



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

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



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

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



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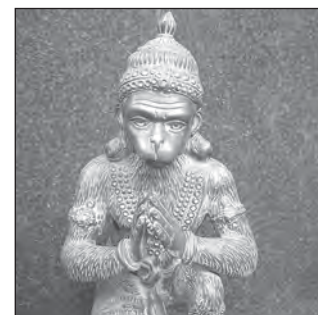
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Hanuman, the monkey god

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IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

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

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

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

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

Newsletter Advertising Policy

(Adopted February 20, 2004)

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

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

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Please visit our website:

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



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

– M.K. Gandhi

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

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

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

"On a personal level I have not met anybody of a combination that is so unique — generosity, kindness, and also the very fierce and demanding teacher that I have seen when watching him in the class; who knows precisely what he is doing to not only a millimeter but a fraction, and (how) to penetrate most of the things that we hear pass by. (Others) don't have enough power. There's not enough behind it that will catch and really penetrate to a level of conviction that will change our lives; and this is what it is necessary to do. Our lives have to be changed; we have to ask the question over and over again 'what do we live for', and all you here, who have much more, and much longer contact with Mr. Iyengar: don't listen only with your ears – listen with your intuition. You might never hear so much compassion again."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Being Within and Without

An Interview with B.K.S. Iyengar

October 28, 2009

by Jane Munro

Introduction

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

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

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

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



B.K.S. Iyengar

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



The Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute

The Interview, Part One

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

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

JM: You are just a little advanced.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JM: It's astonishing. It astonishes me.

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

JM: I can see that you don't.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JM: Yes, that's true.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JM: *Dharmendriya*?

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

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

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

JM: That would be wonderful.

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

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

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

JM: Yes. It's true.

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

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

An Iyengar Yoga Workshop

September 25-26

with Shirley
Daventry French



Going Deeper

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

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

Saturday, September 25:

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

Sunday, September 26:

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

Fees:

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

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

JM: Right.

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

JM: Thank you, very much, Gururji.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁴ *Light on the Yoga Sutras*, I.33: “Through cultivation of friendliness, compassion, joy, and indifference to pleasure and pain, virtue and vice respectively, the consciousness becomes favourably disposed, serene and benevolent.”



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With Leslie Hogya and Wendy Boyer

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

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the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
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Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.



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

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

JM: You have written so many wonderful books!

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

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

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

JM: Oh, but I think....

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

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

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

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

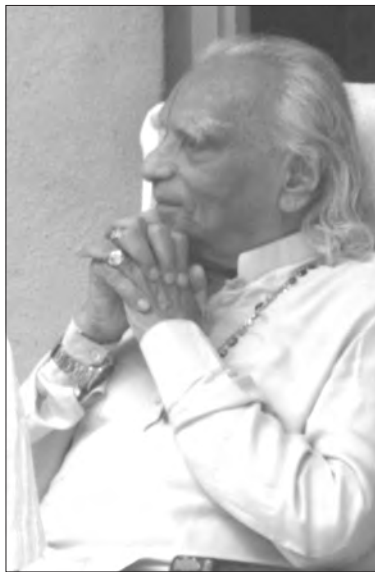
BKS: No, no, no! I'm not interested in writing practice at all. Please know that I'm not interested in that part – writing books or anything like that. Circumstances are forcing me, because people say you explain but we forget, so can you put it into black and white so we can read and remember. Beyond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

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

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

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

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



In conversation with B.K.S. Iyengar

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

JM: Right.

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

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

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

JM: Do you think that it comes through?

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

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

JM: It's very hard to say.

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

JM: Okay.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BKS: By hand.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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With Shirley Daventry French and Leslie Hogya**

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Immerse yourself in daily *pranayama* and *asana* practice. Be involved in lively discussion through group participation as you explore the ancient teachings of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.

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

She has been teaching Iyengar yoga for thirty-five years and is one of North America's most experienced teachers in the Iyengar tradition. Shirley has been training teachers in Victoria and throughout Canada for many years.

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

FEES:

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– camping (must supply own equipment)

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Registration NOW open.

A \$200.00 deposit is required to hold your space and the full payment is due June 1, 2010. After June 1, 2010 the \$200.00 deposit is non-refundable.

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

Two scholarships are available. Please apply to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

The Interview, Part Three – Practice for older students

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

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

JM: Well, you are more than a student!

BKS: I'm going to complete 91 soon.

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

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

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

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

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

Facing old age and death

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

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

JM: Right.

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

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

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

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

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

JM: It would be frightening.

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

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

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

JM: Right.

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

About having a "vision" of what will happen

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

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

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

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

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

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



Poet, Jane Munro, relaxing in Pune.

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

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

JM: Wonderful.

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

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

JM: Thank you very much, Gururji.

BKS: God bless. God bless.

JM: Thank you very much.

BKS: Thank you. God bless you. ॐ

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

with Shirley Daventry French

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

Yoga in the tradition of B.K.S. Iyengar is firmly rooted in the ageless wisdom and practical philosophy contained in Patanjali's yoga sutras.

The sutras are a series of aphorisms, each containing a seed of truth. They provide a framework for living wisely and are as relevant in 21st century Canada as they were in ancient India.

This evening seminar will provide an overview of the sutras and explore practical ways of making use of them as a guide for daily living.

Fee: \$40 + GST for IYCV members,
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Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$15.00 cancellation fee.

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

Delving into Patanjali's Yoga Sutras

by Leslie Hogya

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

In the last issue, I made an error in listing the Sutra on *Satya* as no. 37.

It is Chapter II, Sutra 36, *Satya pratisthayam kriya phalah asrayatvam*. B.K.S. Iyengar's translation of this sutra reads: "When the *sadhaka* is firmly established in the practice of truth, his words become so potent that whatever he says comes to realization."

Satya

In yoga philosophy according to the Yoga Sutras, there are eight limbs of yoga. Described as the first limb are the *yamas*, the ethical disciplines. How we interact with the world and those around us. There are five *yamas* which are often likened to the 'Ten Commandments of Christianity.' First is *ahimsa*, non-harming, compassion. The second is *satya*, truth.

Further reflection on both non-harming and truth bring me to examine my speech. All day long I speak to others socially – when I am teaching, in the yoga centre office, on the phone and with my family. It is the way I present myself to the world. I can express my feelings by the words I choose, and my tone of voice. Speech can impart many messages, both outright and subtly. My voice can inspire confidence in my students if I speak clearly, directly and with action words. Conversely, it could cause them doubt and confusion if I speak with hesitation, conflicting directions, or with tremors in my voice. If I chose to belittle their efforts, this could be seen as *himsa*, harming. Day after day, hour after hour, the interpersonal and daily interchanges provide me with grist for the mill. Each new encounter, each new phone call, gives me another

chance to be clear and truthful.

However, there are the grey areas. Maybe then truth is not always the wisest choice. Shirley Daventry French gave an example at her talk in October on the *Sutras*. She spoke of a little girl asking if she looks pretty who has dressed herself in a strange mix of plaids and outrageous colours, trailing petticoats and drooping shawls. It may not really be pretty to me, but why would I hurt her feelings by saying no, you look silly?

In *The Essence of Yoga*, a translation of the *Yoga Sutras*, Bernard Beauenchaud says that there is an hierarchy to the *yamas*; if there must be a choice between truth and non-harming then non-harming takes precedence.

So as with all speech, it is good to reflect before speaking. The expression of putting your foot in your mouth is also something to consider. Not thinking before speaking can be embarrassing. When I regret an action, it is usually tied directly to what I said. Once the words are out, they cannot be pulled back in. One encounter some years ago still causes me to feel regret at hasty and harsh words that I said. A rift occurred that has still not been properly repaired. In her classic book, *Kundalini Yoga for the West*, Swami Radha offers readers the exercise of putting a small coin or ring under the tongue, to remind us to pause a moment before we speak. When I practice this, it gives me that moment before I speak, allowing me to be sure of what I want to say, before the words come out.

A short time ago there was a tribute to Carol Shields, the Pulitzer prize-winning author of *Unless*, among other titles. She lived here in Victoria before her death. At the end of the readings, her own voice was broadcast. This is not a quote, but she said something like this: I write about the domestic life; all of us have a domestic life, and it is here that

we exist, and it is the crucible for our ideals. And in that crucible I use words to express my thoughts and feelings to everyone I encounter.

Speech has a companion: listening. Really listening to others gives them a chance to be recognized. I show my respect when I listen. Speaking is usually a give and take affair. However, in social situations, I have often noticed how I wait my turn to talk, sometimes with impatience if the person speaking doesn't pause to let me add "my two cents." At times like these, am I really listening? Or am I just waiting to be able to have my moment of attention, my ego's chance to feel important? I see that, in particular, socializing brings on the ego. I like to talk. It's a chance to show off what I know about this or that. I, too, am intelligent, witty, or whatever it is I want to be seen as.

All spiritual traditions recommend prayer, or meditation, or some form of silence. This is obviously no coincidence. The wise sages, through their own contemplation have learned that the communion with the Divine or with God or whatever one calls it doesn't happen sitting around with friends over a cup of tea, showing off what one knows.

When I am doing my yoga practice, I do not want to be disturbed. I don't want to talk or answer the phone. Yet living in a household, I do get interrupted, and I feel the deflection, dissipating of energy when that happens.

Practicing yoga focuses my energy and brings a quiet state. Silence is the key. When I descend into the silence of my heart, then it is the heart that speaks, not the ego. ॐ

Setups for Supported Asanas

by Ann Kilbertus

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

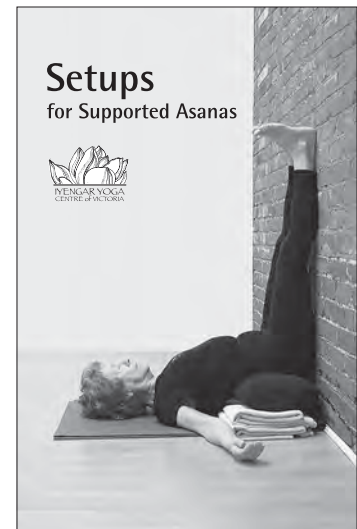
This booklet began five years ago as what we thought would be a simple volunteer project in order to assist our helpers in Special Needs class. It evolved into a friendly format to help remind any student how to set up in specific poses. So often we get questions from people who can't recall which way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

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

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

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

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



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

Teacher Training & Junior Intermediate Workshop

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



TEACHER TRAINING

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

Open to certified Iyengar yoga teachers and teachers in training.

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

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

JUNIOR INTERMEDIATE WORKSHOP

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

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

IYCV MEMBER FEES:

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\$254.00 + GST Workshop

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September 2, 2009 for IYCV members

September 9, 2009 for non-members

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2010 Annual General Meeting

General Manager's Report

by Wendy Boyer

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Iyengar Yoga Centre Treasurer's Report

Year Ending October 31, 2009

By Ann Nolan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



ASSESSMENT DATES

June 11-13, 2010

Introductory I/II
Courtenay, BC

October 16-18, 2010

Intermediate Junior I & II
Montreal, PQ



Student Intensive

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

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

All levels

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

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

Registration is now open.

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

Return Again

By Robin Popinski

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

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

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

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

daily. The government is democratic.

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

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



Practice hall at the RIMYI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sadhana

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



with Corrine Lowen

December 14-18, 2010

6:30 - 8:00 am daily

Fees:

\$98 + GST IYCV members

\$108 + GST non-members

Registration opens:

Oct. 19, 2010 for IYCV members

Oct. 26, 2010 for non-members

To register, drop in to or phone the

Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria

202-919 Fort Street

Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3

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

Summer solstice WORKSHOP

With Ty Chandler

June 20, 2010

1:00 – 3:00 pm

Fees:

\$30 + GST for IYCV members

\$35 + GST for non-members

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Open House

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

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



Leslie Hogya practising trikonasana with the new installation.

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



Fundraising Bake Sale for IYCV

at Moss Street Paint In
July 17, 2010

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

Please contact Keiko
about donations:
keiko_alkire@hotmail.com

Thank You

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

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

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

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



Membership and Newsletter Subscription

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

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Prov/State: _____ Postal code _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

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

☐ Receipt required.

Scholarships & Bursaries

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

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

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

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

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

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



2010-2011 CALENDAR

JUNE

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

JULY

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

AUGUST

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

SEPTEMBER

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

OCTOBER

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

NOVEMBER

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

DECEMBER

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

2011

JANUARY

- 21-23 Heart of Yoga

FEBRUARY

- 19 Victoria Yoga Centre AGM

APRIL

- 22-24 Corrine Biria