latest one, where its omission is being described as a big mistake. I have not seen the film and may never see this film, but despite my lack of fervour this refrain had “grabbed” my attention and was stored in a recess of my memory.

As I sat down at my computer to write this column for the Yoga Centre newsletter, my mind was roaming over reading, conversation, and correspondence of the past few days. I am currently in Hawaii where, if possible, we retreat for a few weeks each winter. This week we have been joined by my oldest daughter Rachel and her husband. She is reading a book that I recommended called *London*

1945¹; it covers the experiences of Londoners during the last six months of the war and first six months of peace.

Peace, when it finally arrived after six traumatic years, did put a stop to the bombing, which continued right up to the bitter end. However, peace also opened the door to more deprivation and challenge. One little known fact is that food rations were actually reduced after the war and, while continental Europe received aid from the U.S. to rebuild, Britain did not. Victory for Britain meant it was time to repay the debts accrued from sustaining a bastion of freedom in Europe.

London 1945 is full of facts, many of them already known to my husband and me but mostly unknown to my daughter, an avid reader curious about a culture that had a vicarious but profound influence on her life as a child of immigrants in a country “far, far away” from her parents’ native land. After living and working in London when she graduated and getting to know some of her relatives on their home ground, she is better informed than most about the cultural gap which we had to traverse.

For this and many other reasons, much of my early life, education and upbringing, might well have taken place in another galaxy; I’m beginning to

have a similar feeling about my experience of yoga. Most of what I see in newspapers, magazines, and discussions on social media has little relationship to the yoga I have been studying and practising for decades.

Yoga is not a fitness or exercise regimen, although it is good for your mental and physical health, will improve your level of fitness, bring better movement and flexibility to your joints, strengthen and lengthen your back, increase the capacity of your heart and lungs, and improve balance, mobility, and stability in all aspects of your life. These benefits do not come without considerable effort to examine how you are living your life: your use of body and mind, your level of consciousness, and the constant intrusion of your ego to serve its own purposes. Derek and I have often joked that promotional material should include a disclaimer that “yoga may be hazardous to your ego”. Mastery in Yoga is achieved when your life serves your Higher Self.

My awakening to the existence of Yoga came in the late 1960s when two women I played bridge with mentioned they were taking classes, and shortly after this I dallied with some of the philosophy in a very superficial way during some encounters within encounter groups!

I was fortunate! Under the tutelage of some extraordinary yoga masters, notably Swami Radha and B.K.S. Iyengar, my

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

1 *London 1945: Life in the Debris of War* written by Maureen Waller, a London educated historian specializing in British and European history.

search became more focused, and for the past fifty years I have been exploring the many facets of mind, consciousness, and emotion, especially the powerful role they play in determining the nature of my existence.

Yoga came into my life when I was in my late thirties, but my curiosity about meaning and purpose goes back much further. Throughout childhood I barraged the adults around me with a flow of questions. Why? Why? Why? Often they were not very well received, particularly during high school, when they were viewed as disturbances and I was labelled a 'trouble-maker'. The fact that much of this took place with a background of war, worry, and sleepless nights merely added to everyone's irritation.

None of this made life easy, nor did it make any sense until I was introduced to the philosophy of yoga by Swami Radha during a series of talks sponsored by the Victoria YM-YWCA. She had been invited there by Jessica Tucker, the teacher of my first Hatha Yoga classes at the Y. Given the conservative nature of Jessica, reflected in the climate at the Victoria Y, I am amazed that these talks ever took place. They were revolutionary!

Swami Radha was a German woman, born into an aristocratic family in 1911. She also lived through the Second World War but in Germany, where her first husband was killed by the Nazis for helping a Jewish family escape. Having survived the war she emigrated to Montréal where, during meditation, she had a profound visionary experience of Swami Sivananda Saraswati of Rishikesh. The story of her extraordinary path, which took her to India where she was eventually initiated as his disciple, makes interesting reading in her autobiographical book *Diary of a Woman's Search*².

My immediate response to Swami Radha's talks was that I had never heard so much common sense in my life and I wanted to learn more. After attending a few more workshops with her in Victoria I travelled to the ashram she had founded in central British Columbia. It was to be the first of many visits.

In 1976, Derek and I attended a three-month residential program where morning, noon, and night we studied and practised many aspects of yoga philosophy and psychology. At the time it was called the Yoga Teachers' Course, but when Swami Radha discovered how little any of us actually knew about yoga, its practice and its purpose, she decided to change its name to Yoga Development Course, and it became a pre-requisite for any form of teacher training at the ashram.

In addition to supervised study and intense spiritual practice, there was required reading of many books on yoga and the mind by noted philosophers such as Carl Jung and Otto Rank, treatises on yoga such as *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, *Patanjali's Yoga-sutras*, *Bhagavad Gita* and B.K.S. Iyengar's *Light on Yoga*.

This course might well have taken place in a Galaxy far, far away in contrast to today's yoga climate. Swami Radha would be horrified to see what currently passes as yoga teacher training! Self-serving and often self-aggrandizing promotion abounds on social media and any form of advertising. Billboards are put out on the street to attract students not just to a centre's program, but to their yoga teacher training course! There are little or no prerequisites and much time devoted to marketing and finding a particular niche for yourself.

Like my initial training with Swami Radha, B.K.S. Iyengar expected us to become somewhat proficient and knowledgeable about yoga before even thinking about teaching. He also understood that expertise in one field does not automatically qualify you for

another and in fact can sometimes be a hindrance.

I am married to a medical doctor (retired now) who practised medicine at the same time as he practised yoga. Very quickly, particularly from his exposure to B.K.S. Iyengar, he understood that while medically based knowledge of the body and mind was helpful, it could also become a hindrance. To teach therapeutic aspects of yoga first required a sound base of study and practice of the art and science of yoga, with an emphasis on approaching it as a student and not an expert.

B.K.S. Iyengar and Swami Radha, immersed themselves in yoga in completely different ways. Even though as part of my studies at Yasodhara Ashram I read and wrote a report on *Light on Yoga* and marvelled at Gururji's prowess with such an array of *asanas*, it had little direct influence on me until a few months after my three-month yoga immersion, when I returned to the ashram to celebrate Christmas only to find the early morning *asana* classes transformed.

Previously the class had been based on the *Sivananda* tradition and was known as the *Rishikesh* series. I was quite happy with this and was not looking for anything else. On this visit, during my first early morning class, I was confronted with something completely different. Swami Radha had a student named Norma Hodge who was also a student of B.K.S. Iyengar and had just returned from studying with him in Pune. Swami Radha had invited Norma to teach the *asana* classes during the Christmas break.

Norma's teaching was quite different from anything I had previously experienced. She was a superb teacher—masterful, knowledgeable and firm! Her instructions were clear and direct, and I received my first hands-on corrections. These were a bit of a surprise; I was not entirely happy to be corrected, but fortunately by this time I had enough

2 *Diary of a Woman's Search* is published by Timeless Books, the publishing arm of Yasodhara Ashram, and can be ordered online.

background in yoga to resist the pull of the ego and sustain some openness of mind. I was very impressed with this approach to the teaching of *yoga-asana* and wanted to learn more.

Thanks to Norma, in 1979 I found myself in Pune standing in front of Mr. Iyengar in the yoga hall of the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, eager, alert and a little apprehensive. Being placed in the front row had not been my choice and happened purely because I am small! As the class progressed I soon realised it didn't matter because Gururji's seeing was able to take us all in!

Like my first encounter with Swami Radha, I felt as if I were standing there naked and realised that attempts to find cover or hide would be futile. This was both unnerving and freeing!

Swami Vivekananda, one of the great masters of yoga and a significant ambassador between East and West, has written many books about yoga that I find clear and pertinent to my life. One of his maxims is to "Discard everything that weakens you—have nothing to do with it!"

My very early yoga classes spoke a lot about doing things "as long as I was comfortable" a phrase that appears to be re-emerging on the yoga scene. Of course, there is a responsibility as both a teacher and as a student not to harm yourself. Some of the layers of protection we put in place during the course of our lives are put there for a good reason and serve a useful purpose—but too often they are still there long after they are useful.

My wartime experience of being under aerial bombardment testifies to this. For decades after the war when I heard an airplane flying overhead, particularly during the night, I would wake up in a start, holding my breath, senses alert, body tense and find myself assessing whether to get up and seek shelter or crawl under the bed. Gradually as the years rolled on this happened less and less but first required that my consciousness registered that the war was over and it was safe to go back to sleep.

This "fight or flight" response continues to have a value in many aspects of life, but when it is overused for every little inconvenience or

perceived affront you become exhausted. The body wears out more quickly.

Yoga, as it has been taught to me by Swami Radha and B.K.S. Iyengar, has helped me develop better discrimination about letting go in all aspects of life: when to react and when not to, when to intervene and when not to, when to speak up and when not to. Each individual will have their own natural tendencies here from the day of their birth to the time of their death (and, if you believe in reincarnation, some of these tendencies, or *vruttis*, will have come into your life from past lives).

The good news is that they can be modified to become spiritual tools and allow us to use this lifetime to become a more humane individual and member of the human race.

And if this article should happen to be read by someone searching for a yoga teacher: look for someone who teaches with courage, confidence, clarity, and compassion, someone who has been well taught and trained in the art and science of yoga, and someone who is first and foremost a committed student. ॐ

Approaching Intermediate Poses

with Glenda Balkan-Champagne

Saturday, March 25, 2017, 1-4 pm



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.

\$48 +GST for Members,
\$53 +GST for Non-members

To register, drop in to or phone:
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Interview With Geeta S. Iyengar, Part 2

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.

W: When we were in the backbending intensive, and you had the back problem, was that a turning point when your back started to bother you?

GI: Yes, I had to learn myself. At certain times, I had to relearn *asanas*. 1962 was a very bad period. Learning so much after 1963 or 64 my balancing went very badly. What I had learnt quickly, I just started losing. I had to attempt a second time to see that I got all the balancings. I did it but perhaps that was the period where the body started becoming a bit stiff.

JW: 1963-64. So you were still in your 20s?

GI: It showed at 20 and again at 25 both these stages body stiffness were there. Then I had to redo myself to get that freedom. And I did. Balancing, of course, came back and then backbending went bad. It started giving pain after the marriages of my sisters, and deliveries of their babies, all that happened when the back went wrong. I used to bathe the small babies. Even now they like my massaging or bathing them. The little one of Harit's, when I touch her she is happy. They all used to like my massaging and bathing them. But when all these responsibilities were there — getting them married, their deliveries, or certain celebrations we have in between after getting married, these things all taxed my body.

There came a time when a youngish woman was brought to the Institute who was unable to walk. She couldn't walk or stand without a cane. Guruji said that the woman was in very bad condition, her father had asked him to take her case in the medical class. I said, I don't want to work with her because my back otherwise will become very bad. He said, "What to do? We are yoga teachers so we have to suffer and do but we have to help them also." At that time whenever my lower back would get a catch I could remove that backache through my practice. But later it became very difficult for me. I just could not remove the pain. My back started deteriorating. And then the doctors said that this is not just a backache or anything of that kind, but my muscles were failing. They said this problem is a connective tissue disorder because of my nephritis. The outer muscles are connected to the bone by connective tissue.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SADHAKA FILM.NET & JAKE CLENNELL

JW: Approximately when was that?

GI: It started in 2003. I travelled outside of India in 2002-2003 but I started feeling that something was failing inside. So when I went to Dr. Naik in 2003 to find out what was wrong with me, I said, "Such a quick moving body; now it doesn't move and there is a stiffness I feel." Even simple *svastikasana* sometimes used to be stiff, though I was doing *padmasana*, etc. The poses I could do easily, I now felt stiffness and could feel they were not coming easily. Then deterioration started. When my right shoulder was dislocated, the doctors said, "No this is definitely connective tissue which is giving way.

You have to be careful. You can't exert yourself.

On days you feel tired or fatigued, rest, don't work, because anything can dislocate. It has only happened to the right shoulder but from now onwards be careful."

Then Guruji made me do *paripurna matsyendrasana*, *yoga dandasana*, *kandasana*, *mula kandasana*, my body was not responding at all to those *asanas*, he said toes, ankles, everything was going wrong. Even sitting in *virasana* was difficult. So he put me in *virasana*, with traction for my back to find out what was going on. Later my back became so weak that now just even to walk I feel is awkward. But what can be done? I mean you cannot do anything when your back is affected like that. My practice goes on, even in *utthita hasta padangusthasana* I need somebody's help. I can't lift my leg on my own so I lift it a bit then I ask Sindhu or Rajlakshmi to help me. Rajlakshmi was waiting for me, she thought I would come today for practice, but so many people were leaving, certificates had to be signed, letters had to be answered, all those problems were there so I could not practice this morning. I don't think tomorrow also I will do. My practice will start only after I come back from Bangalore. And I need help. I can lie down in *viparita dandasana* but if I have to get up, somebody has to help me so my back doesn't get jerked.

So with their help I do my practice. I do rope *sirsasana*, I can go on the chair for *saravangasana*, *viparita karani*, forward bend as is possible — whatever is possible I just keep on doing. But for that I can't blame anyone. It's just my fate. You can't blame anyone for that. It's fate.

JW: Can you remember, at what point your practice changed from an external practice to a more internal practice?

GI: Yes, that started to happen somewhere in late 60s. Somewhere after 66-67, because Gururji's book was there. So a bit of the art of observation started to come from looking at the postures. In *ekapada rajakapotasana* you can just go and hold your foot but seeing the photographs gave me a certain clue how you resist your back foot, etc. and then the head has to reach the foot. Earlier I used to pull the foot toward my head in *ekapada rajakapotasana* or *rajakapotasana*. Then this understanding came that the foot remains there only and head has to go along with the chest and back to reach the foot. Then when *valakibhyasana* came into my practice, I realized that literally you have to pull the leg back to touch the floor and my trunk had to bend back. So these pictures in the book started giving me the clues and moreover, in 1962 Gururji started general class in Pune. Until then, it was all private tuition either one to one, or three or four people. He could only take a maximum of six people as space was limited. Gururji used to teach those people *trikonasana*, *parsvakonasana*, turning of the chest, moving the buttocks in, etc. Some foreigners started coming at that time to our old house. So at that time whenever I had free time, apart from my college because at that time I was in college, I used to attend when Gururji was teaching. When he explained I better understood what the rotation of the trunk meant, what bending actions meant, etc. His explanations took me to penetrate further inside. So I will say that by intuition only, I had that feel of going inward or looking into the pose. That tendency sharpened or was more exact when I saw Gururji teaching. In general classes when I was demonstrating in front of everyone, I had that sense that I should not do wrongly, so I had to be sure my leg wasn't crooked, my knee wasn't bent, my foot was completely turned. Those kind of things made me understand more deeply.

JW: Did you always have a *pranayama* practice? I know you have a very strong *pranayama* practice now.

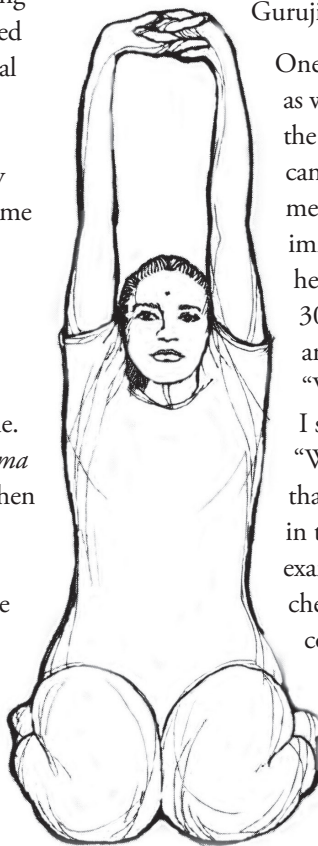
GI: Yes, these past few years when I was not well, and *asanas* were not possible *pranayama* became clearer to me. In the past there was always a rush to finish my *pranayama* and then come to the Institute and do the *asanas*, etc. Then when my *asana* practice became dull or slow, and when I really started getting the pains all over, my *pranayama* started coming very well. I started *pranayama* around the age of 17. Gururji told me to do *ujjayi* and *viloma*. In 1961 we went to Madras – it was a holiday for all of us six children. And at that time Gururji's guru was kind enough to receive us. And during that time he taught me, he said, "Geeta, tomorrow five o'clock you have to get up and come to my room and I am going to teach

you *pranayama*." So I used to be ready and go and sit in front of him and he gave all this *Viloma*. He also gave certain clues about *Viloma pranayama* that Gururji had told me before. But starting was from *ujjayi* and *viloma pranayama*.

JW: Did he teach you digital *pranayama*?

GI: No digital he didn't teach. I learnt digital from Gururji only. It was about 1963, we had one student who had a factory and in that factory there was a hall – it was nearby. The student said, "I will give you that hall and [in return] you teach us *pranayama*" Some of the students were friends and they said, "Why not start a *pranayama* class?" Once in awhile we used to learn *pranayamas* in the house in the same room where Gururji taught *asana*. But when the hall was available he taught a general class. In the beginning, he started doing a deep *savasana* so we used to be on our back for almost 40-45 minutes with detailed explanation. We used to like *savasana* – it was very nice. You really forgot everything with your eyes closed, ok, you're completely out of this world. We started enjoying this. Then in 1962 when he started the classes in that factory hall, Gururji started teaching digital *pranayama* because those people asked him to teach them digital *pranayama*, *nadi sodhana*, or whatever, because at that time the *Light on Yoga* book had just come out. They had read *Anuloma*, *Pratiloma Pranayama*, etc. They thought why not learn all this and that's how the classes started. I was in the class. I used to go to college and right away after finishing my science practicals, I used to come and be in the hall to study *pranayama*. Gururji was teaching, and I was doing.

One day I remember we had an examination, theory as well as practical. I had not even recovered from the tension of the examination or writing when I came to the class. First he started with sitting in meditation and I was sitting and I felt dizzy and he immediately made me lie down. I was on my back, he released my legs and class started as usual. After 30-45 minutes I realized I was not doing anything and I was just on my back. Then he asked me, "What happened?" [You know how he says it.] So I said, "I don't know." Then other people asked, "What happened? Why should she feel dizzy like that?" He said, "She has already exerted herself in the college because the whole day there were examinations. Two papers – one physics paper, chemistry paper, practicals, etc. She should not have come but should have remained in the house and rested." But I wanted to go. I wouldn't miss one class because once you miss, it's a miss. So I went there and that's what happened. I had a lot of fatigue on that day but then I recovered. And I used to go regularly. There he



started with the rest of the *pranayamas*, digital *pranayama* also. Then we shifted from that first hall to Vidya Bhavan as Father Lobo was the principal there. He gave us a hall and we used that hall for the *pranayama* class. Guruji taught us more about digital *pranayama*, and other things like *antara kumbhaka* and *bayha kumbhaka*. I used to come and write notes because he said different things on different days. And when he was writing his *pranayama* book, *Light On Pranayama* I gave him my own notes and he was able to refer to them when he was writing the *pranayama* book.

JW: So are a lot of your notes in *Light On Pranayama*?

GI: Yes. I had to write down whatever he used to teach on that day.

If it was *antara kumbhaka* I had to note it down. The moment he said, “OK, as you hold the breath, lift the inner soul upward” I would note it down. We didn’t understand inner soul but something came up, so I wrote it down in that language only. Then he, of course, for the book language, corrected it. Something from center has to come up otherwise sinking is there. Gurujii used my notes but not in my language. And later the book came out.

JW: How would you describe the important stages in the evolution of your practice?

GI: I won’t say everything was evolution because my body failed at a certain stage. I have already said how I conquered the *asanas* one after the other. I was doing them and my body was responding well. Sometimes I used to ask my sisters, Vanita or Sunita, whoever was nearby, to help me so my head came close to my foot for *kapotasana*. And then sometimes I would guide them to lift my pelvis up and then take the hands back, it didn’t matter I was ready to face the pain. They were used to my body resisting them. Otherwise when you go and touch someone they resist first and you might not continue with the adjustment. So having that in the back of my mind that I have to do the pose, if I ask them to lift up or pull me in the direction I want, they would do it and that is how I would get *kapotasana*.

Vanita also had that understanding. She had some teaching capacities in her because earlier she was coming to the classes, etc. but then after marriage and family she left. Similarly Sunita had the touch because many times she helped me in *virparita chakrasana*, to lift and drop me. Sometime I used to do it on my own. It used to happen. And sometimes, if the touch was there, I could lift my buttocks or waistline slightly further up. And that is how I learned and evolution was happening.



Involution, whether it happens or not, I don’t know but I tell you sometimes, even this disease is a blessing. If you have no problem, you just proceed but when the problem comes, there the question mark comes to a great extent. In 1961-62, as I said, I lost my balancings after getting them. That was the period where I really had to think about where the spine actually twists in *parsava kukutasana* or *parsva bakasana*.

That means, first somehow the *asana* just comes but in the second attempt at learning you begin to penetrate, “Oh I lost because of this. I have to do this and then only it comes.” That guidance was great from inside. I realized what the practical problems were in those *asanas* if somebody has to learn them. The worst part was when I got this attack, in 2002 it started, of muscle failing, gradually. Certain *asanas* I was doing. I was still standing on my head or standing on my shoulders without any support. But even with support, I lost my full arm balance one day. I just jumped and jumped and my legs wouldn’t go. I was the person who was all the time showing the others how we have to learn standing far away from the wall, going and putting the palms and jumping up. So all these things, even if it was gymnastics style, I could show them that this is how to do. Then I realized that I couldn’t stand on my arms. My upper arm failed like anything. That was the bad point. But during that process I understood that when I could not do the *asanas*, I started working on *pranayama* and there I understood the depth of *pranayama* still further. That was the turning point, in that manner. So I started remembering, otherwise, like everyone we are in a hurry, I mean though it’s not fast, somewhere we do some *surya bhedana*, *chandra bhedana*, and finish it off quickly. OK some *savasana*, *pranayama*, some sitting *pranayama*, *antara kumbhaka*, or whatever we do. But then I realized that since I cannot do so many *asanas*, I could do these *pranayamas* in two or three stages – go to *savasana*, recover, come out, do one stage – *pranayama* of that type which is suitable to me at that time, again go to *ssavasana*, again get up, do whatever Guruji had earlier taught, or when Guruji had told me earlier which I explained in the convention also, that one side how to do *nadi sodhana* – at least have exhalation, inhalation, then come to *ujjayi* cycle then do on the other side. So I started studying in that manner and that gave me a better understanding of *pranayama*.

As far as the ongoing process or what I explained in the class, literally to you people, how you have to become withdrawn, etc. I think that my way of doing has taught me how to do this. Only it takes a long time to verbalize it. Experience,

whatever experience we have, cannot be verbalized easily. But I started to put it in that manner so words also can at least convey something like that to those who are doing the practice. And there are still many cassettes available on *pranayama* where I have taught all this, *bhastrika*, *bhrahmari*, *nadi sodhana*, etc. Earlier they were not taping all this. When my father was teaching at that time there was no facility at all to tape, so that part is gone. What demonstrations he gave, that part is gone. It used to be wonderful so we started putting it on paper. On Thursdays when he started classes on *pranayama* the notes that I took were so important for me, and then of course, Guruji also used them, elaborating further, teaching is one thing, but elaborating word wise is quite different. So those points have been included in his *pranayama* book.

JW: Do you think you have another book in you? Do you think about writing another book?

Gl: You know I have already—in 2013 when Guruji was still there—one of the newspapers asked me for an article only on Guruji’s philosophy or approach. They said, don’t give *asanas*, how to do *trikonasana* or *sirsasana*. The editor had read at least a few volumes of *Astadala Yogamala*.

So he telephoned me, he was Guruji’s friend as well as our friend, I mean the press person. He said, “I want the articles from you on Sundays in which you would be mentioning how Guruji developed his philosophy or what was his approach when he was teaching *yogasanas* or *pranayama*, etc.” So I agreed in December 2013 to write a series of articles between 700 and 800 words. I wrote almost 50 articles from June 2013 to 2014 May, that was the last article. I took Guruji’s topic in which he named all the seven steps of yoga. He explained all of these seven stages in a lecture on Guru Purnimday and his words were in my head. So I told Guruji that I would take this topic and I would use it as a starting point to write on as his philosophy talks progressed. All 50 of the articles were written on the seven stages. I used the 50 articles I had and elaborated and expanded on them originally writing in Marathi to produce a book of almost 70 chapters. The book in Marathi should be coming out this April (2016). The editor called me while classes were going on, he said, “Give me the pictures for the book because I had the picture numbers for the *asanas* like *baddhakonasana*, *virasana*, etc. I was busy but Sunita did that job. Everything was ready and she kept it in the cover [envelope] and sent it so now they have the pictures. After giving it to a group of people to read, the editor telephoned me

saying that the people have accepted the book and say it will be good. Sunita then checked everything and it has been sent to the editor and we are waiting for the publication to come out.

Meanwhile, I have told some of my students who are good at English, I said, “You start translating, free translation because Marathi language expresses in one way and English has a different expression, but you just start and I will go through that. If any Sanskrit word is difficult to understand, use the Sanskrit word but give the translation of it so English people can understand. And we will publish it in English also. If that comes you will see it’s a different book.

Fortunately, when Guruji was still alive, Sunita used to read those articles to him. When we went to Bellur in May (2014) to stay, that was the first time, outside of Pune, that the whole family went to stay with him except Prashant because he had to stay back to look after the painting of the house, and the institute was being repaired, etc. What kind of feeling came to Guruji, I don’t know. That was the last trip of ours with Guruji, and then when we came back he was no more in the month of August. He knows what I have written, so when Sunita used to sometimes read and say this is the paragraph which says what you are doing, etc., he liked it but when the book was ready he was no more there.

JW: Yes, very difficult.

Gl: And now it will be out, he won’t be there. What to do

JW: There’s nothing you can do.

Gl: Nothing you can do.

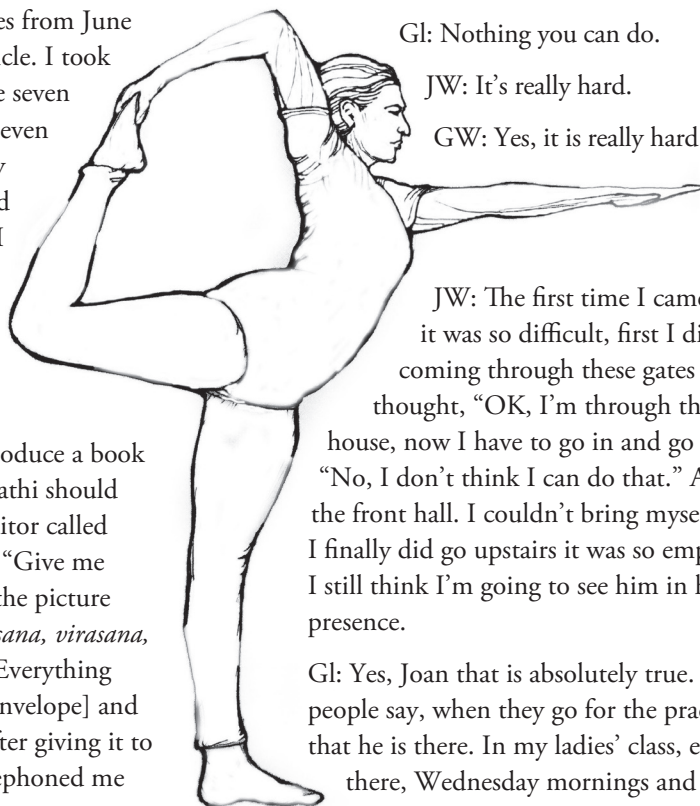
JW: It’s really hard.

GW: Yes, it is really hard. It can’t be easily digested.

I can’t still forget. It sometimes upsets me, but I have to come out of that.

JW: The first time I came back after he was gone, it was so difficult, first I didn’t know if I could bear coming through these gates and not seeing him. Then I thought, “OK, I’m through the gates, I’m in front of the house, now I have to go in and go upstairs.” Then I thought, “No, I don’t think I can do that.” And I stayed down here in the front hall. I couldn’t bring myself to go upstairs. And when I finally did go upstairs it was so empty feeling. Many times I still think I’m going to see him in his corner and I feel his presence.

Gl: Yes, Joan that is absolutely true. You know what these people say, when they go for the practice upstairs, they feel that he is there. In my ladies’ class, especially, he used to be there, Wednesday mornings and Saturday mornings. When



I am conducting the class, he used to be in his corner, doing his inversions or whatever. So everybody says that when I am conducting the class, it is as though he is there, his presence is there and he is watching.

JW: I feel it.

Gl: Yes, that is what everyone tells me. We feel his presence over there, especially that place which was reserved. We used to keep the horse there so people wouldn't enter from that side. Everyone tells me that – that we feel that he is there practicing still. And that happens. For me it happens many a time. It's not a dream or it's not the information as such. But when I am doing, some clues come from inside because my *asanas* are that way OK, whatever I can do within my limits. But arm work, shoulder work, when I have to do, they're not absolutely physiotherapy actions. When Guruji took me, after I had problems with my hands, the way he lifted, or the way he took my arms sideways; my arms were not moving, even now they're not moving. But while doing, whatever intelligence comes, I always feel that it is coming from him. Message is coming from him. It can't come otherwise just on my own. So if either Sindhu or Rajlakshmi, whoever is helping, I say just turn that way and find out if it comes. Then I recognize, yes that is what he told me. Because all this is gone. There is nothing here. Absolutely bony part. No flesh at all there and joint is completely out. So it comes, how it comes I don't know.

JW: But that is what he used to say. When I interviewed him he'd say about all these things he did in therapeutics, "I don't know. They just come." I have him on tape saying that.

Gl: Yes, that is true. It just comes. You have to be in it so that it just comes. That's a fact. Better not to give a thought in a different way to it. Be in it and then you realize, "Oh, this is what is happening."

JW: That is amazing.

Gl: Amazing. Absolutely!

JW: There are so many things I just would like to ask him. I'd like to write him a letter. When things happen, my first thought is, "I need to get in contact with Guruji."

Gl: Shobana tells me many a time, he said, "Do *upavisthakonasana* this way." As though the instruction is coming from somewhere So she did and the pain was gone. She said, "I was just sitting in *upavisthakonasana* and his voice said "Ey, Shobana do in this manner." So she caught that somewhere the voice is coming. So she did and she felt better. She said, "I don't know where that

instruction came from when personally he is not there." Many have told me that as though instructions are coming from him.

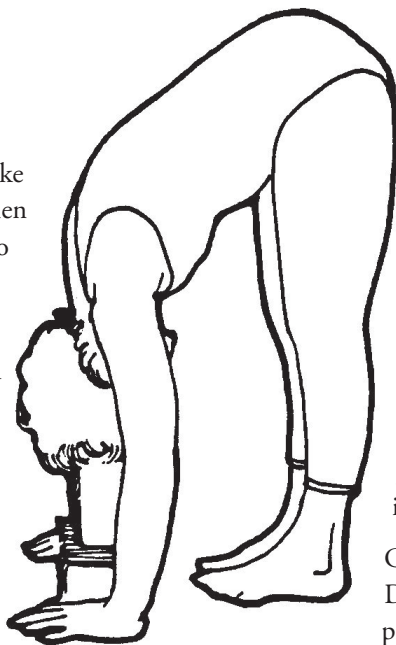
JW: The theme of the convention is practice from the periphery to the core and back. What would you like to share with these convention attendees and magazine readers about this theme? Is there anything you'd like to say about the theme?

Gl: You know, those are Guruji's words – periphery to core; core to periphery. And that has a lot of meaning. In the process of going toward the core, we may lose the core as well as the periphery. That is a major part. We are in between. As we are traveling from one end to the other end, if you reach your destination, it's fine. If you don't reach and you are in between, then what will be the stage? You can imagine; you are traveling and somewhere you are stuck and can't move in the natural journey. But here we find that it is an everyday approach. You have to touch the periphery, go to the core, wherever you are able to reach inside. Once if you even reach the core, then again from there you have to return back to the periphery because that gives you the understanding and knowledge. The knowledge comes from the core. It says, "This is the thing where you have done wrong." Again, you have to go from the core to the periphery. And that's why in every *asana* you feel, especially if you're just practicing one *asana* after the other, that it's peripheral because you haven't gone and examined its depth. Sometimes time is short or we have to go somewhere and we say, "OK, at least let me finish this much practice." And that much practice you finish according to your timing. At that time you cannot go to the core. But even in that process, suppose you have decided that today I have no time and can do only 10 minutes of *sirsasana* and 10 minutes of *sarvangasana* and there's no time at all for other things you may find those

10 minutes are of such use that at a certain point you go in and from there you feel you should not come out of the *asana*. But external conditions are such that you have to come out of the *asana*, finish your *sarvangasana*, and go for your work. It could be any type of job – perhaps my signature is required, my presence is required, and I have to go for some reason. But this is what happens and that's why you should not get stuck in the middle portion rather reach inside and then come out. You need to live externally because your responsibilities are not going to end. We can't give up straight away

JW: So I guess the message to the people attending is to "just keep going."

Gl: Keep on going and always watch from the body. Don't deny the body saying, "No this is the external practice." Deal with that body which is giving the



problem – body, mind, intelligence. Go inside like that up to your consciousness and perhaps up to the inner core.

JW: Great answer.

Gl: That is how they have to learn and they should always remember, “You can’t neglect the body even if it is not helping you in that way, but still everyday you have to touch that practice. I can’t say that I cannot do so let me keep quiet. Whatever happens with the body, let it happen. Then only insight is possible and things do come. What gives the freedom from inside, you cannot explain. It’s not some joint and muscle

that gives the freedom. Something inside gives the freedom at every level – psychological level, mental level. So as you keep on doing you find there is a change.

JW: Thank you so much for doing this inspiring interview.ॐ

JOAN WHITE IS A CERTIFIED ADVANCED JR. IYENGAR TEACHER. SHE BEGAN HER STUDIES WITH GURUJI IN 1971 AND MET GEETA IN 1976. JOAN BROUGHT IYENGAR YOGA TO PHILADELPHIA WHERE SHE LIVES AND RUNS THE B.K.S. IYENGAR YOGA SCHOOL OF CENTRAL PHILADELPHIA.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY LAUREN COX.

Guruji Celebration

by Sania Poluch

I learned about the event from Lydia, my hiking pal, who has been attending the Centre’s classes for years. She asked me a simple question: Are you free Sunday afternoon? I have never been freer in my life! It was the event’s beautiful poster that got me!

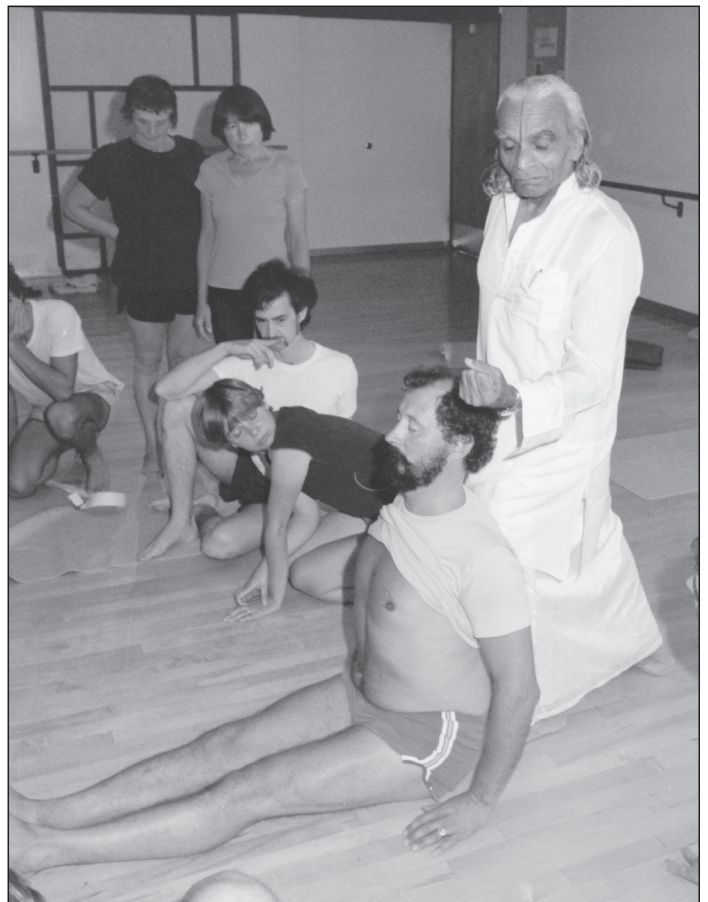
I had to write to Robin Cantor my teacher, for advice. Having had a full right hip replacement two months earlier, I needed cautionary advice. In fact, I was prepared to sit in a chair and observe; we all thought that would be enough.

At the studio there were so many welcoming, friendly, and familiar faces. I was placed in a chair at the back wall and Robin introduced me to all as her student.

Shirley was, as always, a dream. Articulate, kind, so natural and filled with good remembrances of B.K.S. Iyengar. She took me back more than 30 years ago when I had the good fortune to attend a class that Mr. Iyengar taught at the YMCA at Shirley’s invitation. I loved how Shirley was drawn to the single rose placed in his remembrance at the window before class, and her utmost delight in receiving a huge armful as a gift of thanks.

Having been away from yoga class for two months, the invocation with the group was a very strong and powerful experience. Ann Kilbertus noticed I was itching to try moving. She immediately started working with me, guiding and supporting my asanas with props during the entire session. She also cautioned me when necessary. I felt safe and secure and just surrendered to the poses. This released my sore back from long walks and pool workouts designed to strengthen my surgical leg. My adapted *savasana* was like a prolonged *pranayama*. Wonderful!

Gratitude was in the air: Gratitude to B.K.S. for his lifetime of devotion and commitment to yoga was expressed by Shirley and by all of us; Gratitude to Shirley and to all the other teachers



who continue to make yoga accessible by leading the practice and sharing it with us; Gratitude to Joy, Britta, and to the Board members who organized the celebration. The cakes were superb.

I am grateful to be working with Ann’s adaptations at home now on a regular basis. I know my limits much better and respect them! ॐ

Iyengar Yoga Teacher Intensives



INTRODUCTORY INTENSIVE FOR TEACHERS IN TRAINING

July 10-14, 2017

with Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus and Ty Chandler

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

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

Daily schedule runs 9:30 am to 5:30 pm.



INTENSIVE FOR CERTIFIED TEACHERS

August 14-18, 2017

with Shirley Daventry French, Ann Kilbertus and Louie Ettling

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

(250) 386-YOGA (9642)
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Reflection on Philosophy

by Laura Jane Johnston

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

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

Improving the Basic Poses and Principles with Lucie Guindon

by Deanne Orrell

DEANNE LIVES IN NANAIMO AND HAS BEEN A REGULAR STUDENT OF KELLY MURPHY FOR 14 YEARS. SHE IS CURRENTLY A TEACHER TRAINEE MENTORING UNDER LAUREN COX. THIS ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN AFTER THE WORKSHOP IN 2016.

The theme of the workshop was to improve the basic poses and principles. During this short three-hour workshop Lucie Guindon expertly guided both experienced and relatively new yoga practitioners through a dozen of the basic poses.

One of the principles covered was to create space for the organic body by opening the energy channels, or *nadis*. With warmth and humour Lucie also managed the energy of the group during the session.

Working from the foundation from the four points of the feet, the inner and outer toe mounds and the inner and outer heel, one could feel the energy passing up through the legs and up through the body. Lucie used visual cues by marking her feet to clearly illustrate the four points were.

From the feet all the way up to the crown of the head, Lucie emphasized the importance of *tadasana*. Key actions (e.g. lift the knees, thighs back, mid-buttocks forward) that carried through

all the standing poses we did throughout the three hours.

Lucie used visual cues for this pose as well, employing bands on her legs marked with arrows to show the direction the groins were to turn then the thighs and then the backs of the legs. She also did this with the actions to illustrate which direction the upper arms should turn. You could see the students start to understand with this visual aid; for some it was an “ah ha” moment.

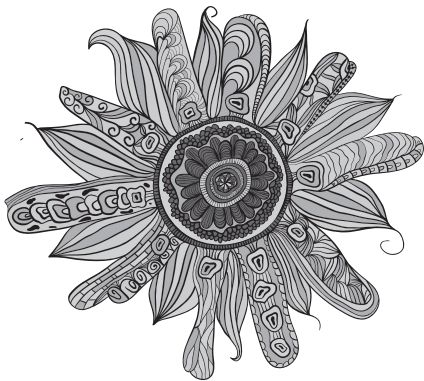
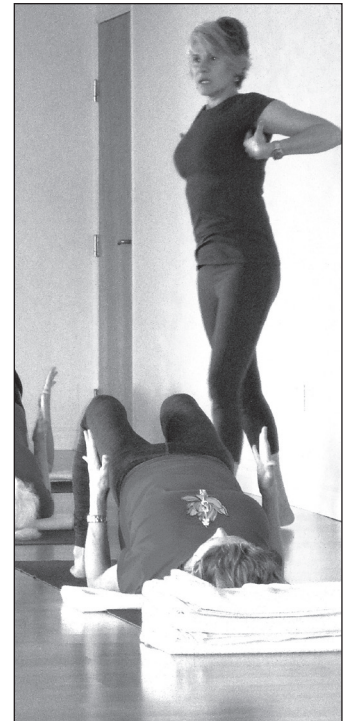
When she demonstrated key actions such as spreading the backs of the legs in *adho mukha svanasana* her body showed the movements beautifully.

After working the actions of the legs she moved up to the pelvis, explaining how to bring balance to the area and the importance of creating space for the organic organs in the pelvis. She used cues such as lift the sternum away from the navel, while keeping the front ribs back.

She worked her way up to the chest explaining the importance of opening and separating the armpit chest from the armpit which aids in mood stability.

As a student in the teacher-training program, I found Lucie’s workshop to be very insightful for learning and understanding key actions in the basic poses, how they carry from pose to pose, and how the work becomes deeper as the knowledge grows and the energy channels open.

This workshop was definitely accessible to all levels and a pleasant way to spend a Saturday afternoon. ॐ



JUMP INTO SUMMER

Come jump start and build your practice for five mornings with Lauren Cox. Focus on standing, twisting, inverting, back bends, and seated poses. All will be explored during this workshop

Monday to Friday, June 26-30, 2017, 7:00-8:00 am

Members \$55, Non-Members \$60

Registration opens April 3, 2017

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

Scholarships and Bursaries

Heart of Yoga with Shirley Daventry French,
April 8-9, deadline March 18

Salt Spring Retreat with Shirley Daventry French,
June 9-11, deadline May 19

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

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

Senior Assessment Victoria

January 12 – 15, 2017

by **Teddy Hyndman, Assessment Committee Chair**

Beautiful flowers from the IYAC/ACYI Board of Directors brightened the entrance to the Victoria Yoga Centre. It was the beginning of an historic event for Iyengar Yoga in Canada. For the first time in Canada, an assessment of three Senior levels was to take place over several days. For the first time in Canada, there was to be an assessment at the level of Senior III.

Preparation for this assessment was long in the making. It took months of organization and administration. Scheduling three levels, creating new sequences for practice, making new forms and questions for exams, deciding on different timings for practice: a long list of things to do.

The host community had much more to organize. Not only was it necessary to fulfill the duties of a “host”, they had to find volunteer students for the assessment, students who had to be prepared to follow instructions for *asana* at a very senior level. And they certainly were.

In what might be called a marathon assessment, the Senior assessors were exemplary. With uninterrupted awareness of attention and the eyes of the “Seer”, they drew upon their years of experience and commitment to Gururji’s work. As professionals, they kept to the high standards of assessment expected in the Iyengar system.

All candidates in the three levels showed their commitment, dedication, and courage. In an atmosphere of friendship, encouragement, and tasty treats, the Victoria hosts and volunteers deserve the highest certificate. Thanks to the senior assessors, candidates, and students, Canadians have shown they can rise to the excellence Gururji intended.

Senior Assessors:

Marlene MaWhinney – Toronto

Marie-Andree Morin – Quebec City

Shirley Daventry French – Victoria

Practice Enrichment Series

Friday afternoon, March 10
2:00 - 5:00 pm

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.

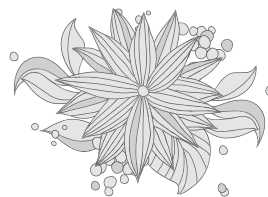
\$35 + GST each session



IYAC/ACYI ASSESSMENT DATES

June 9-11, Intermediate Junior I, Ottawa, ON

June 9-11, Intermediate Junior II, Vancouver, BC



Congratulations!

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

Adriana Fischer, Toronto, ON
Annette Newton, Palgrave, ON
Pam Maguire, Mississauga, ON
Sharon Hogan, Toronto, ON
Velerie Chowaniec, Edmonton AB
Laila Moos, Calgary, AB
Linda Fernandes, Toronto, ON
Pauline Clark, Calgary, AB

**The following candidates achieved
Intermediate Senior certification
at the January assessment in Victoria:**

Krisna Zawaduk, Kelowna, BC – IS I
Ty Chandler, Victoria, BC – IS I
Louie Ettling, Vancouver, BC – IS II
Ann Kilbertus, Victoria, BC – IS III

Victoria Iyengar Yoga Centre 2016/2017 Annual Report

Message from the President

by Laine Canivet

Looking through this year's newsletters I noticed many references to "energy". In the spring issue Shirley tells the story about the student who asked about energy in the practice of yoga and B.K.S. Iyengar refused to answer the question. As time went by Shirley came to a new understanding about energy and its manifestation.

In the summer issue there is an article by Geeta Iyengar where she discusses meditation and she talks about "penetrating energy" being necessary to understand the fruits of yoga. In the autumn issue the article about the 2016 Saltspring Retreat talks about the life energy or prana, including the pranic energy, in our yoga postures.

I am certainly not qualified to talk about these kinds of energy, but I can observe the energy it takes to make our yoga centre the vibrant place that it is. The warm welcome from the front desk staff who are often called upon to do more than their regular jobs; the sense of community among our talented teachers, students, volunteers and donors all of whom go way above and beyond in their contributions to this centre; the dedication and effort that goes into the every-day mentoring, teaching and learning; and of course, the incredible energy it takes to keep the whole organization moving forward smoothly in our friendly, clean and bright environment.

Thank you to all teachers, staff, students, volunteers, donors and especially Wendy Boyer for your energy and dedication to our yoga centre.

It is an honour and a pleasure to serve on this board.
Namasté, Laine Canivet, *President*

Treasurer's Report

Year Ending October 31, 2016

by Bev Kallstrom

Our year end financial statements have been prepared by the firm of Stirling Stanford and were signed off by the IYCV president, Laine Canivet and treasurer, Bev Kallstrom on January 11, 2017. The IYCV Society is dedicated to encouraging the physical, mental, and spiritual growth of our members through the study and discipline of Iyengar Yoga.

Our annual budget is based on the actual revenue and expenditures of the previous fiscal year and projected changes,

with a goal to contain expenses and maintain our revenue through student enrolment in classes, workshops, merchandise sales and donations. This year, we ended the year very close to budget with a shortfall of \$903.00. This included amortized costs for the lobby upgrades, including lighting and a new counter.

Revenue

Total revenue for 2016 was \$407,111 including gains on investments and foreign exchange. The majority of the revenue is from yoga classes followed by workshops, annual appeal, merchandise and memberships as detailed in the statements. A comparison to previous years follows:

2016	\$407,111
2015	\$377,218
2014	\$391,446
2013	\$371,324

Expenses

Total expenses for 2016 were \$407,901. The majority of costs are for class teachers, followed by wages and benefits, rental expenses and workshop costs. Comparative expenses to previous years follows:

2016	\$407,901
2015	\$378,689
2014	\$375,706
2013	\$372,278

Statement of Financial Position

The Statement of Financial Position documents our assets and liabilities as of October 31, 2016. At year end our short term funds invested in GIC's were \$103,739.

The Iyengar Yoga Centre is being managed prudently and overall the financial health of our centre remains strong.

Thank you to the members of the Board for their support, to our General Manager, staff and volunteers especially Theron Morgan 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. It is a true pleasure to be part of this great community of people.



Hilary McPhail, Bob Maher, Wendy Boyer, Britta Poisson, Monica Dimofski, Bruce Cox, Theron Morgan.

General Manager's Report

by Wendy Boyer

The Centre had one of its busiest years in 2016. As with the last two years, class revenue was the largest source of income. We finished 2016 with a small deficit due to the six thousand dollar renovation on the lobby. The lighting and countertops were upgraded and Jane and Bruce painted the lobby.

Our best marketing tool is selling passes for classes. The popular Unlimited pass sells for \$234/term and allows students to take any class at their level anytime. The Om Pass for \$58 buys six hours of class time. In 2016, the Centre offered a six month pass between May 2nd and October 30th. A 30-day Unlimited Student pass for \$92 promotes classes to post-secondary students.

The Centre's website, thanks to designer, Peggy Cady, markets who we are and what we do. In 2016 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; and offered first-class-free to promote the Centre. We also offered free all levels yoga on Friday mornings, as well as free teen and family classes in 2016. Thanks to Roger

Champagne for editing the newsletter, distributed on line and mailed around the world.

The September Open house was held on Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th and attracted 90 people, many of whom signed up for classes. On Saturday we offered three yoga classes, including a ropes class, plus philosophy with Shirley and Derek French. On Sunday, we ran a free two hour workshop with Ann Kilbertus. The board and Johanna, prepared, hosted, and cleaned up; our generous bakers made tasty treats and savories; and Jane McFarlane brewed excellent chai.

In 2016, we celebrated as a community with four well attended events: the New Year's Day Practice in January, the 2nd Annual International Day of Yoga in June, Shirley's 85th Birthday, and a celebration of B.K.S. Iyengar's birthday, in December.

The Centre had 307 members in 2016, 39 of whom are life members, six are international members, and 23 of whom reside outside of BC but within Canada. We still mail 93 newsletters, but encourage students to read the newsletter on the website or, for local students, to pick up at the Centre.

The largest cost saving in 2016 came from our committed volunteer, Theron Morgan, our bookkeeper, who contributed countless hours keeping the finances in order. We salute you!

Many people contributed items to the Special Needs Tea – special thanks to Robin Cantor for her energy and commitment. We are grateful to Sandra Harper, who donated

the photocopier that results in a cost saving to the Centre's annual printing expense. Thanks to Linda Ellen Bosela for managing the Thrifty's Smile card program. Laine produced a beautiful fundraising calendar based on photographs she took in India, thanks Laine! Donations to the annual appeal were up in 2016. Thanks to all who contributed to our fundraising events.

In 2016, maintaining and managing waivers was easier since the Centre moved to signing every six months instead of bi-monthly. Waivers must be stored in hard copy for three years, then scanned and held for another two years.

Staff provides administrative support for the Centre's many activities. A few new staff people joined us in 2016. Monica Dimofski rejoined the staff for a year – Monica has gone back to Singapore now. The Centre welcomes Jennifer Rischmiller in her place. Bruce continues to support the Centre training, consulting and working a weekly shift. Bob Maher joined the staff in 2016 and works Thursday mornings and Monday afternoons. Thanks to Britta Poisson who manages the office; Bruce Cox who maintains the website and Hilary McPhail who handles membership registration. Jane McFarlane stepped away from reception in 2016, but is still on casual support. Thank you to Leslie Hogle for managing the class schedule and the

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

Thanks to the board for supporting the Centre, especially for stepping up to assist with the maintenance for special events and workshops. 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. Annie Kitchen joined the board this year and was a big help at the silent auction.

As with any registered charity, the Centre has 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; to Johanna Godliman who distributes posters; to Patty Rivard, our librarian; and finally to Glenda Balkan Champagne for coordinating the assessment in 2016. We thank you all so much. ॐ

Thank You!

Thank you to:

- Krysia Strawczynski for storing important, but bulky, items for the Centre.
- Jana Bodiley for the donation of 4 new India blankets.

Special thanks for the Anniversary Celebration of B.K.S. Iyengar's Birthday:

Despite an Environment Canada winter storm warning, people flocked to the Centre to celebrate the anniversary of Gurujī's birthday last December 11th. Thirty-eight students had a wonderful practice with excellent teaching from Shirley, followed by delicious cakes and tea. The atmosphere at the Centre was warm and inviting throughout. I think it would have made Mr. Iyengar proud to see our community.

Special thanks to the following volunteers, and to all the teachers who coordinated the celebration

so seamlessly: Laine Canivet, Amanda Mills, Annie Kitchen, Sheila Redhead, Stacey Frank, Shirley Daventry French, Britta Poisson, Jane McFarlane, Leslie Hogle, Ann Kilbertus, Wendy Boyer, and Hilary McPhail. And also a big thanks to Joy Illington for her role as co-ordinator.

Thank you to the many volunteers for the January Assessment at the Centre:

Meals and snacks: Laine Canivet, Jill Williams, Jen Van de Pol, Bev Kallstrom, Laure Newnham, Glenda Balkan-Champagne, Lucie Guidon, Amanda Mills, Adia Kapoor, Melissa Hadley, Heike Miller, Patty Kallio, Nancy Searing

Props: Lauren Cox, Jim Bratvold

Drivers: Jayne Jonas, Patti Rivard, Vicky Kapoor, Leslie Hogle

Balkan-Champagne, Karin Young, Jess Paffard

Clean up and other help: Jane McFarlane, Vicky and Anil Kapoor

Copying and office support: Carole Miller, Jane McFarlane, Britta Poisson, Hilary McPhail

Timers: Teddy Hyndman, Nancy Searing

Student Volunteers: Jayne Lloyd-Jones, Jana Bodiley, Jane MacFarlane, Robin Cantor, Arno de Boer, Karin Young, Glenda Balkan-Champagne, Elizabeth Peckham, Gary Wong, Marilyn Shepherd, Greg Sly, Brandy Baybutt, Teresa Stanley, Andrea Mueller, Tina Hickey, Rebecca Lang, Crystal McMillan, Soo Youn Ham, Jette Merryfield, Laure Newnham, Jan Clarke

Lastly to Wendy Boyer and all of the yoga centre board members for supporting the senior assessment.

Runners: Melissa Hadley, Glenda

Stock Donation to IYCV

by Bev Kallstrom

Last November, the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria received a donation of stocks in response to our annual appeal. The process of accepting this gift was educational for our board, and the sharing of this knowledge could be advantageous to the membership. Donation of stocks to the IYCV can be a win-win solution for both members and the IYCV. Many people believe that giving charitably creates abundance – financially and otherwise – and the generous support of our members is vital and greatly appreciated.

Today, it can make more sense to donate securities that have appreciated in value than donating cash of an equivalent amount. Since 2006 any capital gain triggered by making a donation of publicly traded securities to a registered charity is eliminated under tax law in Canada.

The IYCV is both a registered charity and a not for profit organization which aims to fund operations from revenue (including both course fees and donations) generated in each fiscal year. We have targeted an annual appeal budget amount of \$27,085 in order to balance our income and expenses for the 2016/2017 fiscal year.

Tim Cestnick wrote an article for the *Globe and Mail* published December 12, 2012, [Viewable here: www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-investor/personal-finance/taxes/donate-securities-to-charity-and-be-a-bit-of-a-tax-scrooge/article6270773/], which states, “when you make a gift of investments to a charity...you are deemed to have sold those investments at fair market value so it can trigger a capital gain or capital loss depending on whether they have appreciated or declined in value.” The table from the article illustrates the impact to capital gains tax for both a cash donation and security donation.

	Sell Securities and Donate Cash	Donate Securities
Fair Market Value	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
Adjusted cost base	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Capital Gain	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Taxable Capital Gain	\$ 25,000.00	\$ -
Tax @ 46%	\$ 11,500.00	\$ -
Less:		
Tax Credit @ 46% ¹	\$ 46,000.00	\$ 46,000.00
Net Tax Savings	\$34,500.00	\$ 46,000.00
Net Cost of Donation²	\$65,500.00	\$ 54,000.00

¹ Assume a marginal tax rate of 46%, varies by province

² Cost of donation is \$100,000 less the tax savings

The article goes on to say that if you only want to donate \$20,000 of the \$100,000 from the stock sale, that \$20,000 donation would only cost you \$8,500. Effectively, then, you are paying \$8,500 from your pocket, which becomes a donation of \$20,000 to the IYCV.

The IYCV has set up an account that enables us to receive stock donations, and our treasurer and president are happy to facilitate the transaction should you wish to make a donation. Talk to your financial advisor to determine what the advantages to you would be if you are considering a donation to the IYCV and have stocks that would trigger a capital gain if sold.

In philanthropy, as in yoga, “knowledge is power”. ॐ

MOVIE NIGHT

Approximately 35 viewers gathered for our first-ever Toonie Movie Night on January 13, 2017. We watched “Leap of Faith” to learn about B.K.S. Iyengar’s difficult journey from poverty, illness, and neglect to a man with four million followers. A toonie was charged to help cover costs, and many spent a second toonie to purchase a small bag of popcorn. The Board plans to offer another Toonie Movie Night on Friday, October 20, 2017 – and we promise to have a larger supply of popcorn! Hope to see you then. ॐ



Salt Spring Retreat...Remembered

by Heather Hobbs

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*).

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. ॐ



PHOTO VICKI KAPOOR

The 33rd Annual Retreat at the Salt Spring Centre

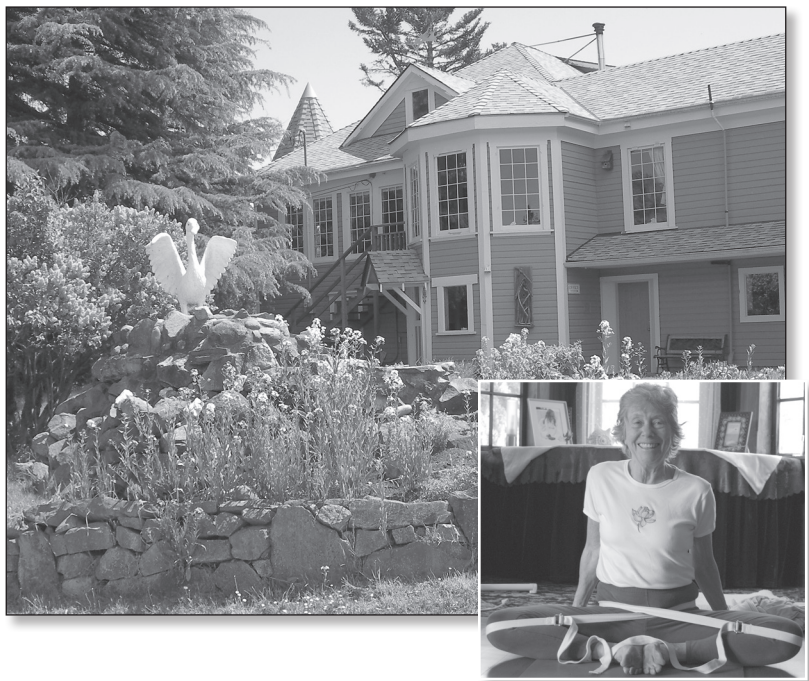
June 9-11, 2017

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.

Please note: Retreat runs 2nd weekend in June.
Registration now open.
Registration closes June 2, 2017

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



IYCV Members:
Shared accommodation \$448 +GST
Camping \$405 +GST
Commuter \$362 +GST

Non-members:
Shared accommodation \$470 +GST
Camping \$443 +GST
Commuter \$400 +GST

The Student Intensive: Contemplations on Pausing

Ann Glover

Editor's note: With registration for the 2017 Summer Student Intensive coming up in a few months, we offer this reflection on last year's workshop as inspiration.

ANNE GLOVER IS A VICTORIA-BASED INTERNATIONAL STORYTELLER AND PERFORMER. SHE HAS BEEN IN AND OUT OF THE VICTORIA IYENGAR WORLD SINCE THE EARLY 1980S AND SOMETIMES MANAGES TO KEEP A YOGA PRACTICE GOING WHEN SHE'S ON TOUR.

An email from Lauren. She has noticed I am not registered for the annual yoga intensive she co-leads at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria. Am I in town? Can I join them? I would be missed, etc.

I know how persuasive Lauren is. In my reply, I try to back her off: Can't handle the intensive. Just back after a year on the road. Worn out. Been sick. And I haven't been doing yoga. All over three continents, no yoga for 12 months. No classes, no workshops, no down dog or up dog or inversions. *Nada*.

Lauren is unfazed. "It sounds like you need the intensive." In her wisdom, she encourages me to sign up and just take it easy. "Practice *ahimsa*," she counsels.

So I sign up (did I mention persuasive?) with *ahimsa* as my guide. Non-harming. Not overdoing it. I sit on the mat on Monday morning with a mix of caution and curiosity. I've come and gone from formal practice before; still, I wonder what it will be like this time to practice after a full year off.



I discover it is both easy and challenging: easy because the poses are like old friends; challenging because my relationship with each one has shifted. (Was *tadassana* always this complicated??) I try not to push myself and come out of poses early when I need to. But as the week progresses, and as I've continued classes in the weeks since the intensive, I am surprised that although I have lost ground, I am not as rusty as I expected. Why didn't this year of "no yoga" cost me more in strength, flexibility, stamina and focus?

There are some logical answers: A familiarity with yoga after many years of practice (albeit erratic practice); a lifestyle that includes a lot of movement; a job – performing – that requires attention to how I stand and move. Even my demons of scoliosis and joint problems force me to pay moment-to-moment attention to bones and muscles, tendons and fascia.

All of these make sense. But there is paradoxical piece that I've learned from my work as a performer. At the end of every tour, I tell myself, "This time, I'll rehearse and keep fresh between tours." Then I spend my off-tour time sleeping, sitting in a daze in the coffee shop, reading novels, watching movies, going to dances, and hanging out with people who make me laugh. I need this time to recharge, and eventually I turn to my work. But it's the administrative tasks that eat my time between tours. In the end, I don't rehearse.

So I go out on the next tour in a state of mild terror, convinced I'll have lost the knack, or forgotten the material. But when I get on stage, new things pop up seemingly out of nowhere. A character I've been playing for years is suddenly more vivid. I use the stage differently. I forget a scene, and discover that the story is fine without it.

Over the years, I have had to accept this cycle. Maybe while I immerse myself in movies and novels, I am studying

characters and plotlines, and while I'm sitting in the coffee shop, I'm watching movement and body language. Certainly dancing, visiting, and laughing tune my spirit. It takes a leap of faith to trust this process, but there is something beautiful about a pause in practice, at least in this context.

At the intensive, I consider pauses in the context of yoga. Ty and Lauren lead us through *asanas*, *pranayama*, and philosophy talks; I ponder pauses. They fit nicely with *ahimsa*: a pause between *asanas* can be a necessary rest. Pausing during the pose – holding the pose – can be the key to finding stillness, "the repose in the pose." Pauses are built into *pranayama*, where they come between "sips" in an inhalation. There is a lot to pausing in yoga, as it turns out.

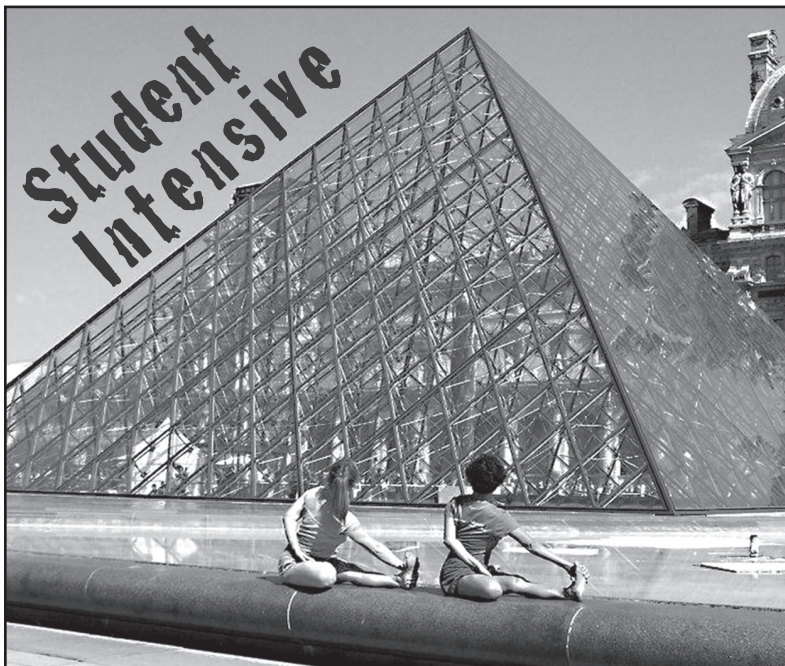
Lest there be any confusion, I do not advocate stopping one's yoga practice for a year. But the experience has made me think about my own cyclical nature (this is not the first time I've done this) and about the intrinsic value in taking a break.

Many of us will at some point hit a place where formal yoga practice is not happening. When those moments arise, we can be kind to ourselves by exploring the pause, rather than resisting the change. Perhaps taking a break from actively "Doing Yoga" can nudge us towards a subtler form of practice. Maybe these periods can help us bring the essence of the *asanas* into our lives, embody the teachings, breathe awareness into even the tiniest corners of everyday life. Then, after days or weeks, months or years, at some point in the pause, a wise and persuasive angel invites us back to the mat, and we make a choice. The Summer Intensive gave me the support and inspiration I needed to reboot my practice, and I'm grateful to be able to follow up by taking classes for a few weeks before my next tour. Who knows – I might even do some rehearsing! ॐ

History Corner: A Yoga Centre Moment

by Roger Champagne, Britta Poisson, and Karin Dayton

A small group of us have met several times recently to discuss a compilation of the Centre's history — a project we soon began to agree is potentially daunting in scope. Some of the big questions we began to grapple with: how do we situate ourselves in thousands of years of ancient Indian culture, where do we begin? Furthermore, we are not among the original IYC members, rather, beneficiaries in large part of their work, wisdom, and practice! Because of this, our perspective on the early years is from the outside looking in. In attempting to establish a starting point, the questions we wanted to ask, lively conversations began to ensue, and our focus began to shift. Perhaps, instead of a big history project, we wondered, why not focus on moments and individuals? Some of our classmates (perhaps that quiet person on the mat next to you, whose name you might not know) have been practicing Iyengar yoga for forty years. Mysterious or practical, for whatever reason, they were attracted to a little known subject, and their interest has withstood the test of time, contributing to the establishment of the subject in our culture, to its history. Additionally, we have come to describe the IYC founding members — teachers, board members, classmates — as “trail-blazers”. Many are women, but not all (the story of the supportive spouse, partner, family, is central to the understanding of our history). In upcoming newsletter issues, we hope to learn more about some of these individuals: their initial inspirations, and what we describe as “first time” stories, hearing the word yoga, meeting B.K.S. Iyengar, and travelling to India, to name a few. ॐ



With Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler

August 28 – September 1, 2017

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 3, 2017

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.

IYCV Calendar

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

June

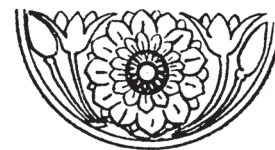
- 9-11 SSI Retreat
- 21 International Day of Yoga
- 26-30 Jump into Summer with an Early Morning Practice

July

- 10-14 Introductory Intensive for Teachers In Training

August

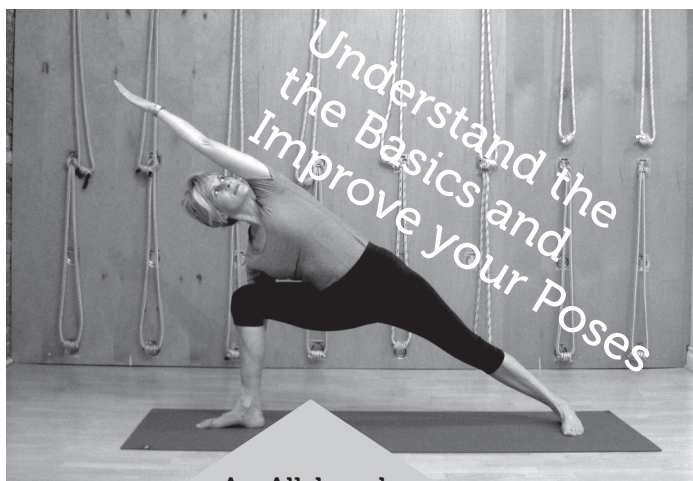
- 14-18 Certified Teacher Training
- 28-Sept 1 Student Intensive



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!



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



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

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



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 \$57.75**

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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.



PHOTO: VICKI KAPOOR



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA



INTRO INTENSIVE 2016



N E W S L E T T E R S U M M E R 2 0 1 7

Iyengar Yoga Teacher Intensives



INTRODUCTORY INTENSIVE FOR TEACHERS IN TRAINING

July 10-14, 2017

with Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus and Ty Chandler

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

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

Daily schedule runs 9:30 am to 5:30 pm.

INTENSIVE FOR CERTIFIED TEACHERS

August 14-18, 2017

with Shirley Daventry French, Ann Kilbertus and Louie Ettling

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

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

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

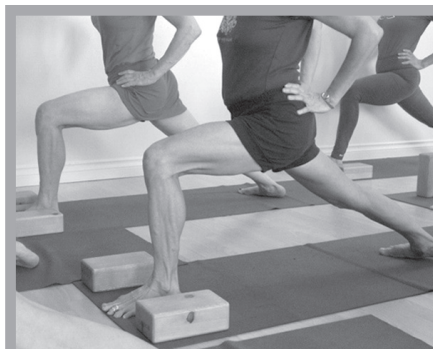
Louie Ettling is the Director of The Yoga Space in Vancouver. She has been a keen student of Iyengar Yoga since she started her studies 28 years ago.

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

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

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

(250) 386-YOGA (9642)
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca



September 16-17, 2017

IYCV Open House

Free! Come one, come all!

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

Saturday, September 16

- Kirtan 11:30 am
- Free classes at Noon, 1:00 pm, 2:00 pm and 3:00 pm
- Yoga, Life and Your Health: A panel discussion led by Shirley Daventry French at 4:00 pm

Sunday, September 17

- *Discover the Basics* with Gary Wong

A free 90-minute workshop for new and returning students
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

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)**

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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: AUGUST 15, 2017

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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

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Reflections

By Shirley Daventry French

B.K.S. Iyengar, and his impact on my life is never far from the forefront of my mind. Lately during a particularly challenging period I have been forced to draw on my strength and follow a maxim from Swami Vivekananda to “discard everything which weakens me”. One way of doing this is to think about Guruji, my studies with him and in particular the many times in Pune practising and learning at the Institute. Those stays varied in length from one to three months, each one packed full of incredible (sometimes almost overwhelming) experiences. Always I returned home stuffed full of details to digest and practise, information to ponder and penetrate, philosophy to dig into for relevance, purpose and meaning. Every day so much happened in and out of class, on and off the mat, for me to make sense of on my return and integrate into my life.

I have crossed many significant thresholds in life including the start and end of the Second World War, school, college, entering the work force, marriage: all in my native England. Later came immigration

to Canada, motherhood and supporting my physician husband as he practised medicine in the days when patients could call their doctor at home and he would answer, when he would make house calls, night calls, deliver babies and visit patients in hospital. All of the family were vicariously part of his practice. Our children were taught to answer our home phone: “Dr. French’s residence!” Smart phones were still a long way off.

On top of all that in an attempt to sustain my own identity I became politically active, tried to change the world and the education system in Victoria which I found too closely linked to outdated British values, wrote letters to the editor and joined a Status of Women Action Group. Sometimes I stopped and asked myself: Where am I? What am I doing here? And eventually, with the advent of yoga this refrain changed to: Who am I?

The significant thresholds of my yoga life are my first yoga class in 1970, my first meeting with Swami Radha a few months later, a three-month residential yoga course at her Ashram in 1976, and my first experience

of the direct teaching of B.K.S. Iyengar in Pune in 1979.

Crossing all these thresholds has been challenging but each one has contributed to my life today. I learned about *karma* and the possibility of multiple births. Very sceptical at first, I opened my mind a little as I came across the following quote by Voltaire: “It is not more surprising to be born twice than once; everything in nature is resurrection”

On my first trip to Pune I went with my husband. We took part in a three-week Intensive at the Institute and Guruji was our teacher. There were two classes a day except Sundays as India continued to observe the British custom of a day of rest on Sundays. The course was correctly called an Intensive. Guruji was a tireless taskmaster whose skill and knowledge surpassed anything I could have imagined. Leaving Bombay (as Mumbai was called then) on our return home, we gave a collective sigh when we were sitting down and the plane took off. We were grateful for a rich and enjoyable time in India but we could not absorb any more. As Guruji would say at the end of many classes: Enough for today!

Derek and I also enjoyed the food in Pune; even modest restaurants served incredibly good meals at astonishingly low prices. However during an overnight stay in Hong Kong we let our hair down during a costly hotel dinner with some other

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returning Canadians, gorged on salad and laughed hysterically at the sound of crunchy vegetables in our mouths (and later on at the size of the bill)!

I couldn't wait to leave India but after arriving home began to formulate plans to return as soon as possible. Meanwhile there was so much to assimilate and integrate into our lives. Often a chef (especially an English one) speaks about a spice or herb which will "kick a dish up a notch". Our yoga had been "kicked up" several notches by Gururji and we had to elevate our practise many levels to sustain this.

Of course, on return to Pune Gururji paid no attention to what we had managed to absorb but zeroed in right away on what had been ignored or misunderstood. A true Master of yoga, knowing that his time with us would be limited, Gururji seized each opportunity to take us as far along the yogic path as possible.

Once, during a conversation in the library Gururji spoke about the difference he experienced teaching returning students because they were no longer so raw as beginners and able to tolerate and absorb more. First timers in Pune were viewed as beginners no matter how many years of experience they had had at home. As Gururji pointed out, first bad habits have to be removed to make space for better ones, and we can only have the capacity to absorb a certain amount at one time depending on our eagerness, willingness and openness to learn. On return visits we can take more and he would demand more. This is true whether you are very flexible or have a stiff body, it is the state of your mind and openness there which will determine the depth of your training.

In January of this year I acquired a new book called *Beloved Gururji*, a commemorative

A true Master of yoga, knowing that his time with us would be limited, Gururji seized each opportunity to take us as far along the yogic path as possible.

volume in honour of the life and work of this great man and extraordinary teacher. The Iyengar family invited students of Gururji worldwide to contribute articles, drawings, poems and other art forms expressing their experience as Gururji's pupil. His heirs, Geeta and Prashant, were to oversee this project along with other family members.

They have taken time and care with this book which is beautifully produced in an age of cheap and shoddy books with dreadful binding which makes them difficult to read. On all levels *Beloved Gururji* is a pleasure to savour and read.

The first contributions are from Geeta and Prashant, followed by tributes from other family members, including his granddaughter Abhijata who like Geeta and Prashant has been trained by Gururji to follow in his footsteps as a teacher.

Other contributions come from a variety of students from all over the world grouped in a series of chapters,

most in essay form but others from fine artists, cartoonists and poets.

Before his death Gururji trained successors who could carry on his work at the Institute in Pune. He also set up a system of teacher training to be implemented throughout the world and trained senior students to oversee that training.

While it is possible to become a certified Iyengar Yoga teacher without studying in Pune, such a pilgrimage is required to progress past the first level of intermediate teaching, and many visits before becoming a senior Iyengar teacher. Sadly there are currents of resistance to making this journey now that Gururji is no longer alive, claiming that with such good training in their home countries it should no longer be a requirement. This is an opinion with which I strongly disagree.

One of my favourite childhood books was *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Graham, and it was one of my disappointments as a mother that none of my children shared my fascination with this story. At one

point the following dialogue takes place between the Mole and the Water Rat while on the river:

"Is it so nice as all that?"

asked the mole, shyly...

"Nice? It's the only thing," said the Water Rat solemnly, as he leaned forward for his stroke.

"Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats."

I could paraphrase that last phrase and say in all sincerity; there is nothing, absolutely nothing more worth doing



While it is possible to become a certified Iyengar Yoga teacher without studying in Pune, such a pilgrimage is required to progress past the first level of intermediate teaching, and many visits before becoming a senior Iyengar teacher.

than getting yourself to Pune if you are a serious yoga student and wish to learn more about Iyengar Yoga and consequently about your life and yourself.

Good, occasionally great yoga, can be found in the western world these days. Guruji's granddaughter, Abhijata, taught a course in Florida at the end of last year which apparently was outstanding; but nothing compares to taking time out to be at the source of yoga in the culture where it originated. It brings a different perspective to the pursuit of Truth and discovery of the Self, two quests which lie at the heart of yoga.

Much has changed in India since my first visit four decades ago. Much has changed in Canada since I arrived and England since I left. Old people in India bemoan many of these changes there just as I lament Brexit, the narcissism of Facebook and what

I perceive as a diminution of written and spoken English language. Change is constant in our lives, our bodies and our minds. The only choice we have is how to approach this.

In addition to Pune, much of my direct learning from Guruji took place in Europe and North America; but it is the stays in Pune which affected me most deeply and allowed me to make changes and sustain them in the face of the many excuses and rational self-limitations which I constantly put into my path. Yoga is the tool to remove them.

In eternal gratitude,
Shirley ॐ



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The “Power” of Guruji’s Eyes

By Rahvi H. Mehta

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The first look at Guruji and immediately what catches your eyes are his eyebrows! In fact, articles in newspapers and magazines about him never failed to mention his eyebrows which were always preceded by an adjective: formidable eyebrows, bushy eyebrows, wild eyebrows, flashing eyebrows, fierce eyebrows! Guruji himself often joked about his own eyebrows. “God gave me these eyebrows to frighten you.”

It is these eyebrows that played a crucial role in protecting one of the most powerful pair of eyes in this world. It is these eyes that had seen so much of this world; it is these eyes that have communicated so much to this world; it is these eyes that have given so much to this world!

Guruji had something in his eyes that did not allow negativity, distractions or disturbance to come in.

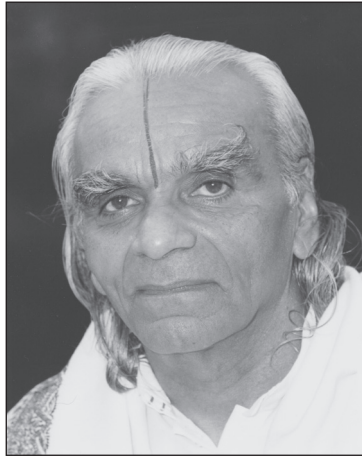
Seeing the outside world

Guruji said, “The eyes are the windows to the brain”. A window lets the outside world in and the inside world out. But how much of the outside world should be let in? How much should the outside world influence you? How much would the outside world disturb and distract you? How much should the outside world educate you?

Guruji had something in his eyes that did not allow negativity, distractions, disturbance to come in. He was never influenced by the outside world. But at the same time, his eyes were not closed to the world. His eyes saw what the others could not see.

The lens in a human eye can filter the UV rays so we don’t see many of the things certain animals see. For example, the males and females of some butterfly species look identical to the human eye but very different to UV-sensitive eyes — the males sport bright patterns in order to attract the females!

Guruji clearly saw things in the visible spectrum but even far beyond into the UV and X-Ray. He had X-Ray vision or in the modern day, I would not be exaggerating in saying that his eyes saw as much as the magnetic resonance images convey.



He was never influenced by the outside world. But at the same time, his eyes were not closed to the world.

A very keen observer, the entire ‘world’ of Iyengar yoga emerged solely on the basis of what his eyes noticed about the outer world. He observed the connection between worn out outer heels of the shoes and the pain in the knee and the back; he observed the

connection between angularly placed legs and the abdominal organs; the placements of the organs of actions and the effect on the senses of perception. All the basic principles and uniqueness of Iyengar Yoga is based on the foundations of the observations from Guruji’s eyes; be it, precision, alignment, technicality or healing to the body and mind.

To start with, as a young man he looked at books on *asana* and critically looked at the illustrations or photographs and the text. He saw that the text often did not tally with the illustrations. For example, the text mentioned ‘straight’ but the illustrations did not show the ‘straightness’. What was the reader to do? He then experimented on himself and experienced the impact of keeping the legs and arms straight. He then showed this precision in *Light on Yoga*. Many before him must have seen these very same books; but none ‘saw’ what he did.

When people came to him with health problems, his eyes saw their posture; he would compare the left with the right and then use the ‘healthy’ side as a guide to correct the other side. Thus came in ‘alignment’. If this alignment did not manifest despite the best efforts, then the props were used. And, that is how people with a variety of problems got relief and Iyengar Yoga became recognized as having therapeutic benefits.

Even in the apparently healthy people, he saw how much ‘duality’ exists between the two sides of the body; and, how this duality affected their organic body and their mind. He totally transformed the way the term ‘*dvandvaha*’ was interpreted and made the students experience the serenity when the duality was lessened if not removed.

With time, the clarity of his vision sharpened to an extent that he could see the change in the shades in the colour of

the skin, the pores of the skin, the movement of the skin with reference to the flesh. Most of us struggle to see this even when shown but we at least know what is possible!

Seeing the inside world

As an outsider can peep into your house through the windows, so also one can peep into the personality of a person through his or her eyes. What did Gururji's eyes convey?

It will be unimaginable for the future generations and even medical practitioners, who rely so much on gadgets and tests to even believe the capability and depth of Gururji's vision

His eyes expressed concern, compassion, humility, serenity, joy and sometimes even mischief especially when in front of kids. All of us express our emotions through our eyes, But, the difference is that Gururji not only expressed but communicated strongly with his eyes.

How many of you have experienced the time when your *asana* changed the moment Gururji's glance fell on you whether you were practicing in the same hall or attending a class in his presence. Why did this happen? Was it that Gururji instructed you? No! Was it that till then you were not clearly listening to the instructions of your teachers? No!

How did the quality of the *asana* change with his glance? The power of his glance was such that he could penetrate deep through the layers of our body right up to the core - our conscience. We may be practicing on our own, we may be following the instructions of our teachers but it often could be that our external sheaths are working – but the moment, Gururji glanced, our conscience, which is covered gets unveiled and we do the *asana* efficiently!

Therefore, there were many students who wanted to practice in the presence of Gururji. For some, it was a chance to catch some words of wisdom which may be expressed to them or somebody around them. But for many, unknown to them there was something happening to them – which was their ability to work from their conscience.

His compassion and confidence reflected in his eyes. Irrespective of the condition or age of the individual, they got the confidence to do the *asana* which would often be impossible on their own. His eyes touched millions who saw him or even saw his photograph. Take the example of the photographs taken by Jake Clennel a couple of years ago near Mulshi. There was a photo shoot for a book but Jake was taking random, natural shots of Gururji. Many

of these photographs have become so popular that one finds them in people's studios and homes. What is it that wants people to see this photo of Gururji heartily laughing? It is the joy and lightness that is communicated. A look at the photo reduces stress and joy reverberates.

Look at his eyes in the hundreds of photographs of the 200 *asanas* in *Light on Yoga* or adorning the walls of the Institute. The poses vary, their difficulty intensifies but the expression in the eyes remains unchanged. It shows the same serenity, calmness and a state of meditateness.

One may close the eyes when one 'tries' to meditate but the internal turmoil could continue or possibly even increase as the outlet is closed. By closing the eyes, one can reduce external distraction but it does not necessarily bring internal stability. However, in Gururji's case, the eyes are open, undistracted and reflect internal calm and poise – where he is not trying to meditate in an *asana* he IS in meditation. Here too, the whole concept of the way the world perceived *asana* has changed. People earlier thought that there are *asanas* in which one meditates and the others were meant for the body. Our sages never said that. Gururji showed that with long hours of uninterrupted practice [*sa tu dirgha kala nairantarya*] one could achieve a state of meditation in any *asana*.

His steady gaze steadied our eyes, our minds, our bodies and even our consciousness – is this not yoga? Isn't yoga *citta vritti nirodhaha*?

Gururji often mentioned that as you progress in the path of yoga, you are on a precipice of *bhoga* and *apavargha*. It is very easy to succumb to *bhoga* with attributes of pride, arrogance and ego. But that was not the case with Gururji. He was always inclined towards *apavargha*.

The eyes in this photograph which marks the cover of *Iyengar: The Master* says it all. The humility in the eyes shows how he surrendered everything to Ishvara leaving no scope for *ahamkara* [ego] and therefore could see the *akara* of the *aham* – the form of the self. ॐ



“There is No God Higher Than Truth”

– Mahatma Gandhi

Introduction

We are pleased to publish the following article written by John Schumacher, an experienced American Iyengar Yoga teacher from Bethesda, Maryland whom I have known for many years on this yogic path. It was first published by Unity Woods, a yoga centre founded by John in 1979. In common with the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, they publish a newsletter to which John is a regular contributor.

As John himself explains, he has hitherto avoided political statements but his reflections in this recent article were prompted by the current political situation in his country, the United States of America.

Roger Champagne, the editor of our Victoria newsletter thought it was excellent and wanted to publish it here, but had a small element of doubt because of the political overtones and because they concerned another country.

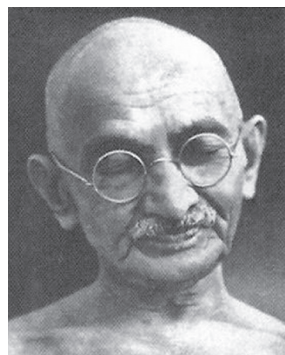
When Roger asked me to read John’s article and express my opinion about its suitability for our newsletter, I was enthusiastic. I saw no conflict in publishing it because yoga is its main source of reference. However, my enthusiasm arose not only because it is well written and timely, but because of my own views that the teachings of yoga embrace all aspects of life and do not exclude the political landscape.

Often I am frustrated to hear experienced yoga students and teachers say that they don’t watch the news on TV or read a newspaper because it’s too depressing. While I do try not to engage my mind late at night, it causes me more anxiety not to be informed about the political situation at home and abroad.

I believe it is our individual responsibility to speak up and become active when truth, one of the fundamental tenets of yoga, is betrayed or manipulated by our elected representatives. Yoga teaches us to raise the level of our consciousness, refine our thoughts, words and deeds and follow the path of truth.

John chose to publish his article under the heading of a quotation on truth by Mahatma Gandhi. I should like to close here with one from another wise and enlightened man: the Buddha: *There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth; not going all the way, and not starting.*

In the Light of Yoga, Thank you John!
Shirley Daventry French



Satya

John’s Letter, Spring 2017

By John Schumacher

For all the years that I have been writing these essays, I have assiduously avoided any sort of partisan political commentary. I want no part of the us versus them

bog that leads only to ignorance, division, conflict, and stagnation. For the truth is that, as yoga teaches, we are all in this together. Yoga is inclusive, wholistic, and ecumenical. At the heart of yoga lies the realization that, beneath our various costumes, disguises, and identities, I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together. We are connected. We are One. Until now, the closest I have come to an outright political statement was the newsletter I wrote during the run up to the Iraq War, where it was apparent to me that the country was being manipulated to support attacking Iraq. Even then I wrote primarily about the importance of paying attention to what we are being told and to develop and practice discerning awareness. More about that later.

Now, however, I feel compelled to comment on the current political mess. And it is a mess on so many levels. Since I write a yoga newsletter, not a political one, my intention is to view the situation from a classical yoga point of view. To do that I want to set the stage by pointing out some basic yoga facts.

What is yoga?

There are many definitions, but in defining yoga, I think it is useful to make a distinction between the *state* of yoga and the *practice* of yoga.

The Bhagavad Gita says yoga is “skill in action”. In the *Yoga Sutras*, Patanjali defines yoga as “the cessation of movements in the consciousness.” (B.K.S. Iyengar’s translation). These refer to the *state* of yoga, a state in which the mind stuff becomes so tranquil and clear that our true divine nature is revealed.

According to Patanjali and most yoga sages, the *practice* of yoga is the action we take to bring about the *state* of yoga. Patanjali describes a path with eight limbs (*ashtanga yoga*) as the practical means to attain the state of yoga.

Most people think of *asanas* (postures) as the foundation of yoga. It’s true that in modern times, *asana* has been the gateway to the practice for most people. In fact, *asana* is their yoga practice.

Classically, however, the cornerstones of yoga as prescribed by Patanjali are the *yamas* and the *niyamas*, the first two limbs of *ashtanga yoga*. The *yamas* are sometimes described as moral injunctions, ethical disciplines, or self-restraints; the *niyamas* as fixed or personal observances. There are five of each.

The first two *yamas*, the very first two steps on the path of classical yoga, are *ahimsa* (non-harming) and *satya* (truthfulness). B.K.S. Iyengar says that *ahimsa* “is more than a negative comment not to kill, for it has a wider positive meaning, love.”

Of *satya*, Iyengar says, “*Satya* or truth is the highest rule of conduct or morality. Mahatma Gandhi said: ‘Truth

Of satya, Iyengar says, “Satya or truth is the highest rule of conduct or morality

is God and God is Truth.’.....if the whole of life is based upon truth, then one becomes fit for union with the Infinite. Reality in its fundamental nature is love and truth and expresses itself through these two aspects.”

There are many notable quotes and definitions with respect to truth, but I chose Mr. Iyengar’s words because they speak to the essential importance of truth as it relates to reality. Without getting into what Reality as a philosophical or religious postulate is, reality as defined in The Oxford online

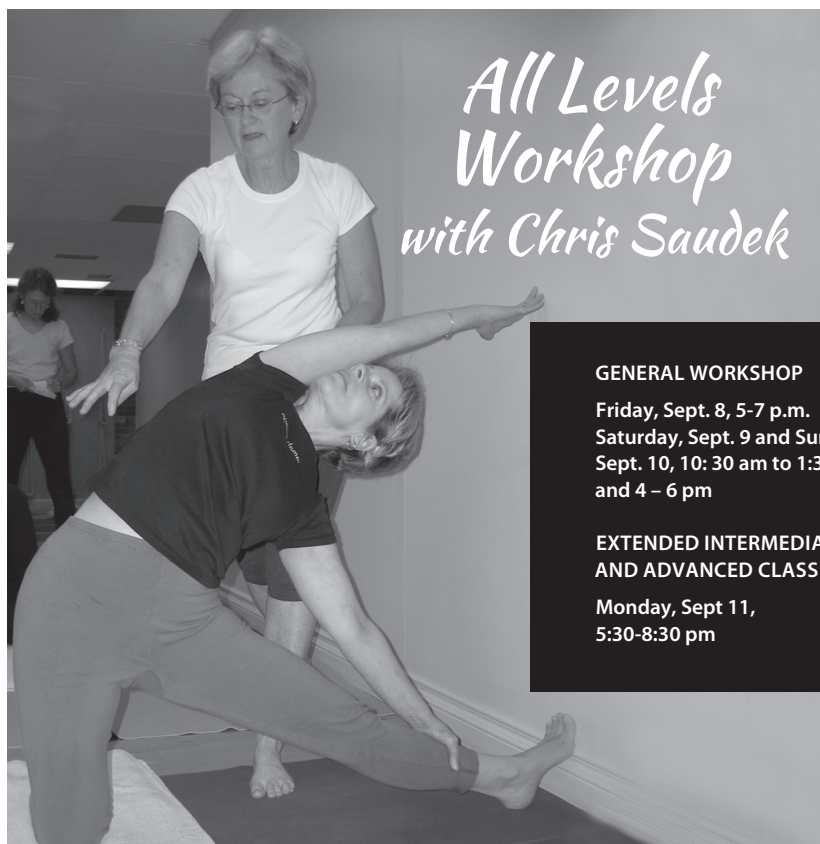
dictionary is “the world or the state of things as they actually exist as opposed to an idealistic or notional idea of them.”

Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary defines fact as “something that truly exists or happens: something that has actual existence.”

In other words, facts are reality and what is real is factual. Anything that isn’t real, that is “an idealistic or notional idea”, simply isn’t fact. You can’t have a wrong fact. And you can’t have an “alternative fact”. And this brings me to the current political mess.

As was pointed out when the term “alternative fact” was first publicly used by Trump advisor Kellyanne Conway, political commentator Chuck Todd said that the information posited as alternative facts were actually “falsehoods”. His criticism was correct as shown by subsequent fact checking. The idea that you can say something that doesn’t comport with reality and call it a fact of any kind is simply wrong by definition.

Even more outrageous is the syntactically challenged statement made by Trump spokesperson, Scottie Nell Hughes, in a Diane Rehm Show interview in which she says that, “There’s no such things, anymore, unfortunately, as facts.” This is absurd on its face since it would mean that there is no reality, only my “facts” versus your “facts”, the sort of thing that George Orwell describes in 1984 where Big Brother says that “War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is



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With so many from every corner, including ourselves, trying to color our view and sway our thoughts, it is our duty as citizens and as yoga practitioners to dig below the surface, to be open and skeptical, to be bold and cautious, to keep our eyes wide open all the time and be a true seer and a truth seeker.

Strength”. Nonsensical, down the rabbit hole, through the looking glass stuff. Not a misspeak. Not out of context.

The danger in our current political situation isn't simply that people who are part of and represent vital institutions in our society are not telling the truth. This has been going on forever. Just in my lifetime I've been lied to by government officials of all parties from the president on down, by the media, big business, big religion, and on and on. Even by friends and relatives. Nearly every agency, nearly every special interest at times spins, misleads, diverts, distracts, and yes, lies.

The real danger here as I see it and the reason I think it's important to write this is that there appears to be a concerted, intentional effort by this president, his spokespersons, and his supporters to cast doubt on everything that doesn't fit in with their version of things (not a new tactic) by denying the existence of objective reality (new and alarming tactic). This is a brazen departure from anything I have seen in this country. Spin the facts, make things up, change the subject, but to say that facts don't exist, that there is no objective reality is stunning in its audacity and its peril.

Peril because once the existence of reality, of an agreed upon set of facts is done away with, every conversation, every discussion, every proposal, every action becomes susceptible to unconstrained manipulation through denial or misinformation. Every uncomfortable fact can be dismissed as “fake news”, and misinformation becomes a tool for creating fear, distrust, and division. The seeds of doubt and confusion are sown. Whom can you trust? Why, the one who is telling you what you want to hear or who is bolstering your own fears and prejudices, of course. As Groucho Marx said, “Who do you believe, me or your own eyes?”

There are numerous possible antidotes for this dire situation, but beneath it all, for our own survival and well-being, we must be willing to open our own eyes fearlessly and see what is real and what is not. With so many from every corner, including ourselves, trying to color our view and sway our thoughts, it is our duty as citizens and as yoga practitioners to dig below the surface, to be open and

skeptical, to be bold and cautious, to keep our eyes wide open all the time and be a true seer and a truth seeker.

For those who advise patience, acceptance, cooperation, I suggest considering the counsel of Mahatma Gandhi in his *satyagraha* (insistence on truth) movement during his quest for independence from the British:

“Non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as cooperation with good.” – Mahatma Gandhi ॐ

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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!



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The Heart of Yoga / The Meaning of Life

By Mary-Ellen Hannah

“Bringing something to sit on, and make a circle,” Ann instructed. Clearly, Heart of Yoga was about to begin, but ... where was Shirley?

“She must be about to glide through the door,” I guessed, but even then the doubt was creeping in – no blankets had been set beside Ann for Shirley to sit on.

Surely...we wouldn’t start without Shirley!! Heart of Yoga without her wouldn’t be Heart of Yoga...would it? Minutes later Ann introduced Carole Miller, a teacher and student in the workshop who not only introduced Shirley and Leslie to Iyengar yoga many years ago, but who was also Ann’s first teacher in the Iyengar tradition. Carole read aloud the letter she held, from Shirley.

A family matter had arisen, that required Shirley’s ongoing attention and, regrettably, she was not able to join us this year. Her letter went on to recount the original motivation for creating Heart of Yoga and the other quintessential “Shirley” workshop, Going Deeper. At a time when Shirley was less and less in Victoria due to

growing demands from other parts of the country for her teaching, Leslie suggested these two workshops as a way for local students and teacher trainees to benefit regularly from Shirley’s teaching.

Shirley wrote of how she’d been making plans for succession for some time. Over the years Ann had more than proven herself up to the task of hosting Heart of Yoga on her own, and this year she would. Shirley confirmed what most of us already knew: We were in very, very good hands.

The letter concluded with Shirley’s thoughts on what constituted the heart of yoga when she was spontaneously asked by someone; the statement was read, but didn’t seep into my consciousness at the beginning of the workshop. Ann asked us to reflect on what we might find for ourselves, in the course of the workshop, that defined the heart of yoga for us now.

As the letter reading finished and the news sunk in, Ann spoke of the phone conversation she’d had with Shirley just a few hours before the workshop. She’d asked Shirley if there was anything Shirley wished to add to the letter, to which Shirley replied, “Tell them to

Ann asked us to reflect on what we might find for ourselves, in the course of the workshop, that defined the heart of yoga for us now.

practice yoga, and carry on.” “As in yoga,” I thought, “so in life.” What else is one to do when circumstances shift unexpectedly and how better to cope? We had our marching orders.

Shirley’s absence from this year’s Heart of Yoga reminded Ann of a metaphor Geeta had used at a landmark gathering of international teacher trainers and assessors, in Pune, in November 2015. “We need to be like a banyan tree,” Geeta told the assembly. “It grows and spreads and then sends roots back down into the earth to continue further stabilization and support. Find the balance between growth and connection to the origin.” Having seen banyan groves in Costa Rica, the imagery was striking for me, a superbly accurate reflection of Gurujii’s wish that, worldwide, we teach each other and support each other, at all levels of endeavour, to advance the development of Iyengar yoga.

Ann mentioned a comment Prashant had made about *Light on Yoga*, how the minute it was published, it started to become outdated. It is a living breathing art and science. *Light on Yoga* remains the preeminent reference in the study of Iyengar yoga but a couple of the poses are no longer done as pictured such as *parsva sirshasana*. Another text, *The Art of Yoga*, shows pictures of how B.K.S. Iyengar kept evolving his practice. Again quoting Prashant, Ann asked us to think of Iyengar yoga as an “ethos”, rather



Jane McFarlane demonstrates parivrtta parsvakonasana.

than a “system”. She defined ethos for us then, but I’ve since looked it up again:

Ethos n. Characteristic, spirit and beliefs of community, people, literary work, or person [mod. Latin, from the Greek ‘*ethos*’ nature, disposition]¹

And with that clarifying contrast between ethos and system in mind, I did as Ann instructed and returned to my mat for *trikonasana*.

“Practice yoga and carry on.” Practice taking the outer buttock of the front leg in while moving the skin of the top of the thigh back? It feels like a tall order; it’s all I can do to move muscle towards the median line, and Ann keeps talking to the directions the skin is going. The movement of the skin, the median line: both come up again and again, both key elements of the Iyengar ethos. I think back to a handout many of us got

from Shirley at a Pro-D workshop in September, entitled, “The Importance of the Skin.” “Flesh is anatomical,” it states, quoting Mr. Iyengar. “Skin is an Organ of Intelligence.”

This practice, this movement orchestrated by the ethos of an ever-evolving system, demands a belief in the possibility, and inevitability, of change. Maybe it’s the power of suggestion but by the end of the second day I think I occasionally feel some fleeting skin response and that the median line grows a little closer, from time to time.

“Use your will to connect with the skin,” Ann encourages, “but not willfulness.” I relax my neck and throat, releasing the self-will that hardens those areas, practice yoga, and carry on.

For me, this year at least, change is a big component of the heart of yoga. And Shirley’s thoughts on the heart of yoga? Ann read Shirley’s written words in our final circle: “It’s about the search for meaning and purpose in life!” It is. ॐ

¹ The Concise Oxford Dictionary Sixth Edition, 1976, ISBN 0-19-861122-6 (thumb-indexed). Sykes, J B, pg. 356, Mary-Ellen Hannah

Practice Enrichment Series

September 29, 2017

November 17, 2017

January 26, 2018

March 23, 2018

2:00 - 5:00 pm

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

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\$35 + GST each session

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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.

Each 3-hour session will include teaching enrichment opportunities as well as a wide variety of current and relevant Professional Development topics.

September 30, 2017

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March 24, 2018

April 6, 2018

April 7, 2018

April 27, 2018

Held on Fridays 2:00 -5:00 pm
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Yoga with Gary

Come for a dynamic all-levels practice with Gary Wong.

1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Saturday, October 14, 2017

\$30 + GST Members

\$35+ GST Non-Members

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

(250) 386-YOGA (9642)
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Understand the Basics and Improve Your Poses

A workshop by Lucie Guindon, May 6, 2017

By Melissa Hadley

Let me confess, this is the fourth of Lucie's annual "Basic Poses" workshops that I have attended. Someone recently asked me, "Are you a slow learner? Why do you keep taking this workshop?" This article is a way of answering that question. I keep signing up for Lucie's "Basics Workshop" for some of the same reasons that I am interested in fine dining.

(1) A clearly themed menu

In the invocation, Lucie offered context for this workshop, referencing Geeta Iyengar from *Anusasanam* 2014, as establishing and becoming "*Yogastha*." This term, translated to mean "abiding in the discipline of yoga," comes from *The Bhagavad Gita*, where Arjuna is instructed on how to act: with the discernment of a yogi, and with the ego untethered from actions and results.

Throughout the workshop, as we explored the structure and actions in specific *asanas*, Lucie called our attention to all aspects of the body in the pose – to be fully present in the experience, and to become "*Yogastha*."

Quoting Geeta Iyengar, she said: "So many things in one *asana*... Every part of the body in the pose has to



Utthita trikonasana

be *asanastha*... When you do *asanas* and turn this way, rotate that way, extend this way, put hand this way, etc., it is all meant to create energy. All these things you do open channels and energy flows in these areas."

(2) Highlighting distinct flavours

For me, part of the magic of Iyengar yoga lies in its nuances. There are innumerable pathways to explore and deepen your practice: where you choose to focus, how you enter the pose, how you sequence it with other poses — all affect the taste of the pose and the practice.

In this workshop we explored how to position the front leg in *trikonasana* to create space to take the buttock into the body and align the back of the head with the tailbone. How to anchor the outer edge of the back foot and lift the arch to strengthen the thigh action in *parsvakonasana*. How to stabilize our balance in *parsvottanasana* by pressing down the front big toe mound. And how lifting the sternum increases our mobility and freedom in sitting twists for example.

(3) Complementary pairings

Like wine to food, we learned how to improve an *asana* by adding a complementary action or new element. Some examples: taking the chest forward of the arms and "reeling it up" to draw the shoulderblades into the back ribs and pull in the dorsal spine in *urdhva mukha svanasana*; using a chair back bar



Urdhva mukha svanasana

to the front groin to better understand the hips and legs actions of *parsvottanasana*; feeling how *adho mukha svanasana* changes when we return to it after sampling other *asanas* in between.

(4) Judicious servings

Focusing on the key actions in a few basic poses, we learned how to apply these to improve other poses:

- *trikonasana* > *ardha chandrasana*
- *parsvakonasana* > *virabhadrasana II* and vice versa
- *parsvottanasana* > *virabhadrasana I, III*; *parivrtta trikonasana*
- *urdhva mukha svanasana* > *chatushpadasana*
> *salamba sarvangasana*

(5) Time to savour

By focusing on a few poses, we had time to understand the correct actions and feel the desired results, practice with a variety of props, and embody the work. From the start in *swastikasana* to *savasana*, we learned how to stabilize the base of the pose, how to create space to extend into, and how to open our bodies for *prana* – the vital life force – to flow.

(6) A skilled chef

Great teachers use a variety of tools to engage learners and increase understanding. Four stood out for me, and the other students I polled:

Visuals: It's often said that a picture is worth a thousand words, and research supports the notion that "unless our words, concepts, and ideas are hooked to an image, they will go in one ear, sail through the brain, and go out the other ear."¹ The arrows on Lucie's t shirt, arm and leg bands, and the soles of her feet (!) showing the direction of movements in various poses are indelibly etched in my mind.

Demonstrating actions and results: Lucie illuminated the "why" of instructions by clearly demonstrating the correct versus the incorrect actions in specific poses, and the subsequent results.

Hands-on learning: Requiring us to do the right and briefly the wrong action, and feel the difference in our bodies, improved our ability to understand, self-correct and adjust for better alignment and better results.

Humour and encouragement.

In her book, *Rising Strong*, Dr. Brené Brown references a proverb of the Asaro tribe of Papua New Guinea and Indonesia: "Knowledge is a rumor until it lives in the muscle." The short answer to why I keep coming to Lucie's Basic Poses

workshop is that I keep learning from her: how to practice, how to teach, how to become *yogastha* and *asanastha*. In this way, I keep transforming the rumour into my reality.

See you next year! ॐ

MELISSA HADLEY WAS INTRODUCED TO YOGA IN THE LATE 1990S, HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF IYVC SINCE 2007, AND IS A TEACHER TRAINEE MENTORING UNDER LINDA BENN.



IYAC/ACYI ASSESSMENT DATES

June 9-11, Intermediate Junior I, Ottawa, ON

June 9-11, Intermediate Junior II, Vancouver, BC

September 29-October 1, Introductory II, Abbotsford, BC

November 3- 5, Introductory II, Ottawa, ON

November 17-19, Intermediate Junior III, Toronto, ON

Scholarships and Bursaries

**Introductory Intensive for Teachers in Training,
July 10–14, deadline June 19**

**Intensive for Certified Teachers,
August 14–18, deadline June 26**

**Student Intensive, August 28 – September 1,
deadline August 14**

**Chris Saudek Workshop, September 8–11,
deadline August 25**

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

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

1 Dr. Lynell Burmark, Ph.D. Associate at the Thornburg Center for Professional Development, referenced in <https://rhdeepexploration.wordpress.com/2011/12/05/visuals-60000-times-faster/> accessed May 12, 2017

A Yoga Moment: Introducing Carole Miller

It's hard to imagine today that there are some who haven't had at least some familiarity with the word "yoga."

Additionally, ancient Sanskrit words, such as *karma*, *dharma*, and *aum*, currently seem well established within the English lexicon, but in 1970's Victoria, this was not the case.

To learn more about the roots of our Yoga Centre, the *History Corner* inroads began with two starting points, the newsletter archives and our founding teacher, Shirley Daventry French. We discovered within the archives, an extensive 1982 interview with Shirley, entitled, *A Tapestry Woven From Many Threads*,¹ which gives us an overview of our earliest years, a discussion of yoga in society, and the development of community, friendship, spiritual practice, and our teachers.

The Oxford English dictionary defines the word tapestry metaphorically, as, "an intricate or complex combination or sequence." In considering the tapestry metaphor with respect to our community, the woman I have the privilege of introducing, Carole Miller, is one of Shirley's first students, and, it was Shirley who supported her preparation for certification as an Iyengar teacher. They both share a very long and enduring friendship.

The following represents a two-hour conversation with Carole over coffee.

Professor Carole Miller, born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, arrived in Victoria in 1970 with an undergraduate degree in Theatre and a Masters degree in Education. An elementary and drama teacher during the civil rights era, a time of riots and armed militia, her formative educational years include teaching in Pittsburg's historically African-American neighbourhoods. Several years later, a University of Victoria theatre professorship, beckoned Carole's husband, Harvey; their move to Canada was a relief from the conservatism of their then home, Lincoln, Nebraska, during the era of the Vietnam war.

The change room at the YMCA seems to be our Centre's "X marks the spot", or "moment", because it is where Shirley and Carole serendipitously met in 1970 and began attending yoga classes together with Jessica Tucker. Amanda Mills was in that class and Leslie Hogle joined a few years later. The friendship and community that developed during this period led to

...*"the trip to India was a life-changing event as my understanding of myself was altered forever."*

much work with Swami Radha², who, during one workshop told Carole, heavily pregnant with twins, "you need to sing to those babies everyday!" And sing she did, a delightful image!

In the 70s and 80s, Carole taught yoga at the Y, UVIC and in Gordon Head. In 1982, she was thrilled to be included among the fortunate eight Victoria students to be given the opportunity to study with Mr. Iyengar in India. Today's students have the benefit of this trail well blazed. Back then, not so much. Carole describes the excitement and trepidation as well as the culture shock, despite the fact that she had grown up in a large, diverse city. In Bombay, tentatively venturing forth with Marlene Miller, (they'd leave the hotel for five minutes, back to the hotel for a cup of tea, prepare themselves for another short walk, and so on). On one such nervous outing, an Indian man approached them with a wriggling sack. "Do you want to see my snakes?" Welcome to India!

In Pune, coming face to face with the master, Carole found herself "pretty terrified that first day." "Send me home!" Derek, Shirley's husband, referred to her initial week at the Intensive as, "the lion meeting the lamb". However, after the third day, she began to see "a different side, a shift." Gururji, she realized, was not admonishing a person, but rather, a knee that wasn't straight. "You don't know how to stand," "how to sit!" he would exhort. Fortunate to be in the front row, Carole "caught the twinkle", and the "fierce adjustment she received from him, by that time, was a badge of honour." For her, "the trip to India was a life-changing event as my understanding of myself was altered forever."

Other very special Yoga Centre memories include the growing and nurturing of our friendships and community through weekly *satsang* led by Shirley after Monday night classes, monthly Yoga Centre meetings at each other's homes, learning about "moving from comfort to newness" from Norma Hodge's introduction to the practice of B.K.S. Iyengar, working with him in San Francisco, teaching at the Iyengar (1987) Harvard convention with other Victoria teachers assisting each other in classes, and experiencing his teaching again in Edmonton and Colorado. And of course, one of our greatest gifts as a community was his extraordinary visit to Victoria (1984) and having the opportunity to listen to him in conversation with Swami Radha. I'm sure those of us who were there will never forget it!

For many years, Carole worked as a Junior High School drama teacher and Special Education teacher for students with

1 February, 1982. The newsletter archives are available in the Centre's library.

2 1911-1995. A disciple of Sivanada. The first Western woman to be initiated into the *sanyas*.



Carole Miller teaching at University of Victoria

learning disabilities. This is where her passion for drama in education and curriculum began to flourish. “How can I use drama to make history come alive?” This period includes Holocaust education, and touring a play entitled, *No More Secrets*, to support the new BC Personal Safety curriculum by using theatre as a powerful means of education.

Carole’s development of drama programs for primary to adult learners led to her being hired at the University of Victoria as a professor in the Department of Curriculum and Education. Today, she is regularly invited to teach and speak in classrooms, conferences and universities worldwide. Additionally, she has contributed to numerous books and papers, and with her friend and colleague, professor Juliana Saxton, co-authored two books. I’ve learned by now, if Carole is not in class, she’s likely in Ireland, or Australia, or New Zealand, or England or...

In 2002 Carole was asked to develop a yoga credit course for University of Victoria students, and this is where my humble



The branches reconnect with the roots.

thread is woven into Shirley’s tapestry. Carole’s course led to my enrolling as a student of Religious Studies and completing a degree at age forty-nine.

In 1982 Shirley wrote, “I think that [our Centre] is a very high quality program, and that we have all come into it from different directions, too, so again that tapestry is woven with different threads, many different threads.” When we see the establishment of yoga as a subject and a practice in today’s culture, it is surely due in no small part to our yoga pioneers—Shirley’s tapestry.

This week Carole, arrived home from England, received two guests (Australia and New Zealand), and began this term’s UVIC yoga class. Currently, she has a paper

to prepare for a summer conference in New Orleans and finally, she and her coauthor have another book to write.

I’m pretty sure however, she’ll be in class tomorrow night. ॐ

Opening Our Own Centre in 2001

In the January, 2002, issue of the newsletter, there is an interview conducted by Melissa Worth where I talk quite a lot about opening of the centre on Fort St. Before October 2001, we were teaching yoga classes out of the YM-YWCA, and the yoga centre was in people's homes: our collection of library books was one place; the books for sale somewhere else; a few props like mats and belts were for sale yet elsewhere. Meetings would be held in different people's homes. Shirley Daventry French, being our founder and senior teacher was always at the centre of our decisions, holding our core beliefs. Many events took place in the French home.

Re-reading this interview, I was reminded that in 1984, there was a big push for opening our own studio. Spaces were investigated, budgets drawn, committees were struck, etc. But when Mr. Iyengar agreed to stop here on his North American tour that year, everyone's energy was refocused on his visit; as a result, the impetus to move got side tracked.

In the year 2000, I was fortunate to have spent quite a few months in Bangkok, and taught some classes at an Iyengar studio there owned by Justin Herold. When I returned to Canada, I thought, really, it is time to get our own space. Around that time, our long working relationship with the Y was not quite so congenial as it had been in the past. Shirley said

that by September of 2001, she would no longer be willing to teach there.

A new flurry of activity began. In the winter of 2001 we had some focusing workshops and filled mural size strips of paper. One we called the wall of wonder. We were developing a vision of what we wanted, setting action plans, goals, and deadlines. Our facilitator, Nathan Bernshaw, did not believe we could possibly open a space by the fall of 2001. But we did. We did this almost entirely with volunteer effort, and no business plan.

We took possession of our space in September, but a lot of work had to be done to turn a warren of small office spaces into our bright studio, so we sublet a space in Fernwood in which to teach, all the while, spending most of our time, trying to ready the new studio. In that temporary space we also held a celebration for Shirley on her 70th birthday.

To be able to open so quickly we owe a huge debt of gratitude to our board at the time, and scores of volunteers. One greatly fortuitous person was contractor Greg Johnson, married to one of our students, Debra. He was willing and able to supply the work crews, to do drywalling, plumbing, electrical work and so on that we needed. He kept the costs so low, and pretty much only charged us for the materials that were needed.

In that 2002 issue, there are the names of 65 volunteers that helped get

us going – and there were probably more. Then there was another long list of names for donations in cash and kind. I can't thank all those by name again, but a few names jump into my memory: Greg Sly for building the prop shelves, Amanda Mills for helping negotiate the real estate rental market, Drew Yallop doing our books and Rosemary Barritt on the board. Every teacher and most of our long time students were helping in various ways, from painting walls to knocking out the backs of the office chairs to turn them into yoga chairs.

When we opened the doors the first day in October, there was a skim coat of cement over a cracked and ugly floor beneath. When we pulled up the old carpeting, the craters beneath rivaled the surface of the moon. We could not afford anything else but a cosmetic coating of cement to cover the biggest fault lines. We were desperate for a solution so that we could start classes. We had to raise money for a floor, and the floor was so uneven, floor installers would come and shake their heads.

We had no front desk staff in the evening, or weekends. Britta was our only office staff and worked five mornings.

When things began to roll along, there were still many challenges. We had to learn how to be in the space: we didn't really know how to operate the thermostat for a few years. It was cold. We had no alarm system, and sometimes the doors would be found unlocked in the morning. The stairwells and the bathrooms had no locks. We had no safe, and had several thefts, with windows broken, and doors jimmied open.

After a few years we were bursting at the seams, so we opened a third

*We were the first dedicated yoga centre in the city.
The city didn't know what to make of our request
for occupancy permit. Were we a gym?
A religious group? A school?*

studio on the ground level. We built a new rope wall, new floors downstairs. The studio downstairs meant we didn't use Birch upstairs very often, and after a bit, we found we could not maintain three studios especially since one was not contiguous, and we closed the third studio.

There have been many problems that we've encountered and surmounted along the way. We had various flooding situations as the roof was needing major repairs. We had an invasion of bees or wasps. The fire alarm went off in the middle of a major workshop, and we stood outside in the cold waiting to be allowed back in. The florescent

lights flickered, (and sometimes still do). We had a fire which started in the Blue Fox kitchen, and every single item in the studios had to be cleaned after the fire. We had no waiver.

What we had was a lot of courage and determination, optimism. And fortunately for us a wave of yoga popularity seemed to be sweeping North America. We had pot lucks. We showed yoga movies and held Friday night gatherings. We had kirtan.

We now sell our props and books in-house. Many of our props are made by our members.

We were the first dedicated yoga centre in the city. The city didn't

know what to make of our request for occupancy permit. Were we a gym? A religious group? A school?

This is but a small taste of our more recent history. Did you know that the library contains an archive of our old newsletters? There are some interesting things to be found. Would you like to help delve into those old issues and help us build a new wall of wonder – a history of our centre?

We have survived and flourished during our first 15 almost 16 years on Fort St.

HOORAY for us! ॐ

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

November 4-5, 2017

Explore asana and pranayama with some of Victoria's senior teachers: Shirley Daventry French, Leslie Hoga, 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 Hoga

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.



Thank You!

Thank you to:

- Patty Kallio for donating coffee mugs for the kitchen.
- Yoga Centre Toronto for giving us several inspiring poster-sized photos of Guruji.
- Gary Wong, Morgan Rea (IYAC board), and Ann Kilbertus for working to get permission for Chris Saudek to return to Canada to teach.
- Lucie Guindon for her support of the Centre by once again volunteering her time to teach the workshop Understand the Basics and Improve your Poses.
- Jayne Fothergill and Adia Kapoor for getting the Yoga Centre events on the national Iyengar yoga web site events page: www.iyengaryogacanada.ca

Special Thanks for the 10th Annual High Tea Fundraiser

March 23, 2017

Hello Everyone,

We had a delightful and lovely 10th Annual High Tea Fundraiser today. Delicious food and refreshments were served. Robin absolutely outdid herself presenting her Tea Pose in full regalia – *eka pada urdhva dhanurasana* with teacup suspended by pearls from her toe! Thanks to Jim, Robin's husband, (in a burgundy beret) for assisting Robin. Mae Brown, a student in the remedial class, entertained the crowd with two songs. Anne Glover, a master storyteller, treated us to a tale from India followed by a song composed by a group of teachers at the Centre. Jayne Jonas accompanied on the ukulele with the audience providing back-up vocals!

The tea was very enjoyable and a great success. The raffle collected \$745, donations were \$940, tea tickets

totalled \$810, and the auction raised \$2,925 for a grand total of \$5,420. Final figures will be compiled once funds are collected from the silent auction. Thank you to Bruce Cox and Jennifer Rischmiller for tallying the proceeds.

Each year, our collective efforts help the Centre not only financially but in community spirit. The goodwill, camaraderie, and all around support are very present at this event. The tea takes much energy and volunteer time from many people.

Thank you to the following for your extraordinary effort:

- Robin Cantor for the overall organization of the tea – a job that begins months in advance of the event. Thanks Robin for coordinating your team of volunteers, fundraising in your home studio – and picking all the flowers!
- Annie Kitchen and her team. Organizing the Silent Auction is a huge job. Many thanks for keeping the treasures and services coming!
- Jaya Malaviarachchi for organizing the draw and bringing her artistic talent to displaying the draw donations. Thanks to Johanna Godliman for assisting.
- Dawn Cox for her role as back-stage coordinator, orchestrating the volunteers: Jess Paffard, Jane McFarlane, Laine Canivet, Melissa Hadley, Bruce Cox, Jim Bratvold, Jaya Malaviarachchi, Laura Johnston, Karin Dayton, Wendy Wimbush, Anne Glover. The kitchen was so packed with people, food and dishes. It felt like a big family gathering!
- The food was wonderful! Thanks to all of you who made the tea a sweet and savoury event: Ingur Deynnar,

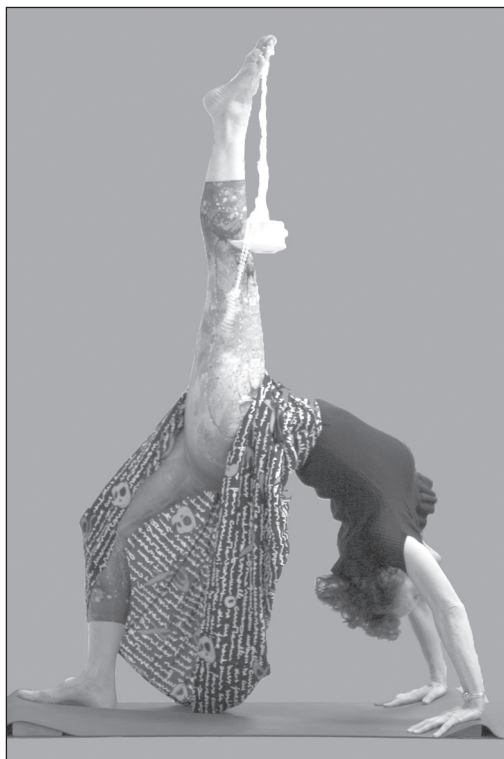
Vi Peskett, Billie Essa, Anthea Browne, Karin Dayton, Jason Fuller, Boni Hoy, Melissa Hadley, Dawn Cox, Laura Johnston, Britta Poisson, Jen Van de Pol, Mary Ellen Hannah, Patty Rivard, Laine Canivet, Johanna Godliman, Linda Benn, Leslie Hogya, Marilyn Shepherd and others. Thank you Jayne Jonas for picking up the tea; Laura Johnston for flower arranging; Wendy Wimbush for meeting and greeting guests.

- Jane McFarlane for her eye-catching posters and competent, willing, and able presence from beginning to end.
- Thanks to Krysia Strawczynski, Robert Beckett, and Billie Essa for loaning tables, and to Jane McFarlane, again, for carrying those tables!
- Thank you to Britta Poisson for the flyer.
- To Darwin Miller of the Renaissance Retirement Residence for supplying the table linens; thanks to Robin's husband Jim Pask for picking these up, setting up, laundering the cloths and returning them to the Renaissance.
- Thanks to Silk Road Tea for their annual contribution towards our fundraiser.
- A big thanks to Marlene Miller and Linda Benn and the many volunteers who teach the Remedial Class each week and to the students who attend.

With much appreciation to one and all for such a wonderful expression of community spirit in the Light of Yoga, *Namaste*,
Ann Kilbertus

ED NOTE: SPECIAL THANKS TO ANN FOR HER INITIATIVE IN ESTABLISHING AND SUSTAINING THIS REMEDIAL CLASS SINCE IT'S INCEPTION.

Next page, photos from the 2017 Annual High Tea Fundraiser



Robin Cantor demonstrates this year's teacup pose, *eka pada urdhva dhanurasana*.





Who knew ropes could be THIS much fun?! With Jess Paffard at left.



Chimes time, with Jennifer Van de Pol and young yogis

Welcome to Family Yoga

By Jennifer Van de Pol

I have had the pleasure of teaching the Family Yoga class at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria for close to two years. This class is offered on many Saturdays throughout the year, from 12-1 pm, depending on scheduling for workshops by visiting teachers. “Family” can mean so many things – people sharing common ancestors, or communities that share time and common passions in heartfelt ways. All kinds of families come to this class, and all are very welcome!

Every Family Yoga class is a unique experience. Some days it’s clear that a full moon is upon us, as young children run laps around their parents who steadfastly move from *asana* to *asana*, at times negotiating with a toddler hanging off of one of their *virabhadrasana* II legs. Other days the children stay contentedly on one side of the room with Jess, building forts and making “pumpkin pie” out of bolsters, blankets and red and yellow foam yoga props, while parents enjoy an uninterrupted

full hour of practice. No matter the collective energy, when *Oms* are sung to begin the class, or when *savasana* is happening, even the most rambunctious or upset child gets quiet, curious and still. And when children see the Tibetan chimes in my hands they start towards me from every corner of the room, to have a turn at ringing it and marvelling at the vibrations as parents emerge from *savasana*.

It is truly inspiring to witness the dedication of these families – it can be challenging to organize oneself to attend *asana* classes regularly, never mind with a partner and toddler or two or three in tow! Several parents with young children have attended almost every class over this two years. I have had the honour of watching these children grow and for some, form their first words during this time.

Thank you to all of the families who have come to class to explore yoga, thank you to Jane McFarlane for inviting me to join this Family Yoga family, and to Jess

Paffard for your playful, warm presence while keeping little yogis engaged and curious until the hour is up!

I certainly feel a sense of coming home to “family” whenever I visit an Iyengar Centre, anywhere in the world. Looking forward to seeing you at the next Family Yoga class. ॐ

JENNIFER IS IN HER THIRD YEAR OF TEACHER TRAINING WITH LAUREN COX. SHE STARTED HER TRAINING JOURNEY WITH KELLY MURPHY IN NANAIMO.





Sheri Berkowitz, Angie Polard, Adia Kapoor, Jayne Jonas, Robin Cantor

Bringing the Words Home: Professional Development at IYCV

By Leslie Hogg

Several times over this past year the teachers from up and down Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands have gathered at the centre for professional development. B.K.S. Iyengar asked us to study and learn together, to be in association. These professional development days strive to keep us linked to Gururji's work.

On May 13, we were led by a group of our local teachers who had attended a conference with Abhijata, Gururji's granddaughter. The conference last May, for twelve hundred people had been organized by the Iyengar Yoga Association of the United States. Our leaders for the day (pictured above) worked together to give a taste of Abhijata's teaching.

The theme of the conference was the Periphery to the Core and the Core to the Periphery. Throughout the day, they quoted Abhi and Gururji which helped inspire us to lift our knee caps even more and turn our front leg completely from the root of the thigh.

Ahead of time, we were asked to read the interview with Geeta Iyengar that was published for the Boca Raton conference magazine. Fortunately this two-part interview appeared in the most recent issues of our newsletter. Geeta was most frank about her practice, her health and life with a yoga master who was also her father. Pick up these last issues, read and re-read this inspiring interview. Thanks to our editor for publishing this.

We thank Sheri, Adia, Jayne and Robin for their coherent presentations. And also thank you to Angie for giving her perspective as a student attending her first conference.

One of the inspiring quotes from Gururji: *Watch how you jump the legs apart, you must be aware of the edges of the mat. Check the feet in relationship to the mat. That is why the mat has to be straight. Our mind and brain are trained to think with a pattern. We think this is intelligence. This is the only way the brain is equipped to learn. The brain needs a reference. The core the self can look at absolutes, but the brain needs a reference which is why we place the mat correctly – to reference a pattern. The brain works in patterns, only a yogi, the core of a yogi can see things in absoluteness.* ॐ

IYCV Calendar

June

- 9-11 Salt Spring Island Retreat
- 21 International Day of Yoga
- 26-30 Jump into Summer with an Early Morning Practice

July

- 10-14 Introductory Intensive for Teachers In Training

August

- 14-18 Certified Teacher Training
- 28-Sept 1 Student Intensive

September

- 8-10 Chris Saudek Workshop
- 16 IYCV Open House
- 17 Discover the Basics with Gary Wong
- 29 Practice Enrichment
- 30 Professional Development

October

- 14 Yoga with Gary Wong
- 19-22 IYAC, Kelowna

November

- 4-5 The Body is the First Prop

CENTRE CLOSED

July 1, 2, 3,

Aug 7

Sept 2, 3, 4

Please read the class schedule carefully.
Not all classes run every week.

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

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- 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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of Victoria Society
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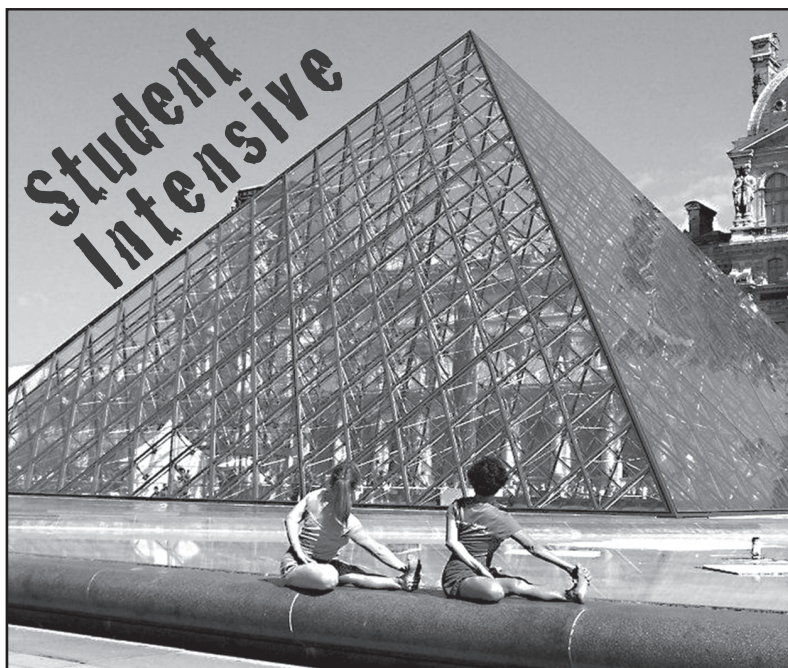
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With Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler

August 28 – September 1, 2017

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 3, 2017

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

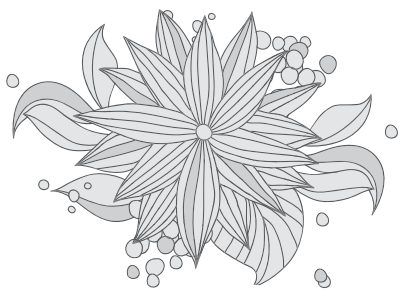
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IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA



N E W S L E T T E R F A L L 2 0 1 7



Congrats!

**The following candidates
achieved Intermediate Junior I
certification at the
June assessment in Ottawa:**

Nozomi Morimoto, Toronto, ON
Nasim Behrouzmehr, Montreal, QC
Mary Mohamed, Markham, ON
Barbara Lee, Calgary, AB
Gesine Montgomery, Saskatoon, SK
Karen McKinnell, Toronto, ON
Rajendra Patel, North York, ON
Jennifer Zelmer, Toronto, ON

**The following candidates
achieved Intermediate Junior II
certification at the
June assessment in Vancouver:**

Michelle Hagenson, Masset, BC
Marilyn Shepherd, Victoria, BC
Vivek Mehta, Calgary, AB
Luci Yamamoto, Vancouver, BC
Terri Damiani, Vancouver, BC
Roberta Vommaro, Vancouver, BC
Corrine Skrobot, Vancouver, BC
Lisa Lelliot, Bridgewater, NS

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September 16-17, 2017

IYCV Open House



Saturday, September 16

- > 11:30 - 1:00pm Kirtan with Bhavantu Sound Tia Benn, Ty Chandler, and Chris Simons
- > 12:00 pm Intro to the Rope Wall Lauren Cox. **Pre-registration required. Max 12.**
- > 1:00 pm Intro Yoga Adia Kapoor
- > 2:00 pm 55+ Yoga Wendy Boyer
- > 3:00 pm Yoga—All Levels, All Traditions Lucie Guindon
- > 4:00 pm Meet the Teachers

Sunday, September 17

- > 1:00 - 2:30 PM Discover Iyengar Yoga Basics with Gary Wong

A short workshop designed to acquaint students new to the Iyengar method with the fundamentals of yoga as taught in the Iyengar tradition. Students who have never taken an Iyengar class and students who have been away from the Iyengar Yoga Centre for six months—this workshop is for you! **FREE! Pre-registration required for workshop. Max 35.**



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

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IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

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

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

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

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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,
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NOTE: We regret we cannot accept past issues of the newsletter, yoga journal, etc., due to space limitations.



Reflections

By Shirley Daventry French

“God is the partner of your most intimate soliloquies.”

– Viktor E. Frankl, *The Unheard Cry for Meaning*

Viktor Frankl explains that he came up with the above concept of God when he was fifteen, and in his old age comes back to it more and more. He describes it as an “operational definition.” Since I first read it, this definition it has worked well for me too!

I discovered Frankl’s definition in a book called *God in all Worlds: an Anthology of Contemporary Spiritual Writing* compiled by Lucinda Vardy, a spiritual teacher and writer. It contains articles and excerpts drawn from Eastern and Western spiritual traditions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, Taoism, Sufism, Islam and other faiths. As stated in the sub-title, the writings are contemporary, written over a period of fifty years from 1945 to 1995—from the end of World War II to the New Age.

Quite by chance, I came across this book one day when browsing in one of my favourite bookstores. It sat on my bedside table for

years, providing many moments of valuable reading and reflection along with much food for thought about the spiritual path.

One morning I spilt a cup of tea on this book and although I dried the sodden pages as best I could, it was never the same. I decided to search for a replacement and ordered another copy only to find it was a poor substitute on inferior paper with a cheap binding that made it a struggle to keep open. This is a book that needs to be opened and savoured rather than fighting to guard your place. Eventually my search was rewarded when I was able to purchase a used hardcover edition on Amazon, which was stated to be in excellent condition. True, it did arrive in very good condition but I was a little dismayed to find, prominently displayed and impossible to remove, several notations that it belonged to Lincoln Heritage Public Library! However, it is well bound with clear print and

good quality paper and stays open. Now it is on permanent loan to my home, frequently used for reading, reference, clarification and inspiration. Viktor Frankl’s definition of God is contained in the first section of this anthology called “The Quest.”

My first tentative forays into Eastern teachings were in the 1960’s. I would not have said that I was on a spiritual quest—just very interested in the body/mind relationship; however, as I immersed myself in yoga philosophy and psychology, words like ‘spiritual’ and ‘devotional’ kept popping up along with other words like God, which had become foreign to my spoken vocabulary. The first commentary I read on the yoga *sutras* was entitled “How to Know God” by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood. Clear, concise and comprehensive, it was a fine opening to a study of Eastern spiritual teaching, and not long afterwards I took a deeper plunge to study at an ashram and eventually in India

In my early teens, having returned to London from evacuation and living through many air raids, life and death were ever present. Not only from the bombers overhead, but the telegraph boys riding their bicycles down the street with a telegram

I would not have said that I was on a spiritual quest—just very interested in the body/mind relationship; however, as I immersed myself in yoga philosophy and psychology, words like ‘spiritual’ and ‘devotional’ kept popping up along with other words like God, which had become foreign to my spoken vocabulary.

for some family—telegrams which could contain good news about a loved one coming home on leave but could also be a notice of death!

My family was not religious, but the immediacy of those times led me to examine the religious offerings in my London suburb, and I visited all the churches in the district plus a synagogue. I settled on a lovely old Norman church on the site of an ancient abbey where God was celebrated with music, singing, processions and pageantry. True to the Anglican tradition of those times, the choir was all male but I happily raised my voice whenever there was a chance to join in. The vicar was an articulate lively Irishman whose sermons commanded attention; this church was full of light in a dark time. And then the vicar became a bishop and moved to another diocese, and his replacement was a pale intellectual Englishman who managed to squeeze all the life out of the services. The war ended, and I gradually drifted away from the church.

Years later in Canada, at my very first workshop with Swami Radha, I did a practice called a Straightwalk where from four directions I approached and noted a series of objects prominently displayed on a multi-level table. We were in a convent at the time and one of the objects was a paperback book that I listed as “spiritual book.” Swami Radha pressed me for more details despite my attempts to move on to other objects.

Swami Radha: What is on the cover?

SDF (reluctantly): Well, there is a huge cross!!

SR: Anything else?

SDF: A man.

SR: Any particular man?

SDF: (mumbling) Jesus!

And I was pressed to reflect on why, when this picture of Jesus on the cross clearly depicted in black and white occupied the entire cover of this book, was I so reluctant to see this? Then, to make matters more confusing, during

As I became clearer about yoga, its practices and its purpose, it seemed like a good idea to bring it into all of my life. However, I went a bit overboard and tried to get everyone else to do the same.

this same workshop I was encouraged, along with everyone else, to reflect on the meaning and purpose of my life, to consider my body and mind as spiritual tools and bring spirituality into all of my life.

Not at all sure about any of this, nonetheless I was sufficiently intrigued and continued to study yoga more seriously, culminating in stays at Yasodhara Ashram. An unidentified need was gradually being fulfilled.

At this period of my life, my body was strong, fit and healthy so unlike many people today I did not enter a yoga class as a form of fitness or therapy, but I was definitely not happy with the state of my mind and volatility of my emotions.

As I became clearer about yoga, its practices and its purpose, it seemed like a good idea to bring it into all of my life. However, I went a bit overboard and tried to get everyone else to do the same.

Needless to say this did not go over well with my close family, and alienated and confused others. My elderly mother in England enquired whether I was suffering a nervous breakdown or divorcing my husband, the only two possibilities she could come up with for

taking such a bizarre direction in life. And my older brother, also in London, wrote that he had no time for this cult of the irrational. The irony here was that as I went deeper into yogic teachings I was discovering that my irrational side was too dominant and for balance I needed to become more rational. As we learn in the yoga sutras, to advance in yoga we have to go beyond opposites and achieve balance, equilibrium and equanimity.

And as my path took me to India and study with B.K.S. Iyengar that elusive balance was addressed forcefully and in practical terms as I stood before him in class in *tadasana*, turned myself upside down in *adho mukha vrksasana* (Arm Balance), *pincha mayurasana* (Elbow Balance) and many other postures, symmetrical and asymmetrical. With a master teacher of his calibre it is impossible to hide: the body does not lie! On the practical side and in accordance with the philosophy and psychology of yoga, I struggled to balance on the median line. The struggle to sustain this equilibrium continues to this day at a very different stage of my life.

Thank God for Yoga! ॐ

PHOTO: GREGG ELIGH, FOCUS MAGAZINE

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!

The Essence of Asanas and Pranayama Practice

By Guruji B.K.S. Iyengar

THIS IS EDITED TRANSCRIPT OF THE INTRODUCTION GIVEN BY GURUJI ON THE SESSION CONDUCTED ON HIS 75TH BIRTHDAY AT PANCHAGINI IN DECEMBER 1993.

This is not an intensive class. It is an intellectual class which I am planning to take wherein the oneness in our teaching may set in you people universally. Intelligence is universal.

Each individual may have different facets of intelligence but at the end intelligence does not vary at all. Intellect varies. Intelligence does not vary. As intelligence does not vary we have to learn how to rest this intelligence in the body when we are performing the postures. The placement of intelligence in the body brings grace in the consciousness; The consciousness graces the physical body, the mental body and the physiological body.

Each individual may have different facets of intelligence but at the end intelligence does not vary at all. We have to learn to rest this intelligence in the body; the placement of intelligence in the body brings grace in the consciousness.

When the subtlety develops in you, then you learn through the bridge, intelligence and consciousness how the seer, the actual seer, can see the entire frame of the physical, physiological and mental sheaths – the vehicles, part by part, so that the whole can be seen at the same time looking into the various parts of the body. This is what I want to give you.

Each teacher thinks that what he teaches or what she teaches is according to the conditions of the students. But you have to keep it in your mind that you have to reach a certain state where the dualities of intelligence, the differences of intelligence disappear and there is only oneness in the feeling of all millions of people who practice yoga. There should be no change in experiencing that essence of each pose. That essence is philosophy. What I am trying to give you is, how to taste each

pose while you are performing. Those who are here can listen and carry on to those who did not have the destiny to attend these classes. So please be humble, please be devoted to the poses. You need not be devoted to me; but without devotion there will be no development.

Asana and *pranayama* are the two facets in the field of yoga where knowledge is acquired by *asana*. Remember that! Nobody teaches this! Nobody tells you! *Asana* is not a physical exercise as it is commonly said. *Asana* develops intelligence in each individual to become more powerful in their understanding.

And, *asana* helps you to develop that quality that is latent in everybody. Can it be brought to the surface? There is no other way in Ashtanga yoga or in other fields of yoga whether it is *jnana*, *bhakti* whatever people may call it but that essence will not flower as it flowers in *asana* and *pranayama*. So, *asana* is that part of *jnana marga* where you develop knowledge of yourself, of your body, of your mind, of your very consciousness. And *pranayama* teaches you how with this knowledge of *jnana* you develop devotion. So, these are the two parts of *ashtanga* yoga – *jnana marga* and *bhakti marga* which Patanjali has kept in between.

Yama and *niyama* are ethical and *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* are actually *karma* because pure *karma* cannot come without *jnana* and *bhakti*. Without the acquisition of knowledge; without devotion and dedication which comes through *pranayama*, you cannot do the right action. That is why *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* is nothing but action which has no reactions. There are no fruits in those actions. But now [with *asanas* and *pranayama*] we acquire, we do with motive; but when you develop this *jnana* that you get with *osonos*; when you develop



Asana develops intelligence in each individual to become more powerful in their understanding. They develop that quality that is latent in everybody.

with devotion and dedication through *pranayama*, action is free from motive and that's why it is pure action.

These two steps of Patanjali are the ladder for you to reach the rightness in your wisdom and that is what I am trying to give. I do not know whether it is 'possible or not. If it is not possible, "well we have to accept our human weaknesses" but an effort should be made and that's what I am trying to present so that the feeling, the understanding and the feeling may set in you within these few days. You have to understand. Without understanding the feeling cannot come at all. Don't say I feel! You cannot feel unless you understand exactly what is said and whether it is imprinted or not.

We use the words *chintana* and *manana* in Sanskrit. *Chintana* means analysing and *manana* means synthesise with action what you are analysing. So, that is the beauty of these two steps of yoga where analysis and synthesis meet together. When they meet together that is meditation.

The beauty of these two steps of yoga is where analysis and synthesis meet together. When they meet together that is meditation.

So, when you reach that state in the *asanas* when the action is re- reflected, in that re-reflected action you understand and you re- re- adjust that pose. That is meditation!

Practice leads to that, providing you understand the essence that I give from the first pose, from the base. I cannot teach all the essences of 200 poses in these 10 days! It is impossible! Even for me I have to work to present to you.

I will give the base and when you practise yourself, you have to go from the base. That is why I use the word subtleness. Patanjali uses two words in the first chapter itself which is enough for us to understand. *Citta prasadanam*. *Prasadana* is not just expansion of the consciousness, but grace. *Prasada* means grace. You ask for blessings when you go to the temple or to the church is it not? Why? So God's grace may fall upon us! The consciousness has to grace that area – wherever, whatever you are doing. When the consciousness graces, then you can use the word *sukshma* – the subtlety of each and every part of your body, every part of your being should be felt. When that *sukshmatata* comes into you, he has used the word *adhyatma prasadana*; from *citta prasadana* from gracefulness of the consciousness you have to jump to the gracefulness of the seer himself.

In the very first chapter he has used these two words. *Citta prasadana* and *atma prasadana*. He has not used the word *atma prasadana* in the beginning knowing very well that people cannot understand – bringing the seer at this point. So, he

says bring your consciousness. Then the consciousness works as a bridge when you reach that essence of subtlety where the consciousness which is dormant is awakened. The moment you have awakened it, it is not the duty of the consciousness but the seer, to see from there, whether the consciousness has awakened or not? It is for the seer to see that the consciousness has awakened in each and every part of your body; then the seer engulfs the entire body and the body becomes an instrument for the seer to penetrate further and that's what *asanas* teaches. I hope you understand the background.

Even while we do *asanas*, we are made up of five elements- earth, water, fire, air and ether. And these have got five qualities. So, elements are in the physical body. The qualities like sound, touch, form, taste, shape and smell and weight of the body are the quality or the atom of the five elements. So, this has to be felt by the senses of perception. Elements are felt by the organs of action; these qualities of elements are felt by the senses of perception so that you have already conquered the

The Body is the First Prop

– a Workshop with Senior IYCV Teachers

November 4, 2017



Explore asana and pranayama to inspire, enthuse, and advance in yoga with Leslie Hogya and Marlene Miller. Practitioners of all ages and stages welcome!

Saturday morning:

10:30 am - 1:00 pm

From the Ground Up
with Leslie Hogya

Saturday afternoon:

3:00 - 5:30 pm

Discovering Balance in Every
Asana with Marlene Miller

One session:

\$55 +GST members |

\$60 +GST non-members

Two sessions:

\$105 +GST members |

\$115 +GST non-members

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



10 elements of nature which are controlled by the 10 organs of the human body. Then comes the *citta* – the mind.

As the first principal of *prakriti* or nature is the *mahat* known as the cosmic intelligence, that cosmic intelligence in each individual transforms itself into individual consciousness. So, when you are practicing *asanas*, that individual consciousness has to be transformed into cosmic consciousness in the entire body so that the external cosmic consciousness and the internal individual consciousness becomes cosmic. There is no difference between the outer and the inner consciousness; and when that is reached the entire 24 principles are brought under your control so the seer can alone see the 25th principle and that's what *asana* teaches which nobody knows. That is what I have worked for and I am glad to tell you that I have reached that state by this alone.

I want you to also know how these vehicles of nature are learned by the practise of *asanas* and subdued. Then, the seer uses them to see how this playground of individuals [though the whole world is the playground of God] for each individual this body is the playground for that soul so that he can play anything in any part of the body. That is what *asana* and *pranayama* teaches. I hope you understand the principle behind that is the conquest of nature; subduing the nature to *asana* and *pranayama* so that the seer alone establishes himself and dictates terms for the nature. The nature is under the control of the seer. As long as you are not doing the *asana* and *pranayama* in that manner – it is the other way around. The nature is supreme and the individual is the servant of nature. But by practise of *asanas* and *pranayama*, the scale is reversed and you become the master of the *tattvas* of nature – the five elements, their atoms, the intelligence, the mind and the consciousness.

Nature is supreme and the individual is the servant of nature.

By practise of asanas and pranayama, the scale is reversed and you become the master of the tattvas of nature.

These are the vehicles of nature and *asana* teaches you so that you go beyond that and the seer exists everywhere as a single unit. This means that the seer is gracing your body which is the part of element of nature or nature itself. And that's what I want to give you. ॐ

Practice Enrichment Series

September 29, 2017

November 17, 2017

January 26, 2018

March 23, 2018

2:00 - 5:00 pm

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

Professional Development 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.

Each 3-hour session will include teaching enrichment opportunities as well as a wide variety of current and relevant Professional Development topics.

September 30, 2017

November 18, 2017

March 24, 2018

April 6, 2018

April 7, 2018

April 27, 2018

Held on Fridays 2:00 -5:00 pm
or Saturdays 10:30 am-1:45 pm



Yoga and Women: in Our Tradition

By Geeta S. Iyengar

EDITED EXCERPTS FROM AN INTERVIEW BY AGI WITTICH WHO IS DOING A PHD ABOUT IYENGAR YOGA AND WOMEN, AT THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM, ISRAEL. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM YOGA RAHASYA, VOL. 24, NO.1; 2017

First of all, yoga was done in the earlier days, even in the Vedic times by ladies. Take the example of Ramayana; when Sri Rama had to go to the forest, he went to his mother to seek her blessings. She was in a deep state of sorrow. She felt that she could not bless her son in this state. She needed to quieten herself. She does *asana* and *pranayama* and then blesses Sri Rama. This is a story of Ramayana. Actually, not a story but history – as it happened here.

In the earlier times, there were quite a few ladies who argued in the palace in front of the king when they had to speak about Brahman, when they spoke about *atman*, soul. There is evidence for that too.

Yoga was there all the time in the 'life-flow.' You can see the *asanas* in the temple sculptures. Almost all older temples were made in stone, we see many yogic postures carved on the stone pillars and columns. We see the back bending *asanas*, we see *sirsasana* and other inverted *asanas* and many others. It means that this was part of their life flow. People were aware of it.



There is a relationship between dance, yoga and music. Yoga is considered as a base for all the arts. There must be some link in those days. There are some old books too where *yogasanas* have been performed as dance postures. That is why in a way, it is said, that Patanjali was also a dancer. In South India, it is said that he was also a dancer and science of dance recognizes Patanjali. Patanjali is also the one who wrote Ayurveda under the name Charaka, as an incarnation.

In the olden days, women were interested in the *vedas*. They were chanting the *vedas*. It was always said that *asanas* and *pranayama* had to be done in *brahmacharyashrama* or studentship. *Brahmacharya* means in search of Brahma. It is in this phase that they were taught *asanas* and *pranayama*. You get clues that they were practising *asanas* in those days too.

In more recent times:

In modern times, credit for getting women to do yoga goes to Sri T. Krishnamacharya, Guruji's Guru. He used to teach a small group in his family. Even my aunt, Namagiri, Guruji's sister did yoga in those days. She told me that when she had pain during menstruation – she did *malasana* and that used to lessen the pain. She also used to do *baddha konasana*. She specifically mentioned these names to me.

When Guruji came to Pune at the age of 17 from Bangalore, Hubli and Dharwar, he was surprised that the women were ready to do *asanas*. He was young at that time and they preferred Guruji coming and teaching. They thought he is a young fellow so there would be no problem to study from him. Nowadays, things have reversed. In those days, they had trust. So, women started attending classes with Guruji.

When my parents got married and my mother came to Pune, my father would ask her to accompany him when he went to teach. There were women in his class and they were shy to talk about their problems to a man. He would ask her to correct the women. My mother learned a lot of yoga from my father although she did not know about yoga when she got married.

My mother would intensely watch when he practised, she would accompany him sometimes when he went to teach. When he started teaching in schools, he asked my mother to accompany him so that the girls in school did not feel shy to tell him of their problems. That is how my mother picked up Marathi, she also learnt to wear the sari-like trousers and started helping the people, especially women. For me, both are my Gurus.

Even in my case, Guruji said, avoid inversions; do forward bends, do *baddha konasana*, do *upavistha konasana* and rest in

supine postures. Instead of lying down on the bed if you get a backache or abdominal pain, he said do this. In the beginning, when women start menstruating, there is a pain, though bearable. I had no problems because of the *asanas* that I was doing.

Guruji was then teaching private classes in Pune. When the general classes started, he told me that when women are menstruating – do this. Avoid the standing *asanas* if there is pain and let them do only *ardha chandrasana*. Then when there was a group, a proper sequence for practice was created. Then, Guruji started getting many women with problems. So, he started teaching in a therapeutic manner for the problems of women.

They had problems during menstruation, delivery, menopause etc and so he started teaching them. When I started teaching, I would communicate with him and he would guide on what should be done for women with different problems. This is how the method of teaching women developed. Many women participated in them.

Practice during menstruation and the use of props:

Women needed rest in those days. They could not really work in the manner that they push these days. That time, he would tell us that it is better to do restorative poses, supine and forward bends so you rest. *Sirsasana*, *sarvangasana* were avoided. Later, when Guruji thought of the props and when the benches came into the picture – the *viparita dandasana* and *setu bandha sarvangasana* bench – then many women started doing these *asanas*. There were ladies who were fat and heavy and could not do these *asanas*. So, the *viparita dandasana* bench and the *setu bandha sarvangasana* bench are really a blessing for women. The moment the women started going onto the props they said that this is something fantastic and it also became easy for us to treat women. She could do *baddha konasana*, *supta baddha konasana* and *viparita dandasana*... that is how the practice for women evolved.

Guruji would guide me in a particular manner for people who had problems especially overflow or lack of menstruation. In those days, the only props that we had were blankets. So, Guruji would say, roll the blanket and place it between the thighs. Another prop that was available was the bed. There were no special yoga rooms so women practised in their bed rooms. They were otherwise shy to do it in a common area as family members, relatives would be moving around. So, they used to ask me to go to their bed room which had furniture like bed, chair, dressing chair etc. That is how I started using the furniture as Guruji would guide. Once there was a young girl, 16-17 years old, with a thyroid problem and she never menstruated. It was a challenging case and she refused to do anything. She had a dislike for yoga. She



would do yoga only because her grandmother insisted. Her grandmother was a student of my father. So Guruji asked me to teach the grand-daughter. Now this girl was not stable, she had a stiff body, she was always shaky and she was not menstruating. She was very lazy and did not take any efforts from her side. She had no understanding of what she was doing. The doctors were also worried. They were known to us and asked us to continue. They were monitoring her and her thyroid levels improved and she menstruated for the first time at the age of 17. There was a celebration!

Handling this case was very difficult for me. I could not be strong although the child was not interested. Now, I can shout!! When, I succeeded with this case, a few more similar cases came to me.

I also taught pregnant women. Guruji guided me on how to take *sirsasana* and *sarvangasana* if they felt a sense of choking. How the face should not become red; How to lift the spine so the abdomen does not become heavy. He used to give me clues and that is how I learned. Basically there was courage and determination that I want to do this and I was watching Guruji do this.



My mother also practiced during her pregnancies. It would not be an intense practice. We were a middle class family. Guruji was not a known name; he had to struggle and so also my mother as whatever we had was limited. We ate simple food and led a simple life. I have seen my mother practice. She used to do *maha mudra* with a spinal lift. She would sit in *janu sirsasana* without bending forward. She used to sit in *virasana*. She would do inversions against the wall and then she would make us do.

I remember my father would go to Mumbai over the weekends. So Saturday

evening was our yoga class with my mother. That was a period to enjoy. It was not a strict class. She would talk to us and make us do different *asanas*. She would herself do inversions, forward bends...*supta baddha konasana* – there were no belts...so Guruji asked her to put the feet near the wall.

Book on concerns about women

There were no books on yoga especially for women. *Yoga: A Gem for Women* was specially written for women. I only picked up *asanas* that are important for women for their stability and the different stages of the lives. That is how the idea about writing a book came to me based on my experience. I used to teach two or three women at a time. I learned a lot during those times. Then, the number of women attending class started increasing. They would come and tell me their problems individually. I would come home and ask Guruji and take his advise and then teach them accordingly.

A special class for women

In the earlier days, women were shy to practice with men in the class. So, we started the class only for women. Women generally wore saris. They were shy to wear tshirts and shorts. So what to wear in the class was a big question. So my mother designed the pants/shorts. They were closed shorts above the knees and tied at the bottom at the thigh. Later, elastic was used. This would give them free movement. If you can imagine a group of such women you can have a perception of that time. Only women teachers would help in these classes. Now, it does not matter.



Practice of mudras and the texts

Certain *mudras* are not meant for women. During menstruation, you cannot do *mula* or *uddiyana bandha*. You can only have the *jalandhara bandha*. The organic body should not be affected at all during this period. This is what Guruji said. The earlier texts also do not differentiate between men and women. They do mention that all can do yoga. It was Guruji who brought clarity on what should be practiced, what should not be done knowing how women suffer. He helped women with the great wealth of *asanas* and *pranayama*. ॐ

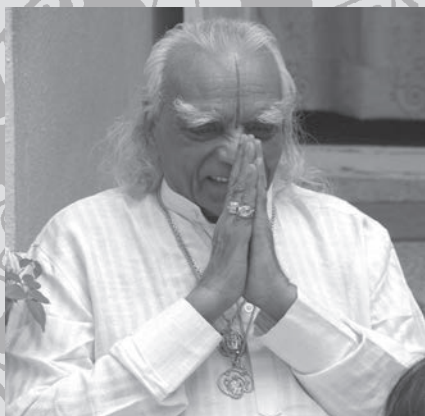


PHOTO: KEVIN MASON

In the Light of Yoga

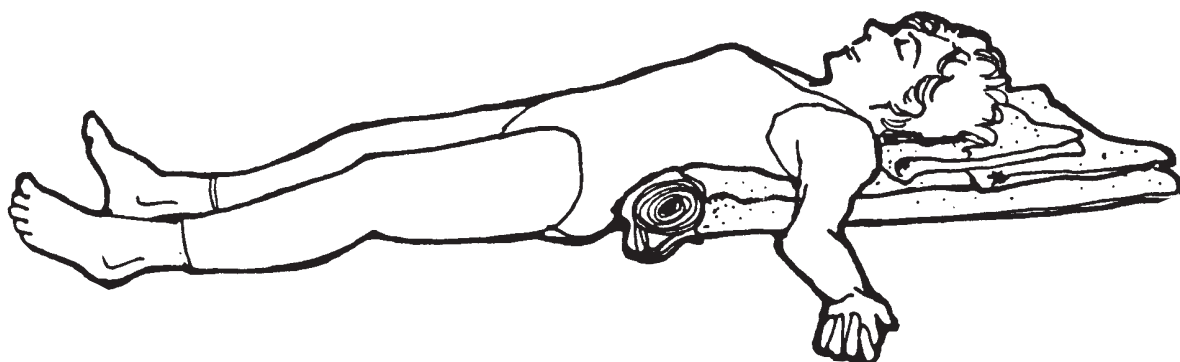
Anniversary Celebration of B.K.S. Iyengar's Birthday

December 10, 2017, 12:30 – 2:30 pm

Come celebrate the anniversary of Guruji's birth with a special class. Tea and birthday cake served after class.

All are welcome at this free event.

Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,
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Taking a look at Savasana

By Leslie Hoggia

This pose is the hardest, according to B.K.S. Iyengar. It may seem to be the easiest, if one thinks of it as just time to lie down and relax. In a beginners class this may be the form and substance of the pose. *Sava* means corpse. *Savasana* is the Corpse Pose. It is surrendering oneself, completely relaxing, and letting go of roles, expectations, and personality.

Teaching older students, interspersing *savasana* in the class might seem beneficial. Geeta Iyengar, in a recent article in *Yoga Rahasya* says that this is the wrong approach. It disturbs both the flow of *asanas* and the attempt at *savasana*. She says: "After a good *savasana*, you cannot suddenly get up. In *savasana*, the body, brain, nerves, everything rests. It is a passive, relaxed state. If you do *savasana* after each *asana* then, you cannot activate the body. So you neither become active for the rest of the *asanas*, nor passive in *savasana* with the anticipating mind. So you offer tension in both ways and the nerves are taxed." *

In Chapter 30 in *Light on Pranayama* Gurujii gives one of the most comprehensive explanations of *savasana* that one will find anywhere. It is traditionally given for rejuvenation after an *asana* class and at the end of a session of *pranayama*. Students often ask for *savasana*, but the reality is that most people cannot stay still for long. Soon, the student may start to fidget and make small physical adjustments, look for a bolster to put under their legs, or shift their head. In many people the eyes, even under closed lids, show darting movements; others can't even close their eyes. Oftentimes students may fall asleep, especially at the end of a busy workday. Gurujii says: "a prolonged stay in *savasana* is not only very

uncomfortable to the brain, but makes the body feel like a piece of dry, dead wood. Pricking sensations are felt on the skin...."

At a recent convention Geeta Iyengar said that if you fall asleep in *savasana* it is *satvic* sleep (illuminating, pure sleep). She said so many people live with such stress, that when they can let go, they sleep and it is more refreshing than when they go to bed. This can happen even if the practice happens after a full night's sleep. Gurujii also said in *Light on Life* that he never woke a student up if they began to snore, unless the hall had emptied!

When the pose is well performed, the breath is steady, slow, and soft, the thoughts are stilled. But at the beginning, there is often no harmony in body, mind, and breath. The breath may be uneven. In *Light on Pranayama*, Gurujii says we must first silence the body, control the breath, bring quiet to the mind and emotions, and move inward to the "Self." *Pranayama* begins and ends in *savasana*, and the two are interlinked, one to the other. The quiet qualities instilled in *savasana* are essential to *pranayama*.

He goes on to describe in great detail the steps to achieve *savasana*, starting with exact placement of the body along a median line. In the photos in *Light on Pranayama*, you can see



him carefully placing the centre of the spine along a straight line. You can either draw a line down the centre of your own mat, or place two mats of the exact same thickness side by side, and use this simple guide to help find that median line. Lying down with a visual cue like this can be a step in teaching your proprioceptors what is straight. First sit along the

line, with the knees bent. As you lie down, first come to the elbows, and check that the legs have stayed equidistant from the centre line, then tuck the hips slightly towards the foot end and continue to lie down. At first, you might need to have another person check that you did stay on the line once you completely recline.

The arms must be placed equidistant from each side of the torso, only about 30 to 40 degrees. If one hand is touching the mat, and the other is touching the floor, the senses are subtly aware of this difference, and attention may be drawn to that touch instead of moving inward. Guruji recommends one adjust the head from the front, to bypass the tendency of some people to tilt the head to one side.

All senses draw inwards, and the tongue should not rest on the palate. The skin is the largest sense organ and covers our entire body; the muscles relax and quietness descends everywhere, especially the skin on the face and temples.

Getting the correct position is the beginning of *savasana*. Guruji says quieting the body helps to still the mind and "... can lead to a sense of timelessness." In *Light on Life*, Guruji entitles a section "*savasana* and time." He describes *savasana* as shedding: "shedding sheathes, thoughts, prejudices, preconceptions, ideas, memories and projects for the future." Tensions prevent us from relaxing. Talking about time he says

Give yourself the gift of time, a gift of silence. Lie down in savasana once a day, breath softly.

that we have to find the present moment. He asks: "Can I exist in a discrete awareness of time in which neither past nor future, impinge or taint the present?"

Give yourself the gift of time, a gift of silence. Lie down in *savasana* once a day, breath softly. The mind does not want to be silent, this is why the pose is the most difficult; the monkey mind is by nature active, it jumps from thought to thought. As thoughts arise, bring the mind back to the breath. Guruji says in *Light on Life* that the goal is to live in the present. He sums up this section with: "By all means, relax, go to sleep even; we are all human, but in *savasana* you are on the edge of a great mystery. And if *savasana* is the most difficult of all postures, at least it has the saving grace that we can all lie on the floor as we attempt it." ॐ

* Iyengar, Geeta. "Yoga Practice for the Elderly in the Absence of Props", *Yoga Rahasya*, Vol 24, No 2, 2017, p.12.



Winter Solstice Workshop With Ty Chandler

December 20 & 21, 2017, 5:30 – 7:30 pm

FIRST NIGHT: forward bend practice with inversions.

SECOND NIGHT: backbend practice with inversions.

Not recommended for beginners.

Fees:

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

Both nights: \$55 + GST IYCV members,
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how to practice with Leslie Hoya

START THE NEW YEAR WITH A HOME PRACTICE

**Saturday, January 13, 2018, 1 – 3 pm
For all levels**

\$15 + GST for Members

\$35 + 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.



Iyengar Teacher Training in Mexico

By Nicole Arendt

While in Mexico this winter I was welcomed by Chantal Gómez Jauffred and Paul King to take an Iyengar Yoga Teacher Training workshop at their modern studio in Zapopan, a city of more than one million people near Guadalajara. The workshop was the very first one for the group of 13 Mexican trainees, and, since I am in my third year of teacher training studies with Kelly Murphy and Lauren Cox here in Canada, I felt I would be able to manage the workshop, which was taught entirely in Spanish!

To prepare for the language challenge, my husband, Chris, and I translated a pose or two a day from the Spanish editions of *Yoga in Action* by Geeta Iyengar and *Luz sobre el Yoga*, or *Light on Yoga* by B.K.S. Iyengar. Although I've read the books in English and frequently reference them, the slow and careful reading required because of my relatively new Spanish skills led me to notice many more details than my easy English readings had done. Because the study process was more difficult, I learned more. I will try to keep that in mind when I feel challenged by ongoing learning in this process! While the vocabulary in a yoga book is quite different than the vocabulary one needs to chat with neighbours or

buy groceries, we were able to quickly learn the yoga vocabulary, which has so many repetitions of verbs (extend, press), directions (up, above, over), and body parts. In English we often have two names for a part of the body: sternum and breastbone; femur and thighbone. In Spanish, there is generally only the anatomical name.

While I was happy that my Spanish study had prepared me to understand what was taught in the classes, I was most excited to be an intermediate-level student reviewing introductory material. At the start of the teacher training program, everything seems new and difficult and often confusing. Through the support of our senior teachers, we keep learning asanas in class, we learn by teaching them to students, and most importantly, day after day and hour after hour, we learn on our mats in our own practice. The experience of being a third-year student studying at a first-year workshop was very enlightening. Now so many more things made sense! (Even though they were in Spanish!) I now more clearly understood the relevance of teaching certain actions in the most basic asanas because I saw how they set the student up to safely and capably tackle progressively more challenging poses. I saw how much there was to learn in just



a handful of beginning poses, and how challenging it was to do these poses with full effort and attention, especially with the teacher calling, “mas, mas, mas!”: wanting more, more, more engagement of the quads, more concave thoracic, more rolling thighs in, more lifting the kneecaps, more rolling biceps out. We spent nearly an hour of the first morning working on those actions while repeating only three poses: *adho mukha svanasana*, *uttanasana*, and *adho mukha virasana*.

It was a pleasure to be embraced by the Iyengar Yoga community so far from home and to have the opportunity to study, to see things in new ways, and to bring that learning back to my community here at Bend Over Backwards in Nanaimo, B.C. ॐ

NICOLE TRAINS IN NANAIMO WITH KELLY MURPHY AND IS A TEACHER IN TRAINING WITH LAUREN COX. SHE IS THE PRINCIPAL TIMPANIST WITH THE VANCOUVER ISLAND SYMPHONY AND IS GRATEFUL FOR THE WAYS YOGA HELPS HER WORK AS A FREELANCE MUSICIAN.



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Ropified: Lauren Cox's Ropes Workshop

By Mary-Ellen Hannah

Finally! I was finally taking one of Lauren Cox's ropes workshops.

Like most students, I've often done an *asana* or two in the ropes in general classes, but I've never had a chance to explore this prop further until today, despite having wanted to for years.

Yoga ropes have always hinted to me of yoga adventures, of gravity-defying freedom beyond the yoga ability of my body, the way the rope swings of my childhood allowed us to feel like we could fly. Then there were rope ladders into crude tree forts, and the rope suspension bridges of family vacations. As it turned out, the playful quality I associated with the ropes paired well with the light-hearted banter Lauren sprinkled throughout her expert instructions.

I wondered what would come of using this remarkably versatile prop for over two hours. I knew the traction the ropes can produce brings a heightened sense of expansiveness to my joints, and the support they provide in challenging poses allows me to work more deeply, but was one ropes workshop enough to walk out the door with these benefits more permanently internalized? My body is often slow on the uptake, and my brain glazes over pretty quickly. I was looking forward to finding out.

Yoga ropes have always hinted to me of yoga adventures, of gravity-defying freedom beyond the yoga ability of my body, the way the rope swings of my childhood allowed us to feel like we could fly.

Although we began with simpler warm-up *asanas* like *malasana*, a quick glance down the full wall of students showed a wide range of familiarity with our prop. Some approached their ropes with hesitation, handling them almost reluctantly as they looked to those on either side for confirmation they'd understood Lauren, while others deftly tugged the knot half way up the loop or skillfully joined three ropes together and readily climbed the wall. Lauren

quickly came to the aid of those less certain or more confused, no one left behind to struggle.

Working into the standing poses like *trikonasana* and *ardha chandrasana*, Lauren addressed the small details for the benefit of the newest students, details that were second nature to those more experienced. "Line yourself up with the latches," she pointed out, "Don't over stay," she cautioned, "Try it – it's just Child's Pose," she encouraged, as we took our feet off the floor, bent our knees, pressed our shins and the tops of our feet against the wall, and hung, fully supported, over the blanketed rope across our groins.

Here a student with no ropes experience at all drew back, quietly stating the pose was not for her. While the rest of us

...our yoga opens up the book of personal possibilities to new chapters time and time again, despite the self-doubt that feeds our resistance.

continued to savour this effortless inversion or carefully prepared to come out, Lauren suggested the student may wish to reconsider, brought her back to the wall and patiently guided her briefly in and out of the pose, always at her side.

“I never thought I could do that!” the student beamed, back on her feet, flushed with the success of proving herself wrong. I knew just how she felt: our yoga opens up the book of personal possibilities to new chapters time and time again, despite the self-doubt that feeds our resistance. This is particularly true, it seems, in inversions and backward extensions.

So it was no surprise, coming out of *ustrasana*, the imprint of the rope still tangible across our shoulder blades, to overhear “I’ve never been able to go back like that before!” and the murmured agreement of students nearby. I’d stayed as long as we had time for, relishing the quiet joy of that supported backbend while at the same time inviting my body to remember its way back to this ease, for all those future *ustrananas* without the ropes.

“Let go the fruits of your labours,” Lauren reminded us several times as we took ropes down then put them back up, reconfigured them, then returned them to their original state. I wondered if she sensed that the repeated adjustments might seem tedious to some: if so, her paraphrasing of Krishna’s injunction to Arjuna, three centuries ago was timely. Later, pondering this reference, I realized it was the essence of Nike’s iconic ad campaign of the late ‘80’s, “Just do it.” Some truths, clearly, bear repeating.

Driving home afterwards, I was surprised to find, after all we’d done in the workshop, that my principal take-away was the



Students in adho mukha svanasana from top ropes

observation on the futility of imaging in advance any outcome of our actions. I reflected on the habit of judging a process while still in it, or even before it starts, and some of the seeming foregone conclusions I can bring to new undertakings: “This will be hard/easy; I will/won’t be good at this; this is boring/interesting” — all slightly toxic combinations of doubt and desire.

It seems the biggest imprint of my first ropes workshop was the invaluable reminder to approach new situations with curiosity, to tune out the internal dialogue, and to simply explore the experience at hand. If you glance at the ropes in regular classes and wonder what it might be like to experience your body through their traction, rule out being too stiff, too old, too new to yoga, or too cautious. Sign up, show up, share with Lauren any hesitations you harbour, and DO. ॐ



IYAC/ACYI ASSESSMENT DATES

September 29-October 1, Introductory II, Abbotsford, BC

November 3- 5, Introductory II, Ottawa, ON

November 17-19, Intermediate Junior III, Toronto, ON

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Yoga is Not a Consumer Product

By Prashant S. Iyengar

All of you are used to a 'package' of *pranayama* which is usually a consumer product. That is why most of you at the end of the *pranayama* class say: "a wonderful feeling, seventh heaven, transported." This is what you usually look for, and the teachers will be catering this, that you must feel wonderfully fine, an exclusive condition of tranquility, quietude, placidity, which is called "little ecstatic state."

Ecstasy doesn't mean that it is exalting and joyful. The state that is above the normal state is "ecstasy." Stasis is the normal state and ec-stasis is above the normal state of mind.

Therefore in yoga psychology it is "en-stasis" because you do not have exuberance of joy after *pranayama*, after yoga. You are not supposed to have. "En-stasis" is higher than the normal state. How long are you going to go on consumer package? Should you not go for a student's package? Should you be still motivated to continue *pranayama*, by showing you 'chocolate' *pranayama*, ice cream *pranayama*, cookies *pranayama*, so that you are attracted towards it? Do you just want to feel wonderful after *pranayama* or do you want to learn *pranayama*? It could be right if you change your priority that has been here all these years: go to *pranayama* and get above your normal state, in an exclusive state, unusual state, sublime state. We have been giving sublime state in *pranayama* class but it is like a dog's tail: it is straight as long as it is kept straight. So, such states are very temporary. People have not changed despite such *pranayama* classes. They have been transported, but again they have come back, and again they have come back to a mundane plane. So, somewhere you have got to change your priority and see that you are prepared to learn the student's package of *pranayama* and not consumer's package of *pranayama* every time. After the *pranayama* you want that wonderful state every time, then I cannot be teaching *pranayama*. I can only be marketing *pranayama*. So, once you come out of the consumer culture then, well I might be induced to teach you the student's package; not until then.

Somewhere see that you amend your approaches and go for student's package in yoga, whether it is asana, or *pranayama* or any aspect of yoga. Do not go for that goody goody condition of asana and *pranayama* so after that you should feel fine. You might struggle during the class but after the *asana* class you must be light; you must feel wonderful; unusual. Until I see such transformation and your change in priority I will not be induced to teach the student's package. Until that time it is marketing.

Move from a consumer package to a student's package. Student's package means pedantic approach. Wherever logic can be applied, apply the logic. You must go for textual references. Try to understand the concept: what the science is trying to say. Have your intellectual process on it to arrive at a conclusion.

*Become a student of the subject.
Do not look only for what you 'get'
from the practice. Be motivated to
learn the subject so that the
practice transforms you.*

The culture for those who are beginners, doing it for the first time is different. They can be taught the alphabet but it cannot continue for long. For the veterans, the culture of learning has to be different. But, what is your process of learning? It is the same. Attend the class, do a class and walk out.

Make some notes on what was taken in the class. I have also seen some of them open the notebook by the side of the mat. See what was taught yesterday and start doing the same today. Yesterday it was taught in the evening, today you are doing in the morning, yesterday it was in a different time space, now it is a different time and space, it was different condition of body and mind then; now it is a different condition of body and mind. This is for the beginners' hierarchy and not at your hierarchy! When you were taught, maybe your teacher was teaching you, your teacher was around you, looking at you, either intimidating you or complimenting you and therefore you did. Now the teacher is not around you. The notebook is there and reading the book you cannot follow the same.

There is another package that has come into the system: teacher's package. How can we learn and start teaching? How can we eat something here and vomit in our institutes, in our studios for students. That is another package that has come because everyone wants to start teaching effectively and develop the business, the clientele, attract the students, give attractive schemes, so that they are attracted towards the teachers.

Even Indians, they want to now start teaching as early as possible and develop that business of teaching yoga; profession of teaching yoga.

I've seen whenever Guruji has taken any workshop "back-bends special," "*pranayama* special" within three months there are announcements: "just fresh from Pune "*pranayama* special course," "back-bends special course."

Learning and teaching asana, *pranayama* or any aspect of yoga is not a consumer product. Become a student of the subject. Do not look only for what you 'get' from the practice. Be motivated to learn the subject so that the practice transforms you. ॐ

EXCERPTED FROM THE ADVICE GIVEN BY PRASHANTJI IN HIS CLASSES.

Poses Captured at the Introductory Intensive for Teachers In Training

JULY 10 - 14, 2017



Leslie Hogya and Crystal McMillan working parivrtta trikonasana



Leslie demonstrating a way to open the hips



Chair sarvangasana



Leg work in parighasana



"Hands on" adjustment in parsvottanasana

Save the Dates!

GUEST SPEAKER
FROM INDIA
coming
February 23-27, 2018
Watch for details at
the IYCV front desk.

Join us for Twoonie Movie Night!

**Friday, October 20, 2017,
6:45 pm - 8:45 pm**

\$2 entrance, \$2 popcorn

"Samadhi"

– *To be at One with the Divine*

Although scratchy, this video shows B.K.S. Iyengar in 1977 (age 59) displaying how the diffusion of the goodness of the core illuminates the fibres, blood and nerve cells of the body.



Thank you to:

- Our bolster bee participants: Linda Poole, Jane McFarlane, Johanna Godliman, Wendy Boyer, Laine Canivet, Annie Kitchen, and Bev Kallstrom.
- Nathan Bernshaw and Keval Kostyna: both donated a large quantity of props and books to the Centre, all in great shape. We were able to use some for the library and studio, and give others away to students for their home practice.
- Jayne Jonas for her donation of a coffee maker for the kitchen.
- Jane McFarlane for the beautiful bulletin boards she creates in the lobby to promote the Centre's programming and fundraisers.
- Bev Kallstrom, Jane Baigent, and Johanna Godliman for transporting props and participants for the Salt Spring retreat.
- Don Benn for researching and purchasing the Centre's new camera.
- Laine Canivet for storing our extra chairs, thus making room in the library.
- All those who made the All Levels International Day of Yoga practice a great success: Britta Poisson for her behind the scenes work and Johanna Godliman for distributing flyers. Jim Bratvold, Jane McFarlane, and Gary Wong set the stage with mats, blankets, and belts for all. Bob Maher managed the waivers and print-in sheets with humour – and efficiency! Soo Youn Ham and Jayne Jonas modelled the asanas at the front of the class. Leslie Hogya monitored the class, providing support where needed. Finally, Ty Chandler led the 40 participants, many of them newcomers to the Centre, in a sequence with clear, concise, and confidence-boosting instructions.
- Laine Canivet and Sheila Redhead for their help at the teaching intensive dinners chez Shirley and Ann this summer.

Emotional Evolution Through Yoga

By Rajvi H. Mehta

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM YOGA RAHASYA, VOL.10, NO.4; 2003.

Come the 30s and 40s and people start complaining of all kinds of physical and organic problems. One tends to associate these with stress and aging; some take measures to tackle the problems while many accept “aging” as a natural process and learn to live with these inadequacies. However, very few individuals have tried to go to the root of these problems, which are in fact “emotional” in nature.

Life is full of emotions and it is these emotions which make a human being different from a robot! However, we do very little to cultivate our emotions and our emotional development. By the time the child is two years old, parents start feeding it with information and education revolves around the intellectual development of the child. The calibre of the child is evaluated on the basis of his/her I.Q – intelligent quotient. A person with an above average I.Q is considered a genius while the one with a lower I.Q is considered to be mentally retarded. It is only recently that scientists and psychologists are giving importance to the emotional development of an individual and some now study the emotional quotient or E.Q!

Guruji says that intellectual development is the vertical growth of an individual while the emotional development is the horizontal growth. A balance between the two is absolutely essential. We tend to give over-importance to the intellectual side of our being while we neglect our emotional self. This imbalance starts reflecting while we hit our 30s and 40s as we realize that not all problems can be solved by the brain and the heart has a role to play too. On the positive side, not all creations, thoughts, ideas evolve from the brain but it is the emotions and intuition that play a greater role.

Only intellectual growth in the absence of emotional evolution is like a tree growing tall without its roots being allowed to spread. Such a tree is unstable and will soon collapse. Intellectual development has to be accompanied by emotional evolution too. Emotional subjects such as music and arts no longer occupy the same space in the school curriculum as the academic subjects. Even as adults, we have limited time for such fine arts. As soon as we realize our inability to cope with situations despite the best use of our logical brains – we are “stressed.” The mind and the body can never be differentiated. The psychological pressures affect the vital organs of our body and ailments set in. For example, Type II diabetes is seen as an endocrine disorder where the pancreas does not function optimally. However, if diabetes were only a “physiological” disorder then why amongst diabetics, does the blood sugar suddenly rise up amidst situations of

emotional trauma such as a death or ailment of a spouse or loved one? Why does the blood pressure alter when one gets angry or depressed? The vital organs and the physical body also have a bearing on our psychological well-being and vice versa. When a person is depressed, he is made to perform backward bending *asanas* to stimulate the adrenals. Thus, the physical body acts on the organic body to stimulate the mental and emotional being.

We “treat” the symptoms of the ailments but not the root cause – lack of emotional development. Guruji explains that the diaphragm is the important link between our emotional and intellectual self. We tend to see the diaphragm only as a muscle, which divides the thoracic and the abdominal cavity and plays a role in respiration. However, do we realize how the diaphragm behaves during one’s intellectual and emotional growth and also during the range of emotional expressions?

The diaphragm grips when emotionally taxing news is heard while it expands while emotionally pleasing news is heard. On the other hand, when one is in deep thought or in the process of intellectual analysis, the diaphragm contracts. Through the regular practice of *asanas* such as *viparita dandasana*, *setu bandha sarvangasana*, *supta baddha konasana* we learn how to expand the diaphragm!

A lay observer tends to see the *asanas* as being meant only for the physical body as we perform them with our limbs and so called exterior body. But, any physical action cannot be free of a physiological reaction. Even a simple *asana* like *urdhva hastasana* has a physiological reaction on the abdomen. When the hands are thoughtfully lifted up, the abdominal viscera also gets lifted up. When this same *asana* is performed with even greater attention with the thumb moving up as much as the rest of the fingers then one feels the abdomen connecting towards the spine! Thus, all the abdominal organs move towards the spinal nerves which is what nourishes them. Does the simplest of *asanas* not have an effect on the vital organs?

Intellectual development involves feeding ourselves with information and then systematically utilizing this information to conceive ideas and tackle problems. We need to perceive before we can conceive anything.

Emotional development or emotional expression involves “feeling” and intuition. The artist just “feels” that this is not right stroke of the brush while this is the right stroke. So also, the musician goes by the “ear.” There is not much rational or intellectual thinking in the composition of a work or art or music. An emotional expression is first felt. It is conceived before it is seen

or perceived. In contrast, an intellectual expression is seen first. It is perceived before it is conceived gradually and methodically. Both the emotional and intellectual expressions support each other. A good emotional development will enhance intellectual growth and intellectual development in turn helps emotional expression.

Both these faculties can be cultivated through the practice of yoga. We start learning the standing *asanas* by seeing and then feeling. We perceive first and then we conceive. We can see the position of our legs, knees, knee-caps, feet, the inner foot, outer foot etc., and only later we can feel and conceive the effect it brings on the back, the shoulder blades, the inner thigh etc. We develop our intellectual faculties by practicing in this manner. On the other hand, *sirsasana*, backward bending *asanas* teach us to conceive first and then perceive; we feel the *asana* before we can see it. So also, in *sarvangasana*, we feel before we see the pose. This helps us to develop our faculty of “feeling” – our emotional faculty.

Both these faculties need to be developed and this has to be done by *tapas svadhyaya* and *isvara pranidhana* i.e., a devoted, intense desire accompanied by hard work. Once both the emotional and intellectual faculties are developed and evolved, then these work together coordinating and cooperating with each other, which builds up new intelligence commonly known as intuition. It is your feelings which dictate an action but the methodological intellectual training will ensure that the action is performed correctly. When the emotional and intellectual faculties for a particular aspect are so well developed, the actions appear spontaneous. For example, the artists’ brush moves spontaneously. An accomplished musician places his hands on his instrument and music just flows. Kekule instinctively came up with the structure of benzene; Newton “just” thought of the theory of gravity! Intuition is the result of the coordinated expression of emotion and intelligence which happens instantaneously.

Patarijali states, *avidya, asmita, raga dvesa abhinivesah kiesah*. Of these, *avidya* and *asmita* are intellectual defects. Ignorance and egoism are defects and diseases of the intellect; *raga* and *dvesa* are emotional defects – attachment and hatred spring from emotions. He then also gives the methodology to conquer these *klesas*. *Maitri, karuna* and *mudita* help to overcome these *klesas*. Compassion, friendliness and joy should govern all our actions. When all our actions are performed with such emotions then and only then will the health of the society improve. However, *upeksa*, indifference, is not meant for social behaviour. We cannot and should not be indifferent to others. It is the duty of the teacher to teach and she/he cannot be indifferent to a student who does not perform. The teacher has to try all within her/his means. It is our duty as students of yoga to attempt all the *asanas* and use all within our means to get ourselves to do it. Indifference must not creep into our practices. The *upeksa* or the state of indifference is meant not for the actions but the reactions

to these actions. For example, you may perform a task with full diligence but at the same time, you should be indifferent to the fruits of that action which may be pleasant or unpleasant. A pleasant reaction would lead to *raga* while an unpleasant reaction would lead to *dvesa*. Therefore, we need to perform the action but remain indifferent to the reactions. Just as the *Bhagavad Gita* states, *karmanye vadhikaras te ma phalesu kadacana* – you have a right to perform your duty (actions) but not to the fruits of your action. Following this one *sutra* in the right spirit will make diseases of the intellect and emotions a thing of the past.

It is time we start realizing the importance of our emotional growth to bring about emotional stability and intellectual clarity and learn this art of yoga for our emotional evolution too and not just maintaining a healthy body and a sharp mind. ॐ

Yoga with Gary

Stillness in Action

Saturday, October 14, 2017, 1:00 – 3:00 pm



Join Gary Wong for a two-hour workshop exploring the dynamic and stability aspects within the yoga asanas. Iyengar Yoga students of all levels welcome - knowledge of shoulder stand prop setup would be beneficial.

Gary has been a practitioner of Iyengar yoga for almost twenty years, teaching for the last ten. His background in martial arts supports his keen interest in exploring the concepts of mobility and stability more deeply.

\$30 + GST Members | \$35+ GST Non-Members

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

Move Up a Level?

By Leslie Hogya

When a student begins with their first Level 1 class, there is so much to learn: what is Iyengar yoga, anyway? Then there is learning to balance on one leg in *vrksasana* (Tree Pose), the names of poses in Sanskrit, how to tie up a belt and fold a blanket. There are protocols and expectations that may be unfamiliar. It may not seem possible at first to isolate the muscles that allow the kneecaps to lift up.

After a few months, the often-repeated names of poses start to sound familiar; *trikonasana* has the same beginning letters as the English translation: triangle pose. That long phrase *adho mukha svanasana* starts to be recognized as downward dog. Soon, one begins to realize that when the teacher says straighten the legs, he or she means absolutely straight. If the mat is crooked on the floor, one cannot proceed until it is lined up properly. Gururji said, "God is the median line." Alignment in all the poses begins to penetrate.

Some students leap in with enthusiasm after a short time and want to come to class every day, or think they are ready for Level 2. They may prefer that time of day the class is running. And after all, the same poses are taught in new ways, and there are new sequences. But, at some point, a feeling comes that one might want to do more. When a student has taken Level 1 for six months and they are starting to practice at home, it is a good time to think of moving on. In some cases, I have known the teacher to change the usual Level 1 class that ran at 5:00 pm to a Level 2 to help their students advance.

What stops people from changing to the next level? Fear? Fear of failure, fear of finding it is too difficult? In India, I was in an "advanced class", and there were the same poses: *trikonasana*, *adho mukha svanasana*. The difference was that the basic structure did not need to be taught, but subtle adjustments were given, the movement of skin, breath, inner knee tendons. Prahant Iyengar (Gururji's son) has said that the simplest poses are the ones that can be taught in an advanced way because the basic structure is known from having repeated it countless times. He said we stop 'doing' the pose and start 'being' in the pose.

In *Light on Life*, there is a striking example of facing fear. A student of Gururji's was complaining about his fear of *sirsasana*. Gururji finally shouted: "Forget about fear. You may only fall on the floor, not beyond. In the future there is fear. In the present there is no fear."

Recently, one of my Level 1 students tried a Level 2 class, but she continued in Level 1 as well. This allowed for a bridge between levels and gave her confidence to commit to the change. I recommend staying with the same teacher(s)

for several terms and then consulting with the instructor who knows you best about what level is appropriate for you .

When a student is serious about yoga, new frontiers are there to explore and new understandings will be found by moving on. Don't give up too fast if it seems to be more difficult than expected at the new level. A fresh arrival in a higher-level class might think that everyone else is familiar with certain poses. This could be because the others in the class have been repeating the class for an extended period of time. The teacher should be able to help everyone in the class become familiar with the poses being taught and to be able to bring all participants up to the same level.

There may be poses that one cannot do yet, but there are always alternatives or preliminary stages and stepping-stones that can be explored. Sometimes there are physical reasons why a certain pose cannot be done, but there is always a substitute. Often a student objects to being singled out, to being given a different pose, to being unable to participate with everyone else in the class. The important thing is to practice moving inwards from the surface to the subtle level of the pose (even if it looks different than what everyone else is doing). If the other students can do a more complex version, or an intermediate stage, that is not the important point. It is not a competition.

There are many ways to deepen your commitment to the practice if you are enthusiastic, and want more understanding of yoga. Become a member at the Centre, read the newsletter, start borrowing books and DVDs from the library, take a *pranayama* class, or sign up for a workshop. Come to the open houses, the Sunday member's practice times, or other events. If you haven't yet done so, buy some basic props, and begin to practice at home. Look at the photos in *Light on Yoga*, try a pose that is new to you.

The goal of yoga is about stilling the fluctuations of the mind. Yoga is about cultivating friendliness and compassion, in order to lead a better quality of life. B.K.S. Iyengar said in his preface to *The Art of Yoga*: "Yoga is a disciplinary art which develops the faculties of the body, mind and intellect.... It is a commitment to a life's pattern and a way towards right living." So take a plunge; challenge yourself. Shirley Daventry French likes to quote Vivekenanda who said: "Discard everything that weakens you."

So, in summary, give it a try. Stretch yourself, and reach towards your highest potential. The body, through *asana* practice, takes us towards the goal of inner peace. Gururji used *asana* as the path to liberation. Learning takes place when one goes beyond the known. At the beginning of *Light on Pranayama* is this invocation:

Where there is Yoga,
There is prosperity, success, freedom,
and bliss. ॐ

A Thank You

EDITOR'S NOTE: THE NEWSLETTER
REPRINTED JOHN SCHUMACHER'S ARTICLE
"SATYA" IN THE SUMMER 2017 ISSUE.

Dear Victoria Yogis,

Many thanks for reprinting my newsletter essay in your summer newsletter. I have always enjoyed reading your newsletter, especially Shirley's essay, so I am deeply honored to be included. Please convey my special thanks to Shirley for her kind words in introducing my essay.

As the little-known Elmer Davis memorably said, "...freedom can be retained only by the eternal vigilance which has always been its price." In these challenging times, let's do our practice....and remain vigilant.

Shanti,
John

CERTIFIED IYENGAR YOGA TEACHER (CIYT)
DIRECTOR, UNITY WOODS YOGA CENTER



IYCV Calendar

SEPTEMBER

- 8-10 Chris Saudek Workshop
- 16 IYCV Open House
- 17 Discover the Basics with Gary Wong
- 29 Practice Enrichment
- 30 Professional Development

OCTOBER

- 14 Yoga with Gary Wong
- 19-22 IYAC, Kelowna

NOVEMBER

- 4 The Body is the First Prop

OCTOBER

- 20 Toonie Movie Night

NOVEMBER

- 17 Practice Enrichment
- 18 Professional Development

DECEMBER

- 10 In the Light of Yoga, Guruji's Birthday
- 20-21 Winter Solstice

JANUARY

- 1 New Year's Day Timed Practice
- 13 How to Practice
- 26 Practice Enrichment
- 27-28 Heart of Yoga

FEBRUARY

- 23-27 Guest Speaker from India

International Yoga Day: Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute Bags First Yoga Award

THE TIMES OF INDIA JUNE 20, 2017

NEW DELHI: Pune's Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute has been selected as the first recipient of the Prime Minister's Award for outstanding contribution for promotion and development of Yoga, the government said on Tuesday.

"The selection was done from among 85 nominations received and 15 more recommended by the screening committee," the government said in a statement.

On June 21, last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had in Chandigarh announced awards for the promotion and development of yoga.

And following which the Ministry of AYUSH developed the guidelines for the awards.

"Two committees were constituted viz a screening committee (for preliminary evaluation) and evaluation committee (jury), so that a transparent process is followed in finalizing the awards. Nomination for the awards were invited through open advertisement," the statement said.



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:

c/o Hilary McPhail
202-919 Fort Street,
Victoria BC V8V 3K3 Canada

Iyengar Yoga Centre
of Victoria Society

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☐ Receipt required.

Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Presents

*the Heart
of Yoga*

January 27-28, 2018

*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
Ann Kilbertus for Level 2
students and above.

Saturday, January 27, 10:30 am - 1:30 pm
and 3:30 pm - 5:30 pm
Sunday January 28, 12 - 3 pm

REGISTRATION OPENS: NOVEMBER 4, 2017

Fees: \$175 + GST members
\$195 + GST non-members

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



To register, drop in to or phone
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www.iyengaryogacentre.ca



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA



N E W S L E T T E R W I N T E R 2 0 1 7

Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Presents

the Heart of Yoga

January 27-28, 2018

We are missing the gold if we do asanas as a physical practice only. – Geeta Iyengar

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250-386-YOGA (9642)
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Attend our annual retreat on beautiful Salt Spring Island and participate in a weekend of Iyengar Yoga with **Leslie Hogya** and **Wendy Boyer**.

Leslie has been teaching in Victoria since the early 70s and has been active in the local centre since then. She has studied in Pune with the Iyengar family at the RIMYI many times since her first trip in 1985. Her most recent trip was in December 2015. Leslie trains teachers and has taught in the U.S., Thailand, Hong Kong, and Mexico.

Wendy began her Iyengar yoga journey with Shirley Daventry

The 34th Annual Retreat at the Salt Spring Centre June 8-10, 2018



French in 1990, and began teaching in 1996. She attributes her knowledge of the Iyengar method to studying with Shirley and other inspiring local and international teachers. Asana and pranayama, and managing the Victoria Iyengar Centre are her daily practice. "Yoga practice and observing students and my peers has taught me so much about our mysterious bodies, and about life."

Wendy and Leslie's teaching is delivered with humour and clarity, inspiring students to explore a range of motion, balance and the energy of Iyengar yoga. Their safe, fun and supportive approach highlights yogic principles and encourages students to weave yoga philosophy into their daily lives.



Registration open January 10, 2018

IYCV Members:
Shared accommodation \$448 + GST
Private accommodation \$508 + GST
Camping \$405 + GST
Commuter \$362 + GST
Non-members:
Shared accommodation \$470 + GST
Private accommodation \$530 + GST
Camping \$443 + GST
Commuter \$400 + GST

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

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: FEBRUARY 15, 2018

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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)

NOTE: We regret we cannot accept past issues of the newsletter, yoga journal, etc., due to space limitations.



Reflections

By Shirley Daventry French

**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.**

(The Dhammapada, Chapter 1, Verse 1, translated from the Pali by Juan Mascaro)

In his lifetime, Spanish born translator Juan Mascaro translated many Eastern spiritual texts. The beautiful poetic English of his *Bhagavad Gita* and *Dhammapada* are among my favourites. They are a particular joy to read aloud, but also to uplift your spirit when you are struggling to regain perspective and need an infusion of light on life.

The past year has been a particularly difficult one for me, with challenges following one another other in rapid succession. As someone once said (Mark Twain possibly) it has been “One damn thing after another!” At a time of life when energy is diminished by age I have been called upon to mobilise all my wits and wisdom. But on the plus side I have been training for these challenges for fifty years.

Everyone has their own words to describe the vicissitudes of life: the unsought, unwanted events which disturb our comfort zone. Why me? The philosophy of yoga

addresses that question in myriad ways, and the translation I selected from The *Dhammapada* to begin this article goes straight to the root of the problem.

Swami Radha used to speak of a Divine Committee which follows our evolution (or lack of it) and intervenes when necessary. Presumably mine decided that at eighty-six I had better get a move on in making certain changes. Last summer I had two personal accidents, both caused by rushing to do something with my mind in one place and my body somewhere else.

The first accident happened as I was about to begin teaching a *pranayama* class during a weekend retreat on Salt Spring island. I sat down to lead the Invocation to Patanjali, and spotted a woman in front of me struggling to find a good sitting position. I got up quickly to take care of this not noticing that someone had placed a bolster in my way. I tripped over it, lost my balance, struggled for

what felt like an interminable time trying to recover it, failed in this task and went down hard on my buttocks jamming my sacrum and lower back. Thanks to my nearly fifty years of practising yoga, I recovered well and was just beginning to think I was ready to resume an active life, when I had a second accident!

This time I tripped over the slightly protruding leg of a chair in my own living room which has been there since we moved to this house forty-five years ago!

That morning I observed myself beginning to rush around the house trying to catch up after the hiatus while healing my back. Seeking to calm my body and mind, I sat down in my favourite chair where I could gaze out the window and see the ocean. I began to breathe slowly and smoothly broadening my lower back ribs to free up my diaphragm, when a very important thought popped into my mind disturbing my rhythm!

I thought to myself: I'll just make a note of this so I don't forget it and then get on with relaxing! Slightly irritated that neither pen nor paper (nor iPhone) were within reach, I moved quickly forsaking my sense of proprioception. Like the

The past year has been a particularly difficult one for me, with challenges following one another other in rapid succession. As someone once said (Mark Twain possibly) it has been “One damn thing after another!”

previous fall, no support was within reach—I was left to my own resources. My main thought was to avoid falling on my sacrum so I managed a sideways twist and fell on my left shoulder and upper arm.

After hitting the floor I didn't know whether to laugh or cry, I could see the irony of my situation and hear a chorus from my Divine Committee saying; Just in case you didn't get the message already sent to you about slowing down here is a reminder!

I lay on the floor for a while, not wanting to move, pretty sure I had broken my upper arm and knowing movement was likely to involve pain. At the same time I was smiling to myself about the irony of my situation.

At the heart of yoga lies personal practice. Practising for what? And here one could employ the teenage response: whatever! On the positive side, I had an incredible array of tools which once again served me well in healing.

My forced withdrawal from outside activities, with no trips to Europe this summer, and a quiet time spent mainly at home gave me a fresh appreciation of this beautiful part of the world with its fresh air, views of ocean and mountains amidst the grandeur of Douglas firs, maples, arbutus trees and plenty of space to aid the process of decluttering my mind and body.

These days most people who enter a yoga class are looking to become more limber, get into shape, keep fit, stretch bodies stiffening through aging, injury or inactivity, or to reduce stress in their lives. Or they may be sick or have injured themselves as I did and are seeking to heal and reduce pain. Yoga provides the opportunity for all this and so much more, but this is not its primary purpose which is to "know thyself and be free".

Each day despite many unaccustomed obstacles I practised *asana* (somewhat limited at first) and *pranayama* (a life saver) and spent much

of the rest of the day in contemplation. Regular practice forms the heart of yoga, not just now and then when everything is taken care of but as a priority in good times and bad. It is a boon for the present, an investment for the future. You practise yoga because the restless mind, often called the monkey mind in India, is always searching for opportunities to re-establish its primacy,

I was reminded of this because despite taking heed of the warnings I had received many old habits were still there waiting for a crack in my resolve, and cracks did appear which allowed old patterns still lurking around to re-emerge. When things are going well to avoid complacency you practise. When things are not going well, to avoid disintegration you practise.

And just to make sure that I stay vigilant, my home was assaulted by a number of plagues—nothing like the upheavals and tragedies you hear about on the world news, but nevertheless disturbing and requiring effort and attention. I began to think of the Biblical plagues of which there were ten.

These were the Fall 2017 Plagues of the Frenchs' residence in Metchosin:

- Two kitchen floods, both from leaky pipes under the sink.
- One overflowing toilet in the main bathroom.
- Mice in house and basement.
- Rats in air exchanges and walls.
- An old washing machine which decided to shred clothing
- An old vacuum machine which wheezed and clattered to its demise.
- A flat tire from a nail in the driveway.
- A minor collision between my husband's car and mine at the entrance to our carport where the entrance was partially obstructed by a contractor's service van.
- Broken hinges on the door of the dishwasher.

In light of all these assaults, we have upgraded our earthquake supplies and refurbished or replaced our fire extinguishers.

And then to crown it all: when this article was almost finished my fine words and elevated thoughts disappeared into the ether never to be retrieved (at least by me) when my computer crashed for the first time ever in my personal history of computers. This demanded the utmost yogic discipline and restraint not to mention a very stiff upper lip to accept what happened and get back to the task.

And I can't think of a better way to finish than with another verse from *The Dhammapada*:

**The mind is wavering and restless,
difficult to guard and restrain:
let the wise man straighten his mind
as a maker of arrows makes his
arrows straight.**

(*The Dhammapada*, Chapter 3, Verse 1)

Om namah Sivaya

Shirley ॐ

Members' Practice

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

There is no instruction given in this self-directed practice session. Props, books and other resources are available for the use of anyone who attends. Come for 20 minutes or stay for three hours!

IYAC AGM Kelowna 2017

By Judith Mirus

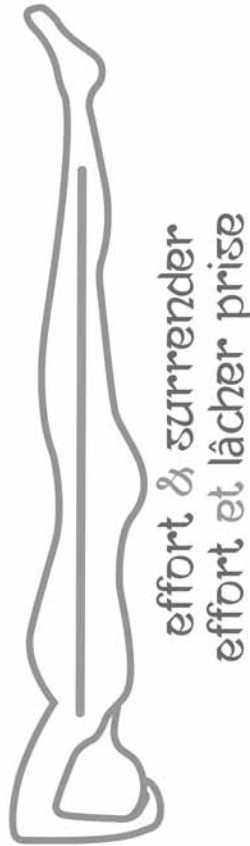
At the IYAC/ACYI Conference in Kelowna this October Teddy Hyndman and I were invited to preface four of the classes, two each, with brief talks on the ‘Deeper Significance of Practice.’ I referred to several sutras and some of their important Sanskrit terms to illustrate how I think Gururji’s teachings are direct reflections of Patanjali’s.

In the first class, I used a portion from an article in *Yoga Rahasya* by Dr. Mel Robins (Vol. 24. No. 2, 2017) to illustrate how Gururji’s approach to *āsana* is as a reflection of Yoga Sutra I.17: *vitarka vicara ananda asmitarupa anugamat samprajnatah*. “Through practice and detachment, four types of awareness develop. Absorption of the consciousness, achieved through engrossment in conjecture, inference and analytical study; synthesis, consideration and discrimination; bliss or elation; and a state of pure being, constitute *samprajnata samadhi*.’ *Samprajnata* means to know accurately, to know actually.

Robins quoted from *The Tree of Yoga*. What Gururji said is a direct and practical description of the mental faculties we must engage in our practice in order to realize the external to internal response to our own bodies in *asana*, Sutra I.17 in action.

In *The Tree of Yoga*, Gururji says, “As you work, you may experience discomfort because of the inaccuracy of your posture. Then you have to learn and digest it. You have to make an effort of understanding and observation. ‘Why am I getting pain at this moment? Why do I not get pain at another moment or with another movement...with this or another part of my body?... How can I get rid of the pain?... How are the muscles behaving on this side and how...on the other side?’ [etc.]...You should go on analyzing and by analysis [and reflection] you will come to understand [*vitarka* and *vicara*]. Analysis in action is required in yoga...You have to see what messages come from the fibres, the muscles, the nerves and the skin of the body while you are doing the pose. Then you can learn. It is not good enough to experience today and analyze tomorrow. That way you have no chance.”

I don’t think it’s a stretch to say this can result in felicity (*ananda*) and self-awareness (*asmitarupa*), with which, through concentrated effort in practice (*abhyasa*) and with detachment (*vairagya*) we may touch the state of knowing accurately, that actualized knowing of *samprajnata*, which is a form of *samadhi* with seeds.



Maybe the notion of being able to experience *samādhi* on such a practical plane seems to diminish its depth. But really, Gururji presents *āsana* as he practiced it as a means to accomplish composure and felicity of thought in practice through the mental skills outlined by Patañjali. I’d like to think that this is a practical taste of *citta vritti nirodhah* [cessation of movements in consciousness].

In her second talk, Teddy reflected on the meaning and meaningfulness of Freedom as significant to our practice. The word ‘freedom’ kept running through my head as the line from an old blues song about Bobby Magee, and I picked up on it for my second talk: “Freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose; nothin’ ain’t worth nothin’ but it’s free.” It may be apocryphal to interpret it in a yoga context, but freedom in Eastern thought, since the *Upanishads*, has been described as pure fullness or perfection (*purna*) or as pure emptiness (*sunya*), both outcomes of how they understood unity, oneness.

This reminded me of Sutra I.33: *maitri, karuna, mudita, upeksanam sukha dukkha punya apunya visayanam cittaprasadanam*. “Through cultivation of friendliness, compassion, joy, and indifference [equanimity] to pleasure and pain, virtue and vice respectively, the consciousness becomes favourably disposed, serene and benevolent.” Gururji adds that, “These qualities keep the mind in a state of well-being.” And also that with this seemingly self-evident form of being contented Patanjali lays the foundation for realizing serenity of mind, which is essential for *citta vritti nirodhah*.

The themes of our conference were effort and surrender. In his words on *asana*, Gururji emphasized deliberate effort, application of intelligence and discipline in action. In his comment on Sutra I.33 he’s drawing attention to it’s corollary: surrender. In effect, I interpret serenity of mind as surrender in action.

Throughout the Sutras Patanjali repeatedly returns to the flavour and means for that kind of serenity. Without disinterest and equanimity (*upeksa*) how can we actually be impartially and uniformly kind and friendly (*maitri*) and compassionate (*karuna*) and practice open-hearted joy (*mudita*); how can we fairly measure virtue and vice, be unattached to pleasure, not blindsided by suffering and the impediments?

I’ve been taught that when there are lists of qualities in the *sastras*, they come in order of importance. The second in the

observances after purity (*sauca*) is contentment (*santosa*), which is the exact opposite of suffering's manifestations.

And the first in the list in Sutra I.33 is *maitri*. It is translated not only as friendliness but interpreted widely in both Hinduism and Buddhism as kindness or loving kindness.

The American novelist Henry James was asked by his nephew what were the three most important things in life. James replied that the first was kindness, the second was kindness and the third was kindness. It's a universal value, a virtue that contributes mightily to peace of mind. ॐ

Effort and Surrender: Theme of Kelowna AGM Conference 2017

By Teddy Hyndman

The essential assumption underlining yoga practice is that the true state of the human spirit is freedom – an inner freedom. In yoga, the freedom of spiritual integrity occurs in the act of discipline itself – somewhat of a paradox. The discipline in our practice requires a very special kind of effort – right effort. Right effort means that it is one of mindfulness (focusing on one thing) and concentration. With this kind of effort we can begin to quieten the fluctuations and the turnings of the mind. All models of spiritual life or personal growth suggest that the mind be calm, that we be present, that we experience the moment.

What does surrender have to do with this? We Westerners have difficulty with the idea of surrender – giving in, or giving up. From an Eastern perspective, surrender means letting go. It is to let go at various levels of our being. We learn in *savasana* to let go of our muscles, bones, skin and then delve deeper to let go of our senses and to let go of our breath and let it breathe us. We are to let go of our thinking minds, the turning of our thoughts. We are to surrender “control”. Control is what we do in our everyday life – and it is important. However, yoga practice suggests we balance the controls. We come to a place of rest – a place where we let go of our controlling everyday identity.

When we let go, or surrender our everyday identity, we let go to a place where we have no expectations, no preferences, no judgements; a place where we relinquish attachments and opinions. Our minds are receptive and open. Guruji says that a practitioner who can “put aside” his everyday identity can access places where no “plump ego” could squeeze through.

It is in these still, quiet moments that we can access places within ourselves we otherwise can't squeeze to. He also says that

in these still, quiet moments we let go of “was”, the memories of the past. We let go of “will be”, the future. It is an infinity of present moments.

Our yoga is a practice of putting aside our “plump egos”. It is a practice concentrating on *asana* and *pranayama* and being present. With practice we will see more clearly, behave more wisely and develop a freedom and lightness of being – that which expresses our true nature. ॐ

Presentation to Judith Mirus, IYAC AGM 2017

By Teddy Hyndman

Judi Mirus attended the Canadian Intensive 1992 (25 years ago) – last Canadian one in Pune and since then has been to Pune 10 -11 times. She has been an active participant in committees founding the CIYTA [Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association] – designing documents for professional development, creating guidelines for assessment and teacher training and helping create by-laws. (2000) She has been VP for a couple of years, Chair of PD Committee and has worked continually over these and subsequent years on the above documents.



Judith Mirus in Pune

She corresponded directly with the B.K.S. Institute about protocols working with pulmonary hypertension students (2008 - 2010) and directly with Geeta about how to work with and teach women with breast cancer.

She, has been and is now the IYAC/ACYI [Canadian/ canadienne Iyengar Yoga association] registrar for RIMYI [Ramami Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute].

In our local world in Edmonton Judi has been active as a teacher trainer and founder of IYTT [Iyengar Yoga Teacher Training] in northern Alberta. She is represented by many of her students here today.

She is also on the board of directors for the Yoga Association of Alberta for the newsletter and the teacher training program.

For her many contributions to Iyengar yoga in Canada, we are pleased to award Judith Mirus honorary member status. ॐ

Delving into the Sutras: What are the Antarayas?

By Leslie Hogg & Barbara Young

During the recent annual general meeting in Kelowna, Barbara Young and I did a seminar on the *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*. Barbara gave some background of the first chapter, and I then introduced the obstacles on reaching the goals of yoga.

The first chapter or *Pada* of the yoga sutras [aphorisms] is a concise summary of what yoga is and the end goal of yoga. Patanjali describes yoga as “the cessation of movements in the consciousness” and the results of practicing yoga as *Samadhi* – the last stage of the eight-fold path of yoga – an “indivisible state of existence”. *Samadhi* also means profound meditation. Thus yoga is the goal and the means of achieving the goal.

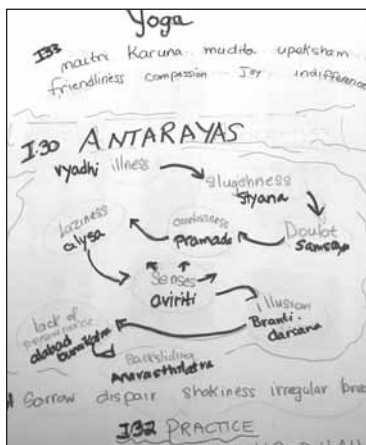
Patanjali explores the nature of the movements (*vyritis*) of consciousness (*citta*) and the causes of these movements which are: correct knowledge, illusion, delusion, sleep and memory. He sets out the disciplines to still these movements: long, uninterrupted, alert practice (*abhyāsa*) and detachment (*vairāgya*) in sutras I.12-16.

The first chapter goes on to describe ways of practice. Patanjali says that obstacles will arise and that meditation on God removes obstacles, (the *antarayas*) These obstacles are disease, sluggishness, doubt, carelessness, idleness, sensory gratification, delusion, lack of perseverance, and lack of progress due to pride or stagnation of practice. Sorrow, despair, unsteadiness of body and irregular breathing also distract the *citta*.

The *antaryas* in Sutra I.30 are called obstacles or disturbances. *Antaryas*:

1. **Disease** – or injury leads to:
2. **Idleness** – disinclination to do anything—can result from the exhaustion from being ill.
3. Then **doubt** arises.
4. **Carelessness** leads to
5. **Laziness/sloth** which can take one towards
6. **Sense gratification**, (get under the quilt with chocolate)
7. Mistaken knowledge or **illusion** arises
8. There is a **lack of perseverance** and
9. One is not able to hold onto what was attained – **back sliding**

If these distractions weren't enough they are followed by a few more in Sutra I.31: sorrow, despair, trembling, and irregular breathing.



Sutra I.32 reminds us again that practice is the way to eliminate the obstacles. The sutra brings us back to practice that appeared in verse I.12. In sutra I.32 it says *eka tattva*, *eka* meaning one, *tattva*: principle. Gururji maintains this would be total surrender to God, which is usually not attainable by ordinary people. The next sutra I.33 offers us more optimistic ideas to overcome obstacles that are more attainable.

Sutra I.33

Maitri karuna mudita upeksam, friendliness, compassion, joy and indifference. Followed by I.34 which gives *pranayama* as the way to still

the mind.

In *Astadala Yogamala*, no. 2, pg. 268, Gururji talks about these obstacles: ...all of us have experienced the dissipation of energy. The nine impediments outlined in verse 30 can be physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual. They can occur at a deep level, but disturbances can effect the surface and can divert our attention from yoga. Sutra I.33-34 lead us out of our despair by cultivating friendliness, compassion joy and indifference and by focusing on the breath.

Physical disease limits and stops one from our practice, languor then arises. Doubt exists and one thinks that all is futile, the body may bend but is one living in an illusion. One is unable to hold on to what has been learned, there is backsliding. The aspirant may stop practicing, Wrong practice can lead to pain, and then one may feel sorrow, This can lead to shakiness and breath is affected. Yoga demands precision to overcome the obstacles. When one practices *pranayama* the same obstacles can arise. But with the single-minded effort, the cessation of fluctuations take place and the dualities disappear, then there is no room for doubt. Practicing *asana* develops an inner courage and discrimination to eradicate the obstacles.

In the session in Kelowna, I showed a word map of these sutras, that I had produced. In trying to remember and understand these concepts, this word picture helped me learn more about how things interconnect. (See photo) I then asked the participants to form smaller groups to give them an opportunity to show in actions, song, or some non-verbal way each of the obstacles.

The creative force and enthusiasm brought some very entertaining and enlivened presentations.

This same section of sutras was discussed in the July 2017 Introductory Teacher Training Intensive in Victoria. I have

worked with intensive groups for over 16 years and found that the wisdom of the group can lead to deeper understandings, as each person brings their own unique perspective. This past summer the group of 15 people spent the week-long intensive together and had time to prepare a presentation for all on the last afternoon.

I asked them to think about:

What is your biggest obstacle on your yoga journey?

Which ones seem to come back again – and then again?

How are they linked to your yoga practice?

How do you find ways that help you get past them?

(credit to the *The Essence of Yoga* by Bernard Bouanchaud for help developing these questions.)

The assignment was to show through charts, diagrams, games, constructions, collage – music or any form of their choice some aspect of these sutras. Each presentation brought out unique insights, sometimes with laughter and song. Some were poignant and personal. See the excerpt from Jessica Lowry's submission. ॐ

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Thanks to Barbara Young and to Annette Whitely

Excerpt from Jessica Lowry's paper on the Antarayas July 2017

...The Obstacle is the Path

Why doubt?

The time I've spent doubting is time I have not been practicing...

But why this doubt...go to into the centre of this-know-this-*samsayat*

My genetics?

Or the heart of the most human obstacle – fear?

Fear of choosing and making the wrong choice?

Fear of doing and failing?

Hmmmmmm

Re-frame

Polarities also human construct

What is no success, no failure – equanimity.

JESSICA LOWRY IS IN TEACHER TRAINING IN LADYSMITH, B.C.

Practice Enrichment Series

January 26, 2018, March 23, 2018

2:00 - 5:00 pm

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

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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.

Each 3-hour session will include teaching enrichment opportunities as well as a wide variety of current and relevant Professional Development topics.

March 24, 2018, April 6, 2018

April 7, 2018, April 27, 2018

Fridays 2:00 -5:00 pm or Saturdays 10:30 am-1:45 pm



IYAC/ACYI ASSESSMENT DATES

January 19-21, Introductory II, Nanaimo, BC

March 16-18, Introductory II, Kelowna, BC

A Summer of Intensives

By Adia Kapoor

This summer I had the good fortune to attend both the Certified Teacher Intensive and the Student Intensive at the IYCV. I have been attending teacher training intensives every summer since I joined the teacher training program in 2011, starting with the intensive for teachers in training, then for certified teachers. However, it had been many years since I attended the Student Intensive. To attend both in one month was a luxury!

I am grateful for the experience of having attended the student intensive years ago, prior to becoming a teacher of Iyengar Yoga. I am even more grateful to have had the experience of attending this intensive today, when I am both a student and a teacher. In the Iyengar tradition, we are students first, and remain humble students even when we are given permission to teach. Having the good fortune to take time out to reflect on my teaching and on my own practice this August provided unique perspectives on my *sadhana* [practice].

First, through our week of practice and study with Ann Kilbertus and Louie Ettling, we had the opportunity to try teaching poses we had never taught before, such as *padmasana* and *urdhva dhanurasana*. While I am familiar with these poses through my own practice, trying to teach them to others for the first time made me feel like a raw beginner! Then, through our week with Ty Chandler and Lauren Cox, we practiced what to me are familiar, basic poses, but approached them in an intermediate way.

In teaching, I was challenged to break complex poses down into basic actions, and to guide students through those actions with clear instruction. We explored how to make complexity approachable, to help students go deeper into their explorations safely, and to observe the students keenly in order to guide them appropriately. Teaching beyond the basic poses requires an attention to *ahimsa* [non-violence], to ensure students are not harming themselves and working wisely against their own limitations.

As a student, I was challenged to explore more subtle actions and refinements in elementary poses, such as the movement of the spine in *utthita trikonasana*, and to work with greater determination and awareness. The practice was playful, but demanding. Although many instructions were not new to us as students, we were asked to work with more intensity, towards longer timings in the poses, and with different props to create new openings and greater refinement.

What both intensives had in common are demanding work, and a common goal: to understand the skillful work required in *asana* to prepare the body for *pranayama* [rhythmic breath control]. All our senior teachers challenged us to develop our *pranayama* practice. Teachers and students alike, we all savoured the fruits of our labours in daily explorations of *pranayama*.

Thank you to all of our teachers for two exhilarating weeks of practice! ॐ



Utthita parsvokonasana



Virabhadrasana II



Parvatasana arms in swastikasana

ADIA HAS BEEN A STUDENT OF IYENGAR YOGA SINCE 2001 AND HOLDS A INTERMEDIATE JUNIOR 1 TEACHING CERTIFICATE.



A Critical Teacher

By Luci Yamamoto

*Why are your feet apart?
You're only halfway. Bend your knees
more!
Lift your chest! Lift!*

I received these corrections (and more) from Chris Saudek during her recent workshop in Victoria. I wasn't surprised. I'd met this master Iyengar yoga teacher at three prior workshops, and I expected sharp feedback. She doesn't miss a thing, and she doesn't hold back. She points out errors; she insists on effort. Like most Iyengar yoga teachers, Chris is sparing with praise. If she walks by me in silence, it's a positive sign.

If unfamiliar with Iyengar yoga, this method of teaching might seem harsh and scolding. Once, I watched a video of another senior Iyengar yoga teacher and, among the comments, I read, "jeez I thought yoga was supposed be relaxing" and "where is the love..."

I had to laugh at those reactions. What do people want from yoga teachers anyway?

A critical teacher

A critical person is commonly thought to be negative and carping. But the definition of "critical" that I prefer is Merriam-Webster's 2c: *exercising or involving careful judgment or judicious evaluation*.

To me, the best teachers are very critical—and also quick about it. First, they readily spot students' strengths and weaknesses and instinctively know how to guide them toward improvement.

Second, the best teachers convey what they see, especially if they see errors and confusion. Giving "positive" feedback is simple and stress-free. Giving "negative" feedback is more complicated. A correction must be accurate (obviously) and immediate (for effective learning). It must also be appropriate for the student's maturity and condition—for it would be unreasonable to overcorrect beginners or those with injuries or illnesses.

Being critical is demanding. Critical teachers cannot be on autopilot, but

must process myriad thoughts while teaching. And they must clearly articulate their feedback, sometimes repeatedly, to get the message across. It's much easier to be a minimalist teacher, who sticks to giving general instructions and correcting only egregious errors.

Of course, criticism shouldn't be excessive and cruel. Teachers must have a sense of proportionality. A screaming tirade for an *asana* lapse is ridiculous. There is no justification for abusive behavior.

Criticism versus praise

As mentioned, Chris is liberal with corrections. I find her in-your-face approach very effective. Knowing that I'm being watched heightens my alertness (and, with Chris, I'm on high alert). I work harder, I pay stricter attention, I perform poses more precisely, I hold them longer and push my limits.

Praise can be nice to hear, but does it really enhance learning? I once took a random power yoga class, in which I heard words like "beautiful!" and "fantastic!" Everyone got compliments.

Ostensibly such feedback is helpful and encouraging.

But its feel-good effects are only momentary. Instead, by correcting and criticizing, a teacher is actually urging me to fulfill my potential. Criticism is not an insult. Rather, it tells me, “You can do better. You can do more. Don’t settle. Be your best self.”

Praise can be counterproductive

In “How Not to Talk to Your Kids,” a *New York Magazine* article, Po Bronson discusses the breakthrough studies by Carol Dweck, Stanford professor and author of *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. She found that kids who are praised for their innate abilities (rather than for their efforts) become preoccupied with looking smart and with avoiding mistakes. They see struggle as a stigma. They have no way to deal with failure if their natural gifts prove insufficient.

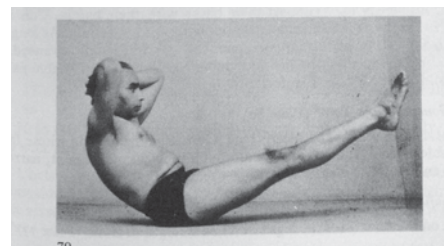
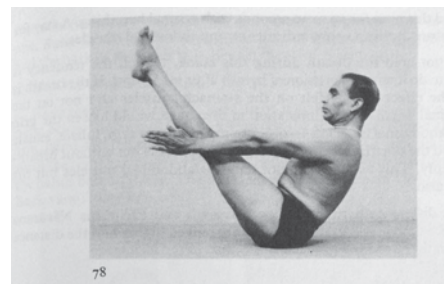
In contrast, kids praised for their efforts believe that they can improve themselves through commitment and hard work. They are undaunted by challenges—and they are resilient during setbacks. Dweck’s findings contradicted

the prevailing notion that all praise boosts self-esteem.

If a yoga teacher frequently praises a student’s textbook form, the student might end up overvaluing physical perfection. Other students, less experienced or less adept, might undervalue their own efforts. When even experienced practitioners are corrected, however, they are motivated to keep improving, while novices see that mastery is elusive.

Internal versus external motivation

To avoid being overly influenced by criticism or praise, we must be self aware and grounded. If we know what we can and cannot do, why would we be floored by other people’s opinions? If we have a solid yoga practice, we won’t be dejected by strong words. I received Chris’s “lift your chest” admonition during a second or third *Paripurna Navasana* (illustrated above, plate 78) which we entered with straight legs from *Dandasana* and held for an eternity! I’ve always found this pose doable (unlike *Ardha Navasana* (plate 79), which is torture) and momentarily thought to myself, “Don’t I get credit for my 60-degree angles?” But,



solid pose or not, she’s right. I can do better, I can do more.

I’m generally a bit thin skinned. My first reaction to criticism is to defend myself. But I’ve developed a thick skin in two major realms of my life: writing and yoga. I am unfazed by a critical reader who blankets one of my drafts with red marks. Likewise I accept—and welcome—yoga corrections from a critical teacher. ॐ

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

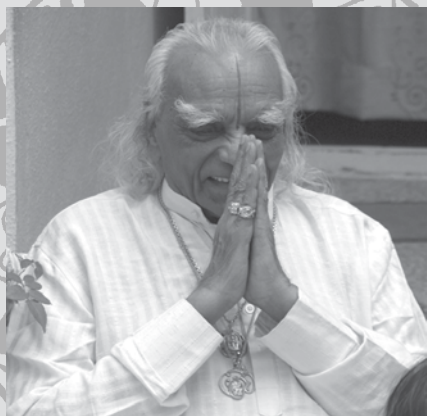


PHOTO: KEVIN MASON

In the Light of Yoga

Anniversary Celebration of B.K.S. Iyengar’s Birthday
December 10, 2017, 12:30 – 2:30 pm

Come celebrate the anniversary of Gururji’s birth with a special class. Tea and birthday cake served after class.

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

Practice to Learn and Learn to Practice

By Mary Dunn

“Words fail to convey the total value of yoga. It has to be experienced.” – B.K.S. Iyengar

The Sanskrit word *Yog*, means to join or yoke. Yoga practice is a means to make oneself whole by training the mind and uncovering the profound core of being. But how is a state of integration accessed and trained through the repeated and refined practice of *asana* [a seat, posture, position]?

The practice of Iyengar Yoga begins by training in the postures we do already, the postures of daily life – standing, sitting, and lying down. We learn how to move, reach, bend, twist, and release in a mindful and balanced way. We learn to actively engage movement, action, perception, stability, and tranquility. The teaching makes us aware of possibilities and strengths we did not know we had. It also shows us habits that impede or discourage us – as well as ones that sustain and nourish us.

The postures of daily life are then stretched into less familiar territory. In inversions we learn to turn our perceptions and actions upside down as we change the direction of our circulatory and muscular-skeletal systems. We expose more of ourselves to challenges as we bend backward, mobilizing and energizing the spine and central nervous system. We twist more intensely and watch rigidity dissipate while stimulating the digestive system and increasing circulation. We balance with



*Mary Dunn (1942-2008)
Senior founding teacher
of Iyengar Institutes
in New York City and
California*

confidence on our hands as well as our feet. We gain peace cultivating stillness and silence.

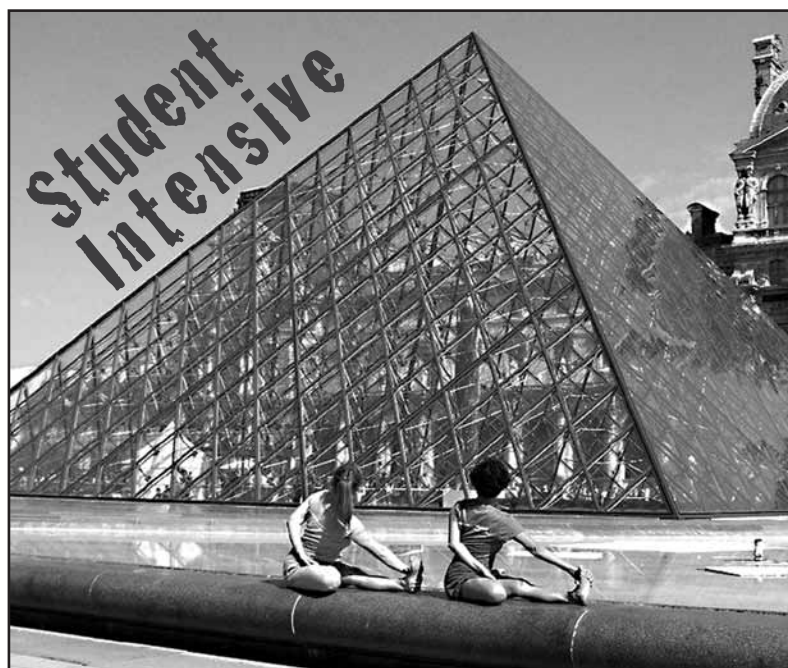
The postures reveal more and more of what we are, how we function, and what we can be. Refined repetition naturalizes conscious change and integration in the *asanas*. As the *asanas* increase in their challenge, we progress to meet that challenge. We practice sustained postures to learn clarity of purpose and effortless effort.

Observation reveals how habits of the mind affect attention and distraction. Distractions become avoidable as we learn to put aside what is not in the moment. Times of stillness and peace extend and expand.

Practice in all the elements of the *asana* draws us to the source of our own energy. The experience of breath and breathing harmonizes our physical, physiological, mental, emotional, and spiritual life. *Asana* practice allows perception and action to make way for the integrating life force of the breath.

The study and practice of the lifeline of the breath allow us to begin to penetrate the space, rhythm, and nourishment of the inner being.

We learn to practice, and practice what we learn. ॐ



With Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler

August 27 - 31, 2018

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 2, 2018.

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.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika

Swami Svatmarama's Medieval Manual on Hatha Yoga

By Annette Whitely

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* is important, as it is a summary of the tradition of *hatha* yoga as understood between the 12th – 14th centuries. Swami Svatmarama incorporates ideas from the *Yoga Sutra*, the *Yoga Upanisads*, the *Purana* and other scriptures. He names a lineage of sages that have come before him that have practiced and passed on the art of *hatha* yoga and so establishes that this tradition is ancient and not a new understanding of yoga. Compared to Patanjali's sutras, which are rich in philosophy, but short on practical descriptions, Swami Svatmarama's text (as translated by Hans Ulrich Rieker) is a practical handbook on how to do the various yogic practices (*asana*, *pranayama* and *mudras*) and also describes the physical, mental and spiritual effects of these practices on the aspiring yogi.¹

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* defines yoga and describes the ultimate goal of yoga. Yoga means union. *Pradipika* is Sanskrit for light or illumination. The two syllables '*hatha*' have multiple translations and *hatha* yoga means the union of these binary meanings. The literal meaning of *hatha* yoga is the union of sun and moon. The deeper meaning is the union of all aspects of being – the two nervous systems, the energy fields of the upper and lower body, the in-breath and out-breath, and the soul and mind. *Hatha* also is "to win over one's will."² Thus this text can be translated as *Light on Yoga* – yoga in its largest meaning. The practice of yoga conquers both *prakrti* – the physical/ephemeral part of being, and *purusa* – the soul or eternal part of being. These practices lead to the ultimate goal of yoga, which is to quiet the "mind, intellect and ego, so that attention is drawn in towards the Self."³

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* influence is obvious in the writings of B.K.S. Iyengar, from the title of his seminal book, *Light on Yoga*, to the very practical instructions in this book of how and when to practice *asana* and *pranayama*.

This text emphasizes the intimate relationship between *asana/pranayama* and the realization of *samadhi*. Thus, *hatha* yoga is not just a physical practice, but also a spiritual journey.

ANNETTE WHITELY LIVES IN THE LADYSMITH AREA AND IS IN HER THIRD YEAR OF TEACHER TRAINING.

¹ *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, Rieker. Introduction by B.K.S. Iyengar

² P96, Basic guidelines

³ *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, Rieker, Introduction by B.K.S. Iyengar, Bandhas and Madras section

To the IYCV Board and Membership

Thank you for the generous award of the B.K.S. Iyengar scholarship towards my studies in Pune in November 2017. It is an honour to receive the financial support of the IYCV. Study in Pune requires much sacrifice and commitment, not only at the financial level. Having the support of the community in undertaking a journey of this magnitude is priceless.

With gratitude, Adia Kapoor



Thank you to:

- Laine Canivet for steadily and skilfully repairing all our stretched and fraying blankets.
- Jess Paffard for her contribution of a book to the library
- The Kelowna group for doing such a fine job of hosting the IYAC AGM.
- Laine Canivet, the Board, and Ty Chandler for their work on the video for the Centre. Check out the video yourself on our Facebook page or at <http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca/about/> and click "Watch the video".

Interim Classes during Winter Break

December 23 - December 26: **CLOSED**

December 27 - December 30:
All Levels Class 10:30 am - Noon

December 31: **CLOSED**

The Subtleties of Sarvangasana

By Arti H. Mehta

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM YOGA RAHASYA, VOL.10, NO.4; 2003

Sarvangasana is referred to as the “queen of asanas”, a rare gem in the three worlds as it brings about an overall effect in the practitioner’s body as well as mind. Its regular practice brings about gradual changes such that the practitioner develops the subtle qualities of patience and emotional stability. The asana itself requires a lot of subtle adjustments and is not merely a “shoulder balance”. Often, we tend to perform the pose mechanically. To give an example, we use a belt around the upper arms but we do not know why we use or what we learn from it. This article concentrates on some of the subtle adjustments of sarvangasana with an explanation on why we do it. The reader, however, is advised to refer to *Light on Yoga* and *Yoga In Action* for the basic methodology for these asana.

Why do we teach sarvangasana before we teach sirsasana?

Sarvangasana creates confidence in the practitioner to do the topsy turvy poses. In both the asanas the legs are in the air and so they wobble. But, there is an “earth” quality in the legs in sarvangasana which is absent in sirsasana. A student feels more stable and therefore we teach sarvangasana first.

How can you grow intellectually, sensitively, sensibly to understand the unknown within the core?

Yoga is the blending and coordination of the action of the motor nerves with the sensory nerves. When the motor nerves go very close to the sensory nerves, the sensory nerves get jarred and lose their feelings and perceptions. When that happens, wait for a while and allow the mind to recede from the extension in the motor nerves by your voluntary action. This will then allow your sensory nerves to guide you on what’s to be done.

The sensation of the motor nerves coming together with the sensory nerves without their rubbing each other is the guide. This will make you grow intellectually, sensitively, sensibly to understand the unknown within the core.

How do you learn the right action on the legs in sarvangasana?


The correct action on the legs is learnt when the legs are slightly spread apart. The sensation that you get in the legs when they are apart serve as a guide when you bring the legs closer. Observe the direction of the skin when you spread your legs apart. The skin of the bottom leg faces the front but the skin on the top leg (frontal thigh) faces the sides. The skin in the bottom of the legs guides you towards the “correct” positioning of the legs in sarvangasana where the legs are joined and kept close to each other. Sensitively, turn the skin on the top of thighs to face the front. Use the motor nerves in the bottom of the legs to bring the legs closer so that skin in this part of the leg continues facing the front.

How does one join the legs in sarvangasana?

Spread your legs apart. Harden the motor nerves on the bottom of the outer side of the lower legs and revolve the skin of the top legs inwards for the legs to come closer. “Keeping the motor nerves strong, the sensory nerves should circularly move for the motor nerves to come closer without creating passivity”. Pound the bottom of the outer side of the thigh to revolve the skin of the top leg inwards for the thigh to face the front. “Where there is pounding, is the stable brain which should not shake and where it’s revolving is the mobile brain. Lengthen the skin as you join the legs. When the skin is lengthened, the flesh has to lengthen. “Do not work from the motor nerves. They have to follow the sensory nerves”.

How do you know whether the feeling in the legs is correct or not in sarvangasana ?

You should lift the skin from the inner ankle towards the heel for the calf muscles to stretch out like a stencil. Then look at the inner side of the ankle joint of each leg and find out whether it is in line with the respective eye. If it is not in line then lock the stable point at the bottom of the thigh, get the outer side of the ankle joint to move by taking the sensory nerves inwards. “The inner legs go up, the outer legs do not go up. The outer legs have



NEW YEAR'S DAY
Timed Practice
With Ty Chandler

ALL LEVELS
January 1, 2018
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
2018 IYCV members: Free
Non-members: \$40 + GST for
Not recommended for beginners

Become a 2018 member or renew your membership by Friday, December 22, and register for this 2 hour All Levels Timed Practice with Ty Chandler for FREE!

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

to be brought in line with the inner leg. That is meditation”.

How should the knees be in sarvangasana?

Watch how kneecap naturally behaves in the pose. The outer kneecap tends to go out. Roll the outer knee inwards. Watch the movement of the knee. Does the entire knee feel gripped?

If not, it means that the nerves are lifeless at the back of the inner leg near the bottom of the buttocks. Create life there and you can grip the entire knee. The sensory nerves at the outer side of the knee go towards the ligament. Roll the quadricep muscles from outside inwards so the center of the quadricep muscle is exactly in line with the nipples. The knees should get broader as if they are extending from side to side.



How do you ascend the back of the legs up? Anil Kapoor in chair sarvangasana

Keep the buttock bone away from the tailbone. Then the groins roll in, the pelvic head gets in and the back of the legs go up.

How do you adjust the trapezius muscles in sarvangasana?

Place exactly the head of the trapezium on the blankets. The muscles should roll towards the kidneys and the skin should move backwards.

How should the triceps be in sarvangasana?

The outer banks and the inner banks of the triceps should be evenly touching the blanket. The arch of the thumb helps you to learn how to master *sarvangasana*. If it does not touch the back then you have to use the inner arch to make the outer arch strong and stable. The triceps should be used to raise the ribs and the buttocks up. Nail the triceps on the blankets and then with the help of your fingers (which are placed on the back) charge your back.

How should the biceps be in sarvangasana?

The bottom of the biceps and the top of the biceps should run parallel to each other. “The attention and elongation of the inner upper arm is the brain in *sarvangasana*”.

How do you adjust the fingers on the back?

Before you go into the pose, the pores of the skin at the back coil in but after you are in the pose it does not coil in but it opens out. Move the ribs where your fingers are placed towards

the front and then ascend the ribs to create an “awakening” in the chest. Do not rest on your hands. Manipulate your back ribs from the intercostal muscles by lifting the intercostal muscles along with the bone.

How do you adjust the cervical spine so as to remove the bulge between the shoulders?

When you stand erect, a portion at the top of the back bulges out. This bulge can be rectified while doing *sarvangasana*. Take two thin sticky mats and roll them lengthwise. Place these on the inner side on the top of the back of the shoulders. The top of the back that was initially convex becomes concave. To make the neck concave, move the muscles of the outer side of the upper arms of both the hands closer towards each other.

How should you practice sarvangasana you have got neck pain?

If you have neck pain you can use a blanket folded three times vertically under each shoulder while practicing at home.

How do you know whether you are doing correct sarvangasana or not?

Watch the center of the abdomen and the outer abdominal viscera. The outer abdominal viscera is down whereas the center is up. So, poke the inner arch of the thumb into the body for the outer abdominal walls to come up. That’s how you learn *sarvangasana*.

Why do you use a belt for the elbows?

The belt is not used merely to support. You use the belt to bring intelligence to the biceps and triceps. With the belt around the upper arms, pin the lateral biceps down, move them towards each other by coiling the skin of the biceps towards the ground. If the skin cuts the belt, you have to roll the upper arms inwards so that it neither cuts the belt nor allows the arms to go out.

How do you adjust the belt and work on the belt?

Sit. Take the belt around the arms at the elbows. Lie down after the belt is put on. The belt gives a sense of direction to the fibres of the forearms. Are they parallel or are they cutting in? The one that is cutting in has to turn out and the moment it turns out the elbow goes in. The reaction of the adjustment of the biceps on the belt is to be learnt. The bottom edge of the belt touches the arm but the top edge does not. Both the edges of the belt should

be even touching the arm. Now, move your intellectual intelligence on the somic intelligence to revolve from the inner side of the biceps to the outer side of the biceps. Only turn the motor and the sensory nerves. The inner, the top and the back of the arms equally touch the belt when you rotate the biceps from inside out.

Why do you use a belt for the middle of the thighs?

The belt is not just used to tie the legs and keep them straight. You have to observe how the sensory nerves in one leg are almost touching the belt without any constriction on the skin and in the other leg the skin is squeezing the thread of the belt in such a way that it does not allow the sensory nerves to open. Feel the sensory nerves on the outer side of the thighs where the lower end of the belt and the top end of the belt touches. When you observe the belt, there is a slight fold on the belt. Now gradually stretch using the motor nerves for the sensory nerves to act more than the motor nerves. The fold disappears automatically. The belt also helps to move the quadricep muscles backwards.

How do you go into the pose using a belt for the legs and arms?

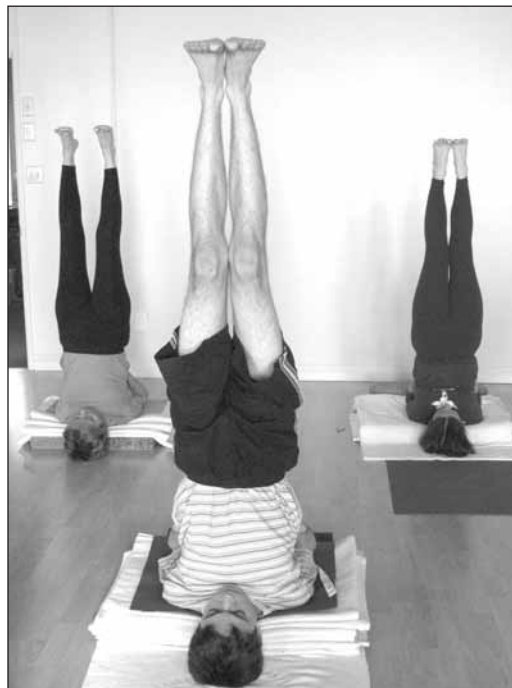
Tie the belt for the legs and lie down. Bend the knees and get the legs closer. Let your intelligence flow into your calf muscles. Let the shoulders roll out. Keep the elbows in line with the upper arms. Extending the back of the arms, bend your elbows and extend the upper arms towards the elbows and open the top chest. Now, keeping the top chest alert, exhale, bend your knees and quickly go up into the pose with the hands on your back.

How should the energy flow in the body in sarvangasana?

It is a circular coiling movement of energy within the body. The energy flows from the back of the legs up to the heels and then descends down from the metatarsals towards the front. It is a circular action from behind. Energy from the back of the heel goes to the buttocks and from the top of the chest comes to reach and receive that cycle of the energy flowing down and from the frontal chest the energy goes up to the pelvic girdle. It is a circular coiling movement of the energy in the body.

Why do you sometimes feel drained in sarvangasana?

This happens because the chest does not open out. The side of the chest which is in line with the nipples is too narrow while



Ian Cruikshank in salamba sarvangasana

the top chest is broad. To correct this, lie down on the floor in preparation for *sarvangasana* with the blankets supporting your shoulders. Extend your hands behind and roll the triceps towards you. Keep the palms on the back, press the elbows down on the floor and raise the armpits of the chest. This creates space in your chest.

How to broaden the chest?

Pinning the triceps towards the ground, place the hands on the back and lift the inner tailbone straight up. The chest broadens. The importance of *sarvangasana* is it releases the glandular system.

Why do you need to learn inverted poses in order to learn pranayama?

Sarvangasana, *sirsasana* and other inverted poses help to develop the area of the sides of the chest. This area is the storehouse of energy which is important for *pranayama*. These poses help to conserve energy and are not draining poses. ॐ

COMPILED FROM THE TEACHINGS OF GURUJI DURING HIS 80TH BIRTHDAY AND THE SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS OF RIMYI.

how to practice with Leslie Hogya

START THE NEW YEAR WITH A HOME PRACTICE

Saturday, January 13, 2018, 1 – 3 pm, For all levels

\$15 + GST for Members

\$35 + 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.



In Appreciation of Hilda Pezzaro

By Shirley Daventry French

Hilda Pezarro née Sargent, long-time friend and colleague on the path of yoga, died in North Vancouver recently at the age of eighty-six. Born in Namibia in 1931, Hilda spent her school years in South Africa, married at age nineteen, travelled extensively, and eventually emigrated to Canada.

Derek and I met Hilda for the first time in 1976 while we were students in a yoga development course at Yasodhara Ashram. It was a three-month residential course and Hilda, who was living in Calgary at the time, had taken this course a couple of years previously. She came expecting to be a teaching assistant to Swami Radha only to learn that Swami Radha felt she was capable of being the primary teacher. A little taken aback, Hilda did a masterful job.

During this same visit she also taught one of the early morning *hatha* yoga classes based on a class she had taken with B.K.S. Iyengar in London a few months previously. It was impressive and startlingly different. This class was the first time I had been asked to pull my kneecaps up. We also did *utthita trikonasana* and *virabhadrasana* I and II for the first time holding them what seemed like an eternity. At that time we were more used to holding as long as you were comfortable!

We met Hilda again when she was one of three students from Calgary lucky to have a place in the 1979 Intensive with B.K.S. Iyengar. Classes were very demanding and after class we had many meals together where we laughed hysterically like schoolchildren just let out of school. Hilda had a wicked sense of humour and an infectious laugh.

My next contact with Hilda was in Calgary when she was one of the prime organisers of a conference called *Challenge to Change*. Derek and I had

been invited to teach there along with Angela Farmer from England and Ramanand Patel. Swami Radha was one of the keynote speakers.

Thereafter Hilda's and my paths crossed at many a yoga event in Pune, across Canada and throughout North America.

In 1984 I learned that Hilda was moving to Montreal because of her husband Theo's work. And it so happened that in that summer I attended a yoga course in Pescadero, California with Ramanand Patel. I was sharing a room with Marie-Andrée Morin, a yoga teacher from Montreal. It was her first experience of Iyengar Yoga and she was eager to learn more so she enquired if I knew an Iyengar teacher in Montreal. I put her in touch with Hilda, and so began a strong tradition of Iyengar Yoga in Quebec!

After a year or so Hilda moved back to western Canada and ended up living in Vancouver where she quickly became involved in the Iyengar community there.

Hilda was also a vital force in the creation of the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada. During the 1993 convention in Toronto where Gurujī was Guest of Honour, Hilda and I served as his Entourage Committee. In our opinion this was the best possible duty because we got to spend much of the day with him including meals at his residence. Each mealtime was a gift in itself because we listened to many an impromptu discourse on the art and science of yoga: how to refine its practice, how to bring it into all aspects of life, how to interpret philosophical concepts—served with much humility, curiosity and humour.

One of the highlights of our time on this Entourage Committee was a trip to Niagara Falls with Gurujī

where we did everything it is possible for a visitor to do there including a stormy trip on the *Maid of the Mist*, all of us including Gurujī resplendent in bright blue oilskins! It poured with rain and the wind howled all day, but nothing dampened Gurujī's spirits. His acceptance, tolerance and endurance uplifted the spirits of all of us privileged to share this experience with him.

Most significantly during this 1993 visit to Toronto, we were also in his presence as he spoke clearly and consistently on several occasions of his desire for Canada to formalise our national association, adopt the guidelines and syllabi he had drawn up, and begin certification and assessment.

As we moved to follow his wishes, there was fierce opposition in some communities. However, a majority of the country wanted to move towards certification and assessment in accordance with Gurujī's wishes. A committee was established to look into implementation of the process and Hilda was appointed as chairperson. She did her job well and by the time the next Canadian group went to Pune everything was in place. Hilda was awarded one of the first honorary lifetime memberships in our national association in appreciation of her efforts in this regard.

Gurujī awarded Iyengar Yoga teaching certificates to eleven long-time Canadian students, Hilda Pezarro among them. These were signed and presented by him during the Canadian Intensive in Pune in 1997. Hilda had not been able to come to Pune on this occasion because of health issues, but as Gurujī gave me her certificate to present back in Canada, he spoke of her maturity. This group of teachers became the first assessors.

Ill health of Hilda's husband Theo and later her own health prohibited her from serving as an assessor other than a few times at the very beginning. However, we often deferred to her for counsel in difficult situations.

Hilda was a bright spirit in Canadian yoga, loved and respected by all who met her. For me personally I shall always treasure the adventures we shared, the humour which she was able to bring into the most sober situations, her mischievous laugh and bright spirit.

Hilda and Theo had four children: two daughters and two sons. Theo predeceased her, but on behalf of her friends in Victoria and colleagues throughout Canada, I should like to send light to her children and grandchildren in honour of a great and gracious lady, Hilda Pezzaro. ॐ



Looking for a gift, small or large?

Look no further! Check out our own 2018 Calendar as well as blankets, blocks, and bolsters through to straps and an array of books and CDs.

Our Gift Certificates can be used towards classes and passes as well.

Two Victoria Teachers Honored

By Leslie Hogya



Local teachers Marlene Miller and Carole Miller (not related) were recently honoured at The Iyengar yoga association of Canada (IYAC/ACYI) annual meeting and conference in Kelowna.

The association has been giving honorary lifetime memberships to members who have been founding members of the association and worked in various capacities to promote the work of B.K.S. Iyengar around the country. This year the IYAC/ACYI board decided on two different designations to give recognition for service. One is a lifetime membership; the other is distinguished member award, which honors recipients with a one year membership.

Carole Miller was honoured with the distinguished member award this year to recognize her role in helping to ignite the interest in Iyengar yoga in the country and in her community of

Victoria. Carole went to Pune in the first Canadian intensive in 1982. She was in the group of seventeen people who were given the opportunity to be assessed and given their first certificates in 1998 in Vancouver. In following years

she was busy with career responsibilities, and eventually was teaching drama at the University of Victoria. Through her persistence, in 2002, she was able to offer yoga as a credit course at the university. This course is now taught twice a year, once in the winter term by Ann Kilbertus, and Carole does a spring term in May. This course involves future teachers, and health professionals in the study of the eight limbs of yoga and the principles of the Iyengar method and was one of the first of its kind in Canada. (Read more about Carole in the summer 2017 issue of the newsletter.)

Congratulations to you both! ॐ

Tribute to Marlene Miller

By Nancy Searing



Can you imagine being at the Iyengar Institute in Pune and being so terrified of B.K.S. Iyengar and the whole experience that you seriously just want to go home!

This is a tribute to a person who had that experience, Marlene Miller. I wasn't with her on her first trip to the Institute in 1982 to witness her terror, but I know from the future unfolding of her life that she was able to face her fears and tap into the inspiration of that experience in

a way that led her to a life dedicated to Iyengar Yoga.

I am forever grateful that my first teacher was Marlene. Her compassion, skill and dedication to creating positive change in her students changed my life.

Marlene began her yoga practice in Calgary when she was in her late 20s. After a few sessions of non-Iyengar classes, a friend talked her into trying an Iyengar Yoga class with Hilda Pezzaro. Within minutes in that class, Marlene had an "aha"

moment. She knew that yoga was the path for her and that she wanted to become a yoga teacher.

At the auspicious age of 33 she took a six-month leave from her job to pursue the yoga teacher course at the Yasodhara Ashram under the guidance of Swami Radha. Three months later, knowing she wanted to live in a community where she had access to the work of both B.K.S. Iyengar and Swami Radha she moved to Victoria, where Shirley Daventry French was following both teachers. Soon after arriving, with Shirley's encouragement, Marlene began teaching. That was in 1979.

That first fateful trip to the Iyengar Institute took place in 1982. While Marlene was petrified, especially because she had been given a spot directly in front of Guruji where she was to stay for the full month of classes, she found strength in the fact that not only Shirley and Hilda were with her, but Carole Miller, Maureen and Bruce Carruthers and Felicity Green were some of the other only 60 students in the class. Marlene returned to the Institute 3 years later and then another 9 or 10 times most recently in 2015. While each trip to the Institute brought a new level of growth for Marlene, it was the first two trips, where she was taught directly by Guruji, that hold a particular significance for her. Being in Guruji's presence and being taught directly by him were momentous events in Marlene's life.

In 1997, Marlene was a member of the 1st wave of Canadian teachers to be certified. These certifications were awarded directly by Mr. Iyengar at the Institute in Pune and Marlene received her Intermediate Junior 1 certification. The Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada/ Association canadienne de yoga Iyengar (IYAC /ACYI) was being formed around the same time. Marlene immediately began to train as an assessor while continuing her personal practice and development. She has since pursued and

been awarded certification through to Intermediate Senior 2 in 2013.

Since her first certification, Marlene has been consistently active in IYAC/ACYI, not only as an assessor, but also on the board in a number of capacities including the finance and membership committees and coordinator of membership directory publication. As a member of the professional development committee, she took on the role of chair for many years. Notably, for a number of years, Marlene took on the huge never ending job refining and developing the assessment and certification procedures document and later served as an advisor to the continuing work on that document.

Simultaneous, to her commitment to IYAC/ACYI, Marlene has been dedicated to the development of the Iyengar Yoga Centre Victoria, where she has served as President, Secretary, workshop coordinator, and on the Newsletter committee. Since around 2000 to the present she has taken the mentorship role in training many teachers through the Iyengar Yoga Centre Victoria Teacher Training program. Marlene's dedication to teaching Iyengar Yoga in Victoria has been consistent from 1979 to today.

Without Marlene the Peninsula Yoga Centre in Sidney, BC would not exist. After living and teaching in the Sidney area since 1980, and lugging boxes of props to and from her car to various teaching sites many times a week, her devotion to Iyengar Yoga was recognized and supported by her Peninsula students. The desire of Marlene's students to have a dedicated space to hold classes was the impetus to create PenYoga Society in 2003. Since that time, Marlene has been the heart and soul of our Society.

I know that Marlene's yoga life has not been without its struggles, struggles that were tempered by fruits of her practice. As her confidence grew she learned to stand up for herself, let go of long held opinions and courageously try

new approaches in teaching and accept the consequences, successful or not, with humility.

Marlene's creative and innovative approach to teaching, her perseverance, dedication, sacrifice and many acts of karma yoga have not only been a great influence in my life and the lives of many others, but have been instrumental in the promotion of Iyengar Yoga in Canada.

With gratitude and deep appreciation Marlene was awarded an honorary membership in IYAC/ACYI at the AGM in Kelowna, October 2017. ॐ



Winter Solstice Workshop With Ty Chandler

**December 20 & 21, 2017,
5:30 - 7:30 pm**

FIRST NIGHT:
forward bend practice
with inversions.

SECOND NIGHT:
backbend practice
with inversions.

Not recommended for beginners.

Fees:

One night:

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

Both nights:

\$55 + GST IYCV members,
\$65 + GST non-members

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

Syzygy (or What I Did on My Summer Vacation)

By Karin Dayton

My husband, Simon, and I went to Shaniko Oregon in August to witness the solar eclipse. Our destination, “the path of totality,” a seventy mile swathe cutting across the state’s high desert. An avid amateur astronomer, Simon explained that a partial eclipse, even a ninety nine point nine percent eclipse, while interesting, is nothing compared to what is known in Astronomy as “syzygy”, or, “the perfect alignment of three celestial bodies”, (a different dictionary defines the ancient greek word as, “to yoke with the sun”).

As the study of alignment is of immense import within astronomy, so to is the word synonymous with the practice of Iyengar yoga.¹ But, to be honest, I have wondered over the years, just what is alignment... exactly? In class I think my elbow is pretty straight, I receive an adjustment. I use lines on the floor, the edges of my mat, re-grip my knee caps, stretch, balance, press, twist, lift, and breathe, yet receive an adjustment. And, while a marked improvement say from last year, my ninety nine point nine percent *trikonansa* is still not...quite situated in yoga’s path of totality. The teacher directs my attention to Gururji’s Light On Yoga photographs, she offers me a block, strap, encouragement...hope.

And like the study of astronomy, the number three is of equal significance to the yogi. What is yoga but the cosmic union of body, mind and breath, what is human nature but an admixture of the *gunas: sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. The sacred syllable *aum* contains three intertwining

letters, just as Hinduism’s understanding of God is the triad of Brahma, Siva, Vishnu.² As if in rough seas the buffeted yogi navigates the rocky shores of past and future in their quest for the present moment, to stay the course. One inference gleaned from Patanjali’s first sutra, 1.1 “*atha yoga yoga-nusasanam*” is that yoga is always in the now.

Parked at the side of a dry country road, nervously anticipating the rare conjunction of earth, moon and sun, when, as if in an ancient temple, the morning sky and surrounds dimmed to a mystically deep orange. I contemplated the encroachment of the moon’s shadow and considered the minutest of percentages. Worried about looking at the sun with a naked eye, I asked Simon, “but how will I know the eclipse is absolutely for sure for sure one hundred percent total?” “Oh, you’ll know” he replied with utmost assuredness. All around us spectacled faces turned skyward, watched, waiting in a hush of collective awe. Suddenly, the sky was dark and the birds were silent. Then, from all around I heard the call indicating totality, “Bailey’s beads!”³ and Simon flung off his glasses too pointing up, “Look, look!” he said. Still, I was afraid to look. “Look, look,” the sun was saying. Directly above I sensed its looming presence but look at the sun? I was reminded fearfully of Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, “if a thousand suns should rise all at once In the sky, Such splendour would resemble The splendour of that great Being.”⁴

Simon, transfixed, refocused his camera, and noticing my reticence, again impatiently exhorted “look”!

And so finally, with moments to spare, I peeked over my left shoulder and glanced warily up. Staring fixedly everywhere, but especially at me (or so it seemed) the moon’s disc inset perfectly across the sun’s face was piercing and unblinking, like the pupil of a celestial eye, and radiating circumferentially a magnificent fiery corona, its aura, like the iris of our cosmos. Hmmm...so this is alignment. And then the moment passed, and the everyday sun reemerged.

Setting our course for home, I reflected on the word syzygy, and thought about my ninety-nine point nine percent *trikonasana*. Having witnessed a total eclipse of the sun, the perfect alignment of three celestial bodies, I now understood what Simon meant when he said with utmost assuredness, “oh you’ll know.” ॐ

Scholarships and Bursaries

**Heart of Yoga, January 27-28,
deadline January 5**

Scholarships are available to IYVC members for all workshops including the intensive February 23-25, with a special Guest Speaker from India, deadline February 1.

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

Applications for both are available at the reception desk.

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

1 Iyengar Yoga, *Oxford English Dictionary*. A type of *astanga* yoga focusing on alignment using aids such as blocks, straps, and other objects in order to achieve the correct pose.

2 Gururji writes “... The three letters also represent the dimensions of length, breadth, depth... the absence of desire, fear and anger...the three genders, masculine, feminine and neuter, father, mother and the Guru respectively...” *Light On Yoga*, pg. 29

3 Observable from earth, the light effect eclipse watchers wait for indicating totality. The last vestiges of sun seen through the moon’s mountainous valleys, its lunar terrain. An optical effect similar to a walk in the forest at sunset’s magic hour.

4 *The Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter XI, Verse 12. Trans. Winthrop Sargeant

Open House Thank you

By Wendy Boyer

Big thanks to all who contributed to our annual Open House weekend!

A stunning fall bouquet for the Open House arrived on Friday from Dale Draper's garden. Many thanks to Penny and Dale, and to Patti Kallio for transporting it to the Centre.

Bhavantu Sound started the event at 11:30 on Saturday, and for 90 minutes filled the Centre with beautiful sound and voices. Thanks to Ty, Tia and Chris for creating a very special atmosphere.

Many thanks to the teachers: Lauren taught ropes; Adia taught Level 1; Wendy taught 55+; Ann taught All Levels; and Gary taught Iyengar Basics on Sunday. In the circle at the end of the day Saturday, where Ann introduced teachers and the board, we received very positive feedback about our Centre from several news students.



Bhavantu Sound at Open House.

Laine did a fine job of coordinating the board support for Saturday. Thanks to Sheila for organizing the baking and to Amanda, Jim, Carole, Stacey, Bev, Jane and Wendy Wimbush for doing everything from greeting to tidying up. The board warmly welcomed students to the Centre and contributed to all the behind the scenes work. ॐ



INTRODUCTORY INTENSIVE FOR TEACHERS IN TRAINING

Announcing a new concept for the Introductory Teacher Training Intensive for 2018.

We would like to run a compact, dynamic three-day teacher training event between July 4-7, 2018. If you are interested in this shorter intensive concept, contact us soon and we will let you know further details.

Please email iyoga@telus.com with your name, address, phone number, email address, and the name of your teacher trainer.



INTENSIVE FOR CERTIFIED TEACHERS

Save these dates!

August 13-17, 2018

With Ann Kilbertus and Louie Ettling

Congratulations!

The following candidates achieved IJ3 certification at the November 17-19 assessment in Toronto:

Stephanie Tencer
Lori Berenz
Glenda Balkan-Champagne
Sarah Bertucci
Deborah Peake
Eileen Millar
Niren Pandya
Michele McLean

The following candidates achieved Introductory II certification at the September 29 - October 1 assessment in Abbotsford:

Melissa Hadley
Samuel Ko
Janice Berg
Danusia Onulov

The following candidates achieved Intermediate Junior I certification at the September 29 - October 1 assessment in Abbotsford:

Soo Youn Ham
Meghan Goodman
Norma Janes



Eleventh Annual High Tea Fundraiser

Hosted by Students from the Special Needs Class
Thursday, March 22, 2018, 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.

IYCV Calendar

DECEMBER

- 10 In the Light of Yoga, Guruji's Birthday
- 20-21 Winter Solstice

JANUARY

- 1 New Year's Day Timed Practice
- 13 How to Practice
- 26 Practice Enrichment
- 27-28 Heart of Yoga

FEBRUARY

- 23-26 Guest Speaker from India

MARCH

- 22 High Tea Fundraiser
- 23 Practice Enrichment
- 24 Professional Development

APRIL

- 6 Professional Development
- 7 Professional Development
- 15 Annual General Meeting
- 27 Professional Development

MAY

- 5 Building Confidence in Inversions

JUNE

- 8-10 Salt Spring Retreat
- 25-29 Jump into Summer

*All memberships expire December 31st.
IT'S TIME TO RENEW!*



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:

c/o Hilary McPhail
202-919 Fort Street,
Victoria BC V8V 3K3 Canada

Iyengar Yoga Centre
of Victoria Society

☐ One-year: \$42 ☐ Membership Plus \$57.75

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

PROV/ STATE: _____

POSTAL CODE: _____

COUNTRY: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

☐ Please mail my newsletter.

☐ Please email me the link to the web newsletter.

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

☐ Receipt required.



IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

The Annual General Meeting of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria will be held April 15, 2018 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.