

January / February 2005



VICTORIA

yoga centre

NEWSLETTER



Yoga is the music of the soul. So do continue and the gates of the soul will open.

– B.K.S. Iyengar



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE PRESENTS

The Heart of Yoga

**An Intermediate Workshop
with Shirley Daventry French**

January 28-30, 2005

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

**Friday, January 28, 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Saturday, January 29, 11 am - 2 pm, 3:30 - 5:30 pm
Sunday, January 30, noon - 3 pm**

Shirley Daventry French is a longtime student of B. K. S. Iyengar and has travelled to India many times to study with the Iyengars, most recently December 2004. Shirley's significant understanding of the teaching comes through in her direct approach.

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

Fees:

\$185 + GST members

\$205 + GST non members

Registration opens:

Dec. 8, '04 - members,

Dec.13, '04 - non members

To register,

drop in or phone

Victoria Yoga Centre

202, 919 Fort Street

Victoria, BC

(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca

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

Saturday 5th February 2005

VYC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Yoga Practice 4-5pm

Meeting 5-6pm followed by potluck

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

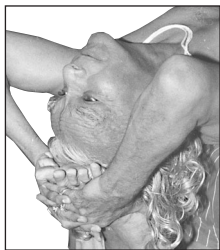
If you are interested in helping to serve on the board of directors, please apply at the front desk.

Come to the Annual General Meeting to choose the new board.

There will be a resolution to raise membership fees to \$40. This is necessary to meet our increased costs.

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

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Newsletter Advertising Policy (Adopted February 20, 2004)

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

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

COURSE REGISTRATION:

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

Phone:

250 386-YOGA(9642)

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VICTORIA yoga centre NEWSLETTER

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

January 15, 2005

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

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

The Newsletter, published regularly by the VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY, provides current information on events concerning yoga in the Victoria area and the Yasodhara Ashram.

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

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

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

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



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

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.

The Dhammapada, chapter 1, verse 1, translated by Juan Mascaro

At a teacher training course I was giving recently I promoted a book which I have found most inspiring: *God in All Worlds* an anthology of contemporary spiritual writing compiled and edited by Lucinda Vardey. It contains writing from all spiritual traditions; short pieces, long pieces, excerpts. "If I were going to be marooned somewhere and could take just one book," I told them, "this would be the one!" Jokingly, I added that "if I were allowed two, the second would be *War and Peace*!"

My first statement was serious. *God in All Worlds* is one of the most influential and inspiring books I have read, and has been a constant companion on my bedside table since I first discovered it by chance years ago. I have bought countless copies and given them to friends as gifts. Without a doubt it is one of the significant books in my life.

War and Peace is one of the greatest novels I have ever read. However, since the summer many years ago when I made it a goal to read this book, it has rested on my book shelf and I have not taken it out to reread. On the other hand I have read Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* countless times; generally in periods when life has speeded up too much and I seek to slow down my thoughts and actions. Wouldn't *Pride and Prejudice* be a better companion on my desert island?

If I were allowed to have only two books, would I take a novel at all? Probably not. Still unfinished is my reading of Bertrand Russell's *A History of Western Philosophy*, which I began in Hawaii several years ago, found provocative

and informative, but put aside as I returned to my practice and study of Eastern philosophy. So what about Eastern spiritual texts? After all, these are what I refer to, peruse and study day after day? What about my own teacher, B.K.S. Iyengar's books, particularly the epic *Light on Yoga*, a book which seems to have been rewritten and revised every time I open it to discover some significant point or principle previously overlooked? *Light on the Yoga-sutras of Patanjali* would also be a good choice, with its timeless wisdom for all eventualities.

As I consider my short list, I recall something I read yesterday in an outline of a course on the Philosophy of Yoga by Foster Walker Ph.D. of Calgary. Dr. Walker had geared this course to teachers and potential teachers of yoga. It was offered recently at the yoga studio of Dr. Walker's brother Robert, who is a certified Iyengar Yoga teacher. Dr. Walker hoped participants would find the course not only enjoyable and informative, but also that it would bring about an expansion of their understanding of yoga and of themselves which would affect their practice, their lives and consequently their teaching. Two texts would form the basis of these studies: *The Bhagavad Gita* and Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutras*.

Dr. Walker had some interesting advice about the reading and study to be undertaken in this course. Beyond the provision of information, beliefs or stories, he hoped it would develop a sense of wonder about the incredible mystery of life and the world around us. In his words, classical yoga literature is "*contemplative, inspirational and visionary*,"

meant to inspire you with the energy of fundamental insights and slow you down to the precision of definite observations in *your* life, and life as a whole.”

Derek and I are on our annual pilgrimage to the west coast of Vancouver Island which provides us not only with some of the purest air on the planet full of negative ions from the open Pacific, but time for contemplation, reading and (in my case) writing, in the comfort of a pleasant apartment on a pristine beach in the midst of the rainforest. When packing for this trip our first priority is finding a box for the eclectic selection of books we wish to take - a number far in excess of two! With the luxury of time to read, we like to give ourselves some freedom of choice according to mood.

My choices included a book of English grammar, two travel books on the antipodes because we are considering a trip to Australia and New Zealand with our grandson, two books about the Second World War, a renowned biography of two English sisters who emigrated to Canada in the nineteenth century, and a prizewinning contemporary novel. At the last minute, remembering that in Hong Kong (where I will be travelling immediately after this trip) I am to give a talk on the yoga-sutras, I included B.K.S. Iyengar's commentary on the sutras and a file of notes and papers.

I also threw in Foster Walker's outline because I had been in Calgary recently and although I have not met him, his brother had spoken highly of him and his manner of teaching yoga philosophy. What Dr. Walker had to say fitted well with my concerns that yoga is taught in its entirety and not in bits and pieces. So much yoga teaching and teacher training these days is being done in the absence and ignorance of the philosophy on which these practices are based.

I was fortunate to be taught from the start that whatever branch of yoga I pursued would involve body and mind as spiritual tools, that mind inhabited every part of the body and, in fact, body was mind made manifest. I learned that while I had little control over how the outside world functioned I was completely in charge of my responses. I came to understand

There are built in safeguards in the system of yoga, particularly when studies are pursued under the guidance of a Master; someone who will know when we need pushing or prodding, or when we need to apply the brakes, slow down, digest and consolidate.

that even in the most difficult of circumstances, I had choices. I became aware of the value of developing my rational mind, and that before I could trust my intuition I must check it out and make sure it was not my self-will imposing itself. I was encouraged to refine my feelings and lessen the disturbance and tyranny of unbridled emotion. I began to see how my patterns of speech, thought and deed defined me and my life, and that my mind does indeed play a significant role in the creation of my world.

On this path of yoga we have to observe the mind, develop the mind, refine the mind, hone the mind as a penetrating spiritual tool and make use of it to go beyond the mind. But this last step cannot be hastened or taken too soon or we would become like an idiot savant, knowledgeable but without an understanding of its value. This is where the discipline of yoga has an important role to play in helping us systematically develop the strength and maturity to make appropriate use of any knowledge and power we acquire. There are built in safeguards in the system of yoga, particularly when studies are pursued under the guidance of a Master; someone who will know when we need pushing or prodding, or when we need to apply the brakes, slow down, digest and consolidate.

Self-discipline and self-study, are the first two of the three practices of *Kriya Yoga*, the Yoga of Action. The third is devotion. Devotion to what? I can hear Swami Radha's voice asking: *What do you worship?* She posed this question to a group of us the first time I met her. What a strange question, I thought, dismissing the idea that I worshipped anything; after all I was not religious. *Take time to be Holy!* This was another curious statement

A Yoga Master does not try to make us into anything we are not, but to bring out that which is within us, show us how to refine this, and point us in a direction where it can be put to good use.

which came from Swami Radha's lips at that same group. The word 'holy' hardly existed in my vocabulary at that time, and was certainly not what I had in mind when I entered my first yoga class!

Gradually, over time, I came to understand that when I went beyond a limited and superficial understanding of the words 'worship' and 'holy' and, most important of all, beyond my emotional response to these words, there was something significant for me to investigate here. The words I use and my reactions to the words of others are a powerful force in defining myself and my life, and I have been struggling to refine my speech and lessen the pull of my emotions since my introduction to yoga thirty five years ago.

This has been one of my greatest challenges. Coming from a family which loved to argue and a culture which valued eloquence and facility with words, I prided myself on my ability to express myself verbally, quickly and forcefully. In one of the English grammar courses at my school, taught by the eccentric headmaster, he peppered us with verbal questions which we had to answer immediately. Any hesitation gained you a mark of zero, a wrong answer gained you a mark of zero, but for those who had the confidence and presence of mind to stand up and deliver a correct answer without hesitation, a mark of ten awaited you. Not intimidated by this rather tyrannical man, and imbued in my family with a love of language, my marks were always high in English grammar.

Not so in English literature. I loved to read, and loved to write, but somehow my interpretation of the classics did not always meet with the approval of my

English mistress (as she was called in those days). Excited by a paragraph of Shakespeare or a beautiful poem, I would complete my assignment eager to convey in my own words what this passage had meant to me. This excitement quickly evaporated when I learned that original thought was not encouraged and what my teacher sought was regurgitation of her own ideas or ones commonly accepted by other experts. Understanding this, I produced the minimum which would get me through the course. For myself I read voraciously, discussed my ideas passionately with family and friends, defended them vehemently, and, in the process, learned that my arguments and premises were often full of holes. I also learned the valuable lesson that to develop one had to speak out and take risks.

This latter point was emphasised in a course conducted by Swami Radha at Yasodhara Ashram when I first went there to study. Swami Radha was a teacher of *Jnana Yoga* and we were taking a course called *Workshop of the Mind*. There was a young woman there who constantly interrupted with irrelevant and sometimes very tiresome questions. Swami Radha tolerated this for a while, giving short answers or deflecting the questions. Eventually, having had enough, Swami Radha tore into this young woman about her selfishness, her lack of consideration for the rest of us there, and lack of respect for the teachings which Swami Radha was trying to bring to our attention. There were about a dozen other students, all of them like me pleased that at last someone with authority was telling this young woman what a nuisance she was, how annoying

her intrusions were. Having said what she felt this young woman needed to hear, Swami Radha then turned to the rest of us sitting there in our self-righteousness and put us firmly in our place. Pointing to the young woman and looking at us, she said: *but she will learn because she takes risks!* When you take risks in the present of a great spiritual teacher you sometimes incur their wrath, but without those risks you will learn little or nothing. There is nothing to be gained by playing it safe. On the other hand you do have to learn when it is appropriate to be quiet and listen, and when it is important to speak up and speak out. Discrimination lies at the heart of yoga, which teaches us to diversify our options.

Before the workshop mentioned above, I had already had my own experience of Swami Radha's directness on our very first meeting. This was in a *Straightwalk* workshop where we had to take a walk in various directions for a certain duration of time, reflect on this process and write a short paper to be read out loud. Having completed this assignment I was eager to read out my paper, but the Divine had other ideas and I had to wait until last. After hearing someone's paper, Swami Radha would question them about the words they used and the meaning they wished to convey. Did they understand what they were saying? What lay behind the words used? Were they serving their intended purpose? What was their purpose? Sometimes she would invite members of the group to ask questions or give feedback. In these cases I was almost always ready with some comments, and whenever we had a break others would come up and congratulate me on my articulateness and courage in speaking out.

Finally it was my turn. Others had mumbled as they reluctantly read out their papers, but I read mine with the expressiveness and voice modulation of a former actress and awaited Swami Radha's response. Not entirely stupid, I

had seen that the previous papers had all generated some challenging questions and anticipated no less for myself. As I finished, I looked up to find Swami Radha looking me straight in the eyes. She asked me a question and I answered confidently and immediately. There was a pause. I waited. Then, slowly and deliberately, still maintaining eye contact, she said: *you are very quick with words!* And there was not a shadow of doubt in my mind that this was not intended as a compliment! Here began the first of many interesting lessons about my thoughts, words and deeds and their role in the creation of my life.

Did I get me to a nunnery, or take a vow of silence? Obviously not, since here I am thirty five years later still writing, still talking, still reading, still forcefully expressing opinions. Swami Radha's assessment of my quickness with words was neither negative nor positive, simply a statement of fact. What she did was stop

me in my tracks and make me look at this faculty, what effect it was having on me and those around me, and what I would like to do with it in the rest of my life.

A Yoga Master will encourage students to make use of their talents, not for name and fame, but for the discovery of their higher self and the greater good of mankind. This is what we mean at the Victoria Yoga Centre when we talk about "the work" which can include any and everything from sweeping the floor after classes, to emptying the garbage, to standing in front of a class and teaching, to serving on the board of directors or various committees, to manning the front desk, to working in the office, to editing and writing in this newsletter, and more.

As I have persevered and stumbled along my own spiritual path, under the guidance of my teachers I have been fortunate to turn my quickness and love of words into a spiritual tool to teach,

talk and write about yoga including the privilege of editing for B.K.S. Iyengar. Above all I have been able to use this tool to know myself! A Yoga Master does not try to make us into anything we are not, but to bring out that which is within us, show us how to refine this, and point us in a direction where it can be put to good use. In the process my mind and as a result my life, has gone in directions which hitherto I could not possibly conceive.

My nature being what it is, I still have to be vigilant and practise restraint over a tendency to use wit and words for the momentary high of a clever rejoinder or to reveal another's perceived ignorance. I have enough ignorance of my own to overcome to keep me busy for the rest of this lifetime. May my energy, talents and abilities be used to this end.

Om namah Sivaya. ॐ

April 15-17, 2005

Basics to Refinement with Ingelise Nherlan

FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 11:00 am – 1:30 pm, 3:00 – 5:00 pm

SUNDAY, APRIL 17, Noon – 3:00 pm

Fees: \$190 +GST for members | \$210 +GST for non-members

Registration opens for members February 7, 2005

For non-members February 14, 2005

Ingelise Nherlan is a dynamic and inspiring teacher. She has studied yoga for 30 years and was awarded a Senior Intermediate Teaching Certificate by her teacher B.K.S. Iyengar. She has studied directly with the Iyengars at the Institute in Pune, India several times.

Ingelise teaches and practices from the point of view that all learning is

- 1. present knowledge**
- 2. exploration of that which still remains to be discovered**

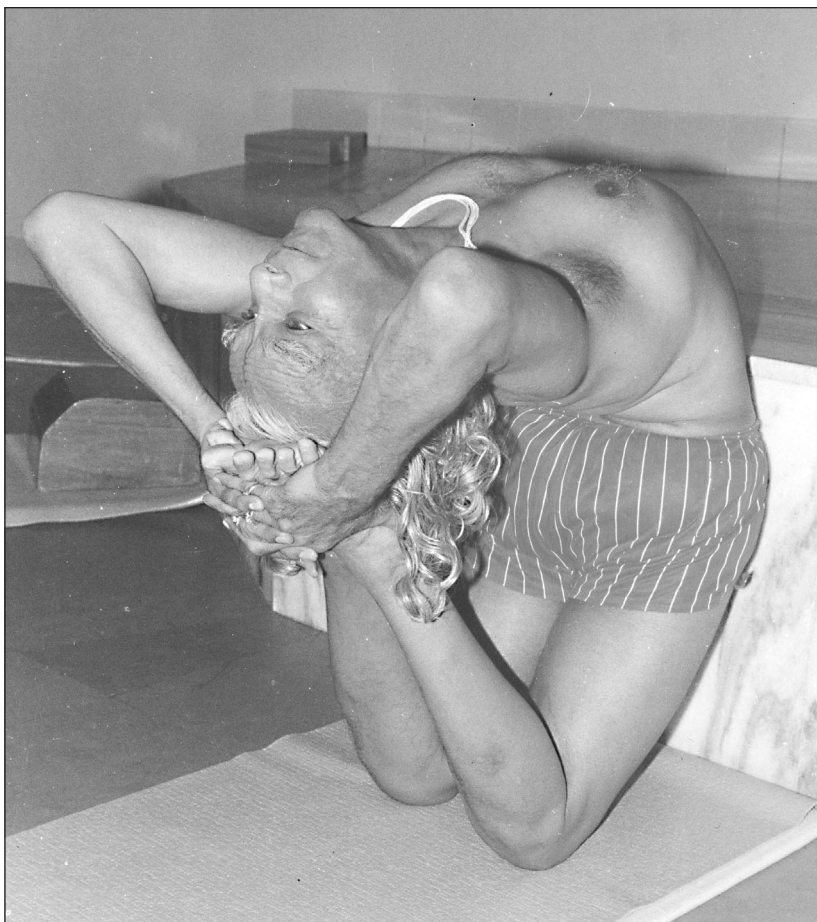
"Combine the two and we can move from basics to the refined."

To register, drop in or phone:
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The "System" of Iyengar Yoga

Prashant S. Iyengar



Guruji in Kapotasana

The following article was first published in Yoga Rahasya, Vol.9, No.2, 2002 pp. 9-17

Today, the way Guruji teaches yoga is identified as "Iyengar Yoga". It has evolved from its rudiments in 1930s and started getting crystallised after the publication of *Light on Yoga*. This system is such that it can befit anyone and everyone irrespective of class, caste, creed, gender, status, stature, stage of life, ethnic background, ethos. That is why, this yoga is multi-faceted.

Most people take to yoga for certain material gains such as remedial expectations or something very mundane such as a sense of physical and mental well being. A raw beginner does not even know what is a sense of well being but he still expects it and therefore takes to Iyengar Yoga.

Children and teenagers have no aspirations to do yoga. The innocent children are sent by their parents, they get joy doing it and then they continue to do it. They do not do it for the sake of joy but they do get joy. As man grows, his requirements on the plane of the body, mind, emotions and the whole life keeps on changing and he then tries to get something out of Iyengar yoga.

This system was not so comprehensive when Guruji started teaching in the 1930's and 1940's. It has evolved over a period of time. Guruji commenced his practice and also teaching on a very rudimentary plane. His dedication, involvement and most importantly his grace led to the complete evolution of the system. This system now conforms to scriptural, textual yoga.

You all recognise this as an Iyengar Yoga System. A system implies that it must be a science, whereas the so-called Iyengar

Yoga is getting disseminated not as a system but as a mode or a form of yoga.

If you come across a board stating Iyengar Yoga Studio/Centre and if it has the wall and ceiling ropes, belts, chairs, trestlers, bricks, then one thinks that this is Iyengar Yoga. If you see some displays of Guruji's postures from *Light on Yoga* then from this you identify it as Iyengar Yoga. This is not a rational way of identifying Guruji's system because all these are modes and Guruji's mode of teaching has changed from decade to decade. It was one in the 40's and early 50's and later changed in the 60's, 70's and 80's. The mode of teaching depends on the form of teaching.

In the early days, Guruji taught on a one to one basis. He naturally used his own body, his hands, legs, head, everything from the toe to the head to make the student do the *asana*. Guruji developed physical precision in the posture

and conveyed that to his students. He used his own body as props. Guruji would adjust *Trikonasana* with his legs, with his hands, gripping between his two thighs, he would adjust the back. Like we do *Setu Bandha Sarvangasana* on a brick, he used to make them do it on his knee. He would place his knee under the tailbone of the student and make them do all the variations of *Sarvangasana*.

While making the students do *Kandasana*, he would hold the knees of the students, and place the crown of his head to their feet and then push their feet to the chest. Today we do *Viparita Dandasana* on the chair. He would become a stool himself and make his students do *Viparita Dandasana* upon on that. Today, props are extensively being used. It is a mode of teaching Iyengar Yoga and should not be identified with the System of Iyengar Yoga.

Some may even use words used by Guruji. This should also not be identified as the system of Iyengar Yoga. For example, Guruji often says, "No pain No gain." A student/teacher should have the moral or ethical qualification and cannot use these words just because Guruji says them. If I am protecting myself from pain then I have no right to say, "no pain no gain."

Guruji's language, Guruji's expression are all a mode of teaching and not a system. Guruji has the moral, ethical qualification to say something about you to you but I cannot claim to be saying exactly the same thing even if I repeat the words. I have to use my words because I am qualified for my language.

Take another example, Guruji may correct someone by giving a kick or a bang on the back or the buttocks. I cannot come and do the same thing and say that I did what Guruji did. I must be qualified to kick the person.

Props, Guruji's language and mannerisms are all Guruji's modes of teaching. He can create a particular ethos in the class just by his presence. One cannot repeat these modes like a

Props, Guruji's language and mannerisms are all Guruji's modes of teaching. He can create a particular ethos in the class just by his presence. One cannot repeat these modes like a puppet and say that one is teaching Guruji's system.

puppet and say that one is teaching Guruji's system.

There are several modes of teaching that Guruji has evolved. There are different ways of teaching children, teenagers, college students or the general public. The mode of teaching depends upon whom are you teaching and how long you are going to teach. The teaching for a short 3 to 8 day workshop will be different from a regular long-term class. The mode also depends upon the conditions under which one teaches. Guruji's mode also depended upon the background of his students. It would be different for children from affluent families who would be hot headed, comfort-seeking and less tolerant as compared to the poorer children.

Guruji has taught people of varying age groups under different conditions and in different states of life. Guruji has taught rickshawallas and tongawallas in 1939-40's to J. Krishnamurthy, Aldous Huxley and Yehudi Menuhin. Obviously he did not use the same mode for all of them. If Yehudi Menuhin and a porter, both of whom Guruji has taught were to exchange notes on Guruji's system then what would be the result?

Never try to characterise a system by the mode of teaching.

Guruji's mode of teaching changed slightly when he started teaching 30 to 40 people. Then later as he took mega classes of 300 to 700 students, his mode changed further. Initially, he would physically help each student to do *Paripurna Matsyendrasana* but do you think that would be possible if he were to teach 700 students? So the mode

became effective articulation. He did not need to articulate when he was teaching one to one.

While teaching on a one to one basis, he developed tremendous insight into human anatomy. But he could not talk only on the anatomical aspects if he were to teach a philosopher and intellectual. He could not teach *Tadasana* to a philosopher as he taught a sportsman even assuming that they were the same age. The mode of teaching is also fluid. The system is one but the modes can be different.

Now what is the system about Iyengar Yoga? *Light on Yoga* is not a book on the Iyengar Yoga System. Just open the page on *Trikonasana* in *Light on Yoga*. A technique has been given and then Guruji evolves on a course. Do you expect a student to do the pose using these techniques after 300 weeks? The mode will change when you do it for the first time and when you do it in your 10th, 20th or 40th year. There are several hierarchies in our system. Beginners *Trikonasana*, intermediate level *Trikonasana*, advanced *Trikonasana*. There are several hierarchies, which do not exist in any other school. Guruji has never repeated a class. Every class has some different perspective. Whereas if you open *Light on Yoga* what do you see? There are a certain number of techniques for every posture. I hope you are no longer surprised with my statement that *Light on Yoga* is not a book on Guruji's system. Guruji's system is not so limited. It has different perspectives, it has hierarchies which cannot be put forth in the form of a book. *Light on Yoga* was

written in 1960's. Do you mean to say Guruji now teaches exactly what he taught in the 1960s? There is a book on the Iyengar system not written by B.K.S. Iyengar or any of the Iyengars. The system is articulated in the ancient text of yoga, the *Patanjali Yoga Sutras*. This text was his direction.

In this system, the *asanas* are not just done on the skeletal and muscular systems or just the anatomical or physiological systems of the human body. The *asanas* are effectively done on all the constituents of the human body. These are the seven elements (*sapta dhatus- twac, charma, mamsa, rudhira, asthi, meda, majja*); *pancamahabhutah, pancaprana, dashmendriya* and *trigunas*.

The course that Guruji conducted in Panchgani on his 75th birthday was taught on the principle of these elements, which have their locus in the *cakra*, which are in turn governed by the *pancaprana*. Thus, his teaching becomes a science of man making. This system is articulated in *Patanjali Yoga Sutras*. There is a definition of *asanas*, there is the effect of *asanas*, and the process of *asanas*.

The *asanas* do much more than work on the joints and the muscles. How many times has Guruji said, "*asanas* are my meditation. *Asanas* are my prayers?" And, the process to evolve the *asanas* from skeletal-muscular-physical plane to a meditative plane to a plane of religiosity is very profound. The *Light on Yoga* cannot give the technicalities of performing *asanas* in a meditative state but Guruji has taught these aspects too.

Asanas have *yama, niyama, asana* and *pranayama*. Unless it has *pranayama*, how can it have meditation? The technique of meditation clearly mentions that without

pranayama there is no meditation. *Dharanasu ca yogyata manasah*. The mind is made fit for meditation by *pranayama*. So, if you have to understand Iyengar Yoga as a system or as a science then it is articulated in the yoga sutras.

In the early period of his teaching, Guruji used masonry bricks and mortar stones. Today, you have wooden bricks and cushioned weights. He used broomsticks or whatever household things that were available. Now in what way were these required for performing *asanas* as meditation or as prayers?

But Patanjali's system is an integral system. It is as *astanga yoga*. *Ariga* means integral parts and not disjointed parts as we understand. There is no appropriate word for *ariga* in English. All the eight limbs of *astanga yoga* are integral. Guruji has beautifully brought together everything from *ahimsa* and *satya* to *Isvara pranidhana*. That is authentic yoga.

So, if the system is to be articulated, then you will have to explain how *asanas* touch every aspect from the skeletal, muscular, physical body to the *pranic* body, mental body and the so-called spiritual body. So, you will have to write volumes of *Light on Yoga* for just one *Trikonasana* to describe the different modes taught to children, taught to teenagers, youth, adults, old, diseased; taught to the *rajasic*, the *tamasic*, *sattvic*; taught to someone who is very empirical, material minded, profane and to someone with a highly evolved religious consciousness. There would be 25 volumes on just one *Trikonasana* with so many differences with reference to sequencing, the various climatic conditions, various states of mind. How many modes are you going to describe in a book?

So, this is the Iyengar system and you have to understand it in its total perspective. There is also a hierarchy. Your knees are straight in *Trikonasana*. When Guruji does *Trikonasana*, his knees are also straight; you open your chest, he also opens his chest; you rotate your waist, he also rotates his waist but do you mean to say it's all the same. You will not come across these hierarchies in any other school of yoga.

So, in a nutshell our system means *Trikonasana* must be holistic. Now this term has to be opened out. What is holistic? Not just *apad tala mastak* (from the feet to the crown of the head) that's not the whole of man. So, there is the physical aspect, physiological aspect, psychological aspect, mental, intellectual, emotional aspect, elemental aspect and that's how the system is spelt out. There are different perspectives and all perspectives are available. That is why a raw beginner will do *Trikonasana* and Guruji will also do *Trikonasana* till today. He doesn't do it just as a practice. Every time there is an exploration. Every time he is experiencing something new.

Why is it that when we see a mirror we look at our reflections although we do not change everyday? Even an ugly person looks into the mirror. He never says, "I am ugly, I don't want to look". That's a *darasana*. So, our system is exploration, experiencing. We never say I have been eating since the last 10 years so I do not want to eat. We want to experience it often. We sleep everyday but we never say I am fed up with sleeping. Last 25 years I have been sleeping. We want subjective experience.

You might say that I am seeing this object for several years now I do not want to see it so throw it out. You can get disgusted with an object but not with subjective experience.

Do not confuse the modes of the system with the system itself. A system is a science and wherever you go it is the same. The conclusions are same.

The asanas do much more than work on the joints and the muscles. How many times has Guruji said, "asanas are my meditation. Asanas are my prayers?"

Asthanga is an integral system. So, Patanjali has postulated and presented an integrated system and the *asanas* are part of the integral system and that is why the *asanas* take you to a mental state. Patanjali says: "Tato dvandvanabhighatah" Effects of *asanas* is to attain a duality free state, neutral state, an insulated state. Patanjali does not say that by *asanas* you develop strong legs, strong limbs, no arthritis. He has not said that you will acquire free movements of the joints in the body, he has not said that you'll have a flexible body. He has not said that you will have a strong body.

Do not mistake that *sutra, rupa lavanya bala vajra samhananatvani kayasampat*; he does not say that you will develop a strong body like that of a wrestler. A strong body is one that is not vulnerable to dualities. If a fly hits you, what happens to you? Nothing happens

to you. But if an elephant knocks you down then what happens to you? So, there are so many things from tiny flies to elephants in our mental life. If you are tense the body is affected, if you are panicky the body is affected. That means the body is susceptible to all such radiation. A strong body is that which is not susceptible to the anguish currents surrounding it. Patanjali has related *asanas* to a meditative state while some of the yoga institutions who have research laboratories have gone to the extent of saying that *asanas* work only on the physical body and *pranayama* works on physiological body. *Pranayama* can work on the mind. *Asanas* cannot work on the mind. *Asanas* can give only a fit body. That means they have not understood Patanjali's system.

Asanas in our system work on the whole human being. They are the science of man making. So, I hope your

thoughts are crystallised now on what the system of Iyengar Yoga is. If you just restrict your practice to *asanas* it is man-making, if it is *pranayama* it is man-making, if it is any meditative aspect, it is man making.

And that is why Gururji's system of *asanas* has evolved into something like a temple. This is what Patanjali has said, "Infinitude of the mind and absorption in infinitude". That's the ultimate perspective, which is to be achieved through the Iyengar System.

Extension means creation of space

Space leads to freedom

Freedom brings precision

Precision leads to perfection

Perfection is truth

Truth is God. ॐ

— B.K.S. Iyengar

Shirley Daventry French

seeing *Q* correcting

Join Shirley Daventry French, senior teacher in Canada, for an inspiring teacher training workshop. Shirley has traveled to Pune many times and has observed firsthand this most challenging aspect of teaching. This one day interactive workshop will help hone your skills of observation and correction.

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Saltspring is Coming!

**Annual Saltspring Retreat
June 3-5, 2005**

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

Registration will open for paid VYC members on March 14, 2005. If there are any spaces left, non-members may register by March 21, 2005.

Members Price

\$340 shared accommodation in house
\$300 to camp, \$265 for commuters

Non-member

Add \$35. All prices include GST.

From the Physical to the Divine

Melissa Worth

MELISSA WORTH STUDIES YOGA AT THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE AND AT HOME. SHE RECENTLY RETURNED FROM RIMYI AND LOOKS FORWARD TO ATTENDING CLASSES THERE AGAIN SOON.

Vinayaka Chaturthi is the festival celebrating the birthday of Lord Ganesha, son of Shiva, the elephant-headed god of all good beginnings and success. This ten day long event is held annually in South India especially with great fervour in *Maharashtra*, the state in which Pune is located. This year, the festival took place during the last two weeks in September.

Ganapati is an important Hindu deity and

has different names and manifestations. He is the god of knowledge, wisdom and the remover of obstacles – *Vignaharta*; hence he is also called *Vigneswar*. He is invoked at the beginning of every major venture.

On the occasion of the Ganapati festival, a large number of images are made of clay, metal and plastic of various sizes, some towering as high as twenty feet. Many people install these images in their houses, in market places and street corners; they are worshipped for one and a half, five, seven, or ten days, after which the images are taken out ceremoniously, carried in a procession through the streets of the town and thrown into the river, sea or well for immersion or *Visarjan*. During immersion, celebrants chant *Ganpati bappa Morya, Agle baras to jaldi aa*: “Father Ganpati, Come again soon next year.”

A cultural feast is held to coincide with Ganesh Chaturthi in Maharashtra especially at Pune. The Pune Festival is attended by many famous Indians and is a well-known event across India. Classical dance, music performances, poetry recitations, folk dances, theatre and film festival are the main features of this celebration.

I was fortunate enough to be in Pune attending classes at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute during the Ganapati festival and, by generous arrangement of the Institute I, and many other students, attended the Pune Festival. It was a glorious event – one which I will never forget (and we only stayed for the opening, which is another story altogether). Two other significant events, Teachers’ Day and Lord Krishna’s birthday, were also celebrated in early September, both of which stimulated discussions, celebrations and devotional activities.

These festivals serve as a constant reminder of one’s spiritual path. They are an opportu-



Statue of Lord Ganesha located in a market area in Pune

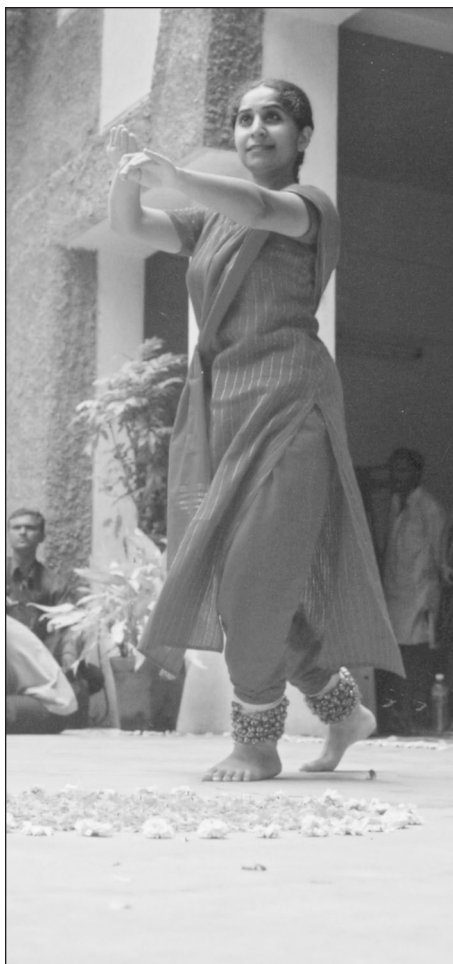
nity to express one's devotion publicly and communally.

Attending classes and practising daily at the institute served a similar purpose for me. There is no doubt that the Light of yoga shines brightly at the institute where Guruji and his children, Geeta and Prashant, live and practise. I was able to devote my days to practice, study and reflection. I was able to choose from thousands of books on yoga in the library, practise *asanas* for three hours daily, attend two-hour classes daily and at any other time observe medical and other classes. The path is free of obstacles, or at least less painful to face, at the institute. Our duties are made clear and if we forgot, Guruji, Geetaji or Prashantji did not hesitate for one moment to remind us.

It is difficult to maintain this perspective back in Victoria with a lack of reminders around us. We are surrounded not by spiritual festivals but by commercial slogans encouraging us to spend our money. It is the beginning of the Christmas season, the shopping season, and walking home from work one evening I could not help but notice many signs warning that the number of shopping days until Christmas is quickly dwindling. I once saw a banner declaring simply that "Shopping is Good." Is shopping going to help us along the path of yoga? Probably not.

As I search for some external beacon of light, I remember Prashant's words that we must not become followers of a teacher or a type of yoga, we must not become sycophants and worshippers. He encouraged us not to become dogmatic, not to become point takers, not to practise (or teach for that matter) mechanically, cerebrally. The light of yoga is within the heart, not the head.

We must learn *yoga*, study *yoga*, follow *yoga*, practise *yoga*, explore *yoga*, experience *yoga*. This is what the Iyengars are teaching us – to become our own teacher. To practice not for endurance, not for strength, not so that we can do



Dancer at a Pune cultural centre during Ganesh celebrations



Rope Sirsasana in the main hall at RIMYI

These festivals serve as a constant reminder of one's spiritual path. They are an opportunity to express one's devotion publicly and communally.

advanced poses, not for teacher training assessment, not for teaching, this may certainly be a secondary result, but ultimately we practise for our Self – to know your Self, to know your legs, your spine, your spleen, your kidneys, your liver, to learn more and to go on learning. Prashant encouraged us to become our own gastroenterologists, to do *asanas* as if to perform surgery on our abdomen, to clean our pelvis, to bring health to the spine. Yoga is experiential, not intellectual. It is all too easy, however, to confuse the secondary results for the goal. But when you do one thing in yoga, several things result. Your aim is one but several things result. By doing one, you do everything. Yoga is multifaceted. Yoga then moves us beyond physical health to spiritual health.

It did not take me one week to renounce teaching – when sitting at the feet of the master, one's ignorance is quickly made apparent. I wanted to practise. Guruji says we call ourselves teachers first, we say we are teachers of yoga – but are we learners, are we students of yoga? Evolution has to start with the body. Guruji practises to evolve further. He does not call himself a teacher but a student. Since returning to Victoria, I am teaching again, but less so and seeking opportunities to learn more. It is difficult to stay steady on the path of yoga in a cultural environment that lacks festivals and other overt spiritual reminders. But, ultimately, yoga is a journey of one's own and as such provides us with tools to delve deeper, to learn more and to know one's Self. ॐ

Going Deeper: Comments from an Observer

Karyn Woodland

KARYN WOODLAND IS A TEACHER-IN-TRAINING
AT THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE.

Being a *pitta* type, I find it difficult to watch as others do especially over the course of a weekend workshop. Yet I was unusually content to sit and observe Shirley Daventry French's teaching during her *Going Deeper* workshop in October.

It is a privilege to "sit at the foot of a master". All of us in Victoria know we are lucky indeed to be able to study with, and learn from Shirley, a long-time student of B.K.S. Iyengar.

I have been a student of Shirley's since the late '70s, yet I am always amazed at how much I can, and do, continue to learn from her! Each class and workshop takes me to a new place of understanding (a little like each reading of *Light on Yoga*).

This review focuses on the pearls of wisdom I harvested that weekend: some culled from Shirley's instructions during *asana* practice; others from her comments at the beginning of each practice (what I call the "chant and chat" sections of the workshop). The review concludes with her recommendations, that weekend, for further study.

On the theme of What is yoga?

- Yoga is popular today for fitness reasons, but we must not lose track of its roots.
- Physical benefits are an aside—self-study is the essence of yoga.
- Postures have physical, mental, spiritual, *and* mystical benefits.
- The mysteries of yoga come from concentration of the mind. They are not mysteries when you understand them.
- Yoga is like ballet—the beauty comes from the discipline *and* the practice!
- The practice of yoga creates pathways that take us to our Selves, from which we can observe life.



Urdhva Mukha Svanasana



Uttitha Parsvakonasana

Some general tips for *asana* practice:

- The muscles move the bones getting into the posture. But when holding the posture, look for the support of the structure (alignment), so that the muscles do not have to work as hard.
- If you get tired it's because you're using your arms and legs; if you get cross, it's because you're holding your breath!
- Before making an effort, *breathe*, and make the effort on the exhalation.
- If you're always doing, doing, doing it never happens; sometimes you have to hold and penetrate.
- Notice when you are forcing. Notice when your effort becomes hard, rather than intense. At that point change.
- Strong arms, strong legs, *then* the quietness of the pose is experienced at its core.
- Even if you're not flexible and can't go forward in the pose, you can be quiet.

Staying Present

- Sometimes closing the eyes is an excuse for the mind to become more busy.
- Yogis call the throat the seat of self will.
- Stay in the present and see what emerges in terms of self-understanding.
- When the body, mind and self come together, then you can experience a moment of transcendence.
- What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts create our tomorrow.

Recommended books (Shirley's picks):

1. *The Tree of Yoga*, B.K.S. Iyengar (connection between *asana*, *pranayama* and philosophy)
2. *Yoga*, Georg Feuerstein
3. *The Teachings of Yoga*, Georg Feuerstein
4. *Bhagavad-Gita* (translation by Juan Mascaró)
5. *God in All Worlds*, Lucinda Vardey (about obstacles)
6. *Many Mansions*, Gina Cheminara

Going Deeper into Dishes

Joan Douglas

JOAN DOUGLAS STUDIES YOGA AT THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE AND SERVES AS SECRETARY ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

This is the second time I have attended Shirley's *Going Deeper* workshop. For a mother with a continuously busy life, the rare opportunity to have a total retreat becomes especially intense. At this year's *Going Deeper* workshop I experienced some sudden insights and synchronous events. My experience last year was focused more on the physical work of achieving an *asana*. This year, I had some realization of the philosophic and spiritual foundations of *asana* practice.



Salamba Sarvangasana

Both years I attended Shirley's discussion of the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. I used to see the *sutras* as probably containing profound wisdom but esoteric and remote from my own life. Shirley,

however, stressed the immediate practicality of the *sutras*. For the first time I see how these terse aphorisms register not just in the mind but in the whole experience of body, mind and soul. I had

to be practising regularly to get that realization.

Shirley asked us a series of questions prompting us to reflect on what is our true self, and what is our false or illusory self. An important lesson for me is humility and detachment, which mean letting go of ego. This is as important in yoga practice, perhaps by doing a less favourite pose in order to learn its lesson, as it is in parenting, by allowing your child to learn from natural consequences.

Shirley's discussion of devotion resounded most deeply. The devoted practice of mindful concentration in a repeated act seems to be fundamental to *samadhi*, whether it is the repetition of a pose, of our name for God, or washing dishes.

Dishes, you ask? This is my most regular daily practice. Thich Nhat Hanh says washing the dishes is like bathing a baby Buddha. It is either extreme monkey-mind or extreme concentration.

For the first time I see how these terse aphorisms register not just in the mind but in the whole experience of body, mind and soul.

Washing dishes is a perfect *karma* service, performed to sustain others. Scrubbed in peace with love and gratefulness, will those plates yield greater nourishment? Could I wash dishes with devotion and renounce my aversion and resentment? I tried it out after the potluck and happily washed several sinks full. Back at home, I remember Shirley's words on *aparigraha*. I could renounce my attachment to washing dishes, and ask someone else to do them! ॐ



Virabhadrasana II



Shirley makes an adjustment in Parivrtta Trikonasana

The devoted practice of mindful concentration in a repeated act seems to be fundamental to samadhi, whether it is the repetition of a pose, of our name for God, or washing dishes.

Yoganga – Shikshaka – Chakravarti –

“Emperor of Teachers of Yoga”

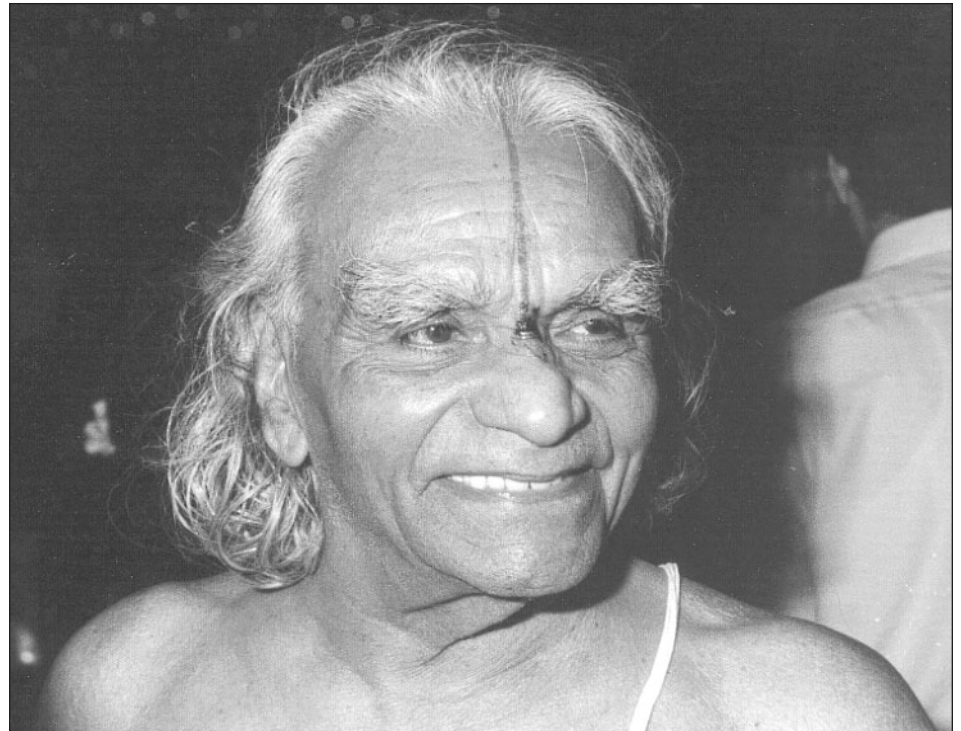
PART I

Chris Beach

The Victoria Yoga Centre would like to express its gratitude to Chris Beach and Jean Smith for giving us permission to reprint this two-part article which was first published in the Orange County Iyengar Yoga Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 7, August 2004. We will publish the second part in the next VYC Newsletter.

Most of us who practice the method known as Iyengar Yoga have never had the opportunity to study directly with our Gururji, B. K. S. Iyengar. Those fortunate enough to have gone to Pune when Mr. Iyengar was still teaching regular classes, or to have studied with him at an intensive either in India or in the United States, have experienced Gururji's teaching in the most direct form. This two-part essay is an effort to convey a sense of Gururji's teaching to those who have never had the chance to be taught by him. The first part will be an overview of Mr. Iyengar's inspiring career as a teacher and his contributions to the teaching of yoga; the second part will include some quotations from those who have had the opportunity to study with him.

When my students ask me to explain the contribution made by B. K. S. Iyengar to the teaching of yoga, it is difficult for me to give a concise answer. My response always feels inadequate, since in order to do justice to his immense contribution I would have to interrupt the class for a lengthy lecture on the subject. Some of the most important things he has given us are the refinement and precision in the practice



of the *asanas*, the sequencing of *asanas* to produce the most beneficial effect, the use of props to make the *asanas* accessible for more people, the more complete understanding of the effects of the *asanas* on the physical and emotional body, and the therapeutic use of yoga to help those with a wide range of physical and psychological ailments. But this list only gives a superficial idea of what Mr. Iyengar has given us as teachers and as students.

B. K. S. Iyengar began the study of yoga at the age of fifteen when his brother-in-law, T. Krishnamacharya, brought him to Mysore, where he was the personal yoga teacher for the Maharaja of Mysore and his family. Two years later, Mr. Iyengar's own career as a teacher began under somewhat unusual

circumstances. In India in the 1930s, women were not allowed to attend classes with men. When several women asked Krishnamacharya for instruction in yoga, he told his senior students to teach them. Since Iyengar was younger than the other senior students, the women felt more comfortable learning from him than from the others. Krishnamacharya allowed him to teach the ladies class, and this experience "ignited my interest in teaching yoga."

At the age of eighteen, Gururji was sent to Pune to teach yoga in some of the schools, colleges, and sports centers there. This presented a new challenge, since many of the students at the colleges were not only older than he was, but also more educated and cultured. The young Iyengar had to impress his students by

demonstrating his skills at *asana*; when they saw the exceptional strength and dedication of his practice, they readily accepted him as a teacher. Since his own guru was no longer available to teach him, he began to study on his own. His first discovery was that he could not learn the subject of yoga from books, since each book showed a different version of the poses. The only way to learn was by trial and error, a method that put him on a lifelong course of self-study (*svadhyaya*) and self-discovery.

I believe it was this method of yoga as self-study, as a continual path toward self-realization that made Mr. Iyengar unique as a practitioner and teacher of yoga. The Iyengar method insists that those of us who teach yoga are also practising on a regular basis, since it is in our personal practice that we achieve self-study, one of the five personal and spiritual disciplines (*niyamas*) according to Patanjali. "You must practice what you teach," Mr. Iyengar kept reminding us at his birthday celebrations. "When I have not practiced, what right have I to teach others?"

Another aspect of Gururji's teaching that has been extremely important is the emphasis on certain fundamental principles in teaching and practising the *asanas*. Two of these principles are always starting from the base of the pose, and moving from the outer body to the inner body (the periphery to the center). Those of us who were at the birthday celebrations saw a brilliant illustration of this method, as Mr. Iyengar taught *Utthita Trikonasana* progressively over six days, beginning with the feet and legs, then moving to the upper body, and then finally moving inward to the heart center. The understanding of the more subtle aspects of the pose could only be grasped once the foundation of the pose and basic structure had been achieved.

When I was doing my teacher training with Karin O'Bannon, she told us that there is a difference between

leading a class and teaching a class. Leading a class is just saying the names of the poses and telling the students when to go in and come out. Teaching a class involves far more than that; there is the guidance in the proper way to do the poses, the linking of the actions of different poses, and the correction of the poses. The integrity of this method of teaching comes from Mr. Iyengar's insistence on giving precise instructions, even to beginning students. When his senior students would ask him why he bothered giving precise instructions to beginners, he would answer: "A good teacher is one who puts his finger correctly on a mistake - gross or subtle." The teacher must always be observing the students, seeing whether they are doing the poses correctly and finding ways to improve the poses. The beginning student may not grasp all the instructions at first, but she gains an overall sense that there is a more subtle level on which the poses can be performed and understood.

In a lecture given in 1987 and published in *70 Glorious Years of Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar*, Geeta Iyengar gave an eloquent summary of how her father's method differed from that of earlier yogis, including Krishnamacharya. "Gururji evolved the method; he brought changes. He realized that attempting certain *asanas* suddenly without preparation can harm the body and the mind too. So he evolved the sequences of *asanas* scientifically ... he developed a progressive approach from simple *asanas* to difficult and complicated *asanas*. He categorized them by their effects, as being purifying, pacifying, stimulative, nourishing, or cleansing."

Calling Mr. Iyengar a yoga teacher is a bit like calling Albert Einstein a science teacher, for he is a true genius in the art and science of yoga, one who has seemingly mastered every aspect of yogic practice and philosophy. One final anecdote will illustrate how the perfec-

tion of Gururji's teaching won over even his toughest critic: Krishnamacharya himself. One day in 1961, Krishnamacharya was in Pune watching Mr. Iyengar giving instructions and corrections to both Geeta and Krishnamacharya's son, Desikachar, as they prepared for a demonstration. After observing Mr. Iyengar's explanations of the *asanas*, Krishnamacharya went to a local goldsmith and had him engrave a gold medal with the inscription "Yoganga-Shikshaka-Chakravarti," meaning "Emperor of Teachers of Yoga." For an Indian guru to praise his own student as an "Emperor" was an extraordinary act of recognition, and perhaps the highest compliment that could be bestowed on any yoga teacher.

By learning you will teach, by teaching you will learn.

— Latin Proverb

Learning is as much an art as teaching. ॐ

Thank you!
Thank you!
Thank you!

Thank you to Kryisia, Coral and Vicki for helping out at the front desk.

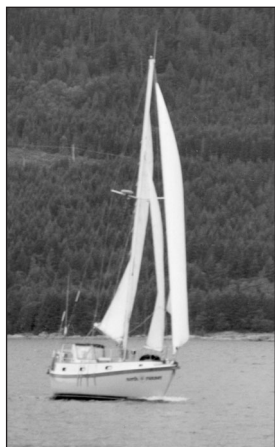
Thank you to Glenda Hingley for 2 copies of Sri Swami Satchiananda's translation and commentary of *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* for our library.

Welcome to Tina Phillips, a new helper in the Special Needs Class.

Thank you to Hilary McPhail and Alisa Kage-McCaig for volunteering on Friday afternoons at the front desk. ॐ

Sailing home is a breeze

Sue Riddell



We must like challenges; here my husband Jim and I were sailing to Cortez Island this summer to attend an Iyengar Yoga workshop with Shirley Daventry French. Most people think sailing is peaceful when they view a sailboat from the shore, its white sails glinting in the sunshine but the exact opposite is the truth. This fact always tends to annoy me when experiencing rough weather when we

are bashing around with the spray flying, blocks banging, lines becoming wild things refusing to do what you want. What does this remind me of? Then I had it; this is comparable to people's response when finding out we are yoga practitioners – of course, *yoga makes you so peaceful!* Since this discovery, a number of other comparisons have come to mind between yoga and sailing and I have been encouraged to share them with you.

When taking a sailing trip of any length, first comes the planning for anticipated meals and also for any emergencies, stocking up on food and spares in case anything may go wrong (and did) on the boat during the voyage. Next, comes transporting all the paraphernalia to the boat at the marina in endless bags and boxes and storing them carefully below.

Finally we were underway. One day at the helm, Jim had gone forward to make a minor sail adjustment which increased our speed and made the boat feel happier. I thought this is just like a yoga *asana*; small adjustments can make big changes which can bring quiet strength and calmness.

Other comparisons occurred to me throughout our trip:

- Polishing the brass plate on the stove one day it seemed comparable to yoga *sadhana* removing obstacles similar to the dark spots on the brass plate allowing us to see our inner light.
- Both require hard work and with both a little done everyday make the job so much easier.
- Sailing and yoga both can be a major commitment of time and money when taken seriously.
- Yoga and sailing are both thought of as peaceful to those not involved; the reality can be turmoil.



Sue Riddell in Paripurna Navasana – boat pose

- Both involve journeys either in distance or on the yogic path.
- Some points of sail are similar:
 - *Running* (when the wind coming from behind) and Forward Bending = Calming
 - *Broad or Beam Reach* & Sun Salutations = Invigorating
 - *Tacking* (wind on the nose) and difficult *asanas* = Forward progress is not always apparent
- Both sailing and yoga can be a hobby or the main focus of your life.
- Gear breakdown on the boat is comparable to sickness. Lack of maintenance on the boat leads to trouble on the water. Lack of maintenance on your Self can lead to sickness and despair.
- Charts (maps) guide your way when plotting your sailing course – good teachers and books light the way for yoga students. When sailing at night lighted buoys and stars guide your way; in yoga our guru lights the path.
- We suffer setbacks both in sailing and yoga, teaching us to persevere.
- A supportive spouse is a big help for both occupations!
- Some small adjustment in sail trim (or *asana*) unlocks power; you move ahead where before you were stuck.
- Bailing when disaster strikes (a leak from an unknown source occurred our second day out) – this is comparable to getting your life back on track after the calamity of losing a family member.

Jim and I are grateful for the opportunity to practise Iyengar Yoga at the Victoria Yoga Center with a wealth of highly trained, helpful and compassionate yoga teachers. Thank you, we are truly grateful. ॐ

SUE AND JIM RIDDELL ARE LONG TIME STUDENTS OF THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY. SUE ALSO KEEPS OUR PROPS IN ORDER AND JIM IS A MEMBER OF OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS WHERE HE OVERSEES STUDIO MAINTENANCE.



Leslie purchasing vegetables near her flat in Pune

Canadian Yogini in Pune

Dr. Vasudha Joshi

During her recent visit to the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, Leslie Hogya was interviewed by her friend Dr. Vasudha Joshi – many thanks to Dr. Joshi for sharing their conversation with us.

VASUDHA JOSHI, AND LESLIE HOGYA MET IN 1992. VASUDHA TEACHES ECONOMICS AT WADIA COLLEGE IN PUNE. SHE INTERVIEWED LESLIE IN AUGUST 2004 ON HER MOST RECENT VISIT TO RAMAMANI IYENGAR MEMORIAL YOGA INSTITUTE.

“What is most appealing to me is the richer spiritual life that Indian men seem to have.” My uncomprehending gaze made her hasten to clarify: “In North America I haven’t often met men who are willing to talk about their deeper, finer feelings. Often it is all to do with his work, sports and maybe stock prices. In contrast, people here talk about values, standards, cultural traditions. They have a larger context in which to fit their lives. This is Indian culture to me.”

That was Leslie Hogya talking. She is currently in Pune, on her sixth visit. She first came here in 1985 and the interval between her successive visits is getting shorter and shorter. I was quizzing her about her impressions of India, Pune, local people and I wanted to know her reaction to the changes that have taken place here in the last nineteen years. She took her time to answer and then emphasized the disclaimers: “I have not seen much of India or Pune. I have met very few people

here. I have close contact with just a handful” etc. etc. I waved them aside and then she made the above startling observation.

Leslie hails from Victoria, British Columbia, a city situated on southern Vancouver Island on the west coast of Canada. Fishing and timber making are the main economic activities there but the island offers breath-taking views of snow-clad mountain peaks and has tall, dense, forests and also sandy beaches. So it attracts tourists from all over Canada. After her graduation with a Bachelor in Education, Leslie has been teaching in different schools. Today she is an accredited yoga teacher. Leslie is the past president of the Victoria Yoga Center and she devotes her time to yoga workshops and teacher training in yoga. Leslie visited Mexico while in college. After marriage, she spent two years in Nigeria. Apart from her visits to India, she has recently held yoga workshops in Thailand. In contrast, she has visited only three European countries. Her exposure to Mexico made her strongly

aware of the 'other' and the orient cast an early spell on Leslie. To her, Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar epitomizes the spirituality of the east. She began studying yoga in 1972. Yoga gave her relief from back pain and injuries sustained in a car accident. The turning point was meeting Iyengar in California in 1984. He had gone there for the first international yoga conference. Leslie attended the conference along with her friends in Victoria. The wisdom and compassion of Iyengar mesmerized her. The next year she came to Pune for the Canadian yoga teachers' intensive training programme and has kept coming back.

Leslie spends her mornings and afternoons at Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute. At home, she practices yoga for at least two hours everyday but nearness to the Guru and the opportunity to watch him are very inspiring. She is impressed with Guruji's children – Prashant and Geeta – and feels that the latter has given a much-needed feminine touch to yoga which otherwise is "for men, taught by men." B.K.S. Iyengar's writings on yoga are her constant companion. She finds something new in them every time she starts reading. Leslie is fond of quoting Iyengar's quip: on a Canadian airlines flight, he declared that he was the only passenger knowing Kanada¹ language there.

Evenings in her hired apartment get rather lonely and she starts missing her family – her husband of thirty-eight years who is Dean of Fine Art at the University of Victoria and who has produced off-Broadway plays, two grown up sons and their wives. Leslie is sensitive, well-informed and has a strong memory. She finds our college students very disciplined and eager to learn.

As we look out of the coffee bar, she asks: "Who are all these persons just standing outside on the pavement, doing nothing? How are they able to fend for themselves? Do they get enough to eat?" She nods her head when I talk of disguised unemployment, parallel economy and migration from poor states. I also quote J.K. Galbraith who had described India as a functioning anarchy. She guffaws but then adds with a twinkle in her eyes, "The chaos, this muddling through somehow is what gives a special charm to India. Let changes come but this part of your life must not be lost." A good, discerning friend of India, Leslie personifies the *Guru-Shishya parampara* at its best when we Indians have abandoned it. ॐ

1. Kanada, one of India's many languages. Sri B.K.S. Iyengar speaks Kanada, the language of his home village in Bellur.

Short WORKSHOPS

Openings Part II

With Ty Chandler

Saturday, Feb 12, 12 noon - 3pm

Ty has recently returned from studying in France with Faeq Biria. Join her as she shares with us some of the teachings from Blacon. Focus will be on opening the shoulders & hips.

Pre-requisite: level 2

Fees: Members:\$45. + GST, Non-members:\$50.+ GST

50+ Workshop: Backs and Hips

Teachers: Leslie Hogya & Wendy Boyer

Saturday, March 5, 1:00 - 3:30pm

Fees: Members: \$30 +GST, Non-members, \$35 +GST

To register, drop in or phone **Victoria Yoga Centre,**
202 - 919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

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



In prayer you make an offering to God, an offering of fruits, flowers, water, milk, honey, curds. Your exhalation should be all that an more as you chant 'OM' – Prashant Iyengar

VICTORIA *yoga centre* Calendar 2005

JANUARY

- 22 Teachers' Meeting
- 28-30 Heart of Yoga with Shirley Daventry French

FEBRUARY

- 5 AGM
- 12 Saturday workshop: Openings Part 2 with Ty Chandler
- 20 Teachers' Meeting

MARCH

- 4 Friday Night Gathering 6:30pm
- 5 Saturday Workshop: 50+ Workshop
- 27 Sunday Workshop: 50+ Workshop: Backs & Hips with Leslie Hogya and Wendy Boyer
- 19 Teachers' Meeting

APRIL

- 15-17 Basics to Refinement with Ingelise Nherlan
- 23 Teachers' Meeting

MAY

- 7 Seeing & Correcting with Shirley Daventry French
- 13-14 Inspirations from India with Leslie Hogya

JUNE

- 3-5 Saltspring Retreat with Shirley Daventry French
- 11 Teachers' Meeting
- 17-19 Introductory I/II Assessment in Courtney-Comox

JULY

- 4-31 Term 6
- 4-24 Early Morning Sadhana
- 11-16 Teacher Training Intensive – Introductory Levels with Linda Benn, Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus

AUGUST

- 1 – 31 Term 7
- 15-19 Teacher Training Intensive – Junior Intermediate Levels with Shirley Daventry French
- 22-27 Student Intensive

SEPTEMBER

- 6-11 Registration Week
- 12 Term 1 begins
- 17 Teachers' Meeting
- 23-25 Weekend Workshop with Felicity Green

OCTOBER

- 14-15 Inspirations from India with Ann Kilbertus, Melissa Worth
- 22 Teachers' Meeting
- 21-23 Introductory I/II Assessment in London, Ontario

NOVEMBER

- TBA Term 2 begins
- 3-6 Weekend Workshop with Chris Saudek
Junior Intermediate Workshop for levels 3 & 4
- 26 Teachers' Meeting

DECEMBER

- 2 Sutra Workshop with Shirley Daventry French
- 3-4 Going Deeper with Shirley Daventry French
- 9 Junior Intermediate I Assessment in Montreal



Request for Volunteers

**Promote Iyengar Yoga in your
neighbourhood!**

The Victoria Yoga Centre seeks Karma Yogis
to distribute class schedules and flyers in
Greater Victoria, on a regular basis.

For more information, please contact
the front desk at the Yoga Centre
or phone 386-9642.

Congratulations

The following candidates achieved
certification during the Junior Intermediate I
Assessment in Toronto, 2004:

Gaye Barter, Toronto
Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Toronto
Linda Kaytor, Waterloo
Mieko Nakamura, Toronto
Temmi Ungerman Sears, Toronto

As well as the following candidates from
the Junior Intermediate I Assessment in
Vancouver, 2004:

Robin Cantor, Victoria
Ty Chandler, Victoria
James Currie-Johnson, Victoria
Louie Ettling, Vancouver
Sarah Godfrey, Vancouver
Deborah Lomond, Kelowna
Rob Walker, Calgary



Radha Yoga Centre

Sing for the joy of it!

A new addition to classes at the
Radha Yoga Centre is an
opportunity for people to raise
their voices in song and harmony.
Everyone is welcome to join in
singing simple chants and songs
in the style of Taize as well as
songs from around the world that
are inspiring and uplifting.

Sundays from 2-4pm

Please check our website
www.radha.org/victoria
or call 595-0177 for dates.
By donation.

Reflections on New Beginnings Saturday January 22, 1pm \$35

In this dark time of the year,
take time in stillness to reflect,
going within and listening. Set
your goals and ideals for the
coming year, using the Kundalini
system of yoga. Please call for
more information.

Open House Saturday January 8, 2005

Come visit our centre and join
in a free class.

Hatha Yoga Basics 9:00am - 10:30am

**Hidden Language
Hatha Yoga** 11:00am - 12:30pm

Kundalini Yoga 1:30pm - 3pm

Dreams 3:30pm - 5pm

Please call ahead to reserve your
place in classes.

time to renew

This is a reminder that the
Victoria Yoga Centre membership
expires on December 31, 2004.

The membership subscription fee is \$32
and renewable each January.

Membership benefits include:

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

To renew your membership, please fill in the membership subscription form (at right), and send to the Victoria Yoga Centre.



VICTORIA
yoga centre
SOCIETY

Membership and Newsletter Subscription

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

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

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

☐ Receipt required

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