



IYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA

N E W S L E T T E R  
J A N U A R Y / F E B R U A R Y 2 0 0 7



*Participants in the 1976 Yoga Teachers' Course at Yasodhara Ashram*

IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA  
PRESENTS

# *The Heart of Yoga*

**An Intermediate Workshop  
with Shirley Daventry French**

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

Friday, January 19, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Saturday, January 20, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm, 3:30 - 5:30 pm

Sunday, January 21, 12:00 noon - 3:00 pm

Shirley is a direct student of the yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar and one of North America's most experienced teachers of his method of yoga. She has taught in Victoria since 1972 and gives workshops both nationally and abroad. She has been travelling regularly to Pune, India to study with B.K.S. Iyengar for nearly 30 years, most recently in October 2005.

Fees: \$185 + GST members  
\$205 + GST non-members

Registration opens December 4, 2006 for IYCV members,  
December 11 for non-members.

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

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

**January 19-21, 2007**

## IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*All members welcome! Saturday, February 3, 2007*

**When:** 1:00 – 3:30 pm

**Where:** Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria  
202-919 Fort Street

**Program:** *Asana* practice 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Annual General Meeting  
(Business includes election of board  
members, special resolutions, and  
annual reports.)

Tea will be served.

If you think you would like to serve on the  
Board of Directors for the IYCV, or on a  
Committee of the Board, applications will be  
accepted in the lead up to the Annual General  
Meeting in February, 2007. Nomination  
forms are at the front desk. Please mark  
“Attention Brian Lepicq.”

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## IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE of VICTORIA NEWSLETTER

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**IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA 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 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, drawings, information or suggestions to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter: 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3. For information on activities and events, call (250) 386-YOGA (9642) or visit our website: [www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca).

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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 given to advertisements regarding:
  - IYCV events
  - IYCV sponsored events
  - IYAC events

### COURSE REGISTRATION:

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

**Phone:**  
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

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



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

Gifts to shake your chakras was the heading of the e-mail. I was about to put it into the trash when curiosity got the better of me: I clicked and opened it. Among the usual advertisements for sales of mats and other yoga related stuff was a list of books, one of which caught my eye. It was entitled *Sivananda Buried Yoga* and written by someone called Yogi Manmoyanand.

Now, even more intrigued because I have a deep respect for Swami Sivananda and the integrity of his work, I clicked again to read these words of Manmoyanand: “Mr. Sivananda kicked me out of the yoga class because I insisted on knowing the finer aspects of yoga like why the lotus pose is so called, or what the *surya namaskar* has to do with the sun.”

Any authentic Yoga Master is likely to eject a student who *insists* on knowing something. The problem here, I thought to myself, was not Sivananda but Manmoyanand's attitude. It is an interesting dilemma for a beginning student, because curiosity is an essential ingredient in the pursuit of yoga.

One of the fundamentals of yoga is learning to surrender. Paradoxically, at the same time one is encouraged to question virtually everything in life. Under the tutelage of a Master Teacher or Guru, one is given clues which will lead towards answers to questions which keep coming up for you. These questions can be as mundane as *how to interact with a teenaged son or daughter who is pressing all of my buttons*, or as esoteric as *who am I?* Each answer, in turn, leads to another question. Question after question will arise.

I learned this one winter, early on in my yoga studies, during a three month residential course at Yasodhara Ashram, which in those days was called the Yoga Teachers' Course. It was the 1970s and yoga had exploded on to the scene along with other practices emanating from the East. There was a demand for teachers, and people who knew virtually nothing about yoga were out there teaching. At that time, not unlike today, there was a split between those who believed yoga consisted of entirely of postures or asanas, and those who were interested only in the spiritual side and ignored their bodies. From what I see today, however, the physical side and superficial things such as having the right clothing and other accoutrements are given even more emphasis. Spiritual teaching, if touched on at all, is delivered in clichés or sound bites.

Credentials in yoga were rare in North America in the seventies. When I began teaching at the Y in 1972, I had completed about a year and a half of weekly classes, and taken a ten-week teacher training course which consisted of two hours once a week. Believe me, this was more than a lot of people when they began to teach; and, alas, it still is!

One of the many admirable qualities of my first yoga teacher, who had established a program of classes at the Y, was how she encouraged her students to establish a daily practice. In fact, she often told us not to take so many classes, but instead to practise at home. She also touched on the philosophy, although as a convert to Roman Catholicism, she had a problem with some of yoga's concepts such as “God within” and reincarnation. She did, however, encourage us to read about yoga, and one of the books she regarded most highly was *Light on Yoga*. She also invited Swami Radha to Victoria to give a series of talks on yoga psychology and philosophy, and this is how my path led me to Yasodhara Ashram.

*One of the fundamentals of yoga is learning to surrender.*



I was not looking for a fitness program when I entered my first yoga class. I was very fit, following an exercise program of my own, skiing, playing tennis. In fact, I was teaching fitness and swimming at the Y. It was there, in the shower after swimming that I met Carole Miller, who was enrolled in the new yoga program. Talking to her, as we dried ourselves and dressed, I became intrigued and signed up for one of these classes. The physical side was not very demanding, although I quickly learned that I was strong but not particularly flexible especially in some areas. It was not until later than I began to make a connection between this fact and my life! But gradually, in these yoga classes an understanding began to emerge which was accelerated with the advent of Swami Radha on the scene. Was it possible that the problems in my life had something to do with my mind?

The first verse of the first chapter of the Buddhist text, *The Dhammapada*,<sup>1</sup> describes my predicament succinctly: “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.” Having emigrated from London to Victoria, supported and worked for my husband as he established his medical practice, given birth to three children in four years, tried first to change the school system, then to bring about a revolution in Canadian politics, finally I paused long enough to take a look at myself. Perhaps some of my energy should be focused in this direction? A different kind of revolutionary thought!

After six years of practising yoga, four years of teaching, and several workshops with Swami Radha and another Sivananda disciple called Swami Venketesananda, it had become clear to me that I had barely skimmed the surface of yoga. I decided to immerse myself a little further by taking the 1976 Yoga Teachers’ Course at Yasodhara Ashram.

This course gave a grounding in many aspects of yoga practice and philosophy. Further, because it was residential, and in a remote area, it was difficult to run away whenever the going became tough. Its three month duration also gave time not only to

## *Was it possible that the problems in my life had something to do with my mind?*

discover what changes needed to be made in one’s life, but to establish practices which would help sustain those changes on return home. Similar benefits accrue from making the pilgrimage to Pune. Spiritual learning is not intended to be used as an avoidance of life, but a means of learning to live life to the fullest.

The course included theoretical and practical sessions on *Patanjali’s Sutras*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Hatha Yoga*, *Mantra Yoga*, *Japa Yoga*. We were introduced to selfless service through *Karma Yoga*, and the devotional practices of *Bhakti Yoga*. Throughout the three months there was an emphasis on *Jnana Yoga*, the study of the mind. We explored personal, cultural and universal symbolism, learned how to interpret dreams, how to practise the Divine Light Invocation<sup>2</sup>. We were given techniques for concentrating the mind, and practised chanting and meditation. We examined our use of language and how to cultivate our speech. We endeavoured to calm our emotions and refine our senses. We began each day with an *asana* class and ended with *Satsang* where we chanted, meditated and listened to readings from spiritual and inspirational texts. We learned that all our faculties could be used as spiritual tools if that is what we chose. We also discovered how innovative we could be in sabotaging this purpose.

From the moment this course began we were inundated with questions. I was quite content about this at first. We were expected to produce written papers in response to these questions, containing not a definitive answer but our own understanding at that moment. Later, we would come together as a group with either Swami Radha or a teacher trained by her, and read our papers out loud. I like writing so I was not at all unhappy about this; neither was I shy about revealing my thoughts. Unlike some others in the group, I was generally eager to read my papers.

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<sup>1</sup> Translated from the Pali by Juan Mascaro. Pali is the language of the Buddhist scriptures of Ceylon, Burma and Indochina. It is connected with Sanskrit in the same way as Italian is connected to Latin.

<sup>2</sup> The Divine Light Invocation is a spiritual practice for Healing and Realizing the Light within. A booklet on this practice by Swami Sivananda Radha is available from Ashram Books at Yasodhara Ashram.

## *Our motives for being there were as diverse as our backgrounds.*

All papers had to be typewritten in duplicate so Swami Radha would have a copy to follow as you were reading (these were the days before computers). Some of us were late night people so would be tap tap tapping until well into the night. Others were early risers and would be up well before the crack of dawn, because that was when we were expected in the *asana* class. The tap tap tapping continued throughout the night!

As we read our papers, Swami Radha would sit there soberly with a highlighter in her hand and you could see her marking various passages. After reading their papers, students would be questioned about what they had written, or asked to explain what they meant if it wasn't clear. They might be encouraged to penetrate further into some areas, or be warned about the consequences of certain ways of thinking and being. No-one was ever told what to do; rather encouraged to question, investigate and discriminate.

There were fourteen of us on this course ranging in age from early twenties to around sixty: four men and ten women. Although the course was supposedly a teacher training course, few of the fourteen were interested in becoming yoga teachers. Two of us were yoga teachers already, two were physicians, two university professors, one a school teacher, another a psychologist. One young man was just out of university, and a young woman, not long out of high school, had signed on as a cook in remote logging camps to earn the money for this course which was not inexpensive. Six of us were English, two or three American, and the native born Canadians came from different parts of the country.

What were we all doing at an ashram in the middle of winter in the middle of

the British Columbia wilderness? Our motives for being there were as diverse as our backgrounds. During one meeting, Swami Radha, who was German-born, said that we had probably crossed paths in previous lives and had karma to work through in this one.

Certainly it was an intensive three months, during which I experienced a full range of feelings and emotions about my fellow students – one of whom was my husband! All of us learned a great deal about each other and a great deal from each other. And all of this occurred under the guidance of Swami Radha and a small coterie of teachers for whom I developed tremendous trust and respect. These teachers were full-time residents of the Ashram, directly trained to teach by Swami Radha and closely supervised by her.

This 1976 course was the last time that Swami Radha was the principal teacher, although of course she continued to train others for this work and oversee how they carried it out. For some of the more personal growth workshops such as Straightwalk and Life Seals, our group was divided into two. Patanjali speaks of levels of aspirant as mild, moderate and intense. With only seven of us subjected to Swami Radha's scrutiny for three or four days these workshops were indeed intense!

A few years after I took this course, its name was changed to Yoga Development Course because that was how it had evolved. Most of the participants were there because of existential crises, emptiness or confusion. Teacher training was premature and would be offered later to those who had completed the course work, and established discipline in their practice and study of yoga. Swami Radha subscribed to the old fashioned idea, which is shared by B.K.S. Iyengar, that first you become knowledgeable about yoga and proficient in its practice before you train to be a teacher. Moreover, such training is a priv-

ilege which has to be earned. In fact, traditionally any transmission of teaching from Guru to pupil has to be earned: the disciple has to prove his or her readiness and worthiness.

As the course at the Ashram proceeded, the questions gathered pace. Every day there was a new question, a new paper to write, and sometimes two. For six weeks of this three month course, I surrendered to the process and got on with it. I was still expecting that towards the end of the course someone would give me some answers. Then one day I realized that no-one was going to give me any answers. If I were serious about this spiritual path, I would have to find out for myself. With this discovery, for a few days I became restless and resentful, until I accepted that I was a free spirit (a very popular concept in the seventies). I was not trapped. I was not a victim. I had a choice: either surrender and get on with it or leave. I stayed.

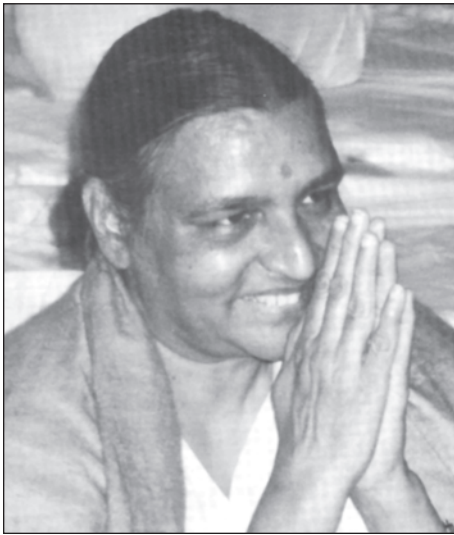
It is the same when you travel to Pune to study with Guruji. In my second class with him I was faced with the stark reality of a choice between holding on to my pride or learning from him. You cannot have both. You cannot control the manner or the timing of the teaching. This is the Guru's prerogative. You do not insist on explanations; although at appropriate times you can ask questions which may or may not be answered. That will be at the discretion of the Guru, who may feel you are not ready or perhaps undeserving of the answer.

Contrary to the spirit of equality and entitlement prevalent in the West today, in yoga all students are not treated equally because all are at different stages in their evolution and facing different obstacles. Each one of us has our own *karma* to work out. If and when we present ourselves at the feet of a Guru, we will be given what we need to move closer to the Light, and not what we want. This is the teaching of yoga. This is the lesson of life. ॐ

# Devotion—Part II

by Geeta S. Iyengar

*This is the second half of an article published in Yoga Rahasya, Vol. 13, No. 2; 2006, pp. 13-25. Many thanks to Rajvi Mehta, Yoga Rahasya editor, for giving us permission to re-print this article. You will find the previous part on pages 7-10 in our November/December 2006 issue.*



*If the concept of God is unknown, if you do not know what God is, then how can you surrender—Isvara pranidhana?*

**Y**oga is a binding thread which unifies all of us from different cultures and backgrounds. However, our society, religious practices and upbringing being very diverse often makes it difficult for us to understand certain dimensions and aspects of yoga which are possibly very unique to Indian culture. One such aspect is devotion. Once a question was asked to Geetaji at the New Zealand Iyengar Yoga Convention in May 2003 that many students do not practice devotion to God or Gods and they wondered as to whether they could be true Iyengar yogis if they did not practice devotion. The response given by Geetaji is reproduced here.

## *The stages of Samadhi*

Sage Patanjali speaks about the four stages of *samadhi* [profound meditation] namely *vitarka*, *vicara*, *ananda* and *asmita samadhi*. The whole process of *samadhi* is such that the intelligence has to get purified and ripened. You have to cleanse your consciousness, your *citta*, to transform it in such a manner that it undergoes the different stages of *samadhi* to get itself purified.

It is a long process. Sage Patanjali also knows that people like you will ask him what will be your fate since you do not practise devotion to God. He answers, “Have faith in yoga and practise the methodical eight aspects of yoga with faith. Have vigour [and] keen and sharp memory of the goal so you proceed on the right path. Develop the process of contemplation and increase the awareness. You might be either quick or slow but go through the whole process. If your intelligence is ripe enough, surrender yourself to God.” So it seems that he is giving alternative methods.

When two different dishes of food are placed in front [of you], you may ask me whether ...[you] should have this or that. [In that case] then it means that ... [you may choose from] ...any of these two. But, here there is no alternative. Sage Patanjali says that generally people cannot directly develop devotion from the heart. Therefore, they cannot have [achieve] *Isvara pranidhana* and cannot surrender to the Lord. We may [also] use the word *bhakti*—devotion, dedication—because the word...[is] simple.

But he [Patanjali] knows *Isvara pranidhana* is not that easy. If the concept of God is unknown, if you do not know what God is, then how can you surrender? If I say, “Now, all of you are going to surrender yourself to God,” you will ask “please tell us what is God?” Otherwise, how can you have devotion and dedication to an unknown object or an unknown entity? So Patanjali says: first follow the whole process of yoga methodically.

In following the process you develop devotion. If your intelligence reaches the state of maturity, then you don’t need [to make] any [extra] efforts as *Isvara pranidhana* happens naturally. You surrender to the Lord without any effort. You do not even doubt the existence of God. But when you question how to practice devotion to God, know well that you [because you have this question, can only at this stage] practice the surrendering to the unknown entity. How can you surrender to the unknown entity? And that’s why the question comes, what is God? If the unknown entity is known, then the devotion arises and flows directly from the heart.

So Patanjali says, *klesa karma vipaka asayaiah aparamrstah purusavisesah Isvarah*

*Nescience, pride, attachment, aversion, clinging to life are our afflictions, our weaknesses.*

[God is the Supreme Being, totally free from conflict, unaffected by actions and untouched by cause and effect] (*sutra* 1.24). The nature of God as defined by Patanjali is absolutely opposite to what we are. We are caught in *klesas*, afflictions, all the time.

### ***Our afflictions and our karmas***

These afflictions are mentioned in the second chapter: *avidya, asmita, raga, dvesa, abhinivesah*—nescience, pride, attachment, aversion, clinging to life (*sutra* 11.3). All these afflictions are our weaknesses. We think we know everything. We think that everything is real in this world. We take it for granted that everything is going to be permanent. That is the lack of understanding which is called *avidya*. That is the first affliction.

*Asmita* is a kind of egoistic approach; [an approach] which is attached to that “I” which is not the real “I.” This “I” relates [to] feelings such as “I am a practitioner of Yoga. I am so and so; I have got a big house.” It makes us identify ourselves with our belongings. That is *asmita*.

Then we have *raga* [desire, attachment, pleasure]...springing from our

attachment to [that] very “I.” *Dvesa*, aversion, exists because of attachment. We say, “Oh! I like that person.” Then we say, “Oh! I dislike the other one.” The root of this “likes and dislikes” is within us. We are attached to some human beings, some friends of ours, in one way, and we have an aversion towards other people whom we do not like. This is our nature and that is why Patanjali points it out. We are so much attached to ourselves that we are afraid of our own death. Therefore, we remain clinging to this life [*abhinivesah*], thinking that it is permanent. We are totally caught in these afflictions.

God is beyond these afflictions and unaffected by them. We think of God [as] having a human form. We think that he takes birth and dies like us. This is not so. Here, Patanjali makes us realize that God is the one who is free from all afflictions. He is the Supreme Being in that sense. That is why he is called as *purusa visesa*. We each have an individual soul. This soul is called *purusa*. But God is above *purusa*. Therefore, he is *purusa visesa*. He is a special soul and not like one of us.

We get afflicted with *klesas*. These afflictions lead us towards *karma*. We store these *karma*, which give their fruits in every birth. We have to see that these *karma* will be [can be] lessened. How can we do this? Only by doing good, virtuous *karma*!

Behind each *karma* there is a certain desire, intention and inclination which depend upon afflictions. So the *klesa* leads towards *karma*, and *karma* gives *vipaka*, the fruits of actions. We all get the fruits of our actions. That is how our destinies are made. Patanjali is not bothered about who is good, who is bad. He says, “You clarify yourself, you cleanse yourself, by performing good actions and dedicating the fruits. Do not hanker after enjoying the fruits.” God is above all afflictions, actions and fruits of actions. He is untouched by these aspects. *Aparam rstah* means untouched. That is how God is. That is how *Isvara* is.

### ***How do I know God?***

“How am I to know this God?” That is the question that arises in your mind. God, as explained by Patanjali, is not in the human form. Patanjali’s concept of God is formless. How am I to know? How am I to visualise God? We only have senses of perception to see something, touch something, feel something, smell something, so how to know this God? So if God has to be known,

## **scholarships & bursaries**

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

Please apply in writing at least one month prior to the workshop you are interested in. See Calendar for dates.

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.

Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria  
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(250) 386-YOGA (9642)



*God is recognised with the sacred syllable aum.  
A true and faithful practitioner of Yoga will  
automatically develop devotion.*

Patanjali says, “The name of God is *aum*. God is represented in *aum*. *Aum* is called *pranava*.” From time immemorial, God is recognised with the sacred syllable *aum*. You open the mouth to speak. The first pronunciation is “a a a.” Then when you go half way with the process of closing, you say “u u u.” Then when you close your mouth to finish you say “m m m.” So with the pronunciation of “m m m,” the lips get closed.

The syllable *aum* indicates the beginning, middle, and end of the process of speech. Read *Light on Yoga* and you will know the different aspects of *aum*. The word *aum* is like a spectrum of light indicating the wholistic and holistic concept of God. According to Patanjali that is the name, the expression of the God. You need to do *japa* [a repetitive prayer] of the sacred syllable, divine symbol *aum*, repeatedly with freshness of mind so that the meaning of *aum* is self-revealed. In order to have the emotional bearing in your heart about the Supreme Soul, you need to do *Isvara pranidhana*. *Isvara* is God and *pranidhana* means to have intense devotion with total one-pointed attention of *citta*. If you are unfit to have such devotion then Patanjali asks you to follow the set up programme of *astanga* yoga—namely *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, etc.—in the frame of *tapas*, *svadhyaya* and *Isvara pranidhana*.

### ***The feeling of devotion and dedication***

The [feeling of] devotion and dedication is an inner feeling. It does not come from the head but from the heart. If you have to become a real yogi, you have to practise yoga. You have to practise [the] eight aspects [of yoga] and one day it just happens. You just feel the spiritual heart filled with devotion. You may feel like

having an idol of Sage Patanjali and do the *puja* and worship. So do it. You may begin to do *japa*; again, simply do it. Just as Lord Krishna says in *Bhagavad Gita* that even if you offer him anything—such as leaves, flowers, fruit, water—or repeat his name, or surrender the fruits of [your] actions [to him], he is pleased, he is satisfied. [But] your mind has to be clear. It is not that God is going to drink the water offered by you. Basically you have to [your goal is to] develop devotion and dedication. Through *karma* and *jnana*, you have to reach [arrive at] *bhakti*. So the yogic path is inclusive of all these aspects. It is a complete path. Knowing that you are on the right path, you need not worry about how to worship God. You just practise and the day will come when you begin to understand that [*bhakti*]. A true and faithful practitioner of yoga will automatically develop devotion. Yoga cannot be practised without devotion to God.

So knowing very well the problems of neophytes, Patanjali hasn't forced *Isvara pranidhana*. He knows that all cannot

surrender to the God—the unknown entity. *Isvara pranidhana* requires not only a different mental set up but also maturity of intelligence. Therefore, one should have *sraddha* (faith), *virya* (vigour to practice), and *smrti* (memory). Remember that you are practising yoga. Remember the ultimate aim of yoga, the very purpose of yoga. Yoga is not practised for earning money or to build up your profession. Lastly, after *sraddha*, *virya*, and *smrti* [you find] *samadhi-prajna*—the maturity of intelligence which leads towards *samadhi*.

*Sama* means equal and *dhi* means *buddhi*. *Buddhi* is intelligence, the inner intelligence. *Prajna* is intense awareness. The intelligence has to spread equally everywhere with sharp awareness when you practise *asana*, *pranayama* or *dhyana* [meditation]. The memory of the ultimate aim is hidden in this *samadhi-prajna*.

Iyengar-Yoga is basically teaching you to develop this awareness. In order to have this *sama-buddhi*, you need devotion. Primarily, the ego has to drop so that *buddhi* remains untainted. Such clear and pure intelligence cleanses and sanctifies the consciousness—*citta*. Devotion comes from that pure heart. Therefore, when it is said that yoga is *samadhi* and *samadhi* is yoga, understand that this is the approach. ॐ

## **Women Working Wisely**

*A Short workshop with Ann Kilbertus*

**2-5 pm, Saturday, March 17, 2007**

Women go through many phases of life and our work in each of these phases changes.

This workshop invites women of all ages to come together as sisters and learn basic principles of how to work wisely and well with Yoga. As Sutra 2.16 advises us:

*The pains that are yet to come can be and are to be avoided.*

**Fees: \$36+GST for Members | \$42 +GST for Non Members**

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

# An Intensive Workshop with Chris Saudek

by Adia Kapoor

Chris Saudek has been coming to Victoria to give workshops at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria for many years, and her reputation precedes her. Having been reluctant in the past to register for her workshops because of how challenging they were rumoured to be, I surprised myself this year by deciding to join her workshop on November 4th and 5th. How pleased I am that I did, as I've moved forward with my practice feeling stronger than before and with an excitement (which workshops tend to give us) about the work Chris challenged us to do.

A quick Google search for information on Chris reveals cursory details about her as a teacher. She is certified at the Senior Intermediate Level III and is a devoted student of the Iyengars. She is the director of The Yoga Place in La Crosse, Wisconsin and has been studying the Iyengar method since 1978. Chris made her first trip to study in Pune in 1980 and has been teaching regular classes and workshops since 1982. Chris is also a physical therapist, which gives her a valuable background for teaching yoga. She is well known for her understanding of the therapeutic applications of yoga and of anatomy. Based on these tidbits and Chris's reputation at our yoga centre, I was sure the weekend workshop with her was going to be a gold mine of learning. So, I opened my mind and prepared myself to absorb.

Chris began the weekend with a teacher-training workshop all day Friday. I didn't attend that, but when those teachers and the rest of her students came together on Saturday morning, Chris first asked what we remembered from her workshop the year before. When many people were able to recall specific

*Chris reminded us many times to infuse our practice with Bhakti (devotion), Yukti (skill), and Shakti (power).*



Ann Kilbertus and Chris Saudek

poses, or the focus of work on particular areas of the body, or groups of poses, Chris further clarified her question by asking what we remembered of the *totality* of her last workshop. It was evident she hoped we would take away and keep not only the details of her teaching, but also the essence of our learning and understanding. Keeping her question about what we remembered of the totality in mind, I was careful not to get too bogged down in the specifics of her teaching

during the workshop. Many of the points she emphasized were quite lost on me; but I look forward to the work of beginning to understand more of what she was teaching. I expect this work will take a lifetime! However, it is the totality of her teaching that I have really carried forward.

*Here are a few pearls of wisdom from Chris that I'd like to share with you:*

- She stressed that we should work hard in each stage of the pose. We shouldn't just rush ahead to the future, trying to get to the point where we have reached the final pose and can hold it; rather, we should be mindful and present at each stage, entering and exiting.
- To the teachers, she emphasized the importance of teaching the same thing in different ways – that one has to be creative as a teacher in coming up with different approaches to teach things for different students. Explaining one point in the same way over and over may not get it to “click” with everyone; a teacher's work is to teach in a way that is meaningful to the wide variety of students.
- Chris reminded us many times to infuse our practice with *Bhakti* (devotion), *Yukti* (skill), and *Shakti* (power), and not leave any one of these out. This was most evident as we struggled with challenging repetitions of progressively more difficult backbends or inversions (such as *Adho Mukha Vrksasana* – Handstand). We needed *Shakti* (power) to get into the poses (such as by “flinging” ourselves at the wall in Handstand) or to remain in poses when we felt tired, *Yukti* (skill) to work in the

poses towards perfecting the asana, and *Bhakti* (devotion) to surrender and allow ourselves to be in the poses, however far we got with them.

- Compassion for ourselves and for others—both as students and as teachers—was also a key theme of the workshop. This figured prominently for me when I would come out of a pose earlier than the people around me. I was then reminded of Chris's instruction to have compassion for myself and my limitations, and also to look around and see others in beautiful poses – and to have joy for them. Again, this comes back to practicing with *Bhakti* (devotion) whether we are students or teachers—working with compassion and love. Humour is also important. Chris reminded us to remain light and not take ourselves or everything too seriously, although we must be serious and work hard at our practice. Sometimes hard work can be fun! We laughed a lot in her workshop.

All in all, the intensive weekend was very hard work, which left me just as exhausted and challenged as I'd expected. But what has stayed with me most is that although we did so much hard work together, Chris left us with more hard work to do!

I was also grateful to Chris for reminding us how blessed we are to have the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria when she thanked us for inviting her to come. Thank you, Chris, for your wisdom, compassion, and devotion, and for sharing all these with us! ॐ

## Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada

# ASSESSMENT DATES

**March 16-18, 2007**  
**Edmonton**

Jr. Intermediate I

**June 15-17, 2007**  
**Kelowna**

Introductory I/II

**June 15-17, 2007**  
**Ottawa** Introductory I/II  
(In English and French)

**October 19-21, 2007**  
**Toronto**

Introductory I/II

**November 16-18, 2007**  
**Vancouver**

Jr. Intermediate II

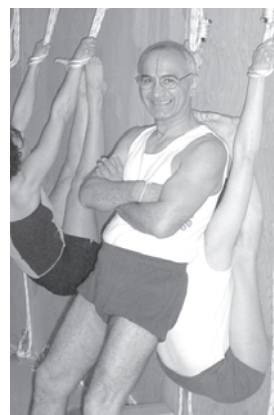
**April 18-20, 2008**  
**Toronto**

Jr. Intermediate III

## Junior Intermediate Workshop with Faeq Biria

for level 3 & 4 students

May 4 - 7, 2007



Faeq Biria is the Director of the Centre de Yoga Institute de Paris. He is one of Mr. Iyengar's foremost teachers, and an ambassador for his work. He travels to India annually and is a strong link in the worldwide community of yoga in the Iyengar tradition.

Faeq has noted: "My experience shows that in order to get something deep through this workshop, four or five days are necessary. If not, the workshop remains only an experience and the real aim of the practice, which is transformation, will not be reached."

This workshop will offer a unique opportunity to study with this dedicated and inspiring teacher.

Classes are from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, with a short lunch break on site. Times subject to change

Open to level 3 & 4 students who are able to hold headstand and shoulderstand for 5 minutes or more.

**Fees:** \$440.00 + GST IYCV members  
\$480.00 + GST non-members

### Registration opens:

February 5, 2007 for IYCV members  
February 22, 2007 for non-members

To register, drop in to or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria

202-919 Fort Street  
Victoria, B.C. V8K 3K3  
**(250) 386-YOGA (9642)**  
[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

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

# A Thank You *from Shirley*

**I would like to thank all of you** who helped me celebrate my 75th birthday.

Thank you for all the flowers, cards and gifts.

Thank you to Leslie and Ann for stepping in at short notice when I was too sick to teach the class.

Thanks to all those who chanted *sutras*, demonstrated *yoga-asanas*, paraded on the catwalk, and gave speeches during the afternoon celebration.

Thank you to those who attended the evening dinner at Spicejammer, who toasted and roasted me, and brought a special day to a festive close.

Thank you to all the organizers of the various events.

It took many people a lot of time to arrange everything for this celebration, just as each week a great number of members of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria donate their time to keep our

space and all of its programs running and healthy. We are a community minded organization with karma yoga at its heart, and I am proud to be a part of this community.

May we continue to be inspired by B.K.S. Iyengar and honour him in our work.

May we keep the spirit of Yoga alive and well in our centre,

*Om namah Sivaya,*  
**Shirley Daventry French**

## Refining our Teaching

### a Workshop for teachers and teachers in training

With Shirley Daventry French

**March 23-24, 2007**

Focusing on the evolution from Introductory  
to Intermediate teaching.

**Friday, March 23, 2007 6:30 – 8:30 pm**

**Saturday, March 24, 2007 11:00 am – 5:00 pm**

(1 hour lunch break time TBA)

Fees: \$120.00 + GST IYCV members | \$130.00 + GST non-members

To register, drop in to or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria  
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8K 3K3  
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)  
[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

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

## Short WORKSHOP

### Exploring Trikonasana

With Linda Benn

**Saturday,  
January 27, 2007**

**3:15 pm - 5:00 pm**

**Levels 1 & 2**

Fees:

\$20 + GST for IYCV members

\$24 + GST for non-members

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



# Let's Celebrate!

by Leslie Hogya and Karyn Woodland

Let's celebrate! The program committee kept that idea foremost in mind as we planned events around Shirley's 75th Birthday. We wanted to have fun, and yet to honour her. Without Shirley Daventry French, her energy and input, there wouldn't be an Iyengar Yoga Centre in Victoria; at least, it would not be in its present form. We are a not-for-profit society with a collective of teachers, many volunteers including our Board, a world-respected newsletter, and more. We work together collaboratively to help foster the teachings of Iyengar yoga.

Shirley is demanding, exacting, and serious as a teacher. She uses her considerable gifts with language and as a story-teller, weaving yoga philosophy into her talks, making it accessible to all. She is encouraging and supportive in difficult times. She also exudes a zest for life and laughter.

Ideas flew about the planning meetings as we formulated our vision for the event: chanting, demos, skits, a yoga "fashion" show, someone in a wig? Wayne as MC, Indian food, music! We also wanted in some way to let the younger members of the IYCV society know more about her.

So, celebrate we did! On Saturday, October 28th, many students, teachers, family, and friends gathered to honour our beloved Shirley on the wonderful occasion of her 75th birthday. (October 11th is her actual birthdate.)

The celebrations began at 11 am with a workshop, which was to have been lead by Shirley. Regrettably, she had come down with a nasty respiratory virus in her travels. For the first time – ever! – Shirley had to cancel a work-



*Asana demonstrations*

shop. Leslie Hogya and Ann Kilbertus graciously and competently picked up the torch. Wendy Boyer read a letter from Shirley which said in part how fitting this was as both Leslie and Ann had recently successfully completed their assessment as Senior Teachers. (Currently, only 10 teachers in Canada hold this honour; the first six certificates were given by Gurujii; and the next four, including Leslie, Ann, Marlene Miller and Linda Shevloff, were awarded at the first ever Canadian Senior Assessment in Montreal.)

The afternoon's festivities continued with the chanting of Chapter 1, "Samadhi Pada," from *Patanjali's Yoga-sutras*. Those who lead the chanting had begun rehearsing at the beginning of the summer and did an admirable job of Sanskrit pronunciation.

Next up was an awesome demonstration by a group of teachers of the beauty and art of *asana*. The peak of this lively and lovely performance included several consecutive drop-overs (from *Sirsasana*). Ty Chandler found the music and choreographed the piece.

Shirley noted that the people in the demonstration represented all ages: they were in their 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s! The 'troupe' was rewarded with long and loud applause from the appreciative audience.

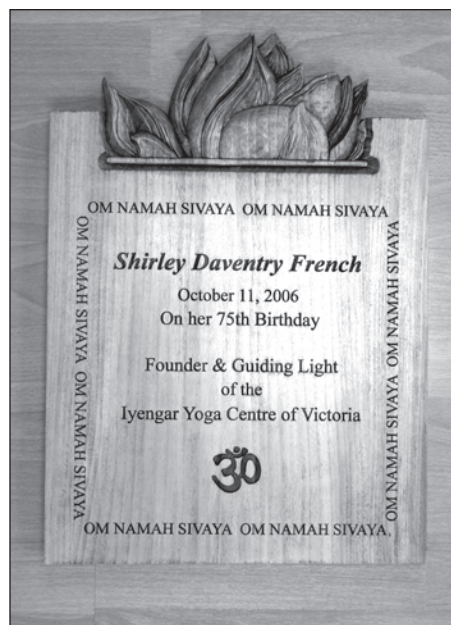
A lighter tone then prevailed as we moved to the fanciful. The fun included giving Shirley a preview copy of her oft-promised book: *The Secrets of the Inner Groins*. As Maggi Feehan presented it, she said it should be kept in a brown paper wrapper. Then there was a show of yoga fashion (or not). In classes when we tie ourselves up with belts, pad our backsides with blankets, or bandage our heads we often joke about it being the latest in yoga fashion. This show depended on spontaneity and adlibbing. Ann found the music, Amanda Mills gathered our ideas together into a "script," and away we went, down a runway of mats. Leslie was first out with the 70s kaftan she wore when she taught her first yoga class. Various and sundry costumes followed, including Pune shorts and several outfits involving the creative use of belts.

The circle of Shirley's influence is wide, and during the celebrations, we had a generous donation and a beautiful flower arrangement presented by the members of the Peninsula Yoga centre. Linda Shevloff from Hong Kong had helped produce special t-shirts with Shirley's mantra, *Om Namah Sivaya*, (praising Siva) which many of the celebrants wore. And finally, once the committee came up with the idea of giving Shirley a plaque, it was carved by David Eeles and produced by the Kelowna Yoga House. The circle of support spreads far.

Shirley's birthday concluded with a wonderful dinner at Spicejammer Restaurant. This restaurant was chosen for several reasons, an important one being the quality of the food! Delicious curries were prepared lovingly by the owner, Billie Essa, who is also a yoga student and supporter of the centre.



*Sutra chanting*



*The plaque*

When we arrived at the restaurant, we were greeted with flamenco guitar music played by Calum Blades.

Many people came to some or all of the events of the day—both those currently teaching or taking classes, and also several former Board members and teachers. During the dinner quite a few took the opportunity given by the MC, Wayne Unger, to come up and speak of Shirley's importance in their lives, or to roast her—a bit. We came together to enjoy the teachings, the fun, the food and all the festivities, working and playing together to pay tribute to Shirley, our founder and guiding Light.

THANKS to the many, many people who made the day such a great success! ॐ

## *Congratulations*



The following candidates achieved certification during the Senior Intermediate I Assessment, October 13-15 in Toronto, and the Junior Intermediate II Assessment, November 17-19 in Victoria.

### **Senior Intermediate I**

Leslie Hogya, Victoria  
Marlene Linda Miller, Victoria  
Ann Kilbertus, Victoria  
Linda Shevloff, Hong Kong

### **Junior Intermediate II**

Robin Cantor, Victoria  
Judith Mirus, Edmonton  
Robert Walker, Calgary  
Gaye Barter, Toronto  
Karen Major, London, Ontario  
Nadia Horodinsky, Mississauga  
Theresa Mcdiarmid, Toronto  
Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Toronto

# Future Directions for the IYCV

## —a Student's Perspective

by Taimi Mulder

*At the 2006 January teacher's meeting, Shirley Daventry French raised a number of provocative questions regarding the future direction for the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria (IYCV). The following excerpts are from a paper Taimi Mulder, who was then in her first year of the IYCV's teacher training program, wrote in response to Shirley's questions. Their dialogue remains worth thinking about at the start of 2007.*

*Teachers are  
at the forefront  
of our work,  
in the same way  
as an actor is  
on centre stage.*

**Shirley Daventry French:** Teachers are at the forefront of our work, in the same way as an actor is on centre stage. Actors depend on a huge team of people to produce any play or film in which they perform. Similarly, there is a vast body of work and personnel behind every class we teach.

When the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria came into existence, the thought that it would provide a livelihood for anyone was in nobody's mind. Our focus was on establishing a community which would support us on our own spiritual journey. The Victoria centre was built on the underlying premise that selfless service makes you divine.

**Taimi Mulder:** I am of the opinion that yoga and the centre (IYCV) should not provide a sole livelihood for those involved. Inevitably there will be some individuals who may end up making their living from their involvement with the yoga centre, however I would prefer to see that happen by accident rather than design.

It is difficult to be detached from the work of the centre if one's existence depends on it. But, detachment from outcomes is fundamental to a healthy yoga centre whose goals reflect and propagate the teachings of the eight limbs of yoga. I use the word "detached" in the sense of emotional detachment and cessation of desire, as recommended in the *Yoga Sutras (vairagya)*, rather than meaning a lack of caring, lack of responsibility, or lack of involvement.

Being able to maintain a detached perspective with respect to the yoga centre's work is critical as it is too easy to disguise one's personal

wants within the guise of what is good for the centre and others. This type of delusion is a natural one for humans and often difficult to penetrate in one's self.

All this being said, there is work that needs to be done at the centre and it is only right that the centre pay these costs, making the issue not as clear cut as one would hope for.

**SDF:** As you know, I have been travelling to Pune since 1979. When I am there, I hear nothing but appreciation of our centre and its work. In this material world where yoga has become commercialized and trivialized, yogis from around the world express their appreciation for the spirit of co-operation in which we have worked for over thirty years. We have earned this reputation by our *sadhana* as a group. Can it be sustained in the current climate of yoga, or have we become an anachronism?

**TM:** I fully believe it can and that this type of *sadhana* is NOT an anachronism. Working successfully in large groups develops and requires the skills of letting go and the practice of personal responsibility for one's actions and emotions without placing those responsibilities on others. The IYCV is a collection of talented and caring individuals who practice these skills with their hearts. And like all practices, it takes time to gain experience and learn skills. As a larger group with its own centre, the IYCV is young and, like all adolescents, we need to grow into our new body. The soul is still there.

**SDF:** In a faculty as large as ours there are bound to be shifts and disturbances. Yoga involves struggle. Iyengar Yoga attracts strong minded people and as the ego begins to feel threatened by our practice, it strengthens its attempts to remain at the forefront of our attention. *Antarayah*, the impediments mentioned in Patanjali's *Yoga-sutra* I.30, and the *klesas* of *sutra* II.3 are not overcome easily.

TAIMI MULDER IS A GEOPHYSICIST WORKING FOR THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CANADA (GSC) AS AN EARTHQUAKE SEISMOLOGIST. SHE HAS BEEN A YOGA PRACTITIONER FOR APPROXIMATELY SEVEN YEARS, AND IS ENTERING HER SECOND YEAR OF TEACHER TRAINING AT IYCV.



*It is my belief that quality work,  
from the heart, always speaks  
for itself.*

As we entered 2005, teacher training continued. More people became certified. Yoga proceeded on its wave of popularity. More and more Iyengar classes were established throughout greater Victoria in public and private centres and homes.

It's tricky, because it is the mandate of our centre to propagate yoga and in particular Guruji's work, but this proliferation of classes means that there is more competition for students. Many of you teach at other centres which are able to offer cheaper classes than ours because they are subsidized by our taxes. Or, they appeal to the lunchtime business crowd because they have showers; or to young mothers because they have day care. Perhaps you teach in your home. Each additional class you take on competes with us for a finite pool of students. There is no right or wrong here; merely a different focus of interest.

**TM:** I believe this diversity of classes is supportive, especially when the teachers maintain a link to the IYCV and inform their students of its events and programs. These other teaching locations in the Greater Victoria area attract students who probably would not come to the IYCV. I can only think that making well-taught classes available to all these people contributes to the mental and physical health of the greater community we all live in. And, some dedicated students from these classes eventually do find their way to the IYCV.

Due to the support of its membership, the IYCV is able to provide a well-rounded "yoga educational centre" in a manner that smaller studios and community recreational centres cannot. By this I am referring to the substantial knowledge-base and the

variety of perspectives which illuminate our curriculum, the opportunity to work with a variety of senior teachers on a regular basis through classes and workshops, the existence of rope walls in both studios, the availability of props and practice space, the library, the newsletter, and the "yoga store."

The question is how to encourage students to make the step to IYCV in such a way that the student maintains contact with both the community classes and IYCV. I see the IYCV as the core of the teachings in the greater Victoria area. It is easy to go where one knows the people and feels comfortable. Perhaps a circuit of IYCV senior "guest" teachers passing through the community classes during the year might strengthen the relationship and provide familiarity and continuity, making it easier for students in the community classes to come to the IYCV.

**SDF:** Throughout North America and much of the Western world, many people, skilled and unskilled, are making a living teaching yoga. Not surprisingly, Iyengar teachers are also looking at this option. It takes time and money to become a certified Iyengar Yoga teacher. Our training is second to none. Why should we not earn a decent living as does that man or woman down the road with so much less training?

**TM:** As a student, I believe yoga should be accessible to all. I have a full-time job which pays moderately well and even at the current reasonable rates of the IYCV, I find that I invest quite a bit of my income into yoga classes, to the point that I make choices with regard to classes and workshops based on my finances. Many individuals work at jobs close to minimum wage and I would like to see their access to classes reflected in the class fees.

**SDF:** What does Guruji have to say about this? He deplores the commercialization of Yoga; but he also says that we have to charge money—just make sure that we give more than we

*Come to the*

## *Friday Night Gathering*

*Friday, February 23, 2007 at 6:30 pm*

*Meditation with Neil McKinley  
followed by Potluck Dinner.*

*Please bring a vegetarian dish to share  
at the Potluck Dinner following the meditation.*

*Free for members. By donation for non-members.*

## **55 Plus Workshop —Strength & Stamina**

**With Wendy Boyer and Leslie Hogya**

**Saturday, February 10, 2007**

**1:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

**levels 1 & 2**

**Fees:**

**\$30 + GST for IYCV members**

**\$35 + GST for non-members**



receive. Prashant Iyengar is unequivocal that we should not view teaching yoga as a livelihood. If we need to earn money (as does everyone who is not independently wealthy), he says we should find a job elsewhere to support us. Again and again he has spoken and written about this. Geeta speaks more of finding and fulfilling one's duty, and sets an exemplary example as a *karma* and *bhakti yogi*. All of them emphasize that we must first and foremost be practitioners, and warn that once teaching becomes a primary means of earning a living there is a temptation to look at students as a source of income, and want to hold on to them for this purpose.

**TM:** I, too, deplore this commercialization of Yoga. Yet if we look at money as a "promissory note," this view changes a bit.

We give yoga classes and receive promissory notes in return. There are some basics that the IYCV needs to survive: a roof over our heads, a continually-available means of registration for classes and workshops, the tools to manage that, professional layout and printing of the newsletter. The IYCV makes choices about how to acquire such basics. These choices are based on the number of promissory notes available. This, in turn, is dependent on a trade-off between the number of students who come and the number of teachers available.

For its basic requirements, I believe that IYCV should pay the cost of doing business. The items that we purchase from our wider community, and our existence at this base level, should not depend upon the charity of others.

But, I believe all the IYCV activities beyond this level of basic survival should be the product of *karma* yoga. Defining the basic needs for survival of the centre, and separating those needs from the teaching, provides a solid foundation for the IYCV society, enabling it to carry on through times of thick and thin. The number of students and the number of teachers will fluctuate.

**SDF:** Hopefully the thoughts I have put together here will stimulate your own. My education involved a tradition of debating, and a debate necessarily has opposing views; but a debate also comes to a conclusion where a decision is made to support or oppose the motion.

**TM:** Thank you for raising these questions! I believe that the right course of action inevitably makes itself known, given the chance. In many instances, resistance to change and opposing views are due to misperception, and all those fluctuating thoughts which accompany that. This reminds me of a bumper sticker I recently saw – "Don't believe everything you think." Debate is a healthy way to air perceptions and inspect one's own resistance to alternative viewpoints. Often another way can be found which addresses the majority of concerns with the minimum of fuss.

I have one last word on perceptions. It is my belief that quality work, from the heart, always speaks for itself. Location and advertising make little difference with regard to work at this level.

For example, the Sooke Harbour House is considered one of the top ten restaurants in North America and it is a difficult place to get to. Many exceptional and well-known institutes do not advertise and are located in out-of-the-way locations. Yet people find and journey to these destinations. They are discovered by word-of-mouth; they thrive on the quality of their offerings, and on the faith, generosity, and spirit with which they are offered (along with some astute financial management). Do not squander resources on the perception of advertising. Quality organizations that recognize us will mention us. Have faith, work from the heart, and the rest will come. ॐ



**Patti Kahlo** for  
washing our tea-towels.

**Linda Poole** for volunteering  
on Thursdays.

**Theron Morgan**  
for cleaning

And, thanks to all the people  
who volunteered & helped  
out with the assessment in  
November!

**Co-ordinator**  
**Extraordinaire:**  
Rosemary Barritt

**Computer Tech:**  
Charles Campbell  
Gary Wong

**Drivers:**  
Rosemary Barritt  
Bruce Cox  
Leslie Hogle

**Timers:**  
Linda Benn  
Wendy Boyer  
Leslie Hogle

**Cooks:**  
Glenda Hingley  
Jane Jonas  
Patty Rivard  
Nina Zak

**Students:**  
Gary Wong  
Leslie Hogle  
Jane Jonas  
Keri Taylor  
Sharon Richmond  
Robin Cantor  
Ty Chandler  
Lauren Cox  
Linda Larsen  
Kim Nunn  
Kelly Murphy  
Britta Poisson  
James Currie Johnson  
Evelyn Nixey  
Diana Cole  
Sarah Godfrey  
Marnie Friesen  
Paulette Hendry  
Glenda Balkan Champagne  
Ann Kilbertus  
Jill Morin

# Starting Yoga at 60: An Interview with my Mom

by Caren Liedtke

If memory serves right, my lovely life partner and I have been doing yoga on and off since the fall of 1989. My mom knows some of the people in the Victoria yoga world from other arenas, so over the years, we have sometimes chatted about how they were doing, as well as the classes I was taking and the workshops I had been to. Our conversations were casual, so I was surprised when she started taking a class in the fall of 2001. I was even more surprised, pleasantly so, that she took to it. She registered for another session, and another, added a second class, took a few workshops, and bought a few books.

I was curious to find out what it was that had prompted my mom to start taking classes and what it was about yoga that kept her coming back. I thought her story might be of interest to others beginning yoga at a similar stage in life. And so, it was with great pleasure that I sat down to interview my mother, Dorothy Liedtke.

**Caren:** When did you start taking yoga?

**Dorothy:** I think it has been five years, which is as long as the center's been open.

**Caren:** How old were you at that time?

**Dorothy:** I guess I was 60.

**Caren:** What made you decide to take a yoga class?

**Dorothy:** I had this daughter and her husband who had been doing it for a long time and mentioned it now and then. I guess for the usual reason, which when I think back now is funny, to improve my flexibility.



*Caren Liedtke and her mother, Dorothy Liedtke*

**Caren:** Why is that funny?

**Dorothy:** Because I don't think that's the reason I go to yoga now, but that was the reason I started. I don't think my flexibility has gotten any better either!

**Caren:** What's the reason you go now? How has your reason changed?

**Dorothy:** It's very important and I won't miss my two mornings. I wish I could go every day. It brings some quiet, some peace. I like the poses. I also like the chanting. Everything.

**Caren:** How long had you been taking classes when you started to feel that way?

**Dorothy:** Probably sometime in my second year when I stopped feeling so self-conscious about chanting. It was really gradual.

**Caren:** Neil and I had been doing yoga forever, so what clicked or made you want to go?

**Dorothy:** Maybe it was the right time. I heard about the new center. I would never have gone if it had been at the Y.

**Caren:** Why?

**Dorothy:** It just seemed like another program at the Y. I didn't want to go to the Y. I did that a long time ago with the kids. It had no appeal. The Yoga Centre seemed somehow special, different.

**Caren:** Why did you join the 55 and Over class?

**Dorothy:** That's where I thought I belonged.

**Caren:** Looking back was that a good start?

**Dorothy:** It was an excellent start. It wasn't full of young 20 somethings in the latest stretch clothing with awesome flexibility. It was not an intimidating class. There were people like me. Even though some of them had been there forever, it wasn't intimidating.

**Caren:** Now you take a 55 and over and a regular class, is there a difference between the two?

**Dorothy:** Yes, there is a difference. The regular class is a little more of a challenge, but some of Leslie's [55 and Over] classes are very challenging, too.

**Caren:** The Friday morning class that you're taking has mostly middle-aged women in it, right?

**Dorothy:** Yes, but some of them have been going for a long time and are very good. Mostly I've gone past the point where if the class can do better or more than I can, too bad, I can't do it. It's not that I'm not trying. I do the best I can and that's it. We did backbends today, which I can't do. I tried, but it killed me. I thought, "No, I shouldn't be doing

backbends.” I did my wimpy little try, anyway.

**Caren:** Yes, but you have a significant back injury.

**Dorothy:** I know.

**Caren:** Why should you be doing backbends?

**Dorothy:** Well, I shouldn’t because I can’t.

**Caren:** Part of yoga is acknowledging where you’re at.

**Dorothy:** Yes, I know.

**Caren:** So the only difference in the classes is the level of difficulty?

**Dorothy:** We [my mom and her friend Patty] decided that we wanted to go more than once a week. Well, there was only one 55 and Over class, so then we went to a Level 1 class. After a year and a bit, Level 1 became very boring in that it was always Level 1. I all of a sudden realized that I was past Level 1, but the only choice was Level 2, which then is a challenge. They started another 55 and Over class, but it was a beginner’s class. And it was in the small room and it was full. When we wanted to drop back, Britta said, “No, you’re not leaving Level 2.”

**Caren:** You’ve been doing yoga for five years, what physical changes have you noticed?

**Dorothy:** I don’t know. I’d like to think I’m better, but some days I think I’m worse. Stronger legs, I guess. More attention to what my body does. The teacher says, “Feel this muscle,” and I think, “Yeah, sure.” Then this last term, I could feel it happen, and I thought, “It really does happen! I guess I’m not dead there.” That has been really funny.

**Caren:** Anything outside out of class?

**Dorothy:** I feel guilty if I don’t have a daily practice. On holidays I did at least half an hour every day and really enjoyed it. I was reading in one of the books that

anything is considered a practice. If you do one pose while you’re making dinner, it’s considered a practice, but what’s one pose a day do for you?

**Caren:** More than nothing.

**Dorothy:** Well that’s where I’m at. I do something every day even though I don’t think one or two poses is a practice.

**Caren:** Did you have a practice right from the beginning?

**Dorothy:** No. Not until my third year.

**Caren:** So your first two years you just took classes?

**Dorothy:** Yes.

**Caren:** What made you start to have a practice at home?

**Dorothy:** I was just absorbing more. I was sure a home practice would help with some of the poses, like plank pose. I needed to develop some upper body strength. I realized I wasn’t going to get it doing plank pose in class once every three weeks.

**Caren:** When you first started, what did you home practice look like?

**Dorothy:** Downward Facing Dog. That stretch where you put your hands on the counter and arch your back up. That would be about it.

**Caren:** A couple of poses. How many times a week?

**Dorothy:** At least twice a week. I do back stretches every day. But I never thought that counted as a practice.

**Caren:** What do you think about or understand about the philosophy behind yoga? Does it matter to you?

**Dorothy:** Yes, it matters, but it’s very difficult. I enjoy it when the teachers read something from Mr. Iyengar’s book. I have his book and I do read it. I think it’s a very good life philosophy. I also like that they stress that it’s not a religion. You can be whatever religion you want

and accept the yoga philosophy. It’s a great way to live, something to strive for. I like the “in the moment, here and now” sort of thing.

**Caren:** Do you think you would have stayed with yoga if you hadn’t had a friend to go to class with?

**Dorothy:** Yes, I would have stayed, but whether I would have taken two classes or not, I’m not sure. Going with a friend is very supportive. Some days when we come, we say, “If you hadn’t been standing on the corner [waiting to be picked up], I would have said, ‘I’m too tired. I’m going to stay home.’” You can get into bad habits. You don’t go once because you’re too tired or you don’t like something. You don’t make yoga your priority if there isn’t someone else. Having said that though, I never miss when Patty is away and she never misses when I’m away.

**Caren:** How did the 55 and Over Salt Spring Retreat come about?

**Dorothy:** Leslie always talked about the Salt Spring Retreat when she came home. A couple of us in class said, “Why don’t we have a retreat?” We started looking for a place and that’s how it happened.

**Caren:** What did you like about it?

**Dorothy:** You just have this whole week-end where you do nothing but yoga.

**Caren:** One of the things I imagine that was nice was to hang out with people who are your own age.

**Dorothy:** The interesting thing was getting to know the people that were in the class better. It went from being a class of strangers to being a class of people that you are comfortable with. The first year I took classes, I really enjoyed the yoga, but the class felt cold. It made me think that when there are new people in the class, I should also say “Hello.”

**Caren:** Do you think about getting older?



**Dorothy:** Well, not really. I don't feel old. I know I'm old, but my own perception of myself is not as an old person. My body might have its creaks, but I don't think of myself as an old person.

**Caren:** Do you see yourself doing yoga for the rest of your life?

**Dorothy:** I do. If I didn't, I'd really miss it. I think it's given me something. What, I don't know. I'd like to go every day. I really enjoyed it and it's always a challenge.

**Caren:** Thanks, mom. It's been really great to talk to you about yoga.

**Dorothy:** Yes, it's been lovely. We should do this again. ॐ

CAREN LEIDKE TEACHES ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT A PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOL DOWNTOWN. SHE WORKS IN THE MORNINGS AND DOES THE MOM THING (SHE IS SAMANTHA'S MOTHER—THE ONE WHO KNOWS NOT TO PUT BUTTER ON JAM SANDWICHES) THE REST OF THE TIME.



**Melissa Worth spotting Marlene Miller.**



## The "55 Plus" Class

by Leslie Hogya

I was speechless when I returned to Victoria this past October, and came in to teach the "55 Plus" class. There before me was Ruth with a beautiful orchid and card from the class to congratulate me for passing my Senior Intermediate I assessment. Luckily for them, there is always a pose for almost any circumstance, so while I recovered my voice, I put them on the floor for *Supta Padungustasana* (a reclining pose).

The members of this class, assembling every Wednesday for many years, have become a group of friends. They practice *asana* together, learn to do *Uttahita Trikonasana* yet one more way, and repeat *Downward Facing Dog* a myriad of times. Their legs are straight, their chests open, their eyes bright. We call it the "55 Plus" class, but most are in their 60s and even 70s; I do not know their exact ages.

What makes it different from an ordinary class? They are not beginners, nor do we stick to the introductory syllabus. I teach many of the more complex poses, adapted to their ability. I teach at a slightly slower yet still demanding pace. I adapt balancing poses by making sure there is always a wall or chair to hold onto.

The class begins in the lobby as the members arrive and exchange news of the week, and sometimes ends over lunch or a cup of tea at noon. In November 2005 we held the first retreat for this age group. It was a wonderful weekend with time for penetrating deeper into the work of Iyengar yoga, for reflection, for meals and shared walks.

I always feel that I am as much a student in the class as the other participants, for we learn and grow together. At the beginning of the fall term, I asked what they hoped to accomplish this year. One said, "I just want to maintain!" With Mr. Iyengar turning 88, we have our model. Prashant has said he is an example of changeless change. He doesn't appear to age and change, but of course he is always practicing to seem changeless. ॐ



# Jam sandwiches and my Immovable Ways

by Neil McKinlay

NEIL MCKINLAY TEACHES MEDITATION THROUGHOUT THE CITY, WHICH ALLOWS HIM AMPLE TIME TO MAKE SANDWICHES FOR HIS DAUGHTER. THE TWO OF THEM CAN OFTEN BE SEEN PLAYING BARBIE, PRINCESS, AND HIDE-AND-SEEK TOGETHER. THIS ARTICLE WAS REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE WINTER 2007 ISSUE OF *LEARNING TO NEWS: OCCASIONAL REFLECTIONS ON LIVING*. LEARNING TO NEWS IS THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF NEILMCKINLAY.COM.

My daughter wanted a jam sandwich for breakfast. Easy enough, I thought. First butter. Then jam. Then another slice on top. “Here,” I said, holding the result.

Samantha gave it a cursory glance. “I don’t like crusts, Dad. Mom cuts them off.”

I went back to the kitchen with a shrug and started slicing darkened crusts from the rest of the bread. When I returned to the table, Sam was again unimpressed. “Could you cut it up, please? Like this,” she gestured, slicing with one hand.

“Into four, then?”

“Yes,” she nodded. “Four.”

This time, I arrived at the cutting board with a sigh. Looking at the clock, I suddenly felt the pressures of time weighing on me. We had a lot to do before the day got underway. “There,” I grumbled, putting the plate down. “A jam sandwich. No crusts. Cut in four.”

“Thank you,” she said, taking a piece into her mouth.

*My idea of how things should go is only an idea, I thought.*



*Samantha and Neil McKinlay*

“Dad!” she soon burst out, fueling my growing frustration. “You put butter on this?!” she accused. My hard work was now hanging in the air in front of me, dangling between two fingers. “I hate butter! Mom...”

I interrupted. “Mom never gives you butter, right?”

Samantha nodded. As if to add emphasis, she stuck out her tongue and said, “Bleah!”

Wanting this episode to end, I snatched the plate, took the quarter sandwich from Sam’s hand and rushed back to the kitchen. I stuffed the rejected creation into my face while reaching out for fresh slices. Jam, butter and bread crowded my mouth. Quite habitually, I reached for the butter tray and wiped a thin layer on the first new slice.

“Aaaargh!” I screamed. Bread crumbs flew everywhere. I placed both hands on the counter and leaned into its support.

“What’s wrong, Dad?” Samantha asked. She had a slight smile lifting her mouth. Some concern wrinkled between

her eyes. “What’s wrong?” she repeated. And then: “Is my sandwich with no butter ready?”

I let out an angry breath. *Wrong* was the fact that nothing was following my agenda. I had felt relatively on top of the day when I had woken—or, more accurately, when I had been awoken. Things were going well as I prepared that first sandwich. In other words, things were more or less following my plan.

But if there is one thing I have learned since our daughter arrived, it is that life doesn’t often follow my idea of how it should proceed. And when it does, this doesn’t last long. Lacking the niceties of most adults, children really drive this home. Where someone older might have put on a good face and eaten that sandwich, Samantha took a different approach. “Bleah!” she exclaimed.

Which points to the second thing I’ve learned since our daughter’s arrival. I am not all that flexible when it comes to my agenda. Once a plan is established, cement pours in and this becomes the

PHOTO: CAREN WILLMS

way things must go! And when they don't—well, the above offers a sense of what happens then.

Standing in the kitchen that morning, staring at the mess I'd made, I felt bad for my immovable ways. My idea of how things should go is only an idea, I thought. The practice of life involves

engaging what's actually happening.

With this in mind, I reached for another slice. I spread the jam, pressed more bread on top and got to cutting. By the time I placed the result in front of my daughter, I wasn't feeling particularly good, but I had relaxed a little. I thought I was more prepared to roll with life's

inevitable punches. "Here you go," I said, putting down the plate.

Sam looked at this for a moment. "Thanks, Dad," she then said, slipping out of her seat. "But know what? I'm not hungry anymore. Come on—let's play!" ॐ

## Changes at the Front Desk

by Leslie Hogya

Monica Dimofski and Karin Holtkamp will no longer be working at the front desk.

You will still see Karin at the centre teaching her classes. Karin has worked at the desk and been responsible for our membership list. Karin finished her teacher training with the centre and received her Introductory II certificate this past June.

Monica is moving to Salt Spring Island. She has been with us for five years and during that time also managed to finish her degree at University of Victoria. Monica has assumed many responsibilities at the centre; she has kept the information on the web site current, among many other duties.

As with all our staff, they have helped make our centre warm and welcoming, always willing to go the extra mile.

Congratulations to you both, and we wish you all the best! ॐ



At lunch: (front row) Karin Holtkamp, Wendy Boyer, Leslie Hogya; (back row) Monica Dimofski, Britta Poisson, Bruce Cox

## From Rush to Hush

by Sue Riddell

Last week when driving around town looking for an address that was escaping me, I became gridlocked in the Hillside Mall parking lot along with others going to the same place—nowhere! How does this happen?

After extricating myself, what did I encounter next but four fire engines at a gas station attending a car fire!

Making a quick turnaround, I headed down to the Iyengar Yoga Center of Victoria. It was time once again to gather up the mats and take them to be washed. And what did I find there? Peace and quiet that knew no bounds. In the silence

of the empty studio, I collected the mats and my thoughts.

This is the perfect time of year to take advantage of our lovely center to recharge and regroup, breathe and contemplate *Santosa*—the contentment I experience with each visit. I've been coming to Ty Chandler's early morning Timed Practice this term and find it a wonderful way to start a day. My recommendation is to try out one of the specialty classes—working with ropes, *pranayama*, or the early morning practice. Surprise yourself with something different. Your body and your soul will thank you! ॐ

### Scheduled Practice Space for IYCV Members

Sundays 12:30 - 3:00 pm  
& Fridays 6:30 - 8:00 am

Schedule is subject to change,  
please call 386-YOGA (9642)  
to check the schedule.

Please note:

- The supervising teacher is not there to teach or lead a practice.
- Bring your own practice sequence or find a sequence in one of the available books.
- The door may be locked; just knock loudly.



# 2007 calendar

## JANUARY

- 19-21 Heart of Yoga with Shirley Daventry French
- 27 Teachers' Meeting
- 27 Short Workshop, Exploring Trikonasana with Linda Benn

## FEBRUARY

- 3 IYCV AGM
- 10 55 Plus Workshop, Strength and Stamina with Wendy Boyer and Leslie Hoga
- 23 Friday Night Gathering – Meditation with Neil McKinley, followed by Potluck Dinner
- 24 Teachers' Meeting

## MARCH

- 16-18 Junior Intermediate I Assessment in Edmonton, AB
- 17 WWW: Women Working Wisely – Focus on Abdomen with Ann Kilbertus
- 23-24 Refine our Teaching, A Teacher Training Workshop with Shirley Daventry French
- 31 Teachers' Meeting

## APRIL

- 21 Teachers' Meeting

## MAY

- 4-7 Workshop Faeq Biria
- 11 Big Big Practice
- 24-27 IYAC AGM, Toronto

## JUNE

- 1-3 Saltspring Retreat
- 9 Teachers' Meeting
- 15-17 Introductory I/II Assessment in Kelowna, B.C.
- 15-17 Introductory I/II Assessment (English and French) in Ottawa, Ont.
- 25-30 Sadhana with Robin Cantor

## JULY

- 9-14 Teacher Training Intensive – Introductory Levels with Leslie Hoga and Ann Kilbertus

## AUGUST

- 6-10 Teacher Training Intensive – Junior Intermediate Levels with Shirley Daventry French
- 22-26 Footsteps of Patanjali Retreat at Saltspring Centre with Shirley Daventry French and Leslie Hoga

### *Newsletter submissions*

**Written:** Digital format is preferred—Word file or other files compatible with Microsoft Word, plain text files or emails. Hand written or printed submissions will be accepted; however, they require transposing (typing or scanning) to digital format by the newsletter committee before publication.

**Photos:** Prints or digital images. Digital files must be high resolution (minimum 600 dpi) for adequate reproduction. Acceptable formats are JPG (choose no compression, high quality, large file), TIFF or EPS. Preferred: save as grayscale EPS files, with no cropping adjustments or sizing.



## Time to Renew!

This is a reminder that your  
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria membership  
expired on December 31, 2006.

The membership subscription fee is \$40 + GST  
(Canadian residents add 7% GST) and is renewable each January.

### Membership benefits include:

- 5% discount on all classes
- free practice times at the IYCV
- 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 form below and send to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria.*



IYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA  
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:

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

Membership/subscription fee is \$40 + GST,  
renewable each January.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

☐ Receipt required.



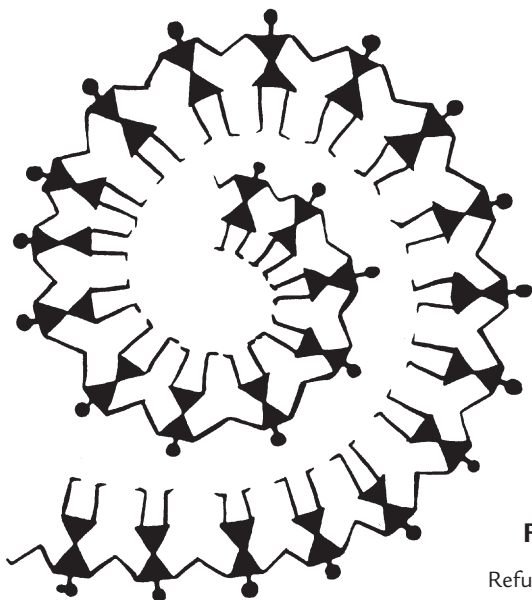


IYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA

N E W S L E T T E R  
M A R C H / A P R I L 2 0 0 7



*Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute (RIMYI), Pune, Maharashtra, India. The coconut seller is out front after class. In the background, a yoga student from England stands with her baby son and her mother.*



## Women Working Wisely

A Short Workshop with Ann Kilbertus

2:00 - 5:00 pm, Saturday, March 17, 2007

Women go through many phases of life and our work in each of these phases changes. This workshop invites women of all ages to come together as sisters and learn basic principles of how to work wisely and well with yoga. As *Sutra 2.16* advises us: *The pains that are yet to come can be and are to be avoided.*

**Fees: \$36.00 + GST for Members | \$42.00 + GST for Non Members**

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



IYENGAR YOGA

## Teacher Training Intensives

### Fees for each course:

\$560.00 CDN + GST IYCV members

\$600.00 CDN + GST non-members

### Registration now open.

To register, drop in to or phone  
the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria  
202-919 Fort Street  
Victoria, B.C. V8K 3K3  
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)  
[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

**July 9 - 19, 2007**

**With Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus**

Introductory I & II Syllabi for uncertified Iyengar Yoga teachers

This six-day course will build your understanding of teaching Iyengar Yoga based on the foundation of a good practice. Peer teaching, *pranayama*, philosophy and anatomy will be included. Leslie and Ann are experienced teachers. Both have Senior Intermediate I certification and are qualified I.Y.A.C. assessors. They are involved in teacher training in Victoria as well as outlying British Columbia and Yukon communities.

Preference will be given to members of I.Y.A.C. and those planning to do their assessment in the near future.

**August 6 - 10, 2007**

**With Shirley Daventry French**

Intermediate Junior and Senior syllabi for certified Iyengar Yoga teachers

This in-depth course offers the opportunity for certified Iyengar Yoga teachers to work with a master teacher and prepare for assessment at the Junior Intermediate I, II & III, and Senior Intermediate I levels.

Shirley 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.

As in previous years, Iyengar Yoga teachers from other countries are also invited to apply. I.Y.A.C. members will get priority.

*A deposit of \$150.00 CDN will reserve a place. Full payment is due June 2, 2007. If you cancel by June 2, 2007, your deposit minus \$50.00 will be refunded. After June 2, 2007, refunds will be given only if your space can be filled.*



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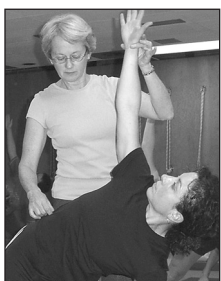
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*Leslie Hogg saluting B.K.S. Iyengar on his 88th birthday.*

## 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 given to advertisements regarding:
  - IYCV events
  - IYCV sponsored events
  - IYAC events

## COURSE REGISTRATION:

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

**Phone:**  
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

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



## IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE of VICTORIA NEWSLETTER

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE Mar. 15, 2007**

**IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA 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 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, drawings, information or suggestions to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter: 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3. For information on activities and events, call (250) 386-YOGA (9642) or visit our website: [www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.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 IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA IN 1976. SHIRLEY LIVES IN VICTORIA AND TEACHES WORLDWIDE.

Laptop in lap I am sitting on the balcony of a waterfront apartment in Mexico. The week before leaving was hectic as I tried to put my business and household affairs in order. I had arranged for someone to stay in our house, covered all my classes, paid the bills, put an appropriate message on the telephone, prepared lists of where we will be and when for my family, stopped the mail, stopped the papers, made an effort to take care of all my responsibilities! The week before leaving on a trip of any duration is always packed with details such as this, plus the additional problems which seem destined to arise at this time: a power pole on our property needs to be replaced, some drain-spouts are falling off the gutters. Derek's computer crashed on the Sunday before our departure while he was in the middle of a spreadsheet being prepared for a meeting with his accountant the following day. This latter occurrence nearly led to a divorce as he kept calling upon me as the computer expert in our household, which is ironic indeed.

Modern life has become so complicated; or rather, as I am sure the sages would quickly remind me, I have allowed my life to become complicated. The past six months has been very challenging for me. Now that I am here in Mexico, perhaps time and distance will give me an opportunity to examine why this was and what I am going to do about it.

Yoga teaches us to live a responsible life, primarily responsibility for the evolution of our soul. For those of us whose sadhana unfolds in the role of a householder rather than as a monk or renunciate, there are many duties. Of course, monks have duties too, but they are different from those of a householder.

I have had teachers who have spoken of monastic life as a higher calling, and I have difficulty with this definition. I believe that for monk or householder, life is equally difficult and equally full of opportunities to evolve.

But was it always so difficult? I used to take exception with my mother who would reminisce constantly about the past and how much better life had been. Considering that she had lived through the Great Depression, two World Wars, the austerity of postwar Britain and the Cold War, this was hard to accept. From my knowledge of history, the olden days are better described in the words of the seventeenth century English philosopher Thomas Hobbes: "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". In the twenty first century the average life span has increased considerably; but has the average quality of life improved?

I would not want to return to the lifestyle of my childhood. Apart from a world war raging around me, there were no washing machines, no dishwashers, no central heating, coal fires, cold bedrooms and chilblains (a red itchy swelling on the fingers and toes, caused by exposure to damp and cold and, in my case, often on the shins from sitting close to the coal fire to get warm). Most of all, there was no privacy, particularly in winter, largely because we were all clustered around the one fire in the house. Bedrooms had fireplaces too, but, with coal severely rationed, were rarely used; in any case this was considered decadent and unhealthy. London is by no means the coldest city in the world, but a cold nose sticking out of the bedclothes and ice on the inside of the bedroom window is one of my childhood memories.

Once the war was over and I was old enough to travel independently, summers became more carefree. I would take off in search of a warm beach with shorts, shirts, sandals, maybe one dress, and a bikini. Now my

*Modern life has become so complicated; or rather, as I am sure the sages would quickly remind me, I have allowed my life to become complicated.*



computer travels with me along with various plug-in cables, an adaptor, and often accompanied by a small printer with its own share of connections. Perhaps when WI-FI becomes more prevalent this will become simpler? I hold on to that hope despite evidence from a long life that very little seems to have become simpler as a result of advancing technology.

Having lugged my laptop to Mexico, I am finally putting it to use. I have just spent an interesting hour cleaning out e-mail. In the newsletter file was a slew of e-mails discussing a replacement for our old newsletter laptop. This came up at a newsletter meeting a few days before I was due to leave. As a member of the newsletter committee I was copied on all letters, but did not respond other than to say that I had nothing to say. First, I was already busy enough trying to disengage and get ready to leave. Secondly, I had nothing to contribute to the ensuing technical discussion.

My technical knowledge of computers is very limited although I was among the early converts. It was Derek's initiative, not mine, which brought this about. I was happy tapping away on my portable electric typewriter. He rarely put any words to paper, so I asked: "What on earth do we want with a computer?" This happened more than twenty years ago, and I really can't recall what, if any, response I received. I do know that we began to look at the few computers available at that time.

Derek had been reading a lot about computers, learned some of the jargon, and knew something about their current capability as well as the predictions for future development. The previous year, we had had a visit from a friend who was a scientist and computer analyst; he had told us that in a few years' time there would be a computer in every household. I thought he was crazy. Derek, presumably, had taken what he said under advisement; maybe even pursued the idea with him. And so it came to pass that we purchased our first computer: an early Macintosh.

From the day the Mac entered our house, I was able to use it easily without reading a word of its instruction book. Despite my initial lack of interest, I was hooked. I did not

*Consensus is a popular word in Canada, and, in my experience, is often reached before sufficient debate has taken place, without consideration of why the matter surfaced in the first place, without examining its nature and the consequences of a certain course of action.*

use my typewriter ever again! Derek, strangely enough, did not warm to computers at all, and is still not inclined to spend much time on the splendid fast IMAC G5 which now sits on his desk. It had quickly become clear that my computer was rarely available for sharing.

In the beginning I used the computer entirely for word processing: writing notes, articles and letters. I am a fast but not very accurate typist so on my faithful typewriter spent considerable time erasing mistakes. This often resulted in holes in the paper and the necessity to retype a page if it were going to be read by anyone other than me; for example, articles for the newsletter which, in its infancy, was a cut and paste effort when those terms meant type, cut with scissors, and glue the resulting tiny piece of paper on to a paste-board.

The very first newsletters were even more primitive than this: a few pages, written and typed whenever the spirit moved me, and reproduced on a messy copying machine which I believe was called a Gestetner.

Then one day, two students, Bill and Trish Graham, approached me and offered their skills to refine the newsletter. He was a typesetter and she a graphic designer. This was the beginning of a newsletter team as another student, Norman Mackenzie, offered his services as editor. He solicited articles which were assembled into a small journal. In addition to the editorial team, there was a paste-up crew which gathered at someone's home on a Sunday afternoon, the compilation crew which took the printed foolscap sheets one by

one, stapled them in the middle and folded them in half to form a booklet. Short of money, we couldn't afford to pay the copy centre to collate and staple for us. Occasionally when you opened your newsletter you would find some of the pages upside down or back to front, but on the whole this activity went smoothly. It usually took place on Friday evening or Saturday morning and would sometimes involve children who liked running around the table picking up a sheet of paper from each pile and making them into a heap. At the point when their help became counterproductive, they would be sent off for juice and cookies or similarly diverted.

Once this task was accomplished, it was time for the mail out crew to address, stuff and seal envelopes, stick on labels, lick stamps (there were no self-adhesive ones then) and get the completed newsletters ready for Canada Post.

Looking back, I can't help contrast the conviviality of those occasions with the nature of much of the centre's admin-

istrative support work these days. Thanks to advanced technology in general and e-mail in particular, now we do much of our work alone at home where we can get more done. Even telephone conversations are rare.

Blessing or curse? I have been pondering this question since I arrived in Mexico. E-mail and the internet have made the exchange of ideas and information rapid and simple; but, speaking for myself, they have created a dependency which causes me to have withdrawal symptoms when, as of now, I have no readily available internet connection. Sitting at our computers instead of face to face with another human being, there is a tendency to become isolated. For some, this distancing is part of the computer's appeal.

At least those of us currently on the production side of the newsletter know each other's faces because we do meet regularly if infrequently. Meetings are scheduled after Monday night's Level 4 class which the majority of committee members attend. We meet in the library

and have learned the wisdom of ordering in sushi so that our hunger is assuaged sufficiently for us to concentrate on the business at hand.

It seems to me that other members of the centre are also rediscovering the benefits of personal contact, because before the Level 4 class, there are often meetings in the library: program committee, scholarship committee, planning, teacher training reviews, or some other form of *karma* yoga. Before any of these meetings take place there will have been a flurry of e-mails discussing the various issues and searching for a suitable date and time.

These exchanges of e-mail do serve to inform and prepare you, and bring more efficiency to an eventual face to face meeting; but sometimes their sheer number is overwhelming. This morning, before erasing the e-mails on certain topics, I reread them. In the process I observed that in some instances the flow of letters led to communication and clarity; in others towards growing confusion and frustration.

## The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Retreat at the Saltspring Centre

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Shirley is a direct student of the yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar and one of North America's most



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### Fees:

\$325.00 + GST IYCV members - shared accommodation in the house  
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### Registration opens:

March 1, 2007 for IYCV members  
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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)

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee. Refunds available only before May 1, 2007.

I am currently reading a fascinating book about France; not a travelogue but a study of the French State, its language, laws, education and significant differences between French and Anglo-American society. Its title is *Sixty Million Frenchmen can't be Wrong*; its authors two bilingual Canadians, one a native French speaker from Québec and the other a native English speaker from Ontario. Married to each other they honed their skills in each other's language by speaking nothing but English one week and nothing but French the next. A political scientist and a journalist, they wrote this book after living in Paris for several years.

In a chapter on Education, they discuss how important it is to the French to be able to build and sustain an argument. From their earliest days in school, children are taught how to develop ideas and expected to be able to justify them verbally and in writing. Even primary students are expected to follow the format of thesis, followed by antithesis, concluding with synthesis. They are constantly tested and challenged to support their reasoning, at home and at school. This is not so very different from the expectations put upon me during my education in England where as early as elementary school we were expected to

*Unless we are willing to acknowledge and confront our emotions and the attachments which lie behind them, we will end up making poor decisions.*

write well constructed essays, which would be subjected to strong criticism. There were no 80% or 90% marks, and 70% would have been rare, even for the very best efforts. We were left in no doubt that there was plenty of room for improvement.

Looking through my e-mail correspondence, I could see a pattern on many issues. There is no shortage of ideas. Someone puts one forward in writing. Most of those who support it respond quickly. Then, someone ventures to disagree. Some of those who agreed with the initial proposition, change their minds. Others fall silent. Still others become defensive. Occasionally, as a result of willingness to tolerate and examine opposing viewpoints, this exchange of ideas develops into wise policies. Before this happens, there is usually an uncomfortable period with some heightened emotions tied to attachment to a certain course of action.

Unless we are willing to acknowledge

and confront our emotions and the attachments which lie behind them, we will end up making poor decisions.

Consensus is a popular word in Canada, and, in my experience, is often reached before sufficient debate has taken place, without consideration of why the matter surfaced in the first place, without examining its nature and the consequences of a certain course of action. (Here I include inaction which, as the *Bhagavad Gita* reminds us is another form of action.) Sometimes this happens because of lack of response or omission; sometimes because of the desire to put an end to the matter or commission. Either way authority is given to another to act in some way or other. Commission can denote strong agreement or indifference, clarity or confusion; and it's hard to know unless some debate has taken place. The moment an issue becomes controversial, verbally or in print, I find that many recoil from it. Because of this unwillingness to tolerate contention,

## Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada ASSESSMENT DATES

March 16 - 18, 2007  
Edmonton  
Jr. Intermediate I

June 15 - 17, 2007  
Kelowna  
Introductory I/II

June 15 - 17, 2007  
Ottawa  
Introductory I/II  
(In English and French)



October 19 - 21, 2007  
Toronto  
Introductory I/II

November 16 - 18, 2007  
Vancouver  
Jr. Intermediate II

April 18 - 20, 2008  
Toronto  
Jr. Intermediate III



No Classes  
Easter Long Weekend:  
Friday, April 6 - Monday, April 9, 2007  
and  
Monday, July 2 - Sunday, July 8, 2007  
for painting

numerous poor decisions are made which in the end take up more time because they have to be rectified.

Direct students of B.K.S. Iyengar will have been taught this lesson time and time again. Out of discomfort, physical, psychological or spiritual, comes the opportunity of learning on all of those levels. Trying to avoid that which causes discomfort is doomed to failure, but nevertheless, a lot of energy is wasted in the attempt. Contentment or *santosa* is one of the precepts of yoga; at the same time it is divine discontent which drives us to progress on our evolutionary path. The Divine disturbs our self-satisfaction and complacency so that we will take risks, learn and realise our potential in this human birth.

My education together with my family prepared me as much for my first confrontation with Gururji as did the asana

*Trying to avoid that which causes discomfort is doomed to failure, but nevertheless, a lot of energy is wasted in the attempt.*

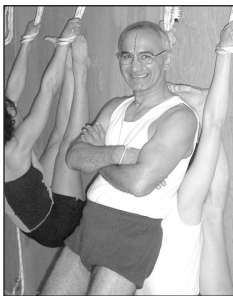
classes I attended beforehand. I grew up listening to heated arguments between my father, a supporter of the Conservative party in England, and my older brother, an ardent socialist. Because I was young, I was predisposed towards my brother's point of view. Nonetheless, sometimes I could see that my father had got the better of the debate. It became clear to me that if your premise were able to be verbally demolished, it was generally because you had not developed it very well. The resulting criticism, while unsettling, provided an opportunity to learn. I couldn't wait to be old enough to join in!

So what are my conclusions about e-

mail? Clearly it can be a tremendous waste of time if we forget that it is a tool to be used with discrimination. It can be used to put an end to thinking or as a means of developing ideas. It can be addictive, but can also be a useful means of communication. Words and their use in thought, speech or writing play a major role in creating the world in which we live. E-mail, in the same way as all other means of verbal expression, can become a potent distraction or a valuable spiritual tool. The choice is up to us.

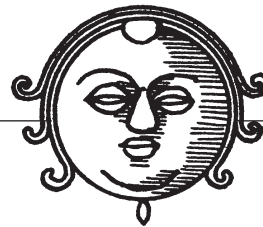
*Om namah Shivaya ॐ*

# Faeq Biria



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## Friday Night Gathering

Friday April 20, 2007 at 6:30 pm

**We are pleased to announce that our guests  
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Let's all join together for a musical evening  
of Kirtan (chanting).

Please bring a vegetarian dish to share  
at the Potluck Dinner to follow the Kirtan.

Admission: Minimum \$5.00 donation to go  
to The Saltspring Centre & their Orphanage Project.



# Mr. Iyengar's Commentary on Patanjali

## Part I of III: Introduction & Samadhi Pada



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

Guruji's introduction, and that part dealing with Samadhi Pada, appeared in the May 1993 edition of the Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter. The remaining portions of that address were subsequently published in the 1993 Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association Newsletter following the annual meeting.

### Patanjali

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

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

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

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

### Pearls of Wisdom: The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

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

*Abahu purusakara  
Sankha cakrasi darinam  
Sahasra sirasam sveta  
Pranamami Patanjalinim*

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

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

mind so that our minds may be tuned to the good thoughts of this great man.

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

Patanjali is a *svayambhu* (*svaya-ambhu*—with one's own willpower). He came into existence by his own will. He has no parents and, according to Indian mythology, he is the incarnation of Lord Adishesha. Adishesha is a great King Cobra who gives his body as a seat for Lord Vishnu. It is said that once Lord Shiva, king of dance, invited Lord Vishnu and other deities to see his famous dance, *Tandava Nrtya*. As Lord Shiva danced, Lord Vishnu's body began to vibrate to the graceful movements of Lord Shiva. As Lord Vishnu was seated on Adishesha, the great cobra became breathless under the weight and started to gasp for air. When the dance came to an end Adishesha asked the Lord, "How is it that you were so heavy when you were dancing, and as soon as the dance stopped

you became light?” He replied, “I was so completely engrossed in the movements that my nerves and body vibrated as if I was myself dancing. That is why you felt it”. Seeing how impressed the Lord was with the dance, Adishesha decided to learn dance himself. (That is why many dancers in India say that Patanjali is also the father of dance.) However, Lord Vishnu said, “You must wait. Lord Shiva is going to ask you to do some work. At that time you can be incarnated on the Earth and then you can learn dance.” That time arrived and Lord Shiva asked him to write a commentary on grammar. Adishesha saw that his master Lord Vishnu’s prediction had come true and he accepted. Then he looked for a woman who was both a *yogini* and a *tapasvini* (one who had done much yoga and fervent penance) to be his mother. He waited to find the right person, someone who would allow his goals to be fulfilled. After some time he found a lady called Gonika who had no children and who had done penance for several years. She was praying to the rising sun, saying, “My time has come to an end and whatever knowledge I have gathered it was only through you, O Sun God. So, as I have no son or daughter to pass it on to, I return my knowledge to you”. She took some water to offer as an oblation, and she closed her eyes to pray. Then as she opened her eyes to make her offering of water to mother Earth, she saw a small worm moving in the water in her palms. She was terrified and said, “What polluted water I have taken!” Then immediately the worm began to take human form and begged the *yogini* to accept him as her son. She was astonished that he could speak and she accepted him as her son.

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

As he grew, Gonika became more and more impressed by the boy and she passed

*So may the blessings of  
Lord Patanjali be on you,  
may his wisdom dawn  
on you, so that the flash  
of his understanding  
may come to you.*

on her knowledge to him. Eventually Patanjali completed his first duty, the commentary on grammar. It is very hard nowadays to imagine how one man could be a master of grammar, a master of medicine and a master of yoga. Because of this some Western scholars have conjectured that Patanjali, the author of the grammar, which was based on the work of the grammarian Panini, must have been the son of Panini. However that is not so according to the Indian tradition.

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

When he had finished these two great works he was very unhappy; he thought, “I have given the grammar for the use of right words and I have shown various ways to develop health, but I have not said anything about cultivating the mind. Some commentators say this is why the first *sutra*, *Atha Yoga anusasanam* begins with the word *atha* which means “now”. Some people translate this *sutra* as “Now, the exposition of Yoga”, interpreting the

“now” to mean that Yoga had not been in existence before. But Patanjali was not creating Yoga; instead, he was bringing what had been in the past into the present. In this *sutra* “now” does not indicate a new idea. It is like in our classes, when we say, “Now, come on, do *Trikonasana*.” or “Now, do *Parsvakonasana*!” Don’t we say that? This use of the word “now” is to bring the hearer’s attention to the present situation. So Patanjali was bringing the attention of his readers to a past tradition, which had been evaded or neglected. Also, in the original language *anusasanam* did not mean exposition (as it is usually translated in English), but referred to the oral tradition of the sages (sayings passed down). *Sasana* also means “code of law”, like the law codes of this world. However, this book is a code for human spiritual development and contains directed instructions for a code of living, a code of conduct. So, the *sutras* begin, “Now, what is the code of conduct?”

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

### ***The Yoga Sutras***

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

(I.1) *Atha Yoga anusasanam*

(I.2) *Yoga citta vrtti nirodhah*

(I.3) *Tada drastub svarupa avasthanam*

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

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

It is very simple. In three *sutras* he has covered the whole subject. Then why the hundred and ninety extra *sutras*? The ancient texts of India always began with the conclusion and then moved onto the elaboration. Books today are quite different; we begin at the base and move towards the summit. In ancient books

*Then as she opened her eyes to make her offering of water to mother Earth, she saw a small worm moving in the water in her palms. She was terrified and said, "What polluted water I have taken!"*

the initial summary was there to attract the intellectuals, to allow them the freedom to ponder its meaning, and then to draw them into the main text.

*Anusasanam* in the first *sutra* is intimately related to *yama* and *niyama*. Patanjali explains later that these ethical disciplines are involved in the character building of *anusasanam*. We are made up of three *gunas* (qualities): *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*. The mind is sometimes dull, sometimes vibrant, and sometimes serene. You have all experienced these states. They come in a flash and disappear in a flash. Patanjali explains that how through the science of Yoga we can learn to free our mind from the states of inertia and vibration and keep it everlastingly in a state of serenity. In order to maintain that serenity, what methods

should we practise? To explain this, Patanjali has arranged the *sutras* in four chapters. In order, they are: *Samadhi Pada*, *Sadhana Pada*, *Vibhuti Pada*, and *Kaivalya Pada*.

### Samadhi Pada

First let us examine the first *pada* (chapter) *Samadhi Pada*. *Samadhi* contains two words; *sa* means "alike", "similar", "auspiciousness", "goodness", and "virtue" and *adhi* means "the base". When Patanjali says in *sutra* I.3 that the core of the being should be awoken so that it finds its true seat, it follows that the virtuousness of that core should be diffused throughout the body, it should illuminate our fibres, our blood cells and our nerve cells. That is the meaning of *Samadhi*, not merely "trance". *Adhi* refers to the core of our being which is the base of our existence, and in *Samadhi* the goodness of this core fills the entire human system. So the first chapter, *Samadhi Pada*, deals with these internal practices (*antaranga sadhana*) and it is very difficult to understand these on the normal intellectual level. So why did he choose to talk about the most difficult subject first? He begins by defining the fundamental terms. Therefore he must first explain the constitution and functioning of the *citta*. I feel this is especially important for Westerners, because the

Indian sages distinguish between several different aspects of what Westerners

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just refer to as “mind”. *Citta* includes three different aspects of the human being, which I have called “mind”, “intelligence” and “consciousness”.

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

This is where Westerners fail to distinguish between the various compartments of the “mind”. For them it is all the same. But Indians have precisely described the

mind as the outer cover of the intelligence, the intelligence as the outer cover of the consciousness, and the consciousness as the outer cover of the soul. These are the three inner layers of the five layers they call the *annamayakosha*, *pranamayakosha*, *manomayakosha*, *vijnanamayakosha* and the *anandamayakosha*—which I am sure you are all familiar with—the anatomical body, physiology body, psychological body, intellectual body and the causal body.

### ***Citta-Vrtti: The Fluctuations in Consciousness***

These three layers—mind, intelligence, consciousness—that make up the *citta* all have their origin in the soul; they “sprout” from the soul. These different aspects of the *citta* create *vrttis*—usually translated as “thought waves”. It is the presence of these thought waves that creates what we term a “disturbed state of

mind”. Patanjali analyses these thought waves and divides them into five types (I.5 - I.11). You can experience thought waves by direct contact (with objects), through the reception of ideas or where the mind works together with the senses to ensure correct perception (because sometimes the senses of perception can misperceive).

These are known collectively as *pratyaya*, the first type of *vrtti*. The second *vrtti* is known as *viparyaya*. Here the senses of perception deceive us. The example often given is of the observer who claims that the rabbit he is watching has horns. In the same way a jaundiced personality cannot see colours correctly. The senses are not well trained and wrong perceptions arise in the form of various thought waves. The third type is *vikalpa*, “misconception”. In this case,



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

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

...this book is a code for human spiritual development and contains directed instructions for a code of living, a code of conduct.

mation of thought waves that takes place through *smṛti*. So *smṛti* must be understood in connection with the other four *vrttis*.

### ***Vrttis and their Associated Kleshas***

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

*Avidya*, the first *klesha*, means “ignorance”. He means specifically the ignorance of right understanding and spiritual knowledge. *Asmīta* refers to the attitude of the know-all who, as someone is telling him something, before the speaker can even finish, says, “Oh, there is nothing to that, I know that!” These two—*asmita* and *avidya*—are intellectual defects, intellectual diseases, intellectual pains. The next two are *raga* and *dvesha*—“attachment” and “aversion”, respectively. The order he puts them in is important for joy leads to attachment and attachment then leads to hatred and pain. Patanjali describes the process but how do we avoid attachment in the first place? We must develop equipoise of mind.

Otherwise we will develop these emotional and mental problems, which are now termed psychosomatic and psychological diseases. We run to the psychoanalysts for help. But we must be our own psychoanalyst and get to grips with the problems of *avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, and *dvesa* within ourselves. That is what Patanjali is saying.

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

### ***Abhyasa–Vairagya: Practice and Renunciation***

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

(1.4) *Vrtti sarupyam itaratra*  
(Otherwise the consciousness is involved in the fluctuations).

Through restraining the mind you reach that exalted state in which you see the soul but you cannot maintain this state. The mind likes to be supreme,

to have control, and as the mind reasserts itself, the *atman* (absolute consciousness) recedes. Like a powerful magnet that draws iron ore, the mind drags the self towards the thoughts. Patanjali says you must renounce that. As soon as you renounce this pulling of the self by the mind towards the thought waves, then consciousness will draw the mind towards the soul. Then there is a distance from the thought waves. If the soul goes towards the mind, you are trapped; but if the mind goes towards the soul, you are free.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Types of Practitioner

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



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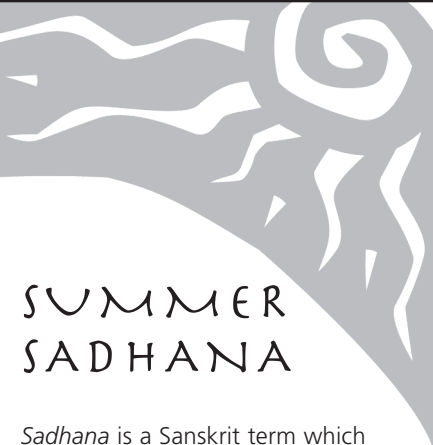
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**With Robin Cantor**

See next issue for more details.

him it is timeless but for the other three types this freedom is time-bound.

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

So Patanjali says “train!”, even if you have not had success. And we must encourage all: those who say, “Oh, I practise once a week”, those who say “I do it twice a week”, “three times a week” and so on. This is *mrdhu*, *madhyama*. And also those who say “I am practising five hours a day”—this is *adhimatratvat*. But remember, this does not mean hours of teaching, do not include teaching time, teaching is not practising, not *abhyasa*. So the student who devotes five or six hours

a day to practice is the keen student. Intensity of practice can similarly be graduated. If you are at a low ebb when you practise that is *mrdhu*, average intensity is *madhya* and high intensity is *adhimatratva*. Whatever the hours spent or the intensity of the practice, Patanjali encourages all to continue; it will take time.

### *The Four Aspects of the Brain*

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

These aspects are found in the four parts of the brain; the front brain is the analytical brain, the back brain is the

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

Of these four aspects, *asmita* and the related concept of *atman* are most difficult to explain. In the second chapter, *asmita* is translated as ego, but in the fourth chapter a different meaning is intended in *nirmana cittani asmita matrat* (IV.4). The meaning differs because he is describing a cultured mind. The mind, which has been created as intelligence through the methods Patanjali describes, acts as the individual self. It is an offshoot from the original consciousness so when it matures through practice it loses its identity. It is here in the fourth chapter that people are unable even to glimpse the meaning that Patanjali intends by the word *asmita*. As long as it does not lose its identity it is *asmita*. So the *citta* which originates in the core of being has to be matured with wisdom. This is the seasoned intelligence, the



*Dear Scholarship Committee and Board of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria:*

This is to thank everyone for the scholarship I just received from the B.K.S. Iyengar scholarship fund to help with my latest (7th) trip to India.

I am very grateful and really touched to be helped in this way.

I had a very rich and wonderful month in Pune. Mr. Iyengar was celebrating his 88th birthday in December, and it was an honour to be there for that event.

I went to see Guruji in the library before the big day, and reminded him that we always give a workshop in his honour in December and that the money raised is for scholarships to attend classes in Pune. Then I gave him a birthday card from us that Lauren Cox had drawn and that about 100 Iyengar Yoga centre students had signed. He laughed in delight when he opened the card. And blessed us all.

*Namaste, Leslie Hogya*



*rthambhara prajna* mentioned in the first chapter (I.48). This arises when the mind is fully absorbed in an object of meditation. Since *asmita* is an offshoot from the absolute consciousness when it is completely mature, the sense of “I am-ness” is lost and *asmita* becomes soul. Through this process of cultivation the four parts of the brain, the analytical brain, the reasoning brain, the joyful brain, and that part which feels I-am-ness, come together. Then they blossom out; but they must first be brought together.

### ***Virama Pratyaya: The State of Silence***

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

However, the next *sutra* in Patanjali’s account is an explanation; in it he says that the person who enters *virama pratyaya* experiences a bodiless state.

In sleep we all experience a bodiless state. Traditional commentaries have taken this *sutra* to refer to deities or angels, but Patanjali is always concerned with the situation of the practitioner, the development and understanding of each individual. Yes, deities and angels have no bodies; they are *prakritilayan* who are undisturbed by the five elements. But what happens in sleep? Is sleep not an *asamprajnata samadhi*? Then why is it called *nidra*? Patanjali describes this experience we all have in sleep and then goes on to say, (I.20) *sraddha virya smrti samadhi prajna purvaka itaresam* (Continue with) faith, vigour, memory, complete absorption in practice, and total awareness.

He is telling us not to stop after we have had such experience but to go on

*The ancient texts of India always began with the conclusion and then moved onto the elaboration. Books today are quite different; we begin at the base and move towards the summit.*

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

### ***Yoga and God***

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

you finish communicating you close your mouth. Thus the base of all communication is *A-U-M*. That is why it became the seed syllable, the *bija mantra*. According to Indian spirituality if you surrender yourself to this *bija mantra* you surrender yourself to the *Sabda Brahman*. You know, of course, that there are many *mantras* which develop from *AUM* and which convey many different meanings. However, that is a vast subject, which we cannot cover now. The important thing is that Patanjali takes that seed mantra and says “meditate on that” (I.28).

### ***Meditation***

The moment the word “meditation” is introduced, the present generation misinterprets it. They think this is an easy method. When you ask them what they are doing, they all say, “I am meditating”. But Patanjali gives a variety of methods because he knows that meditation is not possible for all. The *citta-vrttis* keep playing, wandering here and there and even if you have controlled senses and a controlled mind, you do not know at what time you may fall back. So he says, continue your *sadhana*. For intellectuals he says that meditation is the right method. But do you have the capacity to accept your weaknesses and surrender? Have you heard of Ramakrishna Paramahansa? When he was suffering from terminal cancer all his followers pleaded with him. “Sir, the *shakti* is under your control, why do you not ask the *shakti* to give you the power to expel this cancer?” And do you know what his answer was? “Have I done meditation all these years just to ask for this disease to be taken away?” Do we, you and I, have that kind of mentality? Now do you understand



what meditation is? And yet we do not read Patanjali to see for whom he has given meditation as a method! You have heard of Ramana Maharshi—he also had cancer and the cancer had spread to such an extent that the doctors said that they would have to give him an anaesthetic in order to amputate his arm. He immediately said, “You want my arm don’t you? Well then, what do I want with an anaesthetic? Cut it off!” Do you have that courage? So the way of meditation is only for the *tivra samvegin*, for those who are supremely intense, who are very close to the soul. For them it is easy to achieve their goal. Do you see how jumbled up we are in our misconceptions about meditation?

### *Alternatives to Meditation*

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

(II.34) *Pracchardana vvidliaranabhyam va pranasya*

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

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

Alternatively, he says, whatever subject attracts you, go wholeheartedly and completely into that (II.35). So I go

totally into the *asanas*; I am totally absorbed in them. If you understand and accept what Patanjali says you cannot call *asanas* merely physical yoga. Any subject, if it attracts you enough for you to become totally absorbed in it can become a path to *Samadhi*. Look at the dedication of the greatest scientists. For twenty-four hours of every day their minds and bodies will be fixed on one subject alone. In that respect, according to Patanjali, they are *yogis*. In the same way I am involved in the *asanas* and *pranayama*. The terminology which my critics use to describe my practise is based on misconception. They are suffering from *vikalpa*, from misconception. Consequently they do not approach this subject, which they do not know, with an open mind. I am open to learning. Just as the scientist wants to break down the atoms to understand the workings of matter, so I am interested in breaking down the elements of my body to discover the internal



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Thank you

**Janine Beckner** and **Mary Hayes** for keeping the library in order.

**Ty Chandler** for leading the New Year's Day practice.

**Sue Riddell** for keeping the props clean and tidy.

**Karin Dayton** for coordinating pick up and mailing of the newsletter.

**Karin Holtkamp** for fresh flowers, many times, to beautify the lobby.

processes. I have to continue exploring the quality of movement, the quality of effort. If I say, “My head aches but head-balance brings relief,” is that the end of it? No! What more can *Sirsasana* give? How can I forget the body in *Sirsasana* while keeping the body alert? How can I draw my mind away from the body? Can you do that? I can and I have shown you the process. But this can only be understood when the student is ready. Then there will be total absorption.

If this is not attainable, Patanjali suggests another alternative. (II.36) *Visoka va jyotismati*. Or contemplate the serene and luminous light in the heart.

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

### ***Citta Prasadanam: The Diffusion of Consciousness***

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

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

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

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

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

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

(I.47) *Nirvicara vaiisharadhye adhy-atmaprasadah*

With the attainment of purity in non-deliberate contemplation (*samadhi*) there flows a profound and serene spiritual light.

In that moment, instead of merely *citta* filling the body, now the soul, the very self engulfs that frontier which is your body. It occupies everywhere and there is no support from *mantra*, from

concentration on inhalation or exhalation, or on an ideal human being. You are yourself in the sorrowless light. This state is known as *Nirbija Samadhi* because in it there is no support for the further development of the intelligence. And so he finishes the first chapter with this *Nirbija Samadhi*. Again it is important to note the unusual order of the four chapters. The first chapter culminates with this supreme state of *Nirbija Samadhi* and then immediately he begins the second chapter with basic instructions for unevolved souls. But is this not also for evolved souls, because although you may reach *Nirbija Samadhi*, you do not know when sorrows may come to you.

(II. 16) *Heyam dukkham anagatam*

The pain which is to come can be avoided.

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

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

# Milk, Light and Servants

*My First Visit to Pune, October 20, 2006*

by Athena George

It's day twenty of my sixty days of study at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, India. Last night I wrote in my journal, "I love this adventure!"

On my first day, when I arrive for morning practice at the Institute I enter a large semicircular hall, with windows on the curved side and a white marble platform against the flat wall. A statue of Pantanjali sits to the left of the door. Large black and white photos from *Light on Yoga* cover the walls. Morning light glows on the moss-green marble floors, smooth and cool under my bare feet. A faint mix of incense, mothballs and diesel fumes scents the air. Many wooden props line the back wall. About fifty students quietly practice yoga.

I find a mat and unfold it in a clear space. I check to see who is beside me. It's B.K.S. Iyengar!

The world's most famous yoga teacher, who brought yoga to millions around the world, lies beside me in a supine pose weighted with massive weights. Eighty-eight-year-old Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar, with his famous imposing eyebrows, is doing the same thing as I am (only at a much higher/deeper level); he's practicing yoga. I've since discovered that he practices everyday at the regular open practice times.

Last night, B.K.S. Iyengar spoke at a celebration for Pantajali Jayanti and the beginning of *Diwali*, the Hindu New Year. He moved me with the passion and



Athena (left) with yoga students from the U.K., dressed up in Indian kurtas for a celebration at the Institute.

PHOTOS: ATHENA GEORGE

pleasure he spoke with about yoga. He told us not to do the poses mechanically, but to find out for ourselves, for example, why the backs of the thighs move a particular way in particular poses, such as *Tadasana*, *Sirsasana* (headstand), or *Sarvangasana* (shoulderstand). He said that through experimentation, we will build self-knowledge and increase our attention and awareness. Yet, this is not enough. Iyengar grinned and insisted that we do yoga with mind, body and *soul*—let there be bliss and light in our *asanas*.

Iyengar's daughter, Geeta, teaches many of the classes. She wears green Pune shorts with elastic at the thighs and white shirts, with a battery-powered microphone strapped around her waist. She leads classes with a commanding

presence. During my first week, she instructed us to take our "shoulder bones back!" so many times that my posture is forever altered.

Some students were whispering in the women's bathroom/changeroom (which is the size of a closet) that Geeta's temper doesn't fit with the yogic path of light and bliss. So far, the only time I've seen Geeta angry with students was when someone wasn't listening to her instructions; as a result, I really listen to her.

In my first class with Geeta, she held my upper arms firmly in *Tadasana* and waited for my shoulders to release downward. When my shoulders let go, I gave a happy sigh and smiled. She returned my smile and still holding my arms down ordered, "Now, *lift* your chest!"

Iyengar's son, Prashant, teaches a completely different class than his sister. He says that we are not beginners, so he doesn't need to give instructions to our body. Instead, his goal is to help us to take responsibility for the purpose of our poses.

*I find a mat and unfold it in a clear space.*

*I check to see who is beside me.*

*It's B.K.S. Iyengar!*



In one class Prashant taught us *Trikonasana* (triangle pose) over and over, with mini lectures between each pose, asking us to consider that each time we take the pose it changes depending on our intentions. He said we should be able to do *Savasana Sarvangasana* (corpse pose) in *Trikonasana*. He repeated, "This is not a gym," and, "Mind. Body. Breath. Use your breath."

In my practice today, besides keeping my shoulder bones back and right shoulder down, I combine teaching from all three Iyengars. Geeta asked us to imagine that each pose is like a different shaped bottle of milk with the same contents. I visualized the light that B.K.S. Iyengar speaks of flowing through my body like milk in a bottle, and when I reached a place the milk wouldn't flow, I experimented with various movements and used my breath, as Prashant suggested, to try to open these places.

Before I left for India my class on Salt Spring Island gave me a farewell dinner (thanks everyone!). At this time, my teacher, Sheri Berkowitz, gave me a card with a note inside that said I would go to India to study with a spiritual teacher and find that India herself also becomes my teacher.

India has taught me to be grateful for and to protect our clean air in Canada. Pune, with a population of four million, is crammed with cars and motorized rickshaws, all running on diesel fuel. Everyday, just breathing is like smoking a pack of cigarettes. If I'm outside for more than two hours, I feel ill.

India has also taught me to value our Canadian health and welfare system. Travelling in Mumbai, I saw thousands upon thousands of shacks of tin and plastic. Skinny barefoot children scrounged in mountains of garbage. I will never forget that journey.



A common Indian lunch, Thali. Cost is approximately 40 rupees (\$1).

Here in Pune, the Institute is in a modern, fairly middle-class neighbourhood; although the caste system and poverty still can be found. I have a woman who cleans my room and does my laundry. She's a dark-skinned woman named Ranjani who always wears a purple sari. She's between 30 and 45; it's hard to tell. For her services I pay 400 rupees (\$11.00 CAD) a month to Smita, my gracious and well-traveled landlady.

Last week, Ranjani told me in sign language and a few English words not to throw food in the dust bin. When she cleaned my room the day before, she told me she had found a package of cookies I had thrown away and she took them home. I discarded them because I thought they were crackers when I bought them, and I don't eat sweets. We arranged that I leave my leftover food on one corner of the table. "For my children," said Ranjani.

On Sunday, I asked Ranjani if she didn't get the day off. "No holidays," she replied. I asked about *Diwali*. "No holidays," she replied.

I heard that the common wage for female servants is 1,000 rupees per month (about \$29.00). A curry meal in a basic restaurant costs 50-100 rupees. That packet of cookies I threw away cost 26 rupees.

I haven't given money to the beggars here. Even in Victoria, I don't give to the panhandlers. My *Lonely Planet* travel guide says to give to charities and tip those who have reached the lowest level of employment generously. I gave Rangani 100 rupees for *Diwali* and will give her a larger tip when I leave. I may judge her life as harsh, with low pay and no holidays, but she has a steady job, and has for many years, with the same family.

My new German friend Sabina (you meet yoga people from all over the world at the

Institute) carries a bag full of coins, candies and biscuits. She hands them out to poor children and elderly, not necessarily beggars. She does this with an open heart and leaves many smiling children's faces behind her.

I am enjoying the flavours of India. I have a beautiful pocket garden outside my window, visited by many butterflies and a brown frog. Palm trees fill the sky with singing birds. I've eaten many different curries and flat breads, all pure veg. The women swish about in gorgeous swaths of silk, in oranges, pinks, reds, all threaded with gold. Everywhere small temples are decorated with flowers.

I miss my husband David. We've only known each other for three years, so two months apart seems like forever. He supports me in my big yoga adventure.

I urge other experienced Iyengar yoga students to come to Pune and study. It's an incredible honour and opportunity. ॐ

ATHENA GEORGE LIVES ON SATURNA ISLAND, BC, AND IS IN HER THIRD-YEAR OF IYENGAR TEACHER TRAINING. JOIN US IN THE UPCOMING ISSUES FOR MORE OF ATHENA'S JOURNEYS AT RIMYI IN PUNE, INDIA.



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### **SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH**

is a senior student of B.K.S. Iyengar. She  
has studied at the Ramamani Memorial  
Institute in Pune many times, most recently  
in October 2005. She is the founder of the  
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, B.C.

**LESLIE HOGYA** has been studying Iyengar  
Yoga since 1972. She has travelled to India  
seven times. She most recently studied with  
B.K.S. Iyengar in Pune in December, 2006.  
She holds a Senior Intermediate I level of  
certification and is part of the assessors  
team for Canada.

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# An Interview with Chris Saudek – Part I

*Monday, November 6, 2006*

**By Ann Kilbertus and Leslie Hogya**

CHRIS SAUDEK IS AN IYENGAR CERTIFIED SENIOR INTERMEDIATE LEVEL III YOGA INSTRUCTOR, TEACHING IN WISCONSIN. SHE TEACHES REGULAR CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS AND HAS GRACED IYCV WITH HER TEACHING PRESENCE ON MANY OCCASIONS

**Ann (A): I know that you have lived in India a number of times, for long periods, and I wonder if you could describe what that was like?**

Chris (C): The first time I went to India was in 1980 and I went for about two months and at that time you could stay right in the Institute. They had rooms downstairs and you could rent a room for a small fee.

**A: That was your first trip?**

C: Yes, I had travelled before, in the Peace Corps and elsewhere, but I still was not prepared for what things were like in India in those days. Nothing was regulated at all at the airport, and the moment you landed people just started grabbing your stuff. Fortunately I knew Mr. Taraporewala (who had just been in the USA), and he met me at the airport and took me to his home where he lived with his two daughters and his most wonderful wife. Even to this day when I go to Bombay I stay with his daughter. I rested a couple of days with them and recovered, and it helped a great deal with my introduction to India.

**A: How long had you been practicing yoga at this point?**

C: Two years. I actually started yoga in 1976 but it was not Iyengar. And in 1978 I was taking yoga with a woman who was teaching out of *Light on Yoga* but who really didn't know Iyengar yoga. She would open the book and have us all try



*Chris Saudek teaches Trikonasana.*

a pose. But my friend from college, Sally Rutzky, talked me into going to a camp sponsored by the Ann Arbor Y. I think I showed her *Virabhadrasana II* and I know my form was terrible. She was very polite and nonjudgmental but said she thought I would benefit from the yoga camp.

I went to the camp with Sally and thought I was an advanced student because I'd been taking yoga for a while, not Iyengar, but some yoga. I went to all the classes, the beginner's and the advanced. I have always had scoliosis and an achy back but I still tried to do everything. After two days I could hardly get out of bed. But you know it was my arms and legs, not my back that hurt. It just hit me that my back actually felt pretty good! And that was when I started out searching for a teacher, because I was living in the middle of nowhere, where

there were no teachers. I found one, 93 miles from my home!

It really all began because Sally had suggested that I go to the Yoga Camp. There were many Iyengar teachers there: Mary Dunn, Priscilla Neil, and Mary Palmer. We had a preliminary meeting before starting and there was Mary Dunn with her two small children around sitting in *Uppavista konasana* for half an hour. I thought who could ever do that? She's sitting up straight! I thought I'd never do that.

**A: That's often the way you first see it, from afar.**

C: Yes that's right. I ended up going back to the Yoga Camp and eventually taught there, years down the line. Before I went to India in 1980, I went back to Ann Arbor because that was where the really

good yoga teachers were. I think Iyengar yoga started there around 1974. Looking back, who knows what it is that leads one to something. Why did I start yoga? I don't know. Out of curiosity? Maybe. Someone did say it might help you relax. But why did I stick with it? I don't know, but sometimes I really think there are some imprints there, you have a certain karma that leads you to where you end up. When I started I was sort of a fanatic. For a while I drove 93 miles, one way, and after that I would drive 100 miles, another way, just to do yoga, and sometimes twice a week!

**A: So we can't really complain!**

C: In 1980, my teacher at the time told me that there was a group of people from Manchester, England going to India, and so I joined them. I actually arrived a couple of weeks before the intensive, then there was the intensive, and then I stayed for a couple of weeks after. It was perfect. That was the first time, and I stayed two months. The Institute was much different then. There were only about 35 or 40 people in our intensive. It was just fantastic. And because I was staying right in the Institute I could go upstairs any time, day or night. I only had to be in the Institute by 9 o'clock at night because that was when the front gate was closed

**A: Were there other students staying in the Institute at that time?**

C: I really can't remember. There may have been a couple of Japanese women, but I can't recall now whether that was 1980 or 1982. In 1982 I remember Mira Metha was staying there at the time, and a woman from South Africa, but some of the time I was there just by myself. In 1982 I went again by myself, and again for two months.

**A: Great!**

C: Then in 1983, when my husband was on sabbatical, we met up in Japan, and then went on to India and stayed a

month. I think the next time after that was in 1987. In between, I had a daughter, and that was in 1985.

**A: Were medical classes going at this time?**

C: Oh yes. This was what was so fantastic about living just downstairs in the Institute. I was able to go to everything.

**A: Kid's classes too?**

C: Oh yes. Kid's classes...I went to everything. I would either attend class or take notes. I was also able to help in medical classes, which were not nearly as full as now. I learned an awful lot then. Those first two times (1980 and 1982) were really amongst the best. And Guruji was still teaching then, even in 1983. He was so nice with my husband, I remember, because my husband has to be the stiffest person in the world.

**A: No, no, I think mine is. (Laughter)**

C: He was just so nice to my husband. Because my husband was in chemistry, Guruji would make these analogies about flowing like mercury and things like that.



*Chris Saudek teaches Virabhadrasana.*

He really did try very hard to relate, especially when someone was a guest professor like my husband.

So that was 1983 and then again I went in 1987. Oh yes, in 1987 we were there for five months. That was when my husband took a sabbatical and we spent part of the time in Japan and part of the



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time in India, and we had our daughter, who was two years old. I used to ride a bike with her sitting on the little seat right in front of the handlebars and we sometimes rode down the MG Road. I can't even imagine trying to do that now because the traffic is so bad. Pune has changed a lot.

That was really a nice time for us as a family. My husband was at Pune University and I really enjoyed studying at the Institute and just living there as a family for the five months and being able to settle in.

So that was in '87 and the next time we stayed for a long time was in 1995. Then I had two daughters, one in first grade, one in fifth grade, and we just took the kids.

We just decided we were going, and only then did we start to try and figure out what we were going to do with our house. People asked how we were going to handle all the details, but it seemed that once we had decided to go it just happened and things worked themselves out. There was a problem of getting the kids into the right schools, but once that was settled I was pretty much at the Institute every day. I either took classes or helped in the classes. You know, when you're there for a longer time they don't want you taking classes every day, so I helped on those days and took notes. I took classes about three days a week. Again, it was a very nice time for our family.

**A: So Pune has really been the source of inspiration for your practice?**

C: Yes, very much so, and those early years were just fantastic. I've of course been back many times since then. I can't even count the times. But those early years were just so good. Gurujī was teaching, classes were smaller, and the people who were helping gave you a lot of individual attention. This is not to say that it isn't wonderful now, but for me it was just so special then, especially being able to stay in the Institute and getting to

know the Iyengar family. I spent a lot of time talking to Savita, Mr. Iyengar's youngest daughter, who was still at home and not married...I would sit with her in the garden and also with Vanita, another of Mr. Iyengar's daughters and her two children, Kaushik and Shrinit. In fact, '87 was when Savita got married. We have a wonderful picture of my daughter, Clare, who was two years old, in a *sari* with the *bhindi* dot, and we went to the wedding. For me, those were really the best times. Just as I got to know everyone there, they all knew who I was.

**A: Were you a physiotherapist at that time?**

C: Yes, in 1983. I wasn't on the first two visits. It was yoga that actually got me into physical therapy. I have a Master's degree in math and I was teaching math and for some reason I just got more and more interested in anatomy. I was lucky, because the job I had teaching math was at a small university and I had Thursdays off, which was when my two yoga teachers taught, as well as on the weekend. So I would often go to yoga class on Thursday and go back on Saturday. It was just fortuitous that they taught on Thursday and that was the day I had off. Although I loved math, I really didn't want to go on any further. At that time, (this was around 1980), I wasn't married, and I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life. And yoga was so interesting to me. I never thought I would be a yoga teacher, but I did think I might go back to school and study physical therapy. And then when I went back to school in physical therapy (1981), first of all I met my husband, and then I was asked by the person who ran the continuing education program to teach yoga. They had been getting calls for a yoga class and they had heard that I did yoga. Would I be interested? And that was how I started teaching yoga.

And I met my husband because he is also a wonderful woodworker and I

wanted a back bender built! So my life is really all built around yoga! (Much laughter.)

I got my physical therapy degree in 1983, and I had been teaching yoga, and had gone to India twice. When I got back from India in '83 I was teaching one yoga class in the continuing education program and I was working in an orthopedic clinic as a physical therapist, and I was also editing an orthopedic journal.

And then what happened is that I taught one class of yoga, then two classes, then three classes...

**A: And the subject drew you in!**

C: Yes, and then in '83 a couple of my friends went to India with me, one of whom was one of my first students. She said to me, "Why don't we start something?" and so we did. We started the centre, really just to support our interest in yoga, supporting our hobby, with never any idea that it would become self-supporting. We just thought that since we were studying yoga, going to workshops, and going to India, we could find a way to support this hobby of ours. We started with three classes in what was pretty much a dump of a place that we renovated and tried to make into a nice place.

**A: The same place you're in today?**

C: No, no it was a different place. It was a tile floor and I really wanted wood, and they told me there was nice wood under the tile. So, I decided to tear up the tile and my husband asked me whether I would be content with a different tile if the wood turned out to be not so good, and I said sure. Well, the wood was horrible and I was not content with the idea of anything other than a proper wood floor. I phoned up some people who did wood flooring and asked if they had any used wood and they said no. Then one of them said there was a lady who had called who had a big old building that



had been a roller rink, and then a feed store, and she wanted the wood floor taken up and a concrete one put down. I called the woman and she told me the wood was mine for the taking. So off we went with hammers and crowbars. It was beautiful wood, but you have to remember it had been a farm feed store and so it smelled a bit like fertilizer and there was feed residue in all the cracks so we had to sweep each piece. It really was a labor of love! But in the end we were able to put down a nice wood floor in our new studio. And so we were there from 1988 to 1998. Eventually our number of classes grew and I was able to find a new place, actually through my dentist, with a nice wood floor already in place!

**A: So it sounds as though you had these two parallel careers, the yoga teaching and being a physiotherapist, but it seems that they did not overlap?**

C: That's right, and I don't practice physical therapy very much anymore. Why? Well, as soon as I started to practice physical therapy I realized that yoga was just so much more effective in that it works with the whole person and it looks at issues completely differently.

The observation skills that yoga teachers have to develop are so much

finer than what you normally develop as a physical therapist. Plus, in this day and age you can't spend very much time with somebody as a physical therapist, maybe ten or fifteen minutes per session. When I had this recent shoulder injury I went to the physical therapist and although she could see some of what was injured, she had no idea what to do with me! So, back to your question. If I did anything, I used yoga in physical therapy, not the other way around. In my own practice, my knowledge of physical therapy and anatomy is very helpful because I do think it is very important to be able to visualize internally. Being able to go a little bit deeper into the internal organs brings a deeper understanding and practice altogether. So, I do think the physical therapy knowledge I acquired has helped me in my yoga practice and teaching. But yoga is so much more, so much fuller and more advanced. Once I had to do a workshop on the anatomy of the upper quarter with emphasis on inversions and arm balances. So I decided, I know anatomy but in yoga it is completely different. In physical therapy we normally do what are known as "open chain" exercises (eg. raising the arm up), whereas in yoga we're fixing the arm, then moving over

the arm, and asking, "How did that work," and those sorts of things. I hired a physical therapist to try and help me figure this all out. What was very interesting about all this was that he was fascinated because the newest research that was coming out was all about "closed chain" rehabilitation...and that's really what yoga is!

**A: Like dog pose, weight bearing...**

C: That's right. When I showed him how we did *Pincha Mayurasana*, where we put a block between our hands, he found it very, very interesting. I said, "You know the internal rotators are so much stronger than the external rotators and you want to create balance and so we use the blocks." And he was fascinated by that. And then he asked, "So what if someone had broader shoulders?" and I said, "Oh, well we just have this bigger block!" He laughed and said, "Oh, you've thought of everything." So, I honestly feel that yoga is just so much more advanced. And you are dealing with people, not just a shoulder. ॐ

*End of Part I. Part II is to be concluded in the May/June 2007 issue.*



## Letting Go

*Through yoga I am learning there is strength in yielding.*

**Jennifer Crowe**

For many yoga classes, I felt discomfort and stiffness while lying on the bolster in *Supta Baddha Konasana*. Then one day I just let myself go, sinking into the bolster and discovering a strength in the letting go.

That moment brought awareness to me about life—my life! Yielding is not always weakness. Letting go of rigidity is often finding strength in softness. Yoga is teaching me NOT to fight when there isn't a battle!

Life changes when you work with a situation, a person or a place. Relationships grow in loose well-worked soil. Tightness suffocates. There is more positive and less negative in giving.

I have so much to learn. Motivation for regular practice doesn't come easily. However, yoga is offering me strength—an inner strength that can be discovered by learning how to let go. ॐ

# Practicing Yoga

by Jane Munro

Last night, Shirley got us to bandage our heads for her class. The studio was full. We each took one of the light-weight, 12-foot Indian bandages and wrapped it snugly three times across our eyes, ears, under the base of our skull, and then continued binding our heads, moving up towards the crown and finally tucking in the end. Everyone improvised a method of flipping or slipping the bandage up in order to peek out, then moving it back down when we got to work.

We looked like a ward of casualties. Head injuries! And, in a way, we were. “I made it!” one woman exclaimed, coming in the door. Another, looking drained, explained she’d been staying late at work for a week, trying to finish a project. I’d been up until after midnight the night before, getting marking done. And this was just the job-stuff. One of the class had spent six days the week before without power, which meant without running water or heat, trees shattering just feet away from his deck. Both he and his wife had come down with the flu. The snow was deep. Their kids are little. We were all heading towards the longest night of the year and the holiday season. I thought of an old recurrent nightmare—waking up on Christmas morning to discover I’d blown it, and had no presents to give.

It’s an interesting experience to do headstand with your head bandaged. You discover how much you rely on insight to align and balance by feel. Shirley left us up for a long time. I could hear her quick footsteps weaving around the mats, pausing as she inspected us. “Compact your hips. Lift the inner knees. Breathe into your back.”

She told us it’s also possible to do active poses with your head bandaged, but last night she lead us through a restorative practice focused on seated poses—forward bends and deep twists—then a long *Setubandha* on a wooden block, *Paschimottana*, and *Savasana*. The two hours passed quickly. We unwrapped our heads, blinking a bit. My heart rate had slowed. I felt subdued, serene. When you take a bandaid off a cut finger, the new skin is sometimes sensitive. There was a similar delicacy to us. People got their coats on and didn’t linger.

Driving home, the full moon behind a scarf of cloud spread a calm and defused light across city and forest, shimmering off crusty remnants of the snow. I thought about the week ahead, and how I needed to drop into the work, one task after another, blinked to all else. Maybe wrapping my head while practicing would



encourage such focus. I thought about the shape of a head bound in a bandage with hair escaping in a flounce on top. Rather vase-like. Sort of like my favourite pair of porcelain beakers.

So, in the morning, I carried them outside, one with water in it, and set them down amidst seasonal debris. The potter who made them had explained how it took sustained, intense, precise focus to throw them—how difficult it is to draw out a fine lip in porcelain. I knew that even the rudiments of throwing a pot demanded concentration: whacking a lump of clay down on the wheel after kneading the air bubbles out of it, setting it spinning, squeezing it up and flattening it down to distribute the mass evenly, finding its centre, drawing the space open,

then pulling up the wall of a simple cylinder. To go beyond that would take years of experience—knowledge and exactitude in practice, but also joy, for that’s what these little beakers convey.

When I asked the artist, Gwyn Hanssen Pigott, where she’d like them to sit, she said she could see them with a lot of space around them. I can too. Rather like sages on mountain tops. But, that’s not what has happened to them. They’ve joined the other dishes in our kitchen—become “householder” pots, involved in daily life, not “renunciate” pots in the hermitage of a gallery. I figure it’s no sacrilege, any more than is setting them outside on wet slate among fallen spruce needles and alder leaves, beside beach pebbles. They form interesting relationships wherever they go. Today, I think of how they are the product not just of the artist’s meditation and intention but also of the earth itself—clay, amplified by the remains of bones and shells—and water, hardened by fire. So, I play with them, in the wintry light, placing them on rocks, beside disintegrating moon snail shells, among weeds.

From bandaged heads to porcelain beakers. This is a bit of a leap. As is practicing yoga in this era and neck of the woods, and yet, it works. Like a good pot, it’s functional. Even when my *asanas* are clumsy, they seem useful. And, for those who persist, the promise is that the practice will grow in both utility and beauty. Teachers who are artists of yoga help us see what’s possible. How can one work with devotion? Make each effort a gift? Perhaps, by spending some time this winter practicing with my head bandaged, I’ll build a quieter and more spacious interior—one better able to lift my spirits. B.K.S. Iyengar says, “Learn the art of descending the mind so the self ascends.” A thrown pot is supported by the space within. And that is the same space which gets filled when the pot is used. Perhaps this is how a meditative or restorative practice can provide the presence to give. ॐ



# 2007 calendar

## MARCH

- 16-18 Junior Intermediate I Assessment in Edmonton, AB
- 17 WWW: Women Working Wisely – with Ann Kilbertus
- 23-24 Refining our Teaching, A Teacher Training Workshop with Shirley Daventry French
- 31 Teachers' Meeting

## APRIL

- 6-9 IYCV Closed
- 21 Teachers' Meeting
- 27 Swami Durgananda

## MAY

- 4-7 Workshop Faeq Biria
- 11 Big, Big Practice
- 24-27 IYAC AGM, Toronto
- 26 Short Workshop with James Currie-Johnson

## JUNE

- 1-3 Saltspring Retreat
- 9 Teachers' Meeting
- 15-17 Introductory I/II Assessment in Kelowna, BC
- 15-17 Introductory I/II Assessment (English and French) in Ottawa, ON

## JULY

- 2-8 IYCV Closed
- 9-14 Teacher Training Intensive – Introductory Levels with Leslie Hogya and Ann Kilbertus
- 9-14 Sadhana with Robin Cantor

## AUGUST

- 6-10 Teacher Training Intensive – Junior Intermediate Levels with Shirley Daventry French
- 22-26 Footsteps of Patanjali Retreat at Saltspring Centre with Shirley Daventry French and Leslie Hogya
- 27-31 Student Intensive with Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler

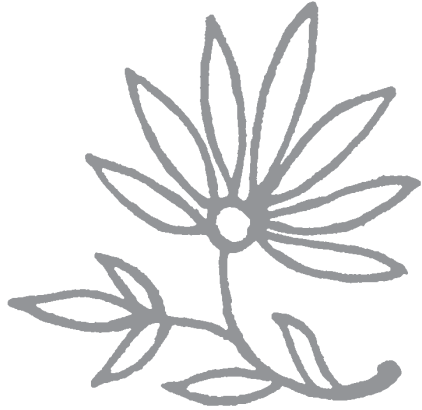
## SEPTEMBER

- 4-9 IYCV Registration week
- 7-8 Refresh Yourself for the Fall workshop with Ann Kilbertus
- 28-29 Going Deeper with Shirley Daventry French

### *Newsletter submissions*

**Written:** Digital format is preferred—Word file or other files compatible with Microsoft Word, plain text files or emails. Hand written or printed submissions will be accepted; however, they require transposing (typing or scanning) to digital format by the newsletter committee before publication.

**Photos:** Prints or digital images. Digital files must be high resolution (minimum 600 dpi) for adequate reproduction. Acceptable formats are JPG (choose: no compression, high quality, large file), TIFF or EPS. Preferred: save as grayscale EPS files, with no adjustments, sizing or cropping.



## Time to Renew!

This is a reminder that your  
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria membership  
expired on December 31, 2006.

The membership subscription fee is \$40.00 + GST  
(Canadian residents add 7% GST) and is renewable each January.

**Membership benefits include:**

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- timed practices
- having the option of getting the newsletter mailed to you
- early registration and discount for workshops
- borrowing privileges in our library
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- eligibility for scholarships for workshops and intensives.

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IYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA  
SOCIETY

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IYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA

N E W S L E T T E R  
M A Y / J U N E 2 0 0 7



*All the candidates,  
volunteer students and assessors at  
the first Iyengar Yoga assessment  
held in Mexico in March 2007.*



## Teacher Training Intensives

**July 9 - 19, 2007**

**With Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus**

Introductory I & II Syllabi for uncertified  
Iyengar Yoga teachers

This six-day course will build your understanding of teaching Iyengar Yoga based on the foundation of a good practice. Peer teaching, *pranayama*, philosophy and anatomy will be included. Leslie and Ann are experienced teachers. Both have Senior Intermediate I certification and are qualified I.Y.A.C. assessors. They are involved in teacher training in Victoria as well as outlying British Columbia and Yukon communities.

Preference will be given to members of I.Y.A.C. and those planning to do their assessment in the near future.

**August 6 - 10, 2007**

**With Shirley Daventry French**

Intermediate Junior and Senior syllabi  
for certified Iyengar Yoga teachers

This in-depth course offers the opportunity for certified Iyengar Yoga teachers to work with a master teacher and prepare for assessment at the Junior Intermediate I, II & III, and Senior Intermediate I levels.

Shirley 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.

As in previous years, Iyengar Yoga teachers from other countries are also invited to apply. I.Y.A.C. members will get priority.

### **Fees for each course:**

\$560.00 CDN + GST IYCV members  
\$600.00 CDN + GST non-members

### **Registration now open.**

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Victoria, B.C. V8K 3K3  
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)  
[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

*A deposit of \$150.00 CDN will  
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due June 2, 2007. If you cancel  
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## Sutra Workshop

**With Shirley Daventry French**

**September 27, 2007**

This evening seminar will provide an overview of the  
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of making use of them as a guide for daily living.

## Going Deeper

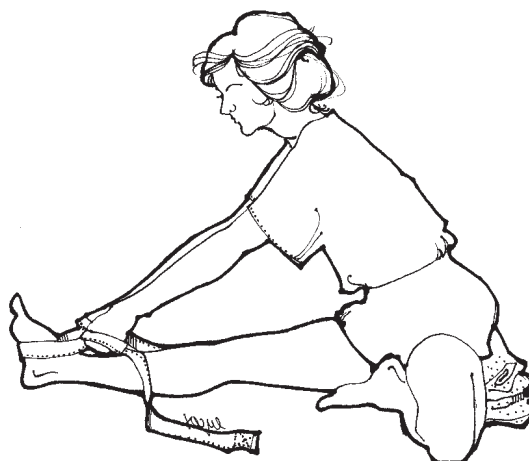
**An Iyengar Yoga Workshop with Shirley  
Daventry French**

**September 28-29, 2007**

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

Shirley Daventry French is a long time student of  
B.K.S. Iyengar and has studied at the Ramamani  
Institute in Pune many times, most recently in  
December 2003.

See next issue for more info.



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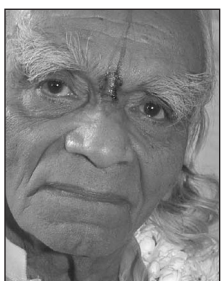
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## Newsletter Advertising Policy (Adopted February 20, 2004)

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

1. Advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the newsletter of the IYCV.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar Yoga
3. Priority given to advertisements regarding:
  - IYCV events
  - IYCV sponsored events
  - IYAC events

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## IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE of VICTORIA NEWSLETTER

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**IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA 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 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, drawings, information or suggestions to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter: 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3. For information on activities and events, call (250) 386-YOGA (9642) or visit our website: [www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.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 IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA IN 1976. SHIRLEY LIVES IN VICTORIA AND TEACHES WORLDWIDE.

The “sixties” were a turbulent time. The world was in turmoil. North Americans were coming to terms with the assassination of President John Kennedy and his brother, Robert. The unrest in Asia was escalating into a full-fledged conflict in Vietnam known variously as the Vietnam War or the Vietnamese Revolution. The ‘Iron Curtain’, which had descended at the close of the Second World War, still divided Europe, taking concrete form as the Berlin Wall. The Cold War was raging, and several times we came frighteningly close to the start of a third world war. Not long after I moved to Canada and my first two babies were born, there was a very real scare about nuclear war when, in 1962, President Kennedy confronted President Krushchev of Russia over missiles the Russians were sending to Cuba.

My mother in London, still thinking in Second World War terms, phoned me to ask whether I would take my brother’s children as evacuees; but I told her they were probably as safe in London as in Victoria, which is only seventy nautical miles from the American naval base at Bremerton. We were coming to terms with a terrifying new reality.

The Americans were conducting nuclear bomb tests in Alaska and in British Columbia. We were told that we would be recipients of radioactive fallout. Our grass would become contaminated making it unsafe to give our children milk from the cows that were grazing on this land. When I heard this, I became alarmed, and promptly went out and bought

a huge supply of powdered milk. Once it was stacked in our very small apartment, I paused long enough to consider that the water supply would likely be similarly contaminated!

In Canada, at the end of this decade, we had our own crisis when the Front de Libération du Québec kidnapped a Québec politician and a British diplomat, executing the former, and when, for a while, the government under Pierre Trudeau subsequently suspended civil liberties.

In my life, this was the era “before yoga.” It was not only on the national and international scene that there was turmoil, but also within me, as I came to terms with the changes in my life that immigration and motherhood had bestowed on me.

I loved my husband and children, and lived in a modern post and beam house on two-thirds of an acre with an ocean view; but there was an underlying discontent. Sensing this from my letters, although I tried to present a positive picture, my mother was quick to remind me that I led a privileged life with nothing to complain about. But complain I did, and one day, listening to myself, I decided to do something about it.

By this time, I had three children, two of whom were attending a free school. Some of the other parents had recently attended residential programs, which they called ‘encounter groups’. They spoke about learning a lot about themselves, and discoveries they had made which were helpful in dealing with current global and personal problems. To my eyes, they seemed to have become more vital, self-confident and relaxed. Intrigued by all these changes, I decided I would like to participate in one of these groups. Perhaps I would discover the source of my discontent.

It was some time before I got to attend, because there always seemed to be obstacles in the way, such as not enough money, no one to take care of the children, or, from a rational point of view, no necessity. However, I persist-

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and motherhood had bestowed on me.*



ed because I knew I had to make some changes, and I was pretty sure that what was needed was internal rather than external change. Finally I insisted, and attended a one-week course for women only which took place in an oceanfront lodge up-island from Victoria.

The man who led the groups was a former United Church minister who had undergone a major mid-life change not only in his vocation, but in role—from husband and father of one family, to husband and father of another. The week I spent at this centre was pivotal. It was there that I first heard discussions of yoga and eastern philosophy, and was introduced to three ideas, which have played a significant role in my life ever since: the destructiveness of unbridled emotions, the power of speech, and the acceptance of full responsibility for one's own situation in life.

Later, I learned that these concepts were fundamental to yoga, but that was still in the future.

I had grown up in a family where emotional outbursts were common place—not of a weeping and wailing nature, but words wielded as a weapon. Verbal agility was prized, and sometimes this was very positive in encouraging deductive thinking. At other times it was very destructive, although I must confess that, in my youth, I did not see this. Rather, I enjoyed the flow of adrenaline produced by free and forceful expression, and the reactions it produced in other people. I compared our household favourably with other more restrained families in our respectable London suburb, judging them to be emotionally repressed. Of course, I really knew nothing about how other families lived their lives or, as my mother would say, “what went on behind closed doors”. I equated inability to speak up and speak out as dull, depressing and undesirable.

Despite the attempts of my school to impose it, restraint did not play a large role in my youthful life. The first glimmers of its potential value came during these encounter groups when the leader confronted my verbal outbursts with even stronger ones of his own, calling me a bully, a term which shocked me

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and which I did not understand until a few years later during a course at Yasodhara Ashram.

After a series of encounter groups, I began to make changes, including the attempt to stop blaming others for the difficulties in my life. I did not know what a mantra was at this time, but a phrase from this man and these groups became a mantra for me: Whenever you are dissatisfied with your life and complaining or blaming others, stop, notice where your buttocks are, and notice who put them there! I cannot claim that the blaming and complaining stopped magically, but I did begin to wrestle with this and take some responsibility for my predicaments. Restraint of speech had an important role to play in accomplishing this task.

When I eventually got to meet her face to face, the first words to me from Swami Radha were: you are very quick with words! And I knew without a shadow of a doubt that it was not a compliment. I was very quick with words. Swami Radha taught me the importance of refining my speech and how to use language as a spiritual tool to know myself, rather than a barrier between others and me. I endeavoured to improve communication and understanding by listening to others and considering their reasoning processes. I was encouraged to read spiritual texts and penetrate the meaning of the words of wisdom of seers and sages. Yoga, of course, also reinforced the idea that the facilitator of the encounter groups had raised: of taking full responsibility for my life.

This past weekend the lesson of learning from the sages was reinforced. I was to lead a teacher training course in Victoria called Refining your Teaching. It was concerned with the transition from introductory to intermediate teaching. As I was going through notes, books and papers with this workshop in mind, I picked up the book *Basic Guidelines for Teachers of Yoga* written by Guruji and Geetaji and published in 2002. I wanted to verify a couple of points from this book, but as I searched for them, I found myself reaching first for a highlighter and then for *Post-It* notes to mark certain pages. I had found my text for this teaching, and made copious notes.

This is not a new book for me, but reading it again with the experience gained in training teachers during those years since its publication, I found it contained virtually all that the burgeoning teachers attending this workshop needed to know about teaching yoga from a theoretical standpoint, and much which could be translated into practical work. One of Geeta's other books is called *Yoga—A Gem for Women*. *Basic Guidelines* is a gem for teachers. Several times during the workshop I told the students to go home and thoroughly digest the contents of this book. Because its

title includes the word 'basic' and a subtitle tells us that it is based on "Teacher Training for the Preliminary Course at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute", I feel there is a tendency for teachers who have completed the primary levels of training to feel they have gone beyond this text. This is definitely not true; this book contains a wealth of distilled knowledge for all of us to refer to again and again. Moreover, when we return to beginning concepts and practices with some experience under our belt, it is astonishing how much we can absorb.

The other day while reading the chapter on Theoretical Background, one of the things which stood out when I turned to page 70 was that speech is one of the *karmendriyas* or organs of action. I knew this. I knew that there were five *karmendriyas*, but generally I tend to think of them as four (arms, legs, excretory organs, reproductive organs) and put speech into a separate category. I am sure this happened because of the prominent role the *devi* of speech has played and continues to play in my life.

Refining my speech and calming my emotions have been two of my primary spiritual practices since I began this quest of self-discovery. It is exciting to live on

an emotional roller coaster, but destructive. The use of *mantra* has been of invaluable help in to me in overcoming these tendencies in myself. Its silent repetition disciplines the mind, and refinement of speech has to be pursued in not only word, but in thought and deed as well. Chanted aloud, a *mantra* is a powerful tool for calming emotions. Writing a mantra or *likita* *japa* is another useful tool for learning patience and restraint.

In our early days in yoga, both Derek and I were encouraged to follow a chanting practice daily for one hour using a harmonium to help maintain our concentration. For me the purpose was to calm my emotions; for him it was to get in touch with his feelings. We followed these practices independently. We used different *mantras*. Like any spiritual practice, after a time it began have the desired effect and provide what each of us needed even though these needs were quite different.

While I no longer include a daily chanting session in my spiritual practices, in other ways, the work to refine my speech and live a more balanced life continues unabated requiring constant vigilance.

*Om namah Shivaya,*  
Shirley ॐ



## ASSESSMENT DATES

June 15 - 17, 2007  
Kelowna | Introductory I/II

October 19 - 21, 2007  
Toronto | Introductory I/II

June 15 - 17, 2007  
Ottawa | Introductory I/II  
(In English and French)

November 16 - 18, 2007  
Vancouver | Jr. Intermediate II

April 18 - 20, 2008  
Toronto | Jr. Intermediate III

# BIG, BIG PRACTICE

**Friday, May 11, 2007**

**Asana Practice 6:00 - 7:00 pm**

Potluck dinner to follow; bring food to share.

Everyone is welcome to join us.

Bring a friend, your partner, a family member.

By donation. Free for IYCV members.

# Mr. Iyengar's Commentary on Patanjali

## Part II of III: Sadhana Pada



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

Gurujii's introduction, and that part dealing with Samadhi Pada, appeared in the May 1993 edition of the Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter. The remaining portions of that address were subsequently published in the 1993 Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association Newsletter following the annual meeting.

### SADHANA PADA

#### The Klesas

Patanjali begins *Sadhana Pada* with the *Klesas*—the pains

*Avidya, asmita, raga, dvesa, abhinivesah klesah*

Again, his subject is what to do when meditation fails. It is in this second chapter that he states the cause of pain. The cause of pain is *Drastr drsayoh samyogah* (11.17)—the coming together of the *seer* (*purusa*) and the *seen* (*prakrti*). So, he says, do not allow the core of being to come in contact with *prakrti*. This is a supreme philosophical statement. It may remind you of the sayings of Krishnamurti. Like him Patanjali says, "Do not get involved. If you keep away from contact with the world, you are free from pains and sorrows physical, mental or spiritual."

But Patanjali does not stop there. He goes on to explain the origins of this attachment; how both evil actions and good actions in past lives react in this life. Here, in chapter II, he is drawing on *Samkhya* philosophy. *Samkhya* philosophy states that the contact of *purusa* with *prakrti* is the origin of pain, and similarly it states that the impressions of present actions determine a man's future (the difference is that in *Samkhya*, unlike Yoga, there is no God). However, both systems state that a man's future is entirely his own responsibility. You sow the seeds of

your future lives. You cannot blame God. So, Patanjali says, since your life is molded by the impressions of past actions, you must correct and develop yourself so that you are not trapped by these past impressions. Do you see how clear this exposition is? You are responsible for future *karmas*, so begin to build favorable *karmas* now!

Then he turns to the level of practice. He says that the vehicles and instruments of the soul (the organs of action, organs of perception, intelligence, mind and consciousness) are all there to help the seer (the *purusa*) to come to an understanding of himself. These objects are there in order that the seer can progress. This is known as the evolutionary path, the way of evolution. These coverings of the seer are there for the seer to progress towards transcendence and as long as that progress continues they are aids, not hindrances. This is explained fully in the fourth chapter, *Kaivalya Pada*. Here in the second chapter he gives the seed of that explanation, that you should cultivate yourself by using the organs of action and perception, the mind and intelligence to bring the seer to see the true light and true knowledge. Why does he say that the seer must see? Because the seer may be caught again.

The *citta* continually drags the seer towards the external world. So although these instruments are there to serve the seer who is the Lord, unfortunately the Lord serves them. That is what is happen-

ing in the world, in day to day life, is it not? But Patanjali shows how to train these elements so that you do not get caught. Through yogic discipline one gains command of them.

#### Controlling the Senses

Then Patanjali explains the method of gaining control. Just as the *Pranayama* texts tell you to tame the breath as you would tame a tiger, so Patanjali says to tame your senses by *Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana* and *Samadhi*. The *Yamas* tame the organs of action. As you know, they are *Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya* and *Aparigraha* (non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, chastity and freedom from greed for unnecessary possessions.) These are all connected to the organs of action. Suppose your mind tells you, "I want to hit this man." "I want to kill this man." It says such things often but if your hands and legs refuse to move, can you kill him? If you want to tell a lie but you keep your mouth closed, can you do it? So Patanjali beings with the peripheral body for dull and average practitioners.

Next, the *Niyamas*—*Sauca, Santosa, Tapas, Svadhyaya* and *Isvara pranidhana* are concerned with the inner body. *Sauca* means cleanliness, but this is not just a question of taking a bath. The *asanas* are practised because they give an internal bath through circulation; they purify the inner cells of the body. You may take a

bath and clean the skin, but what about inside? We are all fighting pollution in the atmosphere, but what about pollution of the internal environment? How do we discharge those impurities?

*Sauca* means that both the internal and external environments should be purified and made congenial. Second, *Santosa*, happiness, and third *Tapas*, austerity, are primarily concerned with internal controls. *Svadhya*—the study of the self—entails joining the soul to the body and the body to the soul; this too is accomplished through the medium of the *Jnanendriyas* (the senses of perception). Just as the mind is the connecting medium between the external body and the internal body, so the senses of perception are the medium between the external body and the mind.

The brain is the central nervous system, while the autonomic nervous system is divided into the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems which are controlled by the central nervous system, and the peripheral nerves which are controlled by the skin. That is how drugs affect people: first they feel the effects on the skin; only later does the brain react, the triggering takes place on the skin. So the yogi learns to get the same feelings naturally. *Sauca* controls the peripheral nerves,

*Santosa* the autonomous nervous system and *Tapas*, *Svadhya* and lastly, *Isvara pranidhana* (surrender to God) affect the central nervous system.

So Patanjali moves on from physical happiness and mental poise to the central body. The autonomic nervous system is semi-voluntary but only a person who has achieved complete mind restraint is capable of directly controlling the central nervous system which is normally involuntary. That is how yogis are able to stop the heart and to stop all brain function.

### Asanas and the Cellular System

So the *Jnanendriyas* are cleansed by *Niyama*. But the cellular system must be attended to because the physiological body is the medium linking the skeletal body and the mental body. Unless we discover for ourselves these links we cannot properly study yoga. When you gain control of the peripheral nerves through the senses of action and perception there are sudden changes; there is a “jump forward” in the human system and unless the cellular system is healthy, illness will follow. The cells must be made healthy.

Let me illustrate this by referring to a few of the *asanas*. When you do *Trikonasana* and both legs are stretched, you stretch the cells towards the feet (if

you connect all the links within the movement of the pose). That means that the energy is moving from the upper body to the lower body. However, when you do *Parsvakonasana*, you bend your knees and then the cells are moved upwards from the lower legs. So there is a circulation upwards. In *Trikonasana* you direct the circulation down in both knees; you cannot suck up. You can stretch the fibers but you will not feel the blood moving upwards. But in *Parsvakonasana* you will observe that the blood flows to the knee and from the bottom foot it flows also to the knee. Haven't you felt it? This is a very difficult subject! Even the doctors do not understand what happens unless I explain it!

Now then, next, if you observe in *Virabhadrasana I*, the blood circulation is from the bottom of the knee towards the pelvis. In *Parsvakonasana*, when you bend the knee, you can see the blood flowing forwards. But the moment you change to *Virabhadrasana* you can see the blood flowing backwards. In this way, by the correct performance of a range of asanas, the entire leg must be cleansed. In order to do this I have to first find out how to move the blood in these different areas by feeling the warmth generated by the circulation. In *Parsvakonasana* if you feel the

**IYVC will be closed  
July 1-9  
for holidays and maintenance.**

Evening classes resume July 9.  
Daytime classes resume July 15.

(Limited daytime classes during  
the Teacher Training Intensives.)

## Congratulations

The following candidates achieved certification during the Junior Intermediate I Assessment, March 16-18, 2007, Edmonton, AB

Lynne Bowsher, Kelowna, BC  
Judy Davey, Toronto, ON  
Sonya Evans, Calgary, AB  
Fay Gascho, Kitchener-Waterloo, ON  
Michelle McLean, Toronto, ON  
Nancy Searing, Victoria, BC  
Val Pape, Winnipeg, MB





warmth in the outer leg but not in the inner leg, then the circulation is happening only on the outside and not on the inside. When the circulation is balanced on the inside as well as on the outside then that means a healthy pose. That is cleanliness, that is *sauca*. Otherwise the blood does not reach the flesh; the inner leg cells do not receive nutrients and they die; only the outer cells are healthy.

So when by your own conscious effort and attentiveness the blood is supplied evenly throughout the body, then the cells are healthy. In one of the Upanishads they say *ratna puritadhatu* which means that the quality of the blood is so good that it is equal to a pearl. They have not used the word *pakta*, blood, but *ratna*, a jewel. So the quality of your blood should be brought to the level of a jewel. And that is the effect of the *asanas*, which build the cellular system to such an extent that the body can take care of itself—the mind cannot enter it.

Now take the example of AIDS. This is important here because research has shown that the cellular system possesses its own intelligence, its own memory. It does not work from the dictates of the brain. That has been proved. So, similarly, it follows that yogic science can work directly on those parts without the use of the mind and that as long as the practice of asanas is continued the cells will look after themselves. That is another reason why Patanjali says not to discontinue your practice. Even if you have experienced *Samadhi* you may fall from that state of grace. That state, *avastha*, becomes an *anavastha*. Those modern yogis who say, “Oh I have experienced such and such so this practice is no longer required,” but who can barely stand, let alone walk, they have nothing to teach. Where is their health? They have neglected their practice and lost their power.

### Master of Asana before Pranayama

Then, in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, there are the eight parts of yoga: *Yama*, *Niyama*,

“...attachment then leads to hatred and pain.  
Patanjali describes the process but how do we avoid attachment in the first place?  
We must develop equipoise of mind.”

*Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*. They are not steps to be carried out chronologically so that once you have mastered one you forget it and carry on to the next one. The only sequence that Patanjali indicates, like the writer of the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, is that *Asana* comes before *Pranayama*. He says that when the mastery of effort ceases (11.47), then he says that the dualities within the body-mind and the mind and soul disappear (11.48). It is only then that *Pranayama* can proceed.

(11.49) *Tasmin sati svasa-prasvasayoh gativicchedah pranayamah.*

Having achieved this (perfection of *Asana*) the regulation of inhalation, exhalation and retention (is to be practised). This is *Pranayama*.

Many underestimate the meaning of these *sutras*. They see *sutra* 11.47 and translate it as “any comfortable pose is enough and you may go ahead.” But that *sutra*, *Prayatna saithilyanantasamapattibhyam*, means that when the effort ceases the mind becomes one with the soul, and it rests in that timeless state which is the soul. You must experience that state in an *asana* to understand this meaning. When the *asana* is mastered the effort becomes effortless and then the pose becomes *sthiram* (stable) and *sukham* (pleasant). You should understand this way and experience it. This applies to any *asana*.

Do you see how yet again the real meaning of the *sutras* is so commonly distorted? People do not study Patanjali or the subject thoroughly. Can they quote from Patanjali? No, but I can. They may sit five minutes in one pose, then five minutes in another, but can they give the effects of the *asanas*? They overlook the true significance of this important *sutra*

which describes the effects of correct *asana* practice.

(III.47) *Rupa lavanya bala vajra samhananatvani kaya sampat*

Beauty, grace, strength and adamant willpower constitute the perfection of the body.

These are the effects, the fruits of *asana* practice, the qualities gained from the mastery of the *asana*. If you just sit in any comfortable pose is there any beauty, grace or strength in it? This is Patanjali's terminology not mine! And yet our yogis speak in the name of Patanjali, and this hurts me.

### Pranayama

So when the cellular system has been cleansed and nervous system purified, the breath can then pass through the channels without obstruction. This is why Patanjali has said, *tasmin sati svasa-prasvasayoh gativicchedah pranayamah*. Here is the only ladder in the practice of the eight aspects given in the *Yoga Sutras*. He does not say that you have to practise *Yama*, then *Niyama* and then *Asana*, absolutely not; he says only that *Pranayama* should be practised after the mastery of *Asana*.

Many commentators say that Patanjali explains very little about *Pranayama* and that it is the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* that describes it. But let us examine what Patanjali actually says. First he describes the aspects that we all know, *Puraka* (inhalation), *Rechaka* (exhalation), *Puraka kumbhaka* (inhalation retention) and *Rechaka kumbhaka* (exhalation retention). What is the connecting link between *Puraka* and *Rechaka*? It is *kumbhaka*. Patanjali does not use the word because, as a grammarian, he is aiming for condensed language; however he deals with all these

phases of *Pranayama* in one *sutra* (11.50). This brevity makes it difficult for us to penetrate its meaning.

The *kumbhaka* he describes here is *Shira kumbhaka* which I have explained in depth in my book on *Pranayama*. Then he explains that there is a second type of *Pranayama* in which the mind becomes absorbed. (The *Hatha Yoga* texts call this *Kevala kumbhaka*.) In this state you are not aware of the breath. It is like when you are by the ocean as the sun is setting and you become absorbed in the vision of beauty. At such a time you do not know if you have inhaled or exhaled or retained the breath. This is unconscious *kumbhaka*. This *kumbhaka* is non-deliberate and unintended. Patanjali calls this the fourth type of *kumbhaka*.

Then he continues in 11.52 to say that when the first four aspects of yoga are mastered, then the clouds which cover the mind and brain—the doubts and confusions we all know so well—these are dissolved by *Pranayama*. At that time, the

next *sutra* says, the mind becomes cultivated and is fit for concentration (*Dharanasu ca योग्यात् मनसाह*, 11.53). This is achieved through *Pranayama* and *Pratyahara*, freeing the mind from the senses of action and perception (11.54).

Now you can see the gap in understanding today. At the end of the second chapter Patanjali shows how the mind becomes ready for meditation when *Pranayama* and *Pratyahara* are practised. Having learned the control of organs of action and the senses of perception through *Yama* and *Niyama*, and the cognizable and non-cognizable pains having been silenced by *Pranayama*, now the mind should be controlled by *Pratyahara* so that it becomes completely detached from the bridge, the *Jnanendriyas*. The mind is the eleventh sense, an inner sense, the *antara indriya*. Up to *Pranayama* it's the reverse journey, the evolutionary method which goes from the self towards the periphery. With *Pratyahara* begins the involutionary

method, the inner journey, from the periphery towards the Self, the soul.

So the first *sutra* speaks of *guna vrtti nirodha* which is character building or the effort to restrain the individual's wavering conduct which depends on *Yama* and *Niyama*. *Snaya vrtti nirodha* is the effort through *Pranayama* to control the cellular system which is noncognizable and non-cognizable pains. The non-cognizable pains are within the cellular system. Thus, cancer cannot be diagnosed immediately. AIDS cannot be diagnosed quickly because the disease is inside and has a long incubation period. It remains *adrsta*, unseen. So at the time the sufferer feels fine, appears happy because the sickness is hidden. It has not yet come to the surface. So they say it is non-cognizable and non-painful. But the moment it surfaces, it becomes painful. That is why *snaya vrtti nirodha* is required so that non-cognizable diseases may be controlled at the cellular level through the culture of the cells. ॐ  
*To be continued in next issue.*

Come and  
stabilize yourself  
for the autumn!



## Refresh Yourself for the Fall

An all levels workshop with Ann Kilbertus  
September 7 - 8, 2007

This workshop will offer a series of *asanas* to prepare the body and mind for the change of season and upcoming fall term. Ann will be drawing inspiration from her recent journey to India in February 2007.

Friday, September 7, 2007, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Saturday,  
September 8, 2007, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Fees: \$83.00 + GST IYCV members,  
\$93.00 + GST non-members

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and  
are subject to a \$30.00 cancellation fee.

Registration opens:  
May 28, 2007 for IYCV members,  
June 4, 2007 for non-members

To register, drop in to or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria  
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8K 3K3  
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)  
[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

## Short WORKSHOP

### Yoga for Hips

With James Currie-Johnson

Open to level 2-4 students

**Saturday,  
May 26, 2007**

**12:30 pm - 3:30 pm**

Fees:

\$35.00 + GST for IYCV members

\$40.00 + GST for non-members

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

# 2007 Annual General Meeting

## President's Report

by Silvia Vilches

This is my second year as President. Looking back, I see that the Society has grown from a small group of friends, who were also teachers, students, and the newsletter committee, to a large organization with a formal board. This has allowed those who are doing the senior teaching to move into other duties such as the cross-Canada assessments, mentoring new teachers, hosting workshops, and developing their own practices further. We have great energy and a lot of people involved, who together give a rich mix of experience that is continuing to help us grow and meet new challenges.

Last year I anticipated a year with many changes – I just didn't know how many! After changing our name to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, we also hired a General Manager, Wendy Boyer, and a formal bookkeeping service. Making the transition from having Drew Yallop and Leslie Hogya in these roles, who were flexible, always available, and willing to fill in the gaps as needed, meant that the front office staff needed to do a lot more. They have all been wonderfully supportive and patient, as have the teachers and students. It has been a pleasure to watch the evolution of the space with Wendy in charge. Also, Britta Poisson has done a marvellous job of taking over purchasing merchandise.

Meanwhile, the board is exploring our governance role with the help of a United Way facilitator. We need to think about how we continue to proceed down a yogic path while also attending to the due diligence required of a board. How does a board relate to staff, now that the board members do not "run" the centre?

What will further our mission as a society? And what will continue to feed us as a society? People who visit our centre are often very appreciative of the community we have here. We are very unique in being both a society and a charitable group. It is our centre, and our society, and people really feel that energy when they come in.

This year, some long time board members are moving on. In particular, I want to say thank you to Rosemary Barritt who served on the board for eight years, as President and as Past-President for several of those! We will miss her fine attention to detail and her energetic commitment. A huge thanks goes from the board to Byron Smith who took us

through our bookkeeping transition, along with support from Lori Wanamaker, who is also leaving. With regrets, we also say good-bye to Brian Lepicq who often challenged us to look at the "other side of the coin." However, most members are staying, and this gives us a good start for looking at governance issues this coming year. I look forward to one more year as President – but be notified! I shall step down next year.

As students of yoga, we are humbled by those who go before us, and I want to continue to support this wonderful work, which has brought so many gifts to me, personally.

Addendum: A late motion amends our prior year statement by reducing our cash position by \$8,000, distributing this for the benefit of our teaching members. Current Treasurer, Dave Gelzinis.



### *Student Intensive*

**September 3-7, 2007**

**Note date change**

**9:00 am - 12:00 Noon daily**

Learn how to establish and  
deepen your practice.

Level 2 experience required.

See next issue for more details.

### *Short WORKSHOP*

#### **Sun Salutation Workshop**

*With Ty Chandler*

**Friday June 22, 2007**

**6:30 pm - 8:30 pm**

Fees:

\$25.00 + GST IYCV members

\$30.00 + GST non-members

# Treasurer's Report

YEAR ENDING OCTOBER 31, 2006

by Byron Smith,  
as of February 3, 2007

I have the honour of presenting Treasurer's Report for the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Society for the year ending October 31, 2006.

2006 presented the Board with many challenges as we faced changes in accountants, and continued to work towards balancing the budget for the Centre. Upon becoming treasurer, I presented a revised budget to the newly elected board, who passed the budget with a small deficit.

Our net earnings for the year ending October 31, 2006 were \$19,766. This is a significant improvement – almost 300%—over our financial performance before the write-off of Cedar studio assets in the previous year.

Total revenues for 2006 were \$457,099. This was an increase of over \$50,000 from 2005. Membership revenues increased to over \$20,000 for the first time (in 2005 they were \$15,040). While class revenues increased by \$15,000, it was an increase in workshop revenues of \$40,000 that accounted for most of the difference. The Footsteps of Patanjali, Manuoso Manos, and Chris Saudek workshops, and our mainstays, the Saltspring Retreat and the summer intensives, were positively received. Due to timing, the 2006 figures have the benefit of two Going Deeper workshops

– one in December 2005 and another in September 2006.

On October 30, 2006, Wendy Boyer and Britta Poisson performed what I believe is the Centre's first inventory count. Due to differences between the accounting records and actual physical inventory, an adjustment was booked that increased inventory and revenues by \$2,200.

Total expenses for 2006 were \$437,333. In January 2006, the Centre began a sort of paradigm shift in management and operations control with the hiring of Wendy Boyer as general manager and third parties for accounting and IT support. Salaries and wages increased by nearly a third to \$57,000. For a number of reasons, accounting ran well over budget before settling into a reasonable monthly expense. While 2006 accounting costs were \$25,000,

## Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Society Statement of revenues and expenditures

For the year ending October 31, 2006

### Revenue

Classes	\$ 292,599
Workshops	118,431
Memberships	20,491
Other	25,578
	<b>457,099</b>

### Expenditures

Class teaching fees	126,698
Newsletter	12,957
Scholarships and bursaries	6,392
Workshops	59,057
Other	240,230
	<b>445,333</b>

**Excess of revenues over expenditures \$ 11,766**

## Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Society Balance Sheet

October 31, 2006

### Assets

Current	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 114,167
Receivables	2,291
Other assets	21,780
	<b>138,238</b>

Capital assets 36,868

**Total assets \$ 175,106**

### Liabilities

Current	
Payables and accruals	\$ 22,267
Deferred revenues	48,889
	<b>71,156</b>

### Net assets

Unrestricted net assets	87,934
Restricted net assets (President's appeal)	16,016
	<b>103,950</b>

**Total liabilities and net assets \$ 175,106**



the board has budgeted accounting expenses of \$8,800 for 2007.

In the prior year, 2005, I personally resisted the closing of Cedar studio – despite the high costs. However, I now believe that the board of directors made the right decision, and this is certainly reflected in this year's statements. Beyond decreased rent and utilities, there are indications that classes are being scheduled and filled more effectively with only Arbutus and Birch studios.

The Centre continues to maintain a modest cash reserve and some short-term investments. At year end, a great deal of this relates to monies received for the November-December 2006 classes and workshops, hence the "Unearned Revenues" on the balance sheet of \$45,000. The actual cash position of the Centre increased by \$16,725 from 2005 to 2006, which is very good, particularly given the changes mentioned above.

Overall, the financial health of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria is good. We have passed a budget for 2007 which projects fewer workshops and stable expenses, with a positive net income of \$1,395. Centre management, the scholarship committee, the newsletter committee, and the program committee all contributed to the development of the budget; I am grateful for everyone's contributions.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the Board for their support in working through change after change over the past year, and the Centre's staff members for their positive attitudes and patience. I owe a debt of gratitude to Lori Wanamaker, past Treasurer, for her counsel and guidance. I would also very much like to thank you, the membership, for allowing me to serve as your Treasurer.

# General Manager's Report

by Wendy Boyer

2006 was a year of high points in our community: we opened the doors at 919 Fort Street 5 years ago in 2001; our beloved leader, Shirley, celebrated her 75th birthday in December; Leslie, Ann and Marlene received senior intermediate qualification at the first assessment of its type in Canada held in Toronto in November; for the first time, Victoria hosted the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada (IYAC) annual general meeting in May; and the Centre hosted the junior intermediate assessment in November, at which Robin Cantor received Junior Intermediate 2 qualification. It was a busy year!

There have been several changes in office administration in 2006. I was hired to manage the Centre when Leslie stepped down to enjoy time with Giles, her husband, in his upcoming retirement. We changed bookkeepers several times. Dan Wilkin was hired to provide technical support to the Centre on a contract basis. Most recently, we said good-bye to Karin Holtkamp and Monica Dimofski who left the front desk for other pursuits. Bruce Cox and Glenda Balkan-Champagne are replacing Monica.

Most of the equipment at the Centre needed upgrading or became exhausted in 2006! It was necessary to replace both computers, both phones, the photocopier, and the microwave and to upgrade the lights in Studio B.

The cushions in the lobby were restuffed and reupholstered by Rosemary Barritt. We also had a lighted sign installed outside the building above Fort Street. The lighted sign, as

well as the graphics for the brochure and the newsletter, were designed by Charles Campbell. Bruce Cox repainted the studios in the summer and, thanks to Patty Rivard, the sliding glass door was removed from the hallway to allow more air to flow throughout. Linda Poole and Theron Morgan were added to the team to keep the physical space clean in 2006. The landlord upgraded the common areas in the stairwell, foyer and washrooms.

The Centre donated classes to fourteen not-for-profit organizations in the past year as well as providing a box for the night shelter over the holiday season. Many bursaries were given to students attending classes at the Centre and several scholarships were given to support further training of senior teachers in Pune and in San Francisco.

This past year was the busiest ever for programming at the Centre. Our workshops, retreats and intensives continue to be well attended, often with wait lists. Visiting teachers were Chris Saudek in November, Manuoso Manos in April, and Stephanie Quirk in May. New programs this year were the week-long retreat on Saltspring in August with Shirley and Leslie, and the special needs class, Bones and Joints. Both were fully attended.

In the last two years, we have raised money in an annual appeal. In 2005, we raised \$8,750, and in 2006, the campaign raised \$8,800. This money is being invested for the future growth and development of the Centre. It also allows us to continue our back care and special needs classes, to provide bursaries and scholarships, and to dream a bit for our future.

Committee Reports for 2007 are available by request at the front desk. ॐ



## Take a Walk in the footsteps of *Patanjali*

**B.K.S Iyengar Yoga Retreat | August 22 - 26, 2007**  
**With Shirley Daventry French and Leslie Hoga**

***Let Shirley & Leslie be your guides at this spiritual retreat centre on beautiful Salt Spring Island off Canada's west coast.***

Immerse yourself in daily *Pranayama* & *Asana* practice. Be involved in lively discussion through group participation into the ancient teachings of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.

**SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH**

is a senior student of B.K.S. Iyengar. She has studied at the Ramamani Memorial Institute in Pune many

times, most recently in October 2005. She is the founder of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, B.C.

**LESLIE HOGYA** has been studying Iyengar Yoga since 1972. She has travelled to India seven times. She most recently studied with B.K.S. Iyengar in Pune in December, 2006. She holds a Senior Intermediate I level of certification and is part of the assessors team for Canada.

**FEES:**

\$740.00 + GST IYCV members  
– shared accommodation  
\$680.00 + GST IYCV members  
– camping (must supply own equipment)  
\$640.00 + GST IYCV members - commuter  
Non-members add \$50.00 to the fees

**Registration NOW open**

A \$200.00 deposit required to hold your space and the full payment is due June 1, 2007. After June 1, 2007 the \$200.00 deposit is non-refundable.

One scholarship is available. Please apply to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria.

To register, drop in to or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria  
202-919 Fort Street,  
Victoria, B.C. V8K 3K3

(250) 386-YOGA (9642)  
[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

## Short WORKSHOP

**What and How to Practice**  
*with Leslie Hoga*

**Saturday, June 9, 2007**  
**3:00- 5:15pm**

Open to all level students

**Fees:**

\$15.00 + GST IYCV members  
**SPECIAL MEMBERS PRICE**  
\$30.00 + GST Non-members

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

## CAN YOU HELP?

Are you able to provide a private bedroom and a breakfast for a yogi during either one or both of the Teacher Training Intensives?

**July 9-14, 2007**  
**August 6-10, 2007**

If so, please fill out a form at the front desk or contact Robin Cantor at [robincantor@telus.net](mailto:robincantor@telus.net) (382-4111).

Or, if you are out of town during this period consider having one of the out of town yogis housesit for you.

The billet and breakfast rate is \$35.00 per day.

## SUMMER SADHANA

*Sadhana* is a Sanskrit term which means dedicated practice or quest.

**July 9 – 14, 2007**

**This summer we offer a 6-day Sadhana with Robin Cantor.**

The 6-day Sadhana is the perfect opportunity to further develop and deepen your practice.

**Fees: \$90.00 + GST IYCV members**  
**\$99.00 + GST non-members**

**Registration NOW open.**

# I hear you knocking

## *Studies in Pune*

by Athena George

I recognize the foolishness of travelling all the way to India to study yoga and then hiding out, but I can't stop the fear. I'm afraid of stern words, corrective blows, advanced poses, long holds, and confusing accents. I'm especially afraid of being singled out for any reason. I keep to the back of the hall at Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, follow orders and blend into the crowd.

I'm also afraid of India. Every time I feel the slightest bit overwhelmed by the heat, noise, pollution, traffic, poverty and crush of people, I retreat to my private room.

Yesterday, all my protective measures blew to bits and I found myself completely exposed and overwhelmed, drifting across a busy street with bicycles, rickshaws, motorcycles and honking cars streaming around me, orange blossoms and bird droppings falling from above, diesel fumes and sweat sticking to my skin, Geeta Iyengar's handprint still stinging on my back where she knocked to open my chest, to open my soul.

I might have managed my invisibility act for one month, but my mistake was that I signed up for two. I didn't know that almost everyone comes to Pune for only one month. Ten days ago, all my



*View from a Pune rickshaw*

new yoga friends went home—most eagerly, some reluctantly—and I was faced with doing the whole thing again.

Most people who meet me wouldn't say that I'm an overly timid person. They would probably be surprised that I'm afraid of a yoga class. But it's not really surprising. Ever since I've been an Iyengar yoga student, I've heard stories of B.K.S. Iyengar's strict teaching methods. In my first week here, I saw him squeeze a student's face, thwap her on the forehead with his finger and say, "You think you have nothing to learn. You are ignorant!"

At the end of month one, I witnessed Sunita Iyengar (Guruji's daughter) strike my new English friend Sharon's hand away from her face for having the wrong finger position in *digital pranayama*. My mind raced from wondering how Sharon was feeling to praying that I had my fingers right.

Sharon is a strong, friendly person. She's taught yoga in prisons, even for sex offenders. She remained calm and cheerful after she was struck, while my fear grew.

My strategy of hiding in the back of the class failed. You can't hide in a yoga class at RIMYI. Guruji Iyengar practices at the back of the hall and he sees everything. Both his daughter Geeta and son Prashant

stride around the hall when they teach, flashing their eyes across the crowds, sometimes teaching the better part of a class from the back.

Geeta Iyengar's eyes shine with a particularly fierce intensity as she scans the class for students like me, the ones trying to hunch forward in a protective crouch. Over and over, she demands that we open our chests. In standing poses, sitting poses, twists, backbends, inversions and *pranayama*, she commands everyone to nail the shoulder bones back, cut the shoulder blades down the backs and vigorously lift the armpit chest and sternum.

Yesterday, Geeta came up behind me while I was twisting in *Bharadvajasana II*. She slapped me hard several times on my mid-back, saying, "Suck in. Suck in. Turning comes." I sucked my dorsal spine into my body farther than I thought possible, lifted my chest and twisted yet farther.

After Geeta slapped my back, she said, "And you think it is a hit. You say, oh those people are so bad. They hit us." She joked, "How did it move?" (She was

*"I recognize the foolishness of travelling all the way to India to study yoga and then hiding out, but I can't stop the fear."*

referring to my back.) She answered herself jokingly, "My hand is God." Everyone laughed.

She continued, "When you are doing *asana*, the body has to be knocked from every area." With humour in her voice, she asked us how we would knock at a house if we knew a friend was inside but just not coming to the door. We would ring the bell, knock on the door, go around to the side and knock on the window, go to the back of the house and knock on the bedroom window.

I am still twisting, my chest more open than it has been in years, and Geeta says, that if you keep knocking from all areas, someone, somewhere, wakes up. She says, "Wake all areas and then the soul will awaken."

I feel a sudden joyous relief. The thing I had feared, to be singled out, exposed, even 'hit', has happened and I have survived, more than survived, I feel energetic, happy, alive. A bubble of hilar-



*Athena George*

ity swells in my expanded chest. This self/soul I've been trying so hard to hide is the very thing I've come to India to find. Even funnier, my soul is never hidden; no matter what I do, my soul is always completely open to the universe.

*"Wake all areas and then the soul will awaken."*

– Geeta Iyengar

As I walk away from that class, I experience the street with all my senses, the hot wind swirling around me carries saris, rickshaws, parrots, coconuts, beggars, monks, flip-flops, dogs, cell phones, children, papayas and motorbikes. I nail my shoulder bones back, lift my chest and open my eyes and heart and smile. What a surprise, after forty days of hiding, to peek out and discover that I'm in India, studying yoga. ॐ

ATHENA GEORGE LIVES ON SATURNA ISLAND, BC, AND IS IN HER THIRD YEAR OF IYENGAR TEACHER TRAINING. MORE OF ATHENA'S JOURNEYS AT RIMYI WERE PUBLISHED IN PREVIOUS ISSUES AND WILL APPEAR IN UPCOMING ISSUES.

Coming November 16–18, 2007

## Chris Saudek

A Junior Intermediate Workshop for Level 3 and 4

Chris is a devoted student of the Iyengars, certified at the Senior Intermediate level and has a background in physical therapy. She is a precise and disciplined, caring and innovative teacher. Look for more information in the July/August 2007 issue.

# Thank you

**Catherine Langpap** for donating new venetian blinds to the main studio.

**Shirley Daventry French** for donating "In Durga's Embrace" by Swami Durgananda to our library.

**Jane Jonas and Phofi McCullough** for assisting, in a pinch, with a mail out.



Sri B.K.S. Iyengar, Honourary President

Presents

## Stephanie Quirk

May 24 - 27, 2007

at Glendon College, York University, Toronto, Ontario  
in conjunction with the I.Y.A.C. AGM.

Stephanie will teach

Thursday, May 24, 3:00 - 6:00 pm

Friday, May 25, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Saturday, May 26, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm.

The Annual General Meeting will be held

Sunday, May 27, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm.

All Iyengar Yoga teachers and students are welcome to participate in the conference, and to attend the AGM.

See you there!

(Only I.Y.A.C. members are able to vote).

For more information see the I.Y.A.C. website at  
[www.iyengaryogacanada.com](http://www.iyengaryogacanada.com)



# Why Should Children Practice Yoga?

By Adia Kapoor

Children need physical activity. It is important for their healthy development for them to move their bodies to maintain good health, proper joint functioning, good circulation and smooth digestion. But in today's busy world, we lead much more sedentary lives than ever before. Children, especially urban, western children, are much less active than they used to be, spending more time in front of the television or computer or being driven in a car or bus. It becomes more and more difficult for children to obtain the exercise they need.

In school, children are encouraged to take up physical activities that are often competitive and vigorous, such as team sports or dance, which, if done improperly, can have detrimental effects on children's minds and bodies. The soft, vulnerable bodies of growing children can be worked too hard or in the wrong way, resulting in hip and spine problems later, and the emotional strain of competitive activities and peer pressure in team environments may be difficult for some children to manage. Children are not always encouraged to pursue physical activity in a natural, fun, and healthy way.

It is for these reasons that yoga is an excellent exercise for children, suitable for any age and physical ability. Nowadays there has been some controversy about teaching yoga in schools. However, as any practitioner of yoga would agree, the physical and mental



benefits for children of practicing yoga asanas far outweigh the concerns a parent may have. As Guruji writes in the introduction to *Yoga for Children* by Swati and Rajiv Chanchani, "nature has gifted children with the ability to quickly recover from injuries. Hence, teachers need not be afraid while teaching them asanas.... If children are made to perform these asanas with different combinations and permutations, they get inspired to do more and more.... Through yoga, it is possible to transform skillfully their vanity and competitive spirit into useful forms of energy. Yoga channelises their thoughts and makes them responsible citizens of the world.... For children, who are custodians of each nation in particular and the whole world at large, I feel yoga is the essential product of the twenty-first century to lead them to perfect physical health and mental well-being."

Yoga works the whole body and mind; promotes strength, flexibility, good coordination and posture; and teaches children how to relax, concen-

trate, and be quiet and still. In our increasingly busy and stressful lives, yoga is a gentle, noncompetitive form of exercise. It can be practiced by children of varying ages and physical abilities without anyone feeling inadequate or inferior. Yoga is not about attaining perfect poses or "being the best" – it is about learning to do what is right for your own body. Success is not measured against others, but against yourself. As well, yoga is one of the few forms of exercise that parents and children can enjoy together

and profit equally from the experience.

Yoga helps children learn about the body and how it works so they can develop good sense of their own bodies – a good foundation for their well-being that will last throughout their lives. Geetaji states that by exposing children to asanas at a young age, parents are laying a good foundation for their future exploration and practice of this vast subject. Yoga asanas are well-suited to children, and can be adapted easily for children as they can be adapted for bodies of all ages and physical abilities. As asanas are also easily demonstrated and repeated, children can learn yoga by observation and imitation – their primary method of learning. Properly taught and practiced, yoga asanas provide children with sound physical and mental health and lead to balanced growth.

Guruji tells us that children aged eight years and above are fit to practice yoga, though children as young as five can be introduced to some asanas playfully and casually. Ty Chandler teaches

two classes at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria for children – one for kids aged 10 to 14 and one for teenagers. Wendy Boyer also teaches a family yoga class, for parents and children. As well, there are a number of excellent books on yoga for children if you are not able to attend a class. The Yoga Centre library has a few copies. ॐ

*Yoga For Children* by Mary Stewart and Kathy Phillips

*Yoga for Children: A Complete Illustrated Guide to Yoga* by Swati and Rajiv Chanchani

Family Yoga – Thursdays from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Ty's Yoga Kids (ages 10-14) – Fridays from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Teen Yoga (ages 14+) – Mondays from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

ADIA KAPOOR HAS BEEN A STUDENT AT THE IYCV SINCE 2001. THIS ISSUE IS ADIA'S FIRST TIME REPRESENTING THE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE AS ONE OF THE NEWSLETTER EDITORS.

## Scheduled Practice SPACE for IYCV Members

Sundays 12:30 - 3:00 pm  
& Fridays 6:30 - 8:00 am

Schedule is subject to change, please call 386-YOGA (9642) to check the schedule.

Please note:

- The supervising teacher is not there to teach or lead a practice.
- Bring your own practice sequence or find a sequence in one of the available books.
- The door may be locked; just knock loudly.

# Bellur

By Leslie Hogya

Bellur is the small village in Karnakata state where B.K.S. Iyengar was born. It is a tradition in South India for a person to take as their first name the name of their birthplace. So the “B” in Guruji’s name stands for Bellur.

This village was in a poor state until a very few years ago. Guruji formed a trust fund to help lift it out of poverty. One problem was with water. Years of drought had caused the water supply to nearly dry up, and one of the first things under taken by the trust was to build a large storage tank with clean water. It holds approximately 50,000 gallons of water.

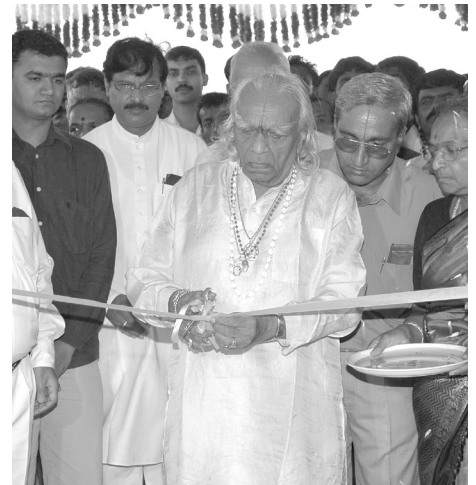
The other aims of the trust have been to improve the educational, cultural, social life of the village and improve availability of health care.

Since 2003 there has been constructed, besides the water tank, a hall over the primary school for yoga classes and social functions. There is a new high school, for both boys and girls. The trust not only covers the cost of running the school, but also pays the expenses for uniforms, books, plus one free meal per day. Near the school is an office building and guest house.

Another big project was constructing the first temple dedicated to Lord Patanjali. In 2004, special priests were invited to bless the temple and sanctify it for worship.

And this past November, a hospital was opened to help keep all the villagers healthy.

The photos were taken by Stephanie Quirk, who is a long time student of the Iyengars. She traveled to Bellur for the hospital opening ceremony. ॐ



Captions

# An Interview with Chris Saudek – Part 2

*Monday, November 6, 2006*

**By Ann Kilbertus and Leslie Hogya**

*This is Part 2 of a two-part article. Part 1 appeared in the March/April 2007 issue.*

Chris Saudek (C), Ann Kilbertus (A),  
Leslie Hogya (L)

A: Have you ever thought of doing scientific studies, or something along those lines? So many people don't see the inherent value in yoga.

C: Yes, I know what you mean, but first of all, with scientific studies, you have to control so much. You virtually have to take the person apart and try and control for this and that and only do one certain thing. And there are people you can't give yoga to because you want to see if the other group changes or not, and I don't want to have to not give them yoga. I don't want to have to do what is not the best thing for a person.

Now, I really am not interested in having to convince people of the value of yoga. I really am not. I feel that if people come to class and they participate and they find yoga very useful for them then that is wonderful. I'm very much a person who doesn't proselytize.

But back to scientific studies, I am involved in one. There is a back study going on in West Virginia, and I am involved, but as a consultant. As I consultant I don't mind, because I don't have to try and set up the study and figure out how to control all the variables or inter-



*Chris Saudek and Ann Kilbertus.*

view people. So, I'm looked at as an expert in yoga, not someone doing a scientific study. I really just want to teach yoga as yoga, which means that it is all entwined...the physical, the mental, the spiritual. I do know that Gururji really wants us to do scientific studies and maybe I will, sometime in the future.

A: It's not a compartmental subject. It's very much a holistic subject.

L: In the special needs class we'll usually give a little talk about how you might have come here with a shoulder injury, but one week we may do nothing that appears to be directly related to your shoulders.

C: Exactly.

L: We explain that this is not a physical therapy class, it is a yoga class.

C: Exactly. I mean sometimes I do something in yoga, and it produces a change. Then I find out later that it has a firm scientific reason as to why it works.

A: It's almost as though yoga is ahead of the science.

L: Once, a long time ago, Derek French asked Mr. Iyengar why he was doing something, and he replied, "Because it works."

C: In the beginning, when I was watching Mr. Iyengar, I would just see him working and I had no understanding. Now, I think I have a greater understanding of why certain things work in certain ways. Most physical therapy is so much more limiting, and most people want a quick fix.

As a physical therapist I have worked in a hospital, and a nursing home, and an

*"Once, a long time ago, Derek French asked Mr. Iyengar why he was doing something, and he replied, "Because it works."*



orthopedic clinic, but you just can't deal with the whole person in that sort of setting, and a lot of people don't want you to do that. They just want to know how many times to do what exercise to make things better, and that's it.

It requires a lot of sensitivity to develop that deeper understanding to heal yourself. People often don't want to do the work

A: Yoga can be very subtle.

C: And it's not like getting on an exercise bike and watching TV!

A: Really, yoga is just the opposite of that.

C: Yoga is not for everybody. I do think you have to have an inquiring mind, and if you don't have an inquiring mind, it doesn't work.

A: Yes, those three tiers that we were talking about in class...

C: Yes...*tapas* (burning zeal), *svadhyaya* (self study), *Isvara pranidhana* (surrender to the divine), and also *shakti* (power), *yukti* (skillfulness), and *bhakti* (devotion). You have to have those.

A: It is such a vast subject. I always think of "vastness" when I think of yoga.

L: Yes, it is rather intimidating how much there is to know.

C: I must say that when I started out I never thought I would be a yoga teacher, let alone become a yoga teacher who is considered to be a senior, and then to be one who is asked to take knowledge to other places and people.

I remember when I first started, I was nervous that I might not know everything. Now that doesn't make me nervous at all. I know I don't know everything. When people ask me questions I'm quite comfortable saying, "That's something I'm going to have to think about, I'm really not sure." Whereas in the beginning I had less confidence and I felt that people expect-

ed me to know everything. Eventually, I came to the realization that it didn't matter whether people expected me to know everything. I know I don't, and I'm willing to say that. And I am so much more comfortable.

L: You started teaching before the certification process began...

C: Yes. In 1984 Guruji came to San Francisco and what happened was that some of the more senior teachers were supposed to submit their names to him to be considered for certification. I had decided not to submit mine. I had been to the Institute three times, he knew who I was, but I just thought it wasn't right for me to put my name forward...me? However, Mary Dunn kept saying to me, "Chris, you really need to submit your name." So, finally I agreed, submitted my name, and was certified. That was in 1984 and then I think the next upgrade was around 1990. To be honest, I can't even remember what the level was that I was given the first time by Guruji, but then there was an upgrade, where we had to teach in front of Guruji, in Ann Arbor. I was teaching Uppavista konasana and suddenly he was standing right there! Oh, I can remember it so clearly. (Much laughter!)

When I first went to India, one of my teachers said, "You'll just love it in India Chris," whereas a couple of other teachers kept saying, "Chris, you're going to have a really hard time in India it can be very emotional!" (Much laughter!) I can still remember my first experience with Guruji...I was standing by the wall, and I even remember exactly which wall, with my buttocks against the wall and my feet a little bit away doing *Uttanasana*. He came marching over to me with a wooden block and stuck it in my short side. He had me come up a little bit and jammed the block in place and said, "And now you will have to hold this or it will break your foot." And he walked away, and I didn't even

know how long I should stay there. I thought, "What am I supposed to do?" It's funny to think of it now. I remember so many things like that. I remember the first time in the Manchester group and we were talking one night and I said, "I really don't understand...sometimes they lift me up and put me further on the blanket in *Sarvangasana*, and other times they put me further out, and I just don't understand where I'm supposed to be." I'm the sort of person who always has all sorts of questions to ask before I go to India, but I find I don't usually say anything when I first arrive, and it seems that I always get my questions answered without even asking.

L & A: Yes, yes, we've found that too.

C: Anyway, this one woman from Manchester spoke out one day and said, "Guruji, the American woman has a question. I just thought, oh no, why did she say that! And of course, he stormed over, and I got so bawled out, and I almost broke into tears. And then he said, "Come here." And he put me into *Sarvangasana*, and I felt like he knew I was just about to burst into tears and he put me into the pose, and moved me back and forth and made me understand. To this day I always say, "You can't cry in *Sarvangasana*," because I felt he knew that if he put me in that pose I wouldn't break into tears. He was yelling at me and saying, "Why is it you don't know this?" and yet I felt alright and didn't break into tears. Yes, I can remember many things like this.

And of course there were the times I was there with my husband. You know my husband has Crohn's disease, which has improved quite a bit, and now he has Parkinson's disease. Guruji has really just been fantastic with my husband. Before my husband got diagnosed with Parkinson's, Guruji was working with him on the Crohn's disease. My husband was in the medical classes and I



*"Yoga is not for everybody. I do think you have to have an inquiring mind, and if you don't have an inquiring mind, it doesn't work."*

worked as his assistant. Guruji would then come over and change, explain, adjust...and then one day he said to my husband, "Now you will walk like a horse instead of a water buffalo." In hindsight he of course saw the plodding slowness of the water buffalo, and I wonder if he didn't see that slowness before the Parkinson's was diagnosed. He has been very generous with us.

And Geeta... I feel she has developed such deep compassion for...us, for...

A: Humanity...

C: ...yes, yes, humanity, whether you are western or not, AND I think she really now understands the western mind. She seems now to really be able to read things.

A: She also seems to be able to translate some of the mercurial mind of Guruji.

C: She can explain very clearly and in a very practical fashion for the western mind.

L: Although sometimes she lets you find out for yourself. (Much laughter!)

C: Certainly my evolution as a practitioner and as a teacher was totally unplanned, totally unplanned.

L: So when you submitted your name in San Francisco, did Guruji just say you were now teachers?

C: Yes, he just said that now you people have this certain level of certificate. We were all people he knew well and he knew our practice. This whole certification thing that has now arisen...you are all really so lucky in many ways. There were so many missing links for us. We didn't really understand the evolution of the poses at all.

L: When did you get the syllabus?

A: Ten years ago, maybe?

C: Yes, maybe, and even then, until I was asked to help train teachers I didn't really understand everything. Even with practice I was still practicing what I had done in India and wasn't looking too much at those syllabi. It was when I started to train teachers that I began to ask why it was that some poses came before others. What's the reason? And still I feel there are so many poses in the early syllabi, before my certification, that I have to back up to and look at.

A: Missing links...?

C: Definitely, missing links that I had to find. We were doing poses such as Bakasana way before Malasana or Marichyasana 1 or Kurmasana, because they were fun to do, they were active. Now, there are so many other poses that one should develop first. The whole process is so much more refined. IF the next generation of teachers is willing to work systematically, there is so much there. I do, however, see an awful lot of the next generation who want to jump to doing full arm balance and to Urdhva dhanurasana, and things like that. It's interesting because I definitely know how to work with people with that stuff. I could definitely show people how to work together in Mandalasana for example, but most people really aren't ready for that.

Sometimes there are poses I want to explain and work with more and yet I realize the teachers aren't ready. But still, part of me wants to teach it because I don't want that understanding and knowledge to be lost. (Discussion ensued on how we might incorporate

this into Chris' next visit.)

A: How do you feel your practice has changed over the years especially as you've got older?

C: When I first began, I started by liking the practice right away, unlike some students who come and ask you, "What should I practice?" I found I just really liked to practice and I would come home from a class and just practice. In those days I didn't know anything about sequencing, how to put a practice together, or why certain things came before others. I knew the basics, like shoulderstand came after headstand. I was lucky in that I was living in a large apartment where I was able to make a practice room. I cleared everything else out and got some props. And, of course, I was travelling a lot of miles just to go to a class, and that also inspired me. I never have lived anywhere where I could just go to class in the same town. When I had to drive that far I wanted to make it worthwhile, and I did like practicing right away.

But in the beginning, I would say I didn't really know what I was doing. Even after my first time in India, I had all my notes and I took them home and did those classes. Nobody ever told me what to practice or to practice the classes, it just seemed logical to me. In those days, in India, they really didn't talk about sequencing, but you did get a sense of what kind of sequencing there was. By the time I had been there for my fourth or fifth time I had been there for almost every month of the year so I came to know what the practice was in India in March or April, or in the cold months. I got a sense of how they changed the practice according to weather and how they changed it depending upon what ailments you had. I would see people in the medical classes who had headaches and I would write down what practices they were given. So I came to know those kinds of things.

And then I had two children, so I had to change my practice completely when I was pregnant, although I did do more than most pregnant women because I had been practicing for so long.

A: Did you know about the precautions for pregnancy at that time?

C: Well, I knew not to do backbends or abdominal asanas and things like that, but I also had a fair amount of experience by then. I mean, I stood on my head the day one of my kids was born. But I would say that as time has gone on and in the last ten years in particular, my practice has changed. I have become much, much more interested in sequencing, and of course that has come with the certification booklet, and I have become more interested in how one develops these more advanced poses with the other poses. When I plan a practice now, I look at what I am working towards and what elements are involved. You can probably see that in my classes today.

A & L: Yes, yes...

C: You know...I would like to work on a pose, but I don't start with that pose. I look at poses that I would do before that. Then, I went through menopause...when I was tired, when I was hot, I had to change things. I learned a lot. I learned how to be quiet. I learned how to really respect myself and what my body, what I, was going through. I felt like I learned a lot during that time. It was really nice when I could get back though. Post menopause is wonderful! And of course, menopause just doesn't end. You still have hot flashes and you're still tired for awhile. Your

*"I think of times when I have had injuries and how the mind turns to think of all you are not able to do. To be able to turn it around to really realize, oh but there are things I can do."*

hips can get stiff sometimes. After that, things slowly start to build up again

During menopause I did more restorative backbends, for example...I just didn't feel that strong. It was very hard for me. When I started yoga, I was not a strong person. I didn't have much endurance, and I wasn't flexible. I couldn't even touch my toes. The first time I did a cartwheel was when I was forty years old. It was the first time I felt I had the strength and confidence to do something like that. During menopause I felt I kind of lost that strength and it was really nice when I could bring that back to my practice. In many ways I feel stronger now. But as you get older, I feel you have to be more careful about your sequencing, and if you want to do the more advanced poses to be more careful about building up to them. You have to have longer practices, and you have to be more introspective. I really feel my practice has become much better and it has all become very inspiring for me.

It's like when I was talking the other day about *shakti*, *yukti*, and *bhakti*. You know, when you are young you have that power and you really just want to go to it. There is not really that skillfulness and introspection. Skillfulness comes from that introspection I think. I learned, when I was younger, to do the poses, but not to really think about

them. As time has evolved I really began to feel the poses more fully and to stay with it so that I could go inward. I think, in the beginning, it was all external. The idea of staying with the poses, and moving inward...that has been really exciting.

A: It's *sadhana* really...

C: Yes, and that has of course got me much more interested in reading, studying the *sutras*, and the spiritual aspects of yoga. I still wonder, technically, even if you can no longer perform the *asanas*, whether it should matter...if you've built your practice and if you've built your intelligence. I still think it will be hard when I start to lose the postures, and that is some of what I am thinking about now. How can I develop the intelligence to continue to work, but not to get so attached to the physical aspects of the poses?

A: And there will still be poses...

C: Yes, of course, and I think of times when I have had injuries and how the mind turns to think of all you are not able to do. To be able to turn it around to really realize, oh but there are things I can do. First of all you don't lose all of that intelligence. To have something to back up to is so much more than what most people have. We have yoga, and I think that is really exciting. ॐ

*"I still wonder, technically, even if you can no longer perform the asanas, whether it should matter...if you've built your practice and if you've built your intelligence."*

CHRIS IS AN IYENGAR CERTIFIED SENIOR INTERMEDIATE LEVEL III YOGA INSTRUCTOR, TEACHING IN WISCONSIN. SHE TEACHES REGULAR CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS AND HAS GRACED IYCV WITH HER TEACHING PRESENCE ON MANY OCCASIONS.



# 2007 calendar

## MAY

- 4-7 Workshop Faeq Biria
- 11 Big, Big Practice
- 24-27 IYAC AGM, Toronto
- 26 Short Workshop with James Currie-Johnson

## JUNE

- 1-3 Saltspring Retreat
- 9 Teachers' Meeting
- 15-17 Introductory I/II Assessment in Kelowna, BC
- 15-17 Introductory I/II Assessment (English and French) in Ottawa, ON
- 22 Short Workshop – Summer Solstice with Ty Chandler

## JULY

- 2-8 IYCV Closed
- 9-14 Teacher Training Intensive – Introductory Levels with Leslie Hoggia and Ann Kilbertus
- 9-14 Sadhana with Robin Cantor

## AUGUST

- 6-10 Teacher Training Intensive – Junior Intermediate Levels with Shirley Daventry French
- 22-26 Footsteps of Patanjali Retreat at Saltspring Centre with Shirley Daventry French and Leslie Hoggia

## SEPTEMBER

- 3-7 Student Intensive with Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler
- 4-9 IYCV Registration week
- 7-8 Refresh Yourself for the Fall workshop with Ann Kilbertus
- 27 Sutra Workshop with Shirley Daventry French
- 28-29 Going Deeper with Shirley Daventry French

## OCTOBER

- 19-21 Introductory I/II Assessment, Toronto, ON

## NOVEMBER

- 16-18 Chris Saudek Workshop
- 16-18 Junior Intermediate Assessment, Vancouver, BC

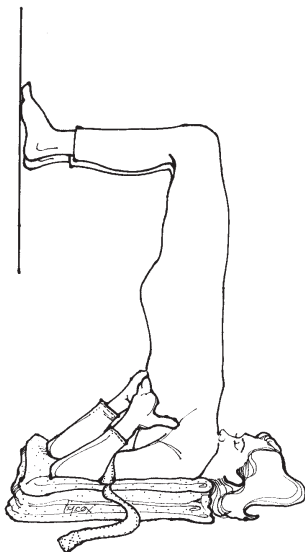
## DECEMBER

- 17-21 Sadhana with Corrine Lowen

### *Newsletter submissions*

**Written:** Digital format is preferred—Word file or other files compatible with Microsoft Word, plain text files or emails. Hand written or printed submissions will be accepted; however, they require transposing (typing or scanning) to digital format by the newsletter committee before publication.

**Photos:** Prints or digital images. Digital files must be high resolution (minimum 600 dpi) for adequate reproduction. Acceptable formats are JPG (choose: no compression, high quality, large file), TIFF or EPS. Preferred: save as grayscale EPS files, with no adjustments, sizing or cropping.



## Time to Renew!

This is a reminder that your  
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria membership  
expired on December 31, 2006.

The membership subscription fee is \$40.00 + GST  
(Canadian residents add 7% GST) and is renewable each January.

### Membership benefits include:

- 5% discount on all classes
- free practice times at the IYCV
- 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 form below and send to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria.*



IYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA  
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:

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

**(250) 386-9642**

Membership/subscription fee is \$40.00 + GST,  
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I'll pick one up at my class.

☐ Receipt required.





IYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA

N E W S L E T T E R  
J U L Y / A U G U S T 2 0 0 7



*"For children, who are the custodians of each nation  
in particular and the whole world at large, I feel that yoga  
is the essential product of the twenty-first century to lead  
them to perfect physical health and mental well-being."*

– B.K.S. Iyengar

# The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

with Shirley Daventry French

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 the 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

**6:30 - 8:30 pm Friday, September 28, 2007**

Fee: \$35 + GST for IYCV members, \$40 + GST for non-members

To register, drop in or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,  
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8K 3K  
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)  
[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

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

# Going Deeper

An Iyengar Yoga Workshop  
with Shirley Daventry French

September 29 - 30, 2007



**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.

The founder of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, Shirley has been the driving force in making the Victoria Iyengar Yoga community one of the strongest and most viable in Canada. Students from across Canada and around the world have studied with her. In this special weekend, students have the opportunity to learn from her in a workshop setting.

**Saturday, September 29:**  
11:00 am - 1:00 pm,  
3:00 - 5:00 pm

Registration opens:  
July 15 for IYCV members  
July 22 for non-members

**Sunday, September 30:**  
10:30 am - 1:00 pm  
1:00 - 1:30 pm refreshments  
1:30 - 2:30 pm debriefing  
for observers

To register, drop in or  
phone the  
**Iyengar Yoga Centre  
of Victoria**  
202-919 Fort Street  
Victoria, B.C. V8K 3K3  
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

**Fees:**  
\$115.00 + GST  
for IYCV members  
\$125.00 + GST  
for non-members  
\$80.00 + GST  
for observers

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a \$50.00 cancellation fee.



## ASSESSMENT DATES

October 19-21, 2007	Toronto Introductory I/II
November 16-18, 2007	Vancouver Jr. Intermediate II
February 29, March 1-2, 2008	Iyengar Yoga School of Toronto Jr Intermediate I
April 18-21, 2008	Yoga Centre Toronto Jr Intermediate II/III
June 20-23, 2008	London Introductory I/II
October 17-20, 2008	Saskatoon Introductory I/II
October 17-20, 2008	Iyengar Yoga Centre Victoria Jr Intermediate I

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## Newsletter Advertising Policy (Adopted February 20, 2004)

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

1. Advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the newsletter of the IYCV.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar Yoga
3. Priority given to advertisements regarding:
  - IYCV events
  - IYCV sponsored events
  - IYAC events

## COURSE REGISTRATION:

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

**Phone:**  
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

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



## IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE of VICTORIA NEWSLETTER

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**IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA 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 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, drawings, information or suggestions to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter: 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3. For information on activities and events, call (250) 386-YOGA (9642) or visit our website: [www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.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 IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA IN 1976. SHIRLEY LIVES IN VICTORIA AND TEACHES WORLDWIDE.

An unexpected meeting occurred on the road to the yoga centre the other day. As I was parking my car, two women approached. Recognising one of them whom I hadn't seen for a long time, I cried: *Teddy!* at the same moment as she exclaimed: *Shirley!* We paused and hugged, then walked together down the road which brings us first to the yoga centre and then to the crossroad where the Victoria YM-YWCA is situated.

Teddy was a warm and welcoming presence at the reception desk at the Y for many of the years I taught there, and apparently continues to fulfil that role. After catching up on how we were and how things were going, we spoke about the explosion of yoga classes. In my early days in yoga, when it was very much a fringe activity viewed with great suspicion or derision, we used to muse about the possibility of its gaining public acceptance. Now it has happened: yoga has become a part of mass culture. Sadly, this has brought into the field many entrepreneurs who see it as a business opportunity, and has led to a proliferation of unskilled and poorly trained teachers. As an article which appeared in the *Vancouver Sun* pointed out recently: "Anybody can be a yoga teacher now. And anybody is. Yoga is being taught by tens of thousands of people with wildly differing levels of training. Some possess philosophical and psychological wisdom. Some do not."<sup>1</sup>

Teddy knows that when we ran our Iyengar program at the Y, we went to great lengths to maintain the high standard an Iyengar Yoga teacher is held to by the Master of that tradition, B.K.S. Iyengar. All classes were taught by qualified teachers and if none were available that time-slot remained empty.

This is not a scenario that appeals to administrators and accountants trying to meet their bottom line, and we were often under pressure to compromise. Despite our efforts, few staff members at the Y ever understood that yoga was more than stretching or stress reduction; Teddy being an exception because she actually took classes. This was one of the factors that led us, after successfully building and sustaining our program at the Y for thirty years, to move out to an independent space dedicated to Iyengar Yoga.

It was a long overdue move, and in retrospect I can't understand why we waited so long. One of the reasons was that the Y, like our yoga centre, is non-profit and dedicated to community service. Another was that it had become a habit, we were comfortable there. But, as the demand for classes increased and we refused to compromise our three year teacher training program and churn out teachers more quickly, the Y became interested in bringing in teachers of other methods or no particular method at all—what is most often described as "eclectic."

Several times I considered opening a yoga centre as a commercial venture but rejected this idea for two reasons. The primary one was that I learned about the value of "karma" yoga, or selfless service, as a spiritual path in my very first yoga classes. It was a scarce commodity in the world then, as it is now, and for support I sought companions in yoga who were drawn to this approach. Two early participants in this group were Leslie Hogya, now one of our centre's and one of Canada's senior Iyengar teachers, and Carole Miller, a professor at the University of Victoria, who has established and teaches a credit course in yoga at that university.

We began practising yoga together in the early 1970s, with some of us starting to teach shortly thereafter, and all of us sharing a philosophy of yoga as a way of life along with the desire to dig deeply into its teachings. We

*Good yoga teaching focuses on getting rid of attachments and encouraging students to become fully independent.*



began to understand the benefit of *satsang* or gathering with those of like mind to help us stay with our practices when difficulties occurred, as inevitably they did. For most of us who began to practise and teach in those early 1970s, the challenge was keeping one's head above water and one's eyes turned towards the Light while giving birth to and raising a family. At the same time we were supporting husbands who were endeavouring to become established in their careers. There was also the added stress for most early yoga centre members of adapting to life in a new country or a new part of the country.

Somehow we persevered, managed to establish a foundation of yoga in our daily lives and, in 1976, we formally inaugurated the Victoria Yoga Centre as a non-profit organisation. Most readers will know that a couple of years ago we changed its name to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria to reflect our adherence to the tradition of Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar, our dedication to him as a Master Teacher and, for many of us, as our Guru. With this background of karma yoga, it was natural to teach as part of a team in a collegial way rather than as owner and employees.

The other reason I did not open my own centre was that Derek was tied down by heavy overheads in his medical practice which made it difficult for us to take much time off, and I did not want to add the overheads and demands of a second business to those we already faced to cover expenses twelve months a year. Few, if any, of us at that time had any money to spare. There were other ways to continue my journey on the yogic path which were more appealing to me, so I persevered with my work within the yoga centre which involved considerable adaptation, adjustment and accommodation—traits fundamental to the practice of yoga.

These days I am out of touch with what goes on at the Y but now, like almost every recreation and fitness centre in Victoria, they offer classes in a variety styles of yoga. Many studios claim confidently that they offer classes in “all styles,” while individual teachers frequently “draw from many traditions”

*A Guru will not treat all his disciples the same but will treat them fairly, although this may not be evident to an untrained eye.*

mixing them up with each other or with other totally unrelated techniques. Few are dedicated to one Master or method.

From the point of view of a teacher in an unstructured yoga environment, anything goes. Creativity knows no bounds, and you are free to pick and choose from a variety of techniques, mixing methods, and quite likely omitting vital steps which would have to be faced and conquered if you were immersed in yoga under the eagle eye of a teacher who had trod this path before you. On the surface there appears to be freedom, but perhaps it is better described as license. Another temptation is to be caught up in pleasing the students so that they love you and your classes and develop an attachment to them. Such an attachment will tend to deepen if you depend on these students for your livelihood.

Good yoga teaching focuses on getting rid of attachments and encouraging students to become fully independent. Paradoxically, this requires that students develop the ability to follow instruction closely, become independent of classes and learn to practise on their own, so that when they take their next class they have digested what they were taught previously. B.K.S. Iyengar is amazing in that he will remember, in the midst of a huge class, that three years ago in London he taught you whatever it is you are still not understanding at that moment. Clearly, something you did not learn!

Certain hazards also face those who teach yoga in a disciplined systematic fashion faithful to the ancient texts of yoga. As Swami Vivekananda put it in his wonderful book *Raja Yoga*: “If one proposes to teach a science to increase the power of sense enjoyment, one finds multitudes ready for it. If one undertakes to show the supreme goal, one finds few to listen to him. Very few have the power to grasp the higher, fewer still the patience to attain to it. But there are a few also who know that even if the body can be made to

live for a thousand years, the result in the end will be the same. When the forces that hold it together go away, the body must fall. No man was ever born who could stop his body one moment from changing. Body is the name of a series of changes.”

As Vivekananda says, few have the patience and determination to stay with yoga long enough to gain even basic skills. Therefore we must offer a lot of beginning classes to discover those who are ready for yoga, and encourage them to continue. There is often a lack of knowledge about the purpose of yoga, and an unrealistic expectation that it will cure all pains and remove all stress with a minimum of effort. As a result of this the drop out rate in yoga is high. Many students become disillusioned when the going becomes tough, and give up before their bodies and minds are sufficiently trained to withstand the seductive powers which will attempt to deter them, and before they have developed the strength to overcome the impediments which are confronting them. Even the most talented and able of students with a strong will and well established discipline, will be tempted and tested again and again.

Yoga is a journey of a lifetime (many lifetimes, so say the sages) and has nothing to do with instant gratification. The goal is *kaivalya* or emancipation, and a yoga teacher's duty is to take their students as far along this path as possible in

this lifetime. This can only be undertaken by teachers who are prepared to face these hazards for themselves.

Another problem on a more temporal level which faces a yoga teacher attempting to follow the precepts of yoga in a Western country such as Canada, is the widespread belief that everything should be fair and equal. Each yoga student is unique. Each enters a class with their own karma, their own nature, their own level of maturity, their unsatiated wants and desires, their pride and ego, their own ability and potential. They will not all learn at the same rate nor in the same way. Under the tutelage of a Yoga Master they will be taught individually at different paces, even in the midst of a large class. Some will be given a lot; others little or nothing. Some will be taught gently; others fiercely. Some will appear to be favoured; others ignored. A Master, seeing beyond the surface to that which obscures the light in that student, will offer what is needed to remove these obstacles—and frequently this will be that student's most cherished attachments. A Guru will not treat all his disciples the same but will treat them fairly, although this may not be evident to an untrained eye. Trust is required, and surrender.

If you don't trust the teachings of yoga as laid out in Patanjali's sutras, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the myriad texts of Yoga, then none of this makes sense and you

might as well do belly-dancing or pilates. However, if you have a sense, as I did at the very first talk I attended on yoga philosophy, that the teachings of yoga contain a healthy dose of common sense and a breath of freedom, then it is worth persevering on this path.

We do not have to rethink and rework yoga. Its teachings and techniques are tried and true. In the tradition of yoga all students will be treated justly in accordance to their needs, which rarely correspond to their desires or fulfil their sense of entitlement. When you endeavour to teach yoga unadulterated by your own desire to be liked, no matter how good a teacher you are, you will not always be popular. On the other hand, you may earn the respect of your students along with self-respect.

Before we parted, Teddy told me a story which made my day. A woman, wanting to register for classes at the Y, had asked a question about the difference between yoga and pilates. Teddy's reply was succinct and brilliant: *well, yoga has been around for five thousand years!* Such a wonderful answer. Yoga has staying power. Perhaps there is something to it! Still laughing, we parted company and went on our way. ॐ

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<sup>1</sup> *Lost in Translation: Yoga Culture, Mass Culture* by Douglas Todd, The Vancouver Sun, Saturday, April 14, 2007.

## **scholarships & bursaries**

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



Please apply in writing at least one month prior to the workshop you are interested in. See Calendar for dates.

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.

Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria  
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8K 3K3  
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

# Mr. Iyengar's Commentary on Patanjali

## Part III of III: Vibhuti Pada & Kaivalya Pada



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

Gurujī's introduction, and that part dealing with Samadhi Pada, appeared in the May 1993 edition of the Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter. The remaining portions of that address were subsequently published in the 1993 Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association Newsletter following the annual meeting.

### The Twin Brothers: *Prana* and *Citta*

As the cells are controlled by *Pranayama*, that is *prana vrtti nirodhah*. *Prana* is close to the self; according to the *Upanishads*, *prana* and *citta* together form the consciousness. Mind is the outer layer of consciousness. Consciousness is near the soul but mind is far away from the soul. Consider the tree, the soul is the seed. First you plant the seed. From the seed a single bud shoots out. You see the bud and you say, "Here is a plant." That is the sprout of *asmita*, the individual self. But before, the seed did not show any form. This bud forms a stem: the sense of individuality. Then this stem branches into two.

Similarly the consciousness divides into intelligence and mind. Then come the various subsidiary branches. These are the organs of action and perception. Then the leaves open, begin to breathe and send back this to the base where the seed has grown the roots. This process is the involuntary method, by which energy is gained from the periphery and sent back to the core; whereas the first process, where energy is drawn from the seed and the root and is then supplied out to the periphery, is the evolutionary method.

Similarly in our system we distribute energy in two ways. From *Pranayama* we

develop *prana vrtti nirodhah*. The energy finds the channels through which it must pass. And when people say, "I don't have enough energy," it is because the energy cannot find channels to flow along. The course of the river changes when the banks change. When we ask, "why is this part of me wearing out?" it is because the course of the channels has changed, one part is alive but another has died. So through *Pranayama* you bring the vital energy to touch these areas and supply the needed energy.

In the *Prasna Upanishad* they say breath and consciousness are twin brothers. But one was born a little earlier than the other. So Consciousness is the elder brother who was followed just after by Breath, and these twins are always together. It is often said that twins cannot live without each other and that if one twin dies the other will die soon after. Similarly if the consciousness goes wrong the breath goes wrong and if the breath goes wrong the consciousness goes wrong. So the theme of the whole of the *Prasna Upanishad* is that these twins must be brought together.

### Energy and the Five Elements

Now what is the energy which the breath brings? What is the energy of *Pranayama*? It is very simple. We all talk about *Kundalini*. Patanjali also talks of this but people miss it because he refers to it as *prakrti shakti* where others talk of

*Kundalini shakti*. Now, a river has life: running water has life. But can it produce electricity? It cannot. Similarly, our normal breathing has life but it cannot produce the energy which the human system requires. In the hydro-electric power station, water is made to flow down tubes from top and bottom, so that as it flows it is heated to high temperatures. It is this super-heated water that rolls the turbines and generates electrical power.

We are made of five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. As in human groups three members tend to form a close relationship, the same is true of the elements. The three cooperating elements are earth, ether and air, whereas water and fire are the antagonistic elements, the anti-elements. If a house is on fire what do you do? You call the fire brigade and they pour water on the fire, which extinguishes it. Now because water and fire are anti-elements they also have the capacity for a kind of fusion that produces a very powerful energy. So the process of *Pranayama* increases the potency of the energy within the human system through the interaction of these two elements in the practice of deep inhalation and exhalation. Then the energy is stored in the body and distributed by the element ether which works through the nervous system.

When this kind of energy is strong the mind does not wander and this is

why the approach of Hatha Yoga begins with *prana vrtti nirodha* – the control of fluctuations of the *prana*. Patanjali begins with *citta vrtti nirodha*, but as we have seen, *Citta* and *Prana*, Consciousness and Breath, are twin brothers. The two are inextricably linked so where one is controlled the other follows.

## VIBHUTI PADA

In the third chapter Patanjali goes on to describe the *vibhuti*. This does not mean supernatural powers as it is so often translated, but it refers to the fruits of action. *Sadhana* is the action, so *vibhuti* refers to the fruits of *sadhana*. Chapters I and II both describe practice, but chapter I describes *antaranga sadhana* (internal practice) while chapter II focuses on *bahiranga sadhana* (external practice). *Samadhi* describes practice at its most refined level, while *Sadhana Pada* gives a more basic and practical approach for lesser minds and for those who have fallen away in their practice.

### Points of Concentration

In *Vibhuti Pada* it is interesting to note that Patanjali describes the fruit of concentrating on several different points within the body. Many people now stress the use of external objects such as candlelight or flowers, but Patanjali also says, “Look at your own throat, look at your heart, look between your eyebrows. Can’t you see the light of the intelligence which is burning inside although you are unaware of it.”

Patanjali connects the external and the internal. For those who find it easy to do external concentration he gives external objects and for those who can concentrate internally he gives internal points for concentration. He gives both ways. So when someone suggests that you look at a beautiful rose, while I suggest you look at the beautiful way the muscles come into balanced action, are these not both acts of concentration? Is one physical and one mental? What is

*“Look at your own throat, look at your heart, look between your eyebrows. Can’t you see the light of the intelligence which is burning inside although you are unaware of it.”*

the difference? If you gaze at a candle you are working with one organ of perception; if you work with the skin in the controlling of an *asana* that is another organ of perception. Do you see how false this distinction of physical and mental is? So do not use such confused terms, but find out for yourselves.

If, for example, in *Setu Bandha Sarvangasana* you concentrate on the heart, where exactly should you concentrate? When you do *Viparita Dandasana*, where should you concentrate? The legs, arms and chest all meet at the centre and there you must concentrate, but you only concentrate for a short while, then you give up and say, “Oh, Mr. Iyengar, this is nothing but physical yoga!” You must stay longer so that the concentration comes.

When you do *Sirsasana*, if you do not keep the shoulders parallel you lose your balance, so are you not concentrating continuously to maintain that? Think about that and you will realize you are doing something more than physical. You are doing something where the mind and body are united as a single unit. Then they ignite the light of the soul. When we do not understand that, then we say, “Oh, I’m doing this for my health.” By saying that you close the door on the possibility of other fruits coming to you from your practice. But if you say, “Yes, I am doing this for my health, but let me also see what other things may come with the health,” then you may see more of the light. If you put a block up in your mind, your mind will never go beyond that block; that is not meditation.

## ***Dhyana*: Meditation An Uninterrupted Flow of Energy and Consciousness**

Patanjali does refer, however, to a different kind of block. These blocks are like the *bandhas* we use in *Sarvangasana* when the chest is brought to touch the chin. These *bandhas* or locks are used to consciously prevent the mind from going beyond certain points. Within those restraints we must try to release and extend the period of focused concentration a little longer. Then comes a oneness between the centripetal and centrifugal tendencies. What terminology does Patanjali use to describe this? He says *Dhyana* (meditation) is when concentration on an object, or on your own self, or on an *asana* does not fluctuate. If you can maintain a single flow of energy with a single flow of consciousness, then that is *Dhyana*. That is Patanjali’s definition; but what is today’s definition? “Close your eyes,” “Go to sleep,” “Have an empty mind.” That is not *Dhyana*. In *Pranayama* sometimes, as you are observing the breath, it begins to come well, and then your attention fades and suddenly the breathing becomes rough. That is broken meditation. It is not *Dhyana*. You must control those tendencies and see that there is no break in the in-flow or the out-flow. Similarly in *asanas*: you must overcome all the blocks and breaks in the joints and muscles of the body which interrupt the flow of movement and concentration. If you work in such a way that the flow is uninterrupted in the *asanas*, then that is meditation. Then, when you achieve this state, continue to work to prolong it.



## The Process of *Samadhi*

In chapter I Patanjali explains this struggle of *citta-vrtti norodha*, the restraint of the fluctuating mind. The Self says to the mind, "I want to restrain this, I want to stop this fluctuation, Stop!" This is the shock treatment. But in Chapter III, for the benefit of the *sadhaka* who has *persevered* and begun to experience the fruits, he goes on to say that the inner consciousness itself does not want to fluctuate. There is a spontaneous tendency to restrain the mind. Between the moment of uncontrolled fluctuation and the moment of restraint of that fluctuation there is a pause, a space (III.9). You have to discover this space, you have to learn this space, you have to learn to prolong this moment. Only then will you begin to draw near to *Samadhi*. In that

*"...the inner consciousness itself does not want to fluctuate. There is a spontaneous tendency to restrain the mind."*

pause *you have* a glimpse of tranquility. So, instead of concentrating on the restraining, you must concentrate on this space. Try to develop this, because your practice of *Pranayama* should have cultivated your brain to give it the sensitivity and stability to respond to this chance. Learning to become familiar with this pause is *nirodhah parinama* (the restraining transformation). When you begin to consciously lengthen this pause, then you have achieved *Samadhi parinama* (the transformation to *Samadhi*). In chapter I Patanjali defined *Samadhi*; here

he shows the process, how *Samadhi* can be touched, in that space beyond words.

See how beautifully he delineates the three transformations; *nirodhah parinama* is the phase in which the mind switches between a state of fluctuation and a state of restraint; *Samadhi parinama* is where the *sadhaka* begins to lengthen the pause between those two states; then Patanjali shows that there is still a higher state to be reached—*ekagrata parinama*. *Ekagrata* is usually translated as concentration; but if we break this word down further into *eka* and *grata* we can find subtler meaning:

# Teacher Training & Junior Intermediate Workshop

## FOR LEVELS 3 & 4 STUDENTS

WITH CHRIS SAUDEK | NOVEMBER 16 - 18, 2007

### Teacher Training

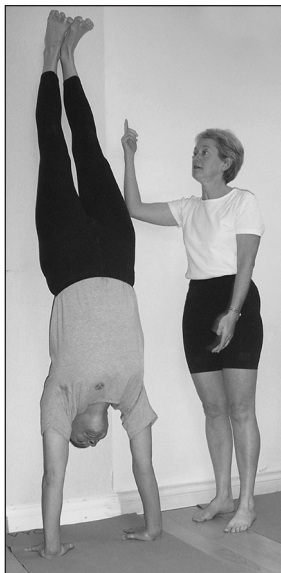
Fri. 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, 3:00 - 6:00 pm

Times subject to change

Open to all certified Iyengar yoga teachers, or those in Iyengar yoga teacher training programs.

A devoted student of the Iyengars for more than 20 years, Chris studied extensively at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune. Her training as a physical therapist gave her valuable background for her study of yoga. She is a precise and disciplined, caring and innovative teacher. Chris is the director of the Yoga Place in La Crosse, Wisconsin and is certified as a Senior Intermediate teacher of the Iyengar method.

Note: Chris will be teaching an extended Level 4 class Monday, November 19, 2007, 4:30-7:30 pm (times to be confirmed). Open to Level 4 students only. There is a nominal surcharge for students registered in the Level 4 class.



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

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Times subject to change.

Open to Level 3 & 4 students able to hold headstand and shoulderstand for 5 minutes or more.

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September 5, 2007 for non-members

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literally, “one base,” or “one foundation.” In *Samadhi parinama* there is a feeling of tranquility in that prolonged “quiet space,” but there is no feeling of the Self. In *ekagrata parinama*, however, you penetrate deeper and the mind rests in the abode of the *Atman*, the Self. There is no division; you are one.

## The Fruits of Practice

In the following part of *Vibhuti Pada* Patanjali has given a list of 35 experiences which may come to you when, as a result of your practice, that state (*Samadhi*) is reached. From mind reading to the ability to distinguish between externally indistinguishable objects, these are all the fruits of practice. As human beings are all different so the fruits of their practice are also different. But whoever you are, if you persevere in your practice, one or other of these powers will surely come. The important thing, says Patanjali, is that such a power should be taken merely as a sign that your practice is succeeding; you must just carry on with your *Sadhana*. Some have attained such powers and have been caught up in them. “Oh! See what I have attained!” they say, and

*“So when someone suggests that you look at a beautiful rose, while I suggest you look at the beautiful way the muscles come into balanced action, are these not both acts of concentration?”*

instantly they are caught up again in the klesas, the pains of *Avidya*, *Asmita*, *Raga*, *Dvesa* and *Abhinivesa* which they fought so hard to conquer before. So beware! Throughout the four chapters of the *Yoga Sutras* the message is clear! Persevere in your practice!

## The Seer and the Seen

The final *sutra* of Chapter III describes the state of *Kaivalya* which will finally come if you persist in your practice. *III.56: Sattva purusayoh suddhi samye kaivalyam.*

When the exalted intelligence is as pure as the seer this is *Kaivalya*, perfect independence of the seer.

When is the seer freed from the seen? He is freed when the intelligence of *prakrti* (nature, the seen) is equal to the intelligence of the *purusa* (the Lord, the

seer). When there is no difference between the intelligence of the seer and the intelligence of the seen, then that is *Kaivalya*. That is the highest state in which there is perfect freedom and yet which is also the divine marriage of the Soul and Nature.

## KAIVALYA PADA

This definition of *Kaivalya* leads to *Kaivalya Pada*, the last chapter. How should the sadhaka who has achieved *Kaivalya* continue to live in the world? All desires for external things have gone: they are transformed into the desire towards the soul, to continue the inward journey. First Patanjali defines the five types of people who achieve divine powers; the difference between them lies in the way in which they reach it.

# Summer Sizzler

For maximum flexibility and versatility this summer, purchase one of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria's Summer Sizzler Passes. Get details at the reception desk.

Use four passes in a week or stretch it over the months of July and August! These passes are for experienced students ONLY.

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for summer classes.

IV.1: *Janma ausadhi mantra tapah samadhihijah siddhayah.*

The divine powers come by birth, herbs, incantation and scrupulousness in practice or meditation.

Some are born gifted, and some gain power through *mantra*. Patanjali also talks of drugs and the word he uses, *ausadha*—medicine, herbs—in this context refers to the use of psychedelic drugs that we are so familiar with in this century. Some attain powers through earnest practice and some through meditation but, as I have said, only those who are capable of absolute surrender to God without the slightest holding back can succeed in this last case. Of these five types, Patanjali only admits these last two to be real yogis; the rest he discards.

### The Energy of Nature

So what of *Kundalini*? Later texts speak of *Kundalini* or *Shakti*; in *Hatha Yoga*, *purusa* is called *Shiva* and *prakrti* is called *Shakti*, but Patanjali always refers to *purusa* and *prakrti*. He uses the word *prakrti* to describe how, for these people, the energy of nature flows abundantly in the human system. It does not happen for you or me. It will only happen when we reach that state. You have all been misinformed on that point and I am trying to correct that misunderstanding.

In IV.2 he says, *Jatyantara parinamah prakrtyapurat.*

In evolved souls the potential energies of nature flow in abundance to dynamically transform their consciousnesses.

So what should we do when this tremendous energy begins to flow? You have heard how many saints have become sinners. Even though they attained *Kaivalya* they fell victim to the energy they released. Patanjali gives a wonderful simile to illustrate how the yogi should deal with his energy to avoid this.

IV.3: *Nimittam aprayojakam prakrtinam varana bhedas tu tatah ksetrikavat.*

As a farmer builds embankments to

regulate the flow of water to his fields, so the yogi channels this abundance of nature's energies for the development of spiritual illumination. So, like the farmer, you must build banks so that the energy you gain is conserved, controlled and directed.

### Freedom In Action

When you have gained such control then you are capable of understanding the true nature of *Karma*. You will have heard that in the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said, "Yoga is skill in action (*Yogah karmasu kausalam*)."

This is the common translation which is widely quoted out of context. By itself it makes no sense. Let us see what Patanjali says about *Karma*.

IV.7: *Karmasuklakrsnam yoginas tri-vidham itaresam.*

For others, actions are of three types: white, black or a mixture of these; the yogi's actions are neither white, black nor mixed: they are pure.

This means that for us, we have good actions, bad actions and mixed actions. A mixed action, for example, is when we offer to help someone or give something to somebody and then keep changing our minds about whether we will or we will not. We are full of such things, but the yogi is not: he is free from these kinds of action. When he gains that freedom, then his actions become skillful, and not before! He is free from all motivations and so his action is free. He can study his actions and their effects dispassionately. That is how he gains the foreknowledge of both the short-term and long-term effects of his actions (111.23).

### Freedom from Time

Patanjali goes on to show the connection between Action and Time. Unlike many of today's philosophers, he does not discard the reality of past, present and future and, as far as I have read, he is the only person to have demonstrated the relationship between Time and Timelessness. He says that action is

dependent on time, but he also shows how the yogi must use this relationship between the two. That is why I say he was a great practitioner.

A moment is timeless and the movement of moments is Time. If the movement of moments goes back, it is past; and if the movement of moments goes forward, it is future. Do not allow the moment to move, but observe the moment as a moment without allowing the thought of movement. It is like the spokes of a moving wheel; if you can see the spokes you see the movement; if you do not, then you cannot tell where the movement begins or where the movement ends. Do you see how beautifully these sutras connect? When your action is free, then you are also free from Time. A moment is eternally present; it is neither past nor future. Therefore, a moment is virtuous while movement is non-virtuous because it creates oscillation in the brain. So if you can learn to observe the moment and live in it, if you can avoid being caught in the movement of moments and instead be caught in the sequence of moments then you have conquered Time. Then you are beyond motives, you have conquered your actions and all your action is skillful!

Then when the seer is freed from time and action, when he understands the difference between Moment and movement, the consciousness itself loses its power. It says to itself, "Until now, because I was connected to my actions and connected to Time, I thought I was supreme; but now I realize that I was just reflecting the light of the soul." When you are stable in Moment, the *citta* is stilled; and because of that, the *citta* finds its true depth. This is the spiritual equivalent of the force of gravity. When the *citta* is still and quiet it is inexorably drawn towards the soul.

### Perseverance in Practice: The Ultimate Samadhi

However, breaks may still occur in this new state of consciousness as a result of

impressions from previous experience (IV.27). When these fissures appear and the *citta* again beings to fluctuate and move away from the soul, then the sadhaka must intensify his *sadhana*. As you see, Patanjali is consistent throughout all four chapters: even at these heights continued practice is essential. Only when the fissures stop appearing, when all the subliminal impressions have been exhausted, then does the search come to an end. There is no need for any further searching because the *Atman* is everywhere. The seeker discovers that he is the seer. The seer acts as seer, object and instrument of seeing. At the end of his quest for the soul, the seeker discovers that he is the seer. The seer acts as seer, object and instrument of seeing. At the end of his quest for the soul, the seeker discovers that he himself, as the seer, is the goal.

In the *Yoga Sutras* two terms are used to describe this ultimate state: in chapter I Patanjali calls it *nirbija Samadhi*, and in chapter IV he calls it *dharma megha*

*Samadhi* (IV.29), literally “*dharma-pouring Samadhi*.” These two titles are like the two sides of a coin; they are two ways of viewing the same phenomenon. How can we explain this “*dharma-pouring Samadhi*.” In England sometimes it is cloudy for 10 days at a time. You see neither sun nor rain and you begin to get gloomy. Is this not true? You ask, Why does it not rain? Why can we not see the sun? It is the divine duty, the *dharma* of cloud to pour down rain, but still they do not pour. Such English weather is like our brains. They form clouds and sometimes we allow those clouds to stay for day after day, obstructing the sun within us. So do not let those clouds settle! Keep the inner clarity, the light of the intelligence striking the entire frontier of your body! Your *citta* fluctuates, it has its rhythms, like the moon which waxes 15 days and wanes 15 days in every month. But the *Atman*, the Self, is a sun that never fades. So when this fluctuating part of you, the *citta*, rests in the sun of the Self then the clouds pour down their

rain, the clouds disappear and the light of the intelligence of the Self shines everywhere in a sky of perfect clarity. Then you have conquered the *gunas*—the qualities of nature—you have conquered *purusa* and that is the end of Yoga.

That is what everybody is seeking and everyone will experience that state, if not today, then tomorrow and if not tomorrow, then next week, next month, next year. Even if it takes several lives, everyone will find this. That is what Patanjali, the great master, the great practitioner, says. That process is what we are all involved in. And as I have said, casual practice brings casual results, temperamental practice brings temperamental results but total practice brings total results. So my friends, this is the way to develop the life of Consciousness. Begin with the body because the body is the covering of the Self. Just as you do with a house that has been shut up: you open all the doors and windows so that the stale air is blown out and the fresh air may come in.



## Student Intensive

*Practice (abhyasa) is the art of learning that which has to be learned through the cultivation of disciplined action.*

*Practice is a generative force of transformation or progress in yoga.*

— B.K.S. Iyengar

**With Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler**

**September 3 - 7, 2007, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm**

Learn how to establish and deepen your practice.

Prerequisite: Level 2 Iyengar Yoga experience

Lauren and Ty are certified Iyengar Yoga teachers who bring enthusiasm, dedication and humor to this five-day intensive. There will be two hours of asana including yoga kurunta, a timed practice, an introduction to pranayama and philosophical and spiritual discussions.

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

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

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



In the very same way, maintain your practice so that your body, your mind, your consciousness and your true self do not become polluted, obscured and dark. Throw out the pollution, and cast off the five coverings of the self one by one, the skeletal body, the physiological body, the mental body, the intellectual body until Self shines through. "*Tada drastuh svarupe avsthana!*" You are all inside your Self! An indivisible state of existence!

### Preparing for the Light

I hope you have grasped the points I was trying to make, because the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali are an extremely difficult subject. But they are also extremely important! If you do not have the preparation they provide you, what will happen when the light of the Self comes? You will fall sick! Remember the story in

*"When the citta is still and quiet it is inexorably drawn towards the soul."*

the *Gita* when Arjuna asks Lord Krishna, "I want to see if you really are the Lord of the Universe. Show me your true form, not the pictures of the imagination you have used 'til now, but your pure original nature." But as soon as Krishna showed his true form to Arjuna. Arjuna's eyes were not strong enough to look upon the divinity. He saw the vision of his own cousins in Krishna's mouth and he called out, "Stop, go back to your usual form, I cannot stand it, I am dying! Only if you give me the eyes of God can I see this and survive!"

Remember also what Patanjali says, "*Heyam duhkham anagatam,*" you do not know what pain lies in wait for you. If

you are not strong enough, the joy of the divine light can also be unbearable. Then people say, "It happened to me in my meditation! It happened to me! I am so frightened. I don't know what to do!" They cannot cope and so they become mentally ill. How many meditators have become schizophrenic? Have you not heard of these cases? So even in spiritual practice be careful. Develop the strength to bear this and work to keep that strength. That is why *asanas* and *pranayama* must be practised regularly so that the nervous system and the willpower keep strong enough to bear this divine light. And so carry on. God bless you. ॐ

# SUMMER SADHANA

*Sadhana* is a Sanskrit term which means dedicated practice or quest.

**July 9 – 14, 2007**

**This summer we offer a six day Sadhana with Robin Cantor.**

The six day Sadhana is the perfect opportunity to further develop and deepen your practice.

**Fees: \$90.00 + GST IYCV members  
\$99.00 + GST non-members**

**Registration NOW open.**



## CAN YOU HELP?

Are you able to provide a private bedroom and a breakfast for a yogi during either one or both of the Teacher Training Intensives?

**July 9 - 14, 2007  
August 6 - 10, 2007**

If so, please fill out a form at the front desk or contact Robin Cantor at [robincantor@telus.net](mailto:robincantor@telus.net) (382-4111).

Or, if you are out of town during this period consider having one of the out of town yogis housesit for you.

The billet and breakfast rate is \$35.00 per day.

## Response to Reflections

Dear Shirley,

At breakfast this morning, I read your March-April "Reflections," which I enjoyed, in part because it made me laugh. I'd gotten up to a freezing cold house. There was enough wind whistling through the wooden window frames in my study to blow out a candle. During *pranayama*, I'd tried to dump my anger and lighten up. That failed, so still feeling cross and rather sorry for myself, I thumped down to the basement and split kindling and split knotty blocks of wood and lit a fire in our cranky, wood-burning furnace.

My husband has been pretending it's now spring and that we don't have to use

the furnace. In true Canadian style, this has not been properly debated; I've added layers of fleece and thicker socks and tried to persuade myself it's interesting to find out what it must have been like for the First Nations who lived thousands of years on this coast in draughty houses.

Before *pranayama*, I'd gone out to cut some daffodils that had toppled over so I'd have fresh flowers. Even though it basically felt no colder outside than inside, the wind blew my robe open around my bare legs and I had to run hot water over my fingers when I came in.

It was quite satisfying to whack the axe down with enough umphff that the

split pieces jumped away from the block. I remembered my mother saying that her mother would split wood when she got angry.

Then I sat down and read your childhood memories about cold houses and chillblains. And, I did lighten up. It all seemed a coherent little lesson. At that point, my husband woke up and came down into the kitchen, rubbing his hands and saying, "I'm going to light the furnace this morning." After telling him I'd already done it, I read him a couple of sentences from your piece, and he laughed too.

love, jane



## Take a Walk in the Footsteps of *Patanjali*

**B.K.S Iyengar Yoga Retreat | August 22 - 26, 2007**  
**With Shirley Daventry French and Leslie Hogle**

***Let Shirley & Leslie be your guides at this spiritual retreat centre  
on beautiful Salt Spring Island off Canada's west coast.***

Immerse yourself in daily  
*Pranayama* & *Asana* practice.  
Be involved in lively discussion  
through group participation into  
the ancient teachings of the  
Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.

### **SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH**

is a senior student of B.K.S. Iyengar.  
She has studied at the Ramamani  
Memorial Institute in Pune many

times, most recently in October  
2005. She is the founder of the  
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, B.C.

**LESLIE HOGYA** has been studying Yoga  
since 1972. She has travelled to India  
seven times. She most recently studied  
with B.K.S. Iyengar in Pune in December,  
2006. She holds a Senior Intermediate I  
level of certification and is part of the  
assessors team for Canada.

### **FEES:**

\$740.00 + GST IYCV members  
– shared accommodation  
\$680.00 + GST IYCV members  
– camping (must supply own equipment)  
\$640.00 + GST IYCV members - commuter  
Non-members add \$50.00 to the fees

### **Registration NOW open.**

A \$200.00 deposit required to hold  
your space and the full payment  
is due June 1, 2007. After June 1, 2007  
the \$200.00 deposit is non-refundable.

One scholarship is available. Please apply  
to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria.

To register, drop in to or phone  
the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria  
202-919 Fort Street,  
Victoria, B.C. V8K 3K3

(250) 386-YOGA (9642)  
[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

# Why Should Children Practice Yoga?

By Adia Kapoor

Children need physical activity. It is important for their healthy development for them to move their bodies to maintain good health, proper joint functioning, good circulation and smooth digestion. But in today's busy world, we lead much more sedentary lives than ever before. Children, especially urban, western children, are much less active than they used to be, spending more time in front of the television or computer or being driven in a car or bus. It becomes more and more difficult for children to obtain the exercise they need.

In school, children are encouraged to take up physical activities that are often competitive and vigorous, such as team sports or dance, which, if done improperly, can have detrimental effects on children's minds and bodies. The soft, vulnerable bodies of growing children can be worked too hard or in the wrong way, resulting in hip and spine problems later, and the emotional strain of competitive activities and peer pressure in team environments may be difficult for some children to manage. Children are not always encouraged to pursue physical activity in a natural, fun, and healthy way.

It is for these reasons that yoga is an excellent exercise for children, suitable for any age and physical ability. Nowadays there has been some controversy about teaching yoga in schools. However, as any practitioner of yoga would agree, the physical and mental benefits for children of practicing yoga *asanas* far outweigh the concerns a parent may have. As Guruji writes in the introduction to *Yoga for Children* by Swati and Rajiv Chanchani, "nature has gifted children with the ability to quickly recover from injuries. Hence, teachers need not be afraid while teaching them *asanas*.... If children are made to perform these *asanas* with different combinations and permutations, they get inspired to do more and more.... Through yoga, it is possible to transform skillfully their vanity and competitive



spirit into useful forms of energy. Yoga channelises their thoughts and makes them responsible citizens of the world.... For children, who are custodians of each nation in particular and the whole world at large, I feel yoga is the essential product of the twenty-first century to lead them to perfect physical health and mental well-being."

Yoga works the whole body and mind; promotes strength, flexibility, good coordination and posture; and teaches children how to relax, concentrate, and be quiet and still. In our increasingly busy and stressful lives, yoga is a gentle, noncompetitive form of exercise. It can be practiced by children of varying ages and physical abilities without anyone feeling inadequate or inferior. Yoga is not about attaining perfect poses or "being the best"

—it is about learning to do what is right for your own body. Success is not measured against others, but against yourself. As well, yoga is one of the few forms of exercise that parents and children can enjoy together and profit equally from the experience.

Yoga helps children learn about the body and how it works so they can develop good sense of their own bodies—a good foundation for their well-being that will last throughout their lives. Geetaji states that by exposing children to *asanas* at a young age, parents are laying a good foundation for their future exploration and practice of this vast subject. Yoga *asanas* are well-suited to children, and can be adapted easily for children as they can be adapted for bodies of all ages and physical abilities. As *asanas* are also easily demonstrated and repeated, children can learn yoga by observation and imitation—their primary method of learning. Properly taught and practiced, yoga *asanas* provide children with sound physical and mental health and lead to balanced growth.

Guruji tells us that children aged eight years and above are fit to practice yoga, though children as young as five can be introduced to some *asanas* playfully and casually. Ty Chandler teaches two classes at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria for children—one for kids aged 10 to 14 and one for teenagers.

*...there has been some controversy about teaching yoga in schools.*

Wendy Boyer also teaches a family yoga class, for parents and children. As well, there are a number of excellent books on yoga for children if you are not able to attend a class. The Yoga Centre library has a few copies. ॐ

*Yoga For Children* by Mary Stewart and Kathy Phillips

*Yoga for Children: A Complete Illustrated Guide to Yoga* by Swati and Rajiv Chanchani

Family Yoga – Thursdays from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Ty's Yoga Kids (ages 10-14) – Fridays from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Teen Yoga (ages 14+) – Mondays from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

ADIA HAS BEEN A STUDENT AT THE IYCV SINCE 2001.

ADIA IS A NEWSLETTER EDITOR.

**IYVC will be closed  
July 1 - 8  
for holidays and maintenance.**

Evening classes resume July 9.  
Daytime classes resume July 15.

(Limited daytime classes during  
the Teacher Training Intensives.)

## Scheduled Practice SPACE for IYCV Members

Practice times can be variable in the summer.  
Please call the office,  
386-YOGA (9642)  
to confirm.

Please note:

- The supervising teacher is not there to teach or lead a practice.
- Bring your own practice sequence or find a sequence in one of the available books.
- The door may be locked; just knock loudly.



IYENGAR YOGA

## Teacher Training Intensives

**July 9 - 14, 2007**

**With Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus**

Introductory I & II Syllabi for uncertified  
Iyengar Yoga teachers

This six-day course will build your understanding of teaching Iyengar Yoga based on the foundation of a good practice. Peer teaching, *pranayama*, philosophy and anatomy will be included. Leslie and Ann are experienced teachers. Both have Senior Intermediate I certification and are qualified IYAC assessors. They are involved in teacher training in Victoria as well as outlying British Columbia and Yukon communities.

Preference will be given to members of IYAC and those planning to do their assessment in the near future.

**August 6 - 10, 2007**

**With Shirley Daventry French**

Intermediate Junior and Senior Syllabi  
for certified Iyengar Yoga teachers

This in-depth course offers the opportunity for certified Iyengar Yoga teachers to work with a master teacher and prepare for assessment at the Junior Intermediate I, II & III, and Senior Intermediate I levels.

Shirley 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.

As in previous years, Iyengar Yoga teachers from other countries are also invited to apply. IYAC members will get priority.

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### Fees for each course:

\$560.00 CDN + GST IYCV members  
\$600.00 CDN + GST non-members

*A deposit of \$150.00 CDN will reserve a place. Full payment is due June 2, 2007. If you cancel by June 2, 2007, your deposit minus \$50.00 will be refunded. After June 2, 2007, refunds will be given only if your space can be filled.*

### Registration now open.

To register, drop in to or phone  
the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria  
202-919 Fort Street  
Victoria, B.C. V8K 3K3  
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)  
[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

**Billeting available** during the Teacher Training Intensives.

\$35.00 per day includes private bedroom and breakfast.

Contact: Robin Cantor at [robincantor@telus.net](mailto:robincantor@telus.net) or 250-382-4111.



# Yoga in Asia

## *An Interview with Marlene Miller*

By Adia Kapoor

### **How did this trip come about?**

This trip came about through my interest and desire to practice and study at the Institute with Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar, Geeta and Prashant. I applied and was given a place to go to the Institute two years prior to going. Trips to Pune are self-organized, and each one of us make our own applications, flights, and accommodation arrangement.

### **What was the purpose of your trip?**

The purpose of my trip was to attend general classes at Ramamani Iyengar Yoga Memorial Institute (RIYMI) in Pune, India for the month of November 2006, traveling through Hong Kong.

### **When did you travel and for how long?**

I left Victoria in mid-October 2006 and returned to Victoria December 6th.

### **Where were you teaching/studying?**

Initially I had opportunity to teach for Linda Shevloff at her Centre, the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Hong Kong, on my way to and from India. Two weeks prior to the original departure Linda called from Hong Kong to ask if I would be able to come a few days earlier to teach on her behalf at the "Yoga In Asia Conference" being held in Guangzhou (formerly Canton), China. Fortunately, I was able to get the extra time from my day job, change flights, and get a visa for China. These arrangements went incredibly smoothly. It quickly became apparent this was meant to happen. So I taught classes at Linda's Centre in Hong Kong and the conference in Guangzhou, China the last weekend in October.

The study and practice I was pursuing was to attend classes, and to observe and assist in Medical classes at RIYMI.

### **Please tell us a little about your experience.**

This was my seventh trip to RIYMI and it was a very good experience. The trip started with teaching in Guangzhou and

*The Chinese students were very keen, open and receptive to the teaching of Iyengar Yoga.*



*Canadians in Pune in November 2007: Sharon Pickle, Ottawa/Gatineau ON; Barbara Young, Ottawa/Gatineau ON; Susanne McAdam, Montreal QC; Christiane Lajoie, Montreal QC; Marlene Miller, Victoria BC; Nancy Searing, Victoria BC; Patricia Fernandes, BC; Athena George, Saturna Island BC.*

Hong Kong, then on to Pune. I arrived from Victoria in Hong Kong early Thursday evening where Michael Shevloff met me. Fortunately, Michael works in Guangzhou, so on Friday morning we caught the 7:00 am train, and he guided me through the underground transportation network and trains. I was met in Guangzhou by the Yoga In Asia Conference organizers, garlanded, and taken to the hotel site!

It was a four day conference where I taught four two-hour classes of approximately eighty students each. The Chinese students were very keen, open and receptive to the teaching of Iyengar Yoga. Several had very flexible bodies. The teaching was on building a stable foundation. It was a very unique teaching opportunity and experience to introduce Iyengar Yoga to so many at one time. I had observed other instructors prior to my teaching and discovered the instructions were being translated into Chinese. I realized that it was very good to have been trained to be clear, succinct and to the point in giving instructions!

At the conference were teachers from other yoga traditions. During meal times there was opportunity to be engaged in stimulating discussions. The conference concluded on the Monday afternoon and I returned to Hong Kong.

The Centre in Hong Kong is a fully-equipped studio within a half hour walking distance from Linda's home. The walk is through parks, areas of commerce and wonderful fresh food markets amongst very tall sky scrapers that rise seemingly effortlessly out of the sides of the very steep mountainous island terrain of Hong Kong.

I had previously met Hong Kong students, Kathy, Jessica, and George, as they had come to teacher training intensives in Victoria and were at an assessment in Edmonton. They were very welcoming and receptive to my teaching. Also, they were

very generous with their time giving the opportunity of getting to know them better. Linda also arranged with another of her students, Angela, to be a resource and guide to the area. Angela is a proponent of maintaining the historic buildings, homes, and sites in a city that aspires to ultra-modernistic commercialism along with great engineering and architectural feats in building accomplishments. I accompanied her one day as she went about her errands. We went to an older part of Hong Kong where she showed and described what developers were proposing and building, and how this displaces and moves the elderly from their families and friends.

Nancy Searing met up with me a couple of days later. We had a day together to explore Hong Kong, then it was on to Pune for the month of November.

Following time in China and Hong Kong, it was on to Pune. In November the weather was a temperate twenty degrees Celsius most of the time, but we did have a few unseasonable rains that nicely cleared the air.

I shared accommodations with Nadine from Arizona and Nancy Searing from Victoria. We had the domestic help of Shantabai, who did our cleaning and clothes washing along with grocery shopping and preparing very delicious meals. We all wanted to take her home with us!

Classes at Ramanani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute started on November 1st. I attended daily classes taught by Geeta and Prashant. On Wednesday morning the Ladies' Class was led by Sunita, who was guided by her father, Guruji Iyengar. Also, I arranged to observe and assist in the medical classes that are instructed and guided by Geetaji. This time I had the good fortune to assist Patricia Fernandez of Ottawa, now of Vancouver, throughout the month. Geeta designed a practice for Patricia to follow, and instructed Barbara Young (of

*Angela is a proponent of maintaining the historic buildings, homes, and sites in a city that aspires to ultra modernistic commercialism along with great engineering and architectural feats in building accomplishments.*

Ottawa) and myself in how to assist and support her as she went through the practice. It was a wonderful learning opportunity and privilege to be able to help and observe Patricia.

As well, Geeta gave me a practice to deal with tinnitus. The *asana* focused on tightness and restricted movement in my left shoulder and also with neck tension. Throughout the month I followed the order and adaptations of the *asana* during the daily practice times. It was great to have the time to focus on the problem. As a result my shoulder and neck released and this relieved most of the tinnitus. At home now I incorporate these *asana* into my daily practice. Unfortunately, I am not able to devote as much time to my practice due to commitments of full time work, teaching yoga and other yoga administration duties, thus progress has slowed as a result. I am very grateful to have been taught and guided by Geetaji, and to now have a practice that continues to bring relief.

The travel to Pune, via Hong Kong and China, in October and November 2006 was a very interesting and rich learning experience. ॐ

### Corrections to Previous Newsletter Issue

The editors wish to apologize for the two copy edits made to last issue's "Reflections".

The first sentence of this paragraph as published reads: "The Americans were conducting nuclear bomb tests in Alaska and British Columbia." This statement is followed by a new sentence: "We were told that we would be recipients of radioactive fallout." Knowing full well that the Americans have never conducted atomic bomb tests in B.C., Shirley would never make such a statement. What she wrote was: "The Americans were conducting nuclear bomb tests in Alaska and in British Columbia we were being told that we would be recipients of the radio active fallout."

The second embarrassing correction comes towards the end in a paragraph beginning, "The other day while reading the chapter on "Theoretical Background" ...." As published it reads "I am sure this happened because of the prominent role the devil of speech has played and continues to play in my life." As written it reads: "I am sure this happened because of the prominent role the *devi* of speech has played and continues to play in my life." *Devi* is a sanskrit word.

Our deepest apologizes to Shirley for these errors!

# Studying the Sutras

Roger Champagne



A variety of texts that examine and comment on Patanjali's Sutras.

ROGER CHAMPAGNE IS A RETIRED TEACHER WHO HAS RECENTLY MOVED FROM TORONTO TO VICTORIA WITH HIS WIFE, GLENDA. AS WELL AS BEING MEMBERS OF THE IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA, GLENDA TEACHES YOGA AND VOICE AND ROGER IS A PRACTICING MEMBER OF THE SOUTH VANCOUVER ISLAND POTTERS' GUILD.

*The good thing about yoga is that it not only allows the pattern to present itself, but it also builds the ability to deal with it.*

Lately, just before the lights go out in our house, you might hear these words: “So are we reading the *Sutras* tonight?” Over the past month we have been attempting to establish a regular late evening practice of reading and discussing the *Sutras of Patanjali*. Although we had been practicing *asanas* for about 10 years, my connection with the *Sutras* had been limited to references made by a teacher during a class or a workshop. However, the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria often preceded classes with a *Sutra* reading and discussion, and my interest was piqued. Here we were in a new city, with new friends, new teachers and new challenges—a study of the *Sutras* seemed like a timely fit.

Our first step towards this lofty goal was to sort through our library and look at the texts we had that might be part of this work. We found four texts, including Mr. Iyengar's, *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. Most evenings, (we did try for every evening) we read a single *Sutra*, both in English and in Sanskrit, and discussed the comments. The weeks went by and we were making progress through chapters.

As much as we enjoyed the reading together we began to notice a few other

things. Sometimes one or more of the texts differed in their translation or at other times in the interpretation, resulting in a different meaning. Discussion, rereading, and checking back to a previous aphorism were required, so reading several texts wasn't resulting in more clarity. On the contrary, using several texts seemed to add more layers and contributed to our confusion. For this reason we have decided to finish this tour of the *Sutras* with B.K.S. Iyengar's book, *Light on the Sutras of Patanjali*, referring to the other texts if we feel a need.

As we continue with this nightly ritual, I am beginning to notice the transformative power of this practice. A look at the official site of B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga says this about *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*: “these *Sutras* are the most profound and enlightening study of the human psyche, and they show how through yoga practice we can transform ourselves, gain mastery over our mind and overcome obstacles to our spiritual evolution.”

I remember one moment of clarity when I managed to find the words that simplified the idea expressed in aphorism 11.19: The *gunas* generate their characteristic divisions and energies in the seer. Their stages are dis-

*"these Sutras are the most profound and enlightening study of the human psyche..."*

— B.K.S. Iyengar

tinguishable and nondistinguishable, differentiable and nondifferentiable.

I suddenly understood that the mind and the senses act as agents of what Patanjali calls the seer. However the mind and the senses often act on their own behalf. They get very attached to everything they see, smell, hear and taste. With so much clutter in the way, the seer says to the senses and to the mind, "When you look at things that way I can't see!" Sometimes the moments of clarity come like this and sometimes they don't.

We are more comfortable with the fact that clarity is not always forthcoming

and more easily say, "O.K., Let's leave it at that for now and go on." I am beginning to see that the different elements of our practice are not so different after all. They all require regular practice and a similar open-minded attitude. We need to let go of the outcome and just do the work, and let the practices do their work from within. What we don't understand or can't do today, after sincere effort, may come tomorrow or the next day. Change within is slow and subtle, and patience with ourselves is very important. So we continue. ॐ

#### References

*Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*; B.K.S. Iyengar; Thorsons

*The Essence of Yoga*; Bernard Bouanchard; Rudra Press

*Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*; interpreted by Mukunda Stiles

*The Heart of Yoga*; T.K.V. Desikachar; Inner Traditions International

## Yoga in the news

### Leslie Hoggia

Our centre was featured in an article in *En Route Magazine*, Air Canada's magazine that is put in every seat on every flight in their April issue. Thanks to Shelora Sheldon who takes classes here and who wrote the article.

We were featured in the local Arthritis society newsletter. An interview with Leslie Hoggia was quoted extensively in the article. *Vanity Fair* ran an extensive article with photos of the world's top yoga teachers. B.K.S. Iyengar was put at the top of the article. Check out their web site for more photos. All these articles are on our bulletin boards.

**Come and stabilize yourself for the autumn!**



## Refresh Yourself for the Fall

An all levels workshop with Ann Kilbertus  
September 7 - 8, 2007

This workshop will offer a series of *asanas* to prepare the body and mind for the change of season and upcoming fall term. Ann will be drawing inspiration from her recent journey to India in February 2007.

Friday, September 7, 2007, 5:00 – 7:00 pm  
Saturday, September 8, 2007, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm  
Fees: \$83.00 + GST IYCV members  
\$93.00 + GST non-members

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$30.00 cancellation fee.

Registration opens:  
May 28, 2007 for IYCV members,  
June 4, 2007 for non-members

To register, drop in to or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria.  
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8K 3K3  
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)  
[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)



## A Thank-you

### *The Newsletter Committee*

After the July/August issue Nancy Searing is stepping down from the newsletter committee and her role as ads and announcement person. Her work helped make the newsletter accurate with ads, lists of upcoming events and so on. We thank her for her dedication and commitment to this task. Beginning September ads will be organized by Jo Anna Hope with Nancy assisting.



# Heart of Yoga Workshop

Glenda Hingley

What is the heart of yoga? Where does it reside? How could I begin to answer these questions from the sidelines, “on the injured reserve list,” as my athletic husband says?

Shirley Daventry French has posed the first two questions to us before, all the while asserting that workshop names are somewhat arbitrary. “We have to call them something.”

What I saw from my perch on the *setu-bandha* bench was not new to me. The clear, concise instruction, the methodical working through the poses, linking smoothly step-by-step, are all familiar to anyone who has been to a class or workshop with Shirley. What I could see from that vantage point was the dedication of teacher and students, a willingness to work “to capacity” and delve into areas of “newness”—that wonderful euphemism for sensations not always pleasant!

After a series of variations on standing poses, Shirley provided the students an opportunity to go to the full, classical poses and see what might be new in their pose, and also to note if some old things were perhaps gone. So many of us are willing to learn more things, to collect more “points” of the poses and mark out new territory in our bodies. Letting go of the old, the comfortable, the safe, can be a challenge, too.

This, perhaps, is a glimpse of the heart of yoga—a willingness and eagerness to search, to stretch more than just the body and welcome change, whether internal or external.

*The known is limited but the unknown is vast. Go to the unknown more and more.* — B.K.S. Iyengar ॐ

GLEND A IS A STUDENT AND TEACHER OF IYENGAR YOGA.TEN YEARS OF STUDY HAVE GIVEN HER THE ABILITY TO WORK THROUGH INJURY AS WELL AS THE PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE TO ENDURE IT.



Uttitha hasta Padangustasana on the trestle.



*What I could see from that vantage point was the dedication of teacher and students, a willingness to work “to capacity” and delve into areas of “newness”—that wonderful euphemism for sensations not always pleasant!*

# The Relevance of a Yama and Niyama to My Yoga Practice

Charles Campbell

January 27, 2007

The alarm rings at 6:05 am. I reach over and hit the snooze button. Just five more minutes and I'll get up for yoga practice. Those five minutes are spent in anticipation of another blast from the alarm and stories start to build in my head about why I shouldn't get up. Maybe I had a bad night's sleep. Maybe Isobel has a cough and I was up several times in the night to attend to her. Maybe this was my first good night's sleep in a week; do I want to cut it short? After the five minutes are up the alarm goes off again. Maybe this time I resolve to get up, or maybe I hit the snooze button again, initiating another round of deliberations.

What is the truth of my situation? I am tired, yes. Will I be less tired if I stay in bed and ignore the alarm? Unlikely. Will I feel better that day? The answer is usually no, yet in the early morning, after a poor night's sleep, I still tell myself that staying in bed is the best option. I don't always win the battle to get out of bed. But I'm not always lying to myself. There are those mornings when that extra sleep is what I need.

Finding the truth in my practice seems to be about finding the places where my mind starts to tell me stories that depart from the truth, or more frequently uses partial truths to build stories to avoid what is difficult. The hard part is stepping back to observe that, while still being sensitive to my real needs and limitations.

At times my practice goes back and forth between applying too much rigour and discipline, to not enough. I will hit the mat hard every day for a week, insisting that I push myself. I hold *sirsasanas* longer and do too many forward bends. But in the

end I have pushed too hard and the pendulum swings back the other way. *Rajasic, tamasic, rajasic.*

Not surprisingly this is a pattern that constantly appears in other aspects of my life. The good thing about yoga is that it not only allows the pattern to present itself, but it also builds the ability to deal with it. I can see the pattern more clearly, and when I'm telling myself a story based on a partial truth part of me is watching. I'm also developing a better sensitivity to my needs and a truer sense of my abilities. I know if I really need that extra half-hour of sleep. Most mornings I get up.

## Santosa

I'm not a person naturally prone to contentment and behind my easy going manner, it is often resignation, not contentment that gets me to accept how things are and get on with my day. In fact I probably confuse the two, seeing resignation as a way out of discontent. Of course it is a cop out. Resignation requires no action. I'm resigned to having tight hamstrings, therefore why make an effort with forward bends.

Contentment seems to be a bit of a paradox. True contentment seems only possible with our spiritual growth and our drive to deal with our discontents pushes this forward. Patanjali says as much in the *sutras*, saying that it is the cycle of happiness and unhappiness in the world that pushes us to rise above it. I'm not happy with my hamstrings; let me do some forward extensions to improve.

The key seems to be to recognise the things that are limiting us and to both accept them as our present reality and work to remove them. We have to be content with our actions. Sometimes I manage to achieve this. I'm content with my work and haven't judged myself over my limitation.

Yoga helps reveal the light inside us. When I'm working to reveal that light I'm content. ॐ

Satya – *Where is the truth in my yoga practice?*



IYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA

# 2007 calendar

## JULY

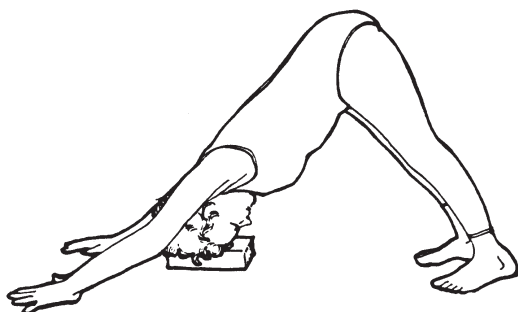
- 1-8 IYCV Closed
- 9-14 Teacher Training Intensive –  
Introductory Levels with Leslie Hogya  
and Ann Kilbertus
- 9-14 Sadhana with Robin Cantor

## AUGUST

- 6-10 Teacher Training Intensive –  
Junior Intermediate Levels  
with Shirley Daventry French
- 22-26 Footsteps of Patanjali Retreat  
at Saltspring Centre with Shirley  
Daventry French and Leslie Hogya

## SEPTEMBER

- 3-7 Student Intensive with Lauren Cox  
and Ty Chandler
- 4-9 IYCV Registration week
- 7-8 Refresh Yourself for the Fall  
workshop with Ann Kilbertus
- 28 Sutra Workshop with Shirley Daventry  
French
- 29-30 Going Deeper with Shirley  
Daventry French



## OCTOBER

- 19-21 Introductory I/II Assessment,  
Toronto, ON

## NOVEMBER

- 16-18 Chris Saudek Workshop
- 16-18 Junior Intermediate II Assessment,  
Vancouver, BC

## DECEMBER

- 17-21 Sadhana with Corrine Lowen

# Thank you

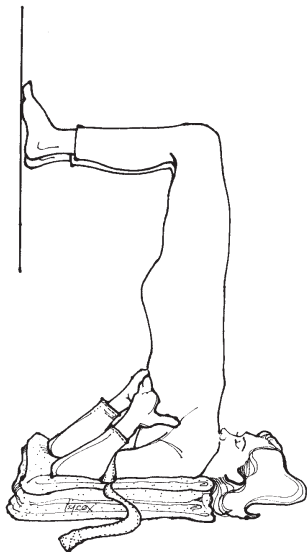
**Rosemary Barritt, aka The Easter Bunny,**  
washed all the straps over the Easter break.

**Stacey Frank and Darlene Kakoske**  
helped with taking props to Salt Spring Island  
for the retreat.

### *Newsletter submissions*

**Written:** Digital format is preferred—Word file or other files compatible with Microsoft Word, plain text files or emails. Hand written or printed submissions will be accepted; however, they require transposing (typing or scanning) to digital format by the newsletter committee before publication.

**Photos:** Prints or digital images. Digital files must be high resolution (minimum 600 dpi) for adequate reproduction. Acceptable formats are JPG (choose: no compression, high quality, large file), TIFF or EPS. Preferred: save as grayscale EPS files, with no adjustments, sizing or cropping.



Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria membership expires  
on December 31, each year.

The membership subscription fee is \$40.00 CDN  
(+ 6% GST for Canadians) and is renewable each January.

**Membership benefits include:**

- 5% discount on all classes
- free practice times at the IYCV
- 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.

# Time to Renew!

*To renew your membership, please fill in the form below and send to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria.*



ITYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA  
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:

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

**(250) 386-YOGA (9642)**

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

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Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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

☐ Receipt required.





IYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA

N E W S L E T T E R  
S E P T E M B E R / O C T O B E R 2 0 0 7



*July Teacher Training Intensive taught by Leslie Hogya and Ann Kilbertus*

*Yoga teaches us how to infuse our movements with intelligence,  
transforming them into action. Action is movement with intelligence.*

*– B.K.S Iyengar*

# The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

with Shirley Daventry French

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 the 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

6:30 - 8:30 pm Friday, September 28, 2007

Fee: \$35 + GST for IYCV members, \$40 + GST for non-members

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

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

# Going Deeper

An Iyengar Yoga Workshop  
with Shirley Daventry French

September 29 - 30, 2007



**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.

The founder of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, Shirley has been the driving force in making the Victoria Iyengar Yoga community one of the strongest and most viable in Canada. Students from across Canada and around the world have studied with her. In this special weekend, students have the opportunity to learn from her in a workshop setting.

## **Saturday, September 29:**

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

Registration opens:

July 15 for IYCV members  
July 22 for non-members

## **Sunday, September 30:**

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

Fees:

\$115.00 + GST  
for IYCV members  
\$125.00 + GST  
for non-members  
\$80.00 + GST  
for observers

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

[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

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a \$50.00 cancellation fee.



## ASSESSMENT DATES

October 19-21, 2007	Toronto Introductory I/II
November 16-18, 2007	Vancouver Jr. Intermediate II
February 29, March 1-2, 2008	Iyengar Yoga School of Toronto Jr. Intermediate I
April 18-21, 2008	Yoga Centre Toronto Jr. Intermediate II/III
June 20-23, 2008	London Introductory I/II
October 17-20, 2008	Saskatoon Introductory I/II
October 17-20, 2008	Iyengar Yoga Centre Victoria Jr. Intermediate I

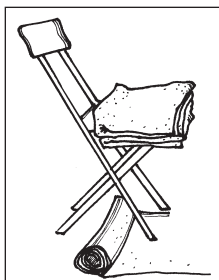
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by Jane Munro

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- 13 **Fear of Fear:  
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- 15 **Ty's Yoga Kids**

- 17 **Notes from my Pune Visit**  
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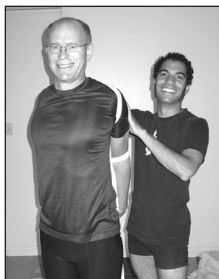
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## Newsletter Advertising Policy (Adopted February 20, 2004)

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

1. Advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the newsletter of the IYCV.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar Yoga
3. Priority given to advertisements regarding:
  - IYCV events
  - IYCV sponsored events
  - IYAC events

## COURSE REGISTRATION:

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

Phone:  
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

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



## IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA NEWSLETTER

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IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA  
SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated  
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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,  
drawings, information or suggestions to  
the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter:  
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3.  
For information on activities and events,  
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The editor/newsletter committee hold the right  
to publish or edit all articles at their discretion.

By Shirley Daventry French



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

*Mistaking the transient for the permanent, the impure for the pure, pain for pleasure, and that which is not the self for the self: all this is called lack of spiritual knowledge, avidya.*

– B.K.S. Iyengar, *Light on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras; II-5*

It is a time of turmoil: throughout the world, across the nation, locally and personally. Earlier this year I spent a month away with my husband and twelve year-old granddaughter, fulfilling a promise made when she was three years old to take her to Asia to ride an elephant. That we did—twice, along with much else. It was a wonderful time, culminating in her participation in a yoga workshop I gave in Hong Kong on our way back to Canada.

During the three weeks we spent in Thailand, she had asked frequently to practise yoga with me. However this presented some difficulties, because daytime temperatures went as high as 40 degrees, so I wanted to practise in the relative cool of early morning. This was not a problem for me as I am used to rising early. My granddaughter, on the other hand, on the verge of becoming a teenager, sleeps late given half a chance. Generally, by the time she got up I had finished my practice and was ready for breakfast!

Throughout the trip she asked many questions about yoga, so when we were in Hong Kong it was not surprising she was interested in seeing the studio where I was going to teach, but she wanted more. She wanted to take the class. I was reluctant at first because I did not want her presence to distract me or the other students. We were staying with friends, Michael and Linda Shevloff, and

it was Linda who invited me to teach in her studio. On the first night of the workshop Michael and Derek were going to a jazz concert, so Adriana would have to come with Linda and me to the studio. “Can I take the class?” she pleaded. “Can I? Can I?”

I told her to bring her shorts but also to bring a book so that if she became bored or restless she could go in a corner and read. I also told her to put her mat close to Linda's so she could follow her if she did not understand my directions, and that she must promise to do everything I told her to. Adriana is very athletic, takes dance classes and is exposed to yoga at home because my daughter, her mother, is a keen yoga student. I did not think she would come to any harm provided she maintained her concentration, which she did—for two hours that night and three in another class which she was eager to attend. I was impressed.

After the first class, when we had returned home and were getting ready for bed, she came into my bedroom and commented on a short talk I had given at the beginning of class on yoga as spiritual practice. She had been surprised to hear me use the word “spiritual” and had a lot of questions about this.

Students in many of the fitness oriented yoga classes these days would be surprised to hear yoga described as spiritual practice, and this is very sad. At a workshop I gave in Saskatchewan last weekend, there were many teachers from across the Prairies and some of them talked to me about their concern over this aspect being overlooked. I spoke to them in the same way as Guruji and Geetaji have talked to me about the responsibility to first bring spiritual values into my own life and then, when I teach, maintain the integrity of the teachings by presenting them to my students in the same way. It has to be in a way where we feel comfortable, and this will only happen when our own practice is geared to this end.

*Students in many of the fitness oriented yoga classes these days would be surprised to hear yoga described as spiritual practice, and this is very sad.*



My time in Hong Kong was a combination of vacation and work, and a good transition between the complete relaxation of Thailand and all the ramifications of our return home to what we mistakenly call “reality.” The timing of our trip was impeccable. As we prepared to depart we were concerned about the threat of war with Iraq, particularly because we were traveling with our granddaughter. We were also concerned over the premature birth in Victoria of another granddaughter, but she had stabilised and was doing well so we felt comfortable in leaving. Our trip was completed and we were safely back home before the war started and before the emergence of the threat of SARS. As if this were not enough to worry about, when I picked up my mail and email I was plunged into controversies on the Iyengar Yoga scene internationally, nationally and locally.

Oh to be back on the southern beaches or northern hills of Thailand! Is it still peaceful, or has the worldwide disturbance infused life there? With so many travellers between Hong Kong and Bangkok, I am sure that they are not immune from the spread of SARS. In any case, I can’t go back. Instead of wasting time on that fantasy, my energy is better employed dealing with what I have to address here. Towards this end, I must be grateful for the opportunities I have had rather than greedy for more. My break gave me a new perspective on many ongoing problems along with renewed enthusiasm for the life I have chosen for myself and the challenges I have embraced. As a result of the time away, when I turned my attention to the issues at hand I was better able to discern how to proceed, set priorities and get on with them.

When my mother was still alive and in her eighties, she would often say that she was glad that she was not young in “this awful world” which she contrasted unfavourably with the world in which she had lived most of her life. I would marvel at this, because this was a woman who was born during the Boer War, came of age in the First World War in which her brothers and my father whom she had just met all fought at the front. One brother was killed, and two gassed in France. My father,

*Each generation comes of age to face its own struggle. The world, it seems, is not meant to be a comfortable place. It is always in turmoil, and to think otherwise is an illusion.*

serving in Palestine, had some close calls but came through unscathed physically. After the war they married and had children just as the world economy collapsed and gave rise to the Great Depression. They were rescued from this only by the Second World War during which her husband was once again on active service this time along with her son. For good measure, in this war she was bombed along with her elderly mother and young daughter for the best part of six years!

When has it ever been other than “an awful world”? I often wonder about the human race with its propensity towards cruelty, and reading history does nothing to reassure me unless I look beyond the external to the indomitable human spirit which arises in the midst of the most terrible diversity. Where does this come from? How can I foster that in myself? For interesting reading on this topic I recommend Victor Frankl’s book *Man’s Search for Meaning*. Swami Vivekananda also has interesting things to say about this in his discourse on Raja Yoga. He asks the question: “Why should we be unselfish? Where is the necessity, the force, the power, that compels me to be unselfish?” He posits that from a purely rational position there is no reason for this. We don’t act in unselfish ways because people tell us that we should. Why would anyone ever lay down their life for another? It is beyond reason, and this is where the practice of yoga takes us, towards knowledge of a higher state of existence.

Each generation comes of age to face its own struggle. The world, it seems, is not meant to be a comfortable place. It is always in turmoil, and to think otherwise is an illusion.

All that has changed lately is that current world events have brought its instability into sharp focus, particularly in North America. Life here on earth is transient. To pretend

otherwise is a delusion, one which many people attempt to perpetuate until the end of their lives. As the writer William Saroyan said on his deathbed:

“Everybody has got to die, but I always believed an exception would be made in my case.” If I needed a reminder of my mortality, it came from my granddaughter on our trip as we spoke about her future including her hope that Derek and I would be around when she gets married and has babies. A quick mathematical calculation did not come up with very favourable odds!

In Sutra II-3, Patanjali cites five *klesas* or afflictions which disturb the equilibrium of consciousness. One of them is *abhinivesah* or clinging to life. The others are *avidya* (ignorance), *asmita* (egoism), *raga* (attraction) and *dvesa* (repulsion). *Avidya* or ignorance, so he says, is the source of all the others.

Years ago I saw a film, made by the BBC where the South African author Laurens Van der Post was talking to Carl Jung towards the end of Jung’s life. In fact he died a few weeks after this film was made. There is a moment imprinted on my memory where Van der Post asks Jung if he believes in God. Jung pauses before answering and a beatific smile transforms his face as he looks up, shaking his head gently from side to side, and says, “No! No! I don’t believe.” After another pause, he looks up and says, “I know.” At that moment I knew he knew,

and hoped that by the time I reached the end of my life I would be able to say that with the same conviction as Jung.

It is no accident that the pose which ends our asana practice is called *savasana*, corpse pose. Unless we come to terms with our mortality, we cannot live a full life. How many people when sick unto death are still talking about “when I get better”? How many people faced with a life threatening illness are so busy reassuring themselves that they are going to beat it that they are unable to focus on the current threat and how to approach that? Swami Radha used to say that when someone suffering from a critical illness came to her for spiritual counseling, she asked them to review their life and consider why it should be spared and what changes they would be prepared to make if it were. At the same time they must face the possibility of their death, perhaps sooner rather than later. When sick or in any crisis, first we have to be fully in the present moment. This is what crises teach us—immediacy.

On one of my trips to Pune I was caught in the middle of a mass protest when the mob became violent and began throwing rocks, wrecking cars and everything else in their path. Afterwards many people said, “You must have been scared,” but I wasn’t. I was too busy deciding what to do and then doing it. If I told them this, they would then say, “I expect you felt it afterwards,” meaning

my fear. But that was not true either. Afterwards what I felt was pleased at my presence of mind, ability to act sensibly and quickly. This is far from unique. Many people have spoken to me about how they are able to cope with the most dreadful situations when their mind stays in the present. There are always options, albeit somewhat limited at times.

One of the primary choices we have to make is to live life as a warrior, not courting danger but not hiding from it either; or as a wimp, trying to play it safe which is never successful. Clinging to life only devalues it: eventually our grip is prised loose.

Sometimes in the midst of a crisis, it is possible to see incidents or signs pointing toward this crisis which we have ignored. If our ignorance prevented us from foresight, at least with hindsight we can reflect on what happened and learn—ignorant no longer.

The primary purpose of the practice of yoga is to remove our ignorance. It is from ignorance that we identify with our body and its appearance, our mind and its achievements, our job, our status in society, our roles in the family and all the external paraphernalia we acquire in life on earth. All of this is fleeting. While we need our body to journey through this life, it is not who we really are. Neither is the mind. We are just confused about that. In the words of a vedic prayer, we confuse the unreal for the real, darkness

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for light and death for immortality. Until this transformation is complete, while even a vestige of ignorance remains, we need to keep practising. For this practice we require the body and the mind. When we practise in a spirit of devotion, with sincerity and humility, the body and mind become spiritual tools. For this purpose they are invaluable and, like all tools, must be treated with care and respect so that they last as long as we have need of them. In this regard we have to hone our skills, requiring more practice.

According to Patanjali, this false identification lies at the heart of all pain and sorrow. Ignorance may exist in us in an attenuated or dormant form, it may be hidden or fully active.

In all these forms, ignorance has been visibly abroad in the world in the last little while. Perhaps it always is, and it's just that I am often sheltered from this knowledge, or practising denial. From observation of the world at large and direct involvement in my particular

corner, it is a disturbing time. What clarity I have been able to achieve, comes out of the years of practice behind me which direct me towards actions which will lessen the disturbance. Otherwise they may either aggravate it, or bury the problem to arise at another time.

We speak of practising yoga, not doing or performing yoga. It is a lifelong practice. Jung practised a form of yoga (whether he called it that or not) which removed his ignorance on one of life's most significant issues. There was not a shred of doubt, which is another of life's obstacles, in him.

Years ago I was present at a series of discourses by Swami Venketesananda, a disciple of Swami Sivananda Saraswati. He was speaking about the benefits of *mantra yoga*.

"Why," asked someone, "do you have to repeat a mantra?" Swami Venketesananda quickly replied, "You don't, if it works the first time!"

Whatever form of yoga we practise, we must continue until we are

completely transformed so that ignorance and all its manifestations have no place within us to reside. Since I began yoga over thirty years ago, many changes have taken place. It is almost as if I have lived several lives in this one. Many things which were common nature to me before are now inconceivable, but I am reminded from time to time that other undesirable and harmful traits still exist when they re-emerge, sometimes bursting out on the scene unexpectedly.

Guruji once asked me, "Can there be such a thing as partial truth?", and then supplied the answer himself: "No!" Until such time as I know the entire truth my practice of yoga will continue in this life or others. *Om namah Sivaya* ॐ

REPRINTED FROM VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE  
NEWSLETTER, MAY-JUNE 2003



## Student Intensive

*Practice (abhyasa) is the art of learning that which has to be learned through the cultivation of disciplined action.*

*Practice is a generative force of transformation or progress in yoga.*

— B.K.S. Iyengar

**With Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler**  
**September 3 - 7, 2007, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm**

Learn how to establish and deepen your practice.

Prerequisite: Level 2 Iyengar Yoga experience

Lauren and Ty are certified Iyengar Yoga teachers who bring enthusiasm, dedication and humor to this five-day intensive. There will be two hours of asana including yoga kurunta, a timed practice, an introduction to pranayama and philosophical and spiritual discussions.

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

To register, drop in or phone the  
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Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee.

# Women Working Wisely Workshop

with Ann Kilbertus, March 17, 2007

by Jane Munro

*Females tend to go away from their own nature by working too strongly.*

*...Donkey work is to come back to our own nature. Yoga does this.*

As Ann Kilbertus put it, “Women Working Wisely” doesn’t mean lying around on a bolster. Although she had everyone using straps and blocks, walls and chairs, mats, blankets and bolsters during her three-hour workshop, the props were there to help each woman discover and then maintain correct structural alignment—her own proper way of working wisely—and not as cushions for relaxation.

The workshop started with a short discussion. During it, Ann laid out some basic principles and talked about her own journey. She’d been thinking of doing something like this for years. At first, she’d liked the idea of calling it “The Dance” because she loves dance and also because women practicing yoga dance with the different stages of their lives and the changing needs of their bodies. Marion Woodman, a Jungian analyst, talks about the Virgin, the Mother, and the Crone (derived from “crown”). Geeta Iyengar identifies three transformative events in a woman’s life, each of which affects her practice: puberty (and menstruation), pregnancy (and childbirth), menopause (and aging). It turned out that our group included representatives from five decades, twenties to sixties. We talked about how women who learn to modify their practice in a dance with their



PHOTOS: TATIANA SCHNEIDER

## Niralamba Sarvangasana

menstrual cycles refine their body’s intelligence and become more sensitive to their physical and emotional needs.

This sensitivity is the kind of wisdom Ann’s had to learn. The fact that she recently earned her Senior Intermediate 1 certification, making her one of Canada’s most highly qualified Iyengar yoga teachers, astonishes and humbles her. About two years ago, she underwent major abdominal surgery. Recovery was slow and painful. She had to unpack what she thought she knew about yoga and begin again with the basics. This took patience—none of what Geeta calls, “working too strongly.” Rebuilding her practice was donkey work, tedious and mundane—one careful step after another, not straying from the rocky trail, carrying her load, working her way up a mountain. Ann’s advice is that, no matter what *asana* a woman may be doing, she needs to relax all three of her “diaphragms”—to keep her throat soft, her diaphragm wide, and the lower

abdomen relaxed. “What’s happening to your throat?” she’d ask.

We used a belt—strapped around the top of the upper thigh of the forward leg, its tail tugged firmly towards the sacrum with the opposite hand—to pull the lower hip into its proper place for *Trikonasana*. When a sway back tilts an abdomen forward, it sags out of its pelvic basin like a mound of bread dough about to roll out of a tipped bowl. By getting the hips lined up on the same plane, the pelvis, although angled sideways, still supports the abdomen and its inner organs.

“*Ardha Chandrasana* is a gift to women,” Ann said, demonstrating it against a wall where she could show how to roll the upper hip over a fist pressed between the wall and the sacrum to draw the buttocks away from the waist and the standing leg’s hip in to the body.

*Adho Mukha Svanasana* done with heels at the wall (and later, on wooden blocks) provided another chance to elongate sagging spines so they would support the abdomen, even though it was facing down. “Sticking the front ribs out,” Ann said, “leaves the abdomen unsupported, so see that the ribs, when viewed from the side, are doing *Tadasana*. Then the abdomen can soften and recede.”

From standing poses to backbends, from *Baddha Konasana* (which Ann advised us to do for five to ten minutes daily) to a twist, from inversions (headstand with a block between our thighs and a five-pose sequence in the shoulder stand cycle) to *Savasana*—the afternoon sped by. “Geeta calls this yogic therapy instead of hormone



replacement therapy,” Ann reported. As the workshop ended, several of us asked her if she’d offer a follow-up, even carry her theme through a mini-series.

We get stuck in our misalignments. Correcting the way we stand and move and do asanas—learning to work wisely—does take donkey work. We need help to recognize that what’s familiar may actually be damaging.

Not just to our physical bodies. If we straighten up, ease up, and provide our organs with the support they need, won’t we also feel less vulnerable, less anxious, and more confident? Will we discover ourselves moving with juicy freedom and easy strength? Yoga gives us hope—the hope that “the pains which are yet to come can be and are to be avoided” (*heyam dukkham anagataṃ*). We left the workshop feeling it was possible, through our own persistent efforts, to change ourselves. Ann says, “it’s my life’s work.” ॐ

*“Geeta calls this yogic therapy instead of hormone replacement therapy,” Ann reported.*



*Ann demonstrates Savasana using bolster and blanket to relax the abdomen.*

IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA  
PRESENTS

## *The Heart of Yoga*

An Intermediate Workshop  
with Shirley Daventry French

For level 3 and 4 students and level 2 students  
who have completed at least 2 terms

Friday, January 18, 2008, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Saturday, January 19, 2008, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm, 3:30 - 5:30 pm

Sunday, January 20, 2008, 12:00 noon - 3:00 pm

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

The founder of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, Shirley has been the driving force in making the Victoria Iyengar Yoga community one of the strongest and most viable in Canada. Students from across Canada and around the world have studied with her. In this special weekend, students have the opportunity to learn from her in a workshop setting.

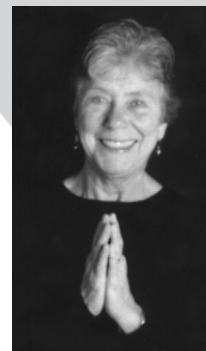
January 18 - 20, 2008

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

Registration opens October 22, 2007 for IYCV members,  
October 29, 2007 for non-members.

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



# Why Do We Use Props?

*Props are an integral part of practice for Iyengar Yoga students. However, we have to evolve in our understanding on the use of the props. This concept was clearly demonstrated by Guruji during his presentation and later articulated by Prashantji during his explanation. This article has been composed on the basis of the learning during these celebrations.*

*A prop is a prop  
when it is no longer a prop.*

– Prashant S. Iyengar

Ask any Iyengar Yoga student on what makes them different from any other yoga practitioner? They will promptly list out their “attributes.” These would include their “ability” to sequence *asanas*, stay in the *asanas* for prolonged duration of time, emphasis on alignment and of course the use of props. Props and “Iyengar Yoga” seem to go hand in hand. But how many of us really understand why and how we use the props? We may have attained many experiences but we have not been able to “grasp” or catch these experiences.

The way we use the prop, what we learn from it and what we apply from this learning will depend upon our calibre and the hierarchy in our practice. A disabled patient would be using the prop as a crutch while Guruji would be using the same prop to reach the innermost depth of his own self.

**A prop as a crutch:** Today hundreds of thousands of patients with problems ranging from slipped disc, arthritis, cervical spondylitis to heart ailments and hypertension have benefited from the practice of Iyengar Yoga. A belt, a rope, a crepe bandage, a block are their life-support systems. Most of these patients would never have benefited from the practice of the classical yoga *asanas* as they would never have been able to do them if not for the props. Ask a patient with

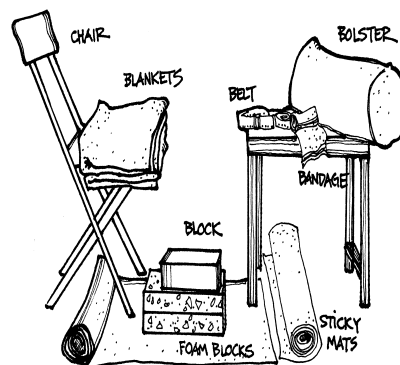
cervical spondylitis to roll the trapezium muscles back. Even if they know the anatomical position of the muscle they have no access to it. Adjust the rope around their back of the neck for “traction” and observe the sigh of relief on their face.

Ask a heart patient to open the chest and see the difference when one places a block behind the chest as in *Sharapan-jarasana*. Medicines can keep people living but yoga props give one life. But, we need to grow beyond the use of these props as crutches. After all, a critically ill patient is weaned off the ventilator as he starts improving!

**A prop to annihilate fear:** Fear can devastate an individual but a prop can help one overcome fear. *Abhinivesa* is literally translated as clinging to life or as fear of death. In our practice, it is the fear

of losing our balance or fear of falling. It is one of the impediments, an obstacle in our practice. How many of us would have managed to learn *Sirsasana* if we never had the wall behind us? How many of us who are stiff and heavy would have learned *Sarvangasana* if not for the chair? Fear also impedes our progress. When we are doing the *asana* independently, there is always a spot, an area, a region where we “cling on to” for the fear of falling. For example, while doing *Virabhadrasana III*, we tend to be on the outer heel and outer ankle of the foot, which is on the floor and we have this “false notion” that it is giving us stability. In reality, it is the outer portion of the back of the heel, which brings in stability. When we use support for our arms, the weight on the heel of the bottom leg automatically shifts towards the back of the heel and stability sets in. Thus, we need to identify the region where fear is holding us back in each pose. Observe what changes are brought about in this *abhinivesic* region when we use props and then try to imitate that action when we perform the *asana* independently.

**A prop brings in physical and mental stability:** Guruji has often said, “*Asana* is not motion but coordinated and harmonious actions.” However, the more difficult the physical positioning of the body in an *asana*, the more physically



unstable we are. We are constantly moving and therefore fail to experience the asana. The props serve as a support to help us stay for a longer duration in an asana and therefore experience the transformations the asana brings about. I wonder how many of us would be able to stay for 7-10 minutes in *Viparita Dandasana* independently. We may use our will power but along with that we may be using our lips and jaws too! But, it is common for most of the 'Iyengar Yoga' students to be doing *Viparita Dandasana* for 7-10 minutes on a chair. In fact, many of us look forward to the freshness and coolness of mind that *Viparita Dandasana* brings us, especially when our head is also supported by a bolster.

It is very difficult to keep the consciousness (especially the mind) in a stable state even if we do manage to "stabilise" and balance ourselves physically in an asana. The *citta bhumi* constantly wanders and is in the *ksipta* (distracted) or *viksipta* (alternating, scattered) state. Under the instructions of a teacher in class, we may be better focused (but the instructions of a teacher are also a prop!). But, it takes just a split second for the consciousness to wander especially when we are performing the asana independently. The use of props aids the *citta bhumi* to be in an *ekagra* (one pointed state) for a longer duration of time.

#### **A prop aids in bringing humility:**

I wonder if any of us would have realised this but whenever we use a prop for any of the asanas, we automatically start to involute and introspect. Thus, there is no space for pride. Sage Patanjali has very clearly said that progress in our practice of asana leads us either towards *apavarga* (freedom) or *bhoga* (pleasure). Many of our neo-yogis can fall from the grace of yoga because of pride of "achievement." The use of props ensures that there is no room for pride and the practitioner

## *When does the brain get a chance to rest? When does the brain get a chance to feel the quietness and tranquility?*

retains humility, which should be one of the most important tenets for a practitioner.

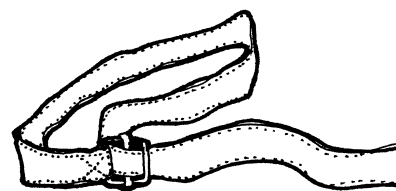
**A prop to objectify the brain:** As has been explained in the previous issue of *Yoga Rahasya* (YR 10.4; pg. 40), we tend to use our heads much more than our senses. We tend to work and direct with the brain rather than spread our intelligence across the entire body. The brain continues being a subject—directing the rest of the body all the time. When does the brain get a chance to rest? When does the brain get a chance to feel the quietness and tranquility? Even if we are doing a "relaxing pose" like *Savasana*—the brain directs the body on how to rest. The only time that a brain can be objectified by even a beginner is when they are using the props. The thoughts cease naturally. For example, when we are doing *Sirsasana* on the rope, the brain becomes totally quiet. This quietness is not dullness but an active passivity! This objectification of the brain also happens when our head is rested on a bolster in *Adho Mukha Svanasana*. We are more stable, quieter and we can stay longer than we can independently.

That is the reason that when asanas are done prior to a *pranayama* practice, we perform many of the asanas with our head rested. This prepares our brain for the active passivity necessary for *pranayama*.

#### **A prop brings in the feeling of**

**lightness:** In the 43rd *sutra* of the *Vibhuti Pada*, Sage Patanjali says that an accomplished yogi attains lightness in the body and he is even able to levitate. This *sutra* clearly gives us a clue as to what we should aim for in our practice of asanas. We all "enjoy" the asana when the body feels light. That is exactly what the props do. For example, when *Ardha Candrasana*

is performed with the support of the tressler and the lifted hand is used to revolve the chest, the chest opens. We are able to take in the cosmic energy as the chest opens. Thus, we never feel the fatigue but instead feel light and energised by the asana.



#### **A prop develops sensitivity in the**

**practitioner:** As beginners, we start asana practice through the gross body. We tend to use only the muscular body but as we continue, we need to attain the sensitivity to feel the asana through the skin and the senses. The prop aids in developing the sensitivity. For example, when we are performing standing asanas against a tressler, we can learn what the source of action is. Once we make any particular action we can study the range of its effects. *Sparsa*, contact, is an important component of practice. Sensitivity develops when we have some external contact and that is how the props guide us. It is for us to use this sensitivity to trigger our intelligence. The props give us a spark of light but we fail to catch it. For example, when we are doing *Ardha Candrasana*, the leg on which we stand tends to become shorter. The moment we perform the same asana with the tressler, it automatically becomes longer. It is for us to "catch" what the prop does to us. In *Sarvangasana*, the frontal thighs tend to collapse if we stay longer in the asana and they feel very fatigued. But, if we loosely tie a belt around the bottom calves and move the legs outwards to touch the belt, we will observe that the frontal thigh

muscles naturally recede towards the bone and there is no fatigue in the thigh muscles. So we have to study what the props do to make us perform the asana with greater ease. Their use sparks our intelligence. We have to “catch” these sparks and clues that we get with the props. We should then try to incorporate them while performing the asanas independently.

**The props help to adjust the *pranas* in our system:** The *prana vayus* are the life force in our system. We are comfortable in any asana as long as these *vayus* (vital energy) are balanced. For example, when the *udana sthana* is tensed or *udana vayu* overused, the throat and along with it the

brain feels choked. Many beginners often tend to unknowingly block or grip the *udana sthana* while doing the asanas especially the twisting asanas and also in sitting *pranayama*. Such practice can be harmful to the practitioner. The use of props automatically adjusts the *prana vayus* in our system. For example, *vayana* naturally drops while doing *Savasana* on the floor. The *vayana pervades* the entire system and can be observed on the lateral sides of the chest. But, the *vayana* naturally lifts when a bolster or pillow is used to vertically support the spine in *Savasana*. In *Urdhva Mukha Svanasana*, the *samana* (one of the vital energies located around the abdomen) and the *vayana* tend to drop. However, when *Urdhva Mukha*

*Svanasana* is performed with the palms on a chair or a *Viparita Dandasana* bench then the *samana* and *vayana* both get lifted and we feel lighter and energised.

### **We should not always use a prop as a crutch or a sofa to flop ourselves on!**

We should be very clear in our minds as to why we are using a prop for a particular asana on a specific day. We should use the prop to trigger our intelligence and generate life in our practices just as Bheesma Pitamah used the bed of arrows to trigger his intelligence and keep himself alive! ॐ

*Reprinted with permission from Yoga Rahasya, Vol. 11, No. 11; 2004*

# Teacher Training and Junior Intermediate Workshop

## FOR LEVELS 3 & 4 STUDENTS

WITH CHRIS SAUDEK | NOVEMBER 16 - 18, 2007

### Teacher Training

**Fri. 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, 3:00 - 6:00 pm**  
**Times subject to change**

Open to all certified Iyengar yoga teachers, or those in Iyengar yoga teacher training programs.

A devoted student of the Iyengars for more than 20 years, Chris studied extensively at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune. Her training as a physical therapist gave her valuable background for her study of yoga. She is a precise and disciplined, caring and innovative teacher. Chris is the director of the Yoga Place in La Crosse, Wisconsin and is certified as a Senior Intermediate teacher of the Iyengar method.

Note: Chris will be teaching an extended Level 4 class Monday, November 19, 2007, 4:30-7:30 pm (times to be confirmed). Open to Level 4 students only. There is a nominal surcharge for students registered in the Level 4 class.



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### 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**  
**Times subject to change.**

Open to Level 3 & 4 students able to hold headstand and shoulderstand for 5 minutes or more.

#### IYCV MEMBERS FEES:

\$340.00 + GST Teacher Training and Workshop  
\$220.00 + GST Workshop

#### NON-MEMBER FEES:

\$375.00 + GST Teacher Training and Workshop  
\$240.00 + GST Workshop for non-members

Fees subject to change.

#### REGISTRATION OPENS:

August 29, 2007 for IYCV members  
September 5, 2007 for non-members

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



# Fear of Faeq: Watching the Mind

By Caren Liedtke

In her May/June dispatch from India, Athena George wrote: "I'm afraid of stern words, corrective blows, advanced poses, long holds, and confusing accents." That's exactly right, I thought. That's how I felt in the weeks preceding the four day workshop with Faeq Biria in May.

My main spiritual path is one of meditation. I have attended numerous meditation retreats over the years, both long and short, group and solitary. I've heard it said that the program begins, not on the day of arrival, but on the day of registration, which may be many months before the program actually starts. Once you've committed yourself, your ego, sensing the impending threat, intensifies. Emotional and neurotic upheavals are common. These seem to act as proof to your friends and family that your spiritual practice doesn't work, that you are becoming more of a mess, not less. But practitioners, take heed. The upheavals actually suggest the opposite—the path is a genuine one and transformation is taking place.

Registration for the workshop with Faeq was no exception. After the act was completed, my neurotic mind went into high gear. Like Athena, I was afraid. I worried. Incessantly.

Yoga is not my main practice. I go to class once a week to keep a pesky back in check so I can enjoy my life, and meditate with some degree of ease and comfort. Not being an advanced or regular practitioner, I questioned the wisdom of attending the workshop.



Faeq instructs class in twisting gomukhasana

PHOTO: ROB WALKER, CALGARY

*"What's the hardest pose?" students sometimes ask.*

I worried that I didn't belong, that I wouldn't be able to handle it, that I would drag the level of the group down, that I shouldn't have taken the spot a more worthy candidate could be using.

As I have been taught, the movements of the mind are not a problem. Close identification with them is. The practice is to watch the mind. Worrying incessantly about whether I'm going to be able to handle the workshop is not a problem. My constant verbalization of it is (especially for my poor husband). But even the verbalization is not really a problem, either. It's another chance to see how I try to get rid of uncomfortable energy.

For me, one of the great gifts of attending a program with a seasoned practitioner is being able to be practice in

their mind space. As Faeq took command of the room and began to teach, the mental agitation I had been feeling drained away. It did return periodically, and when it did I would physically slacken off the pose and withdraw into the neurosis.

I noticed that this made matters worse. The tightening in my mind was reflected in my body. It hurt more, not less. When I made an effort to just follow the instructions as they were given, it made the moment more bearable, the pose more doable. I felt Faeq's mind carrying me through, moment to moment, holding my mind to the task at hand.

Holding my mind to the upper thigh or the inner knee. My job was to meet his mind there as much as I could. To open and relax and let the imprint be made as much as possible.

In the weeks leading up to the weekend, I had worried so much, so very much. Then, before I knew it, it was over.

On the final afternoon, after Faeq had been thanked for all the work he had done with us, he said that it is one thing to come in and impress students during a workshop, but it is another thing to teach the same group of students week in and week out, year after year, and that the real thanks should go to Shirley. This is a thanks I would extend to the other yoga teachers in Victoria, and to yoga teachers everywhere who do the work diligently and consistently to little fanfare and small monetary recompense.

Teachers are essential and deserve our gratitude. Everyone needs a teacher. One can easily go off course without one. But, as Faeq reminded us during

the workshop, I think during a moment of frustration at our inability to follow even the most simple instructions, a teacher can only teach to the level of the students. A teacher's efforts are of limited use if the student doesn't practice.

As I finish this article, it's mid-July. The workshop with Faeq is long over, a fast fading memory. A dream. A ghost. The meditation teacher I work with often admonishes us, his students, not to coast on memory, the memory of insight, the memory of programs. Any insights gained need to be cultivated and stabilized through regular practice. It's a wonderful thing to practice in the mind space of a seasoned practitioner like Faeq, but the whole point is to get a taste of what is possible, available to me through regular and sustained practice.

"What's the hardest pose?" students sometimes ask. The punchline is: The

first one, although if you've practiced much, it's not funny. It's true. After the most wonderful and inspiring workshop in the world, it's still a matter of waking up the next morning and getting to the mat, or for me, the meditation cushion, and taking advantage of this day, this moment.

I would like to thank Faeq for coming to Victoria, and for his seemingly bottomless energy and generosity. It was an amazing four days. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to have worked with you. ॐ

CAREN LIEDTKE AND HER HUSBAND, NEIL MCKINLAY, HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH SENIOR MEDITATION TEACHER DR. REGGIE RAY, WHO IS BASED IN CRESTONE, COLORADO, SINCE 1999.



## Come to the Friday Night Gathering

**Friday, October 19, 2007  
6:30 pm**

Everybody is welcome to join us.

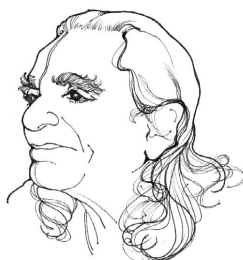
Bring a friend, your partner,  
or a family member.

Asana Practice 6:30 pm followed  
by potluck dinner 7:30 pm.

Please bring a vegetarian dish to share.

By donation,  
free to members.

## In the Light of Yoga



Come celebrate the 89th birthday of Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar at this special benefit workshop.

**Friday, December 14, 2007, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm**

- Kids Yoga demonstration organized by Ty Chandler
- Asanas lead by Ann Kilbertus
- Refreshments to be served

\$25 - Donations welcome!

To register, drop in or phone  
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria  
202 - 919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C.  
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)  
[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

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

All proceeds from this workshop go to the B.K.S. Iyengar Scholarship Fund which assists teachers, training teachers and committed students to attend classes at the institute in Pune.

## Short WORKSHOP

### Winter Solstice Workshop

With Ty Chandler

**Thursday, December 21  
6:00 - 8:00 pm**

**Friday, December 22  
6:00 - 8:00 pm**

Fees:  
\$60 + GST for IYCV members  
\$66 + GST for non-members

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

# Ty's Yoga Kids

*Ty Chandler teaches a Kids' Yoga class every Friday. Her students, including Cleo, Katie A., Fraya, Michael, Breeanna, and Katie H., were asked to respond to the following questions. (Some of the answers have been edited.)*

## Why do you like yoga?

- Yoga is a wonderful experience. It is scary at times, but mostly relaxing and stretching. I like yoga because it is a powerful way of getting further in life and experiencing satisfiedness.
- I like yoga because it stretches your body very nicely and it is really fun. I also have a great teacher and she is lots of fun. Yoga also calms you down.
- Yoga makes me feel good. You should see the smile on my face after a yoga class. Even if I am exhausted I can't help beaming. I get caught in my mind sometimes. Yoga helps me come out of that. I like yoga because it helps me see the world, and myself, in a new light.
- I like yoga because it makes me think about my spiritual direction. It makes me move in different directions. It helps me to meditate on my character and personality, even unknowingly.
- I like yoga because it makes you feel calm and relaxed. I think that yoga is good for your flexibility and health.
- I like how when you are finished you feel refreshed and like when you finished something and felt good about yourself. I also like how the poses are timed and done.

## Who is our Guru?

- Our Guru is B.K.S. Iyengar or Mr. Iyengar.

## Where does he live?

- He lives in India but travels around the world.

*Yoga makes me feel good.*

*You should see the smile on my face after a yoga class. Even if I am exhausted I can't help beaming.*

## How much should I practice?

- Once a day for an hour and do *savasana* after.
- I should practice daily. The more you do the better you are. I will work to do this.
- ...as much as possible?...as much as I feel I should...as much as I can, when I can.
- You should practice as many times until you know that you're good at it.
- I should practice at least an hour or thirty to forty-five minutes.
- Somebody should practice as much as their body feels like or wants to.

## What should I always do in my practice?

- The poses that should always be in my practice are: *surya namaskar* (sun salutations), *savasana*, and an upside down pose like *sirsasana*.
- You should always practice *savasana*...any pose that fits your mood.
- ...Downward dog, headstand, shoulder stand and lotus.
- ...*Savasana*, *sarvangasana*, *sirsasana*...poses you don't like or poses that you are not good at. Poses for my balance and abdominal strength.
- You should practice corpse pose at the end of your practice.

## Why is it bad to eat before class?

- It's bad to eat before practice because you'll get either nausea or cramps. Maybe food interferes with spirit.
- You will not be able to stretch properly.
- I don't know why it's bad to eat before practice but I think practice disrupts digestion or maybe digestion disrupts practice.
- Your energy is put into digestion rather than doing yoga.
- You will get a cramp and a stomach ache.

## Who is Patanjali?

- Patanjali is a yoga god that we follow in our regular chant. He has a story.
- He is one of the people you do sun salutations to.
- Patanjali is the great sage, the codifier of yoga, and the black statue at the front of the classroom.
- He is the inventor of yoga.
- Patanjali is a yoga guru.

## What is the name of the song we sing at the beginning of class?

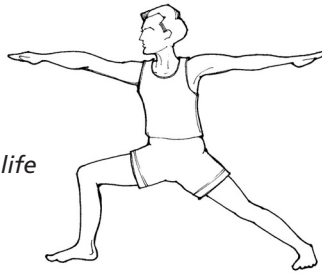
- We chant, "The Chant to Patanjali."
- It is the prayer song.
- It is the invocation, though it likely has a sanskrit name.

## What is the goal of yoga?

- The goal is to quiet the mind and become still and in touch with the universe beyond the consciousness.
- The goal of yoga is to become more calm and respecting of other people.
- ...to stretch your muscles and to heal yourself in many ways.
- The goal of yoga is to connect mind, body and spirit. ॐ

## 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 17 - 21, 2007**  
6:30 - 8:00 am daily

Fees:  
\$76 + GST IYCV members  
\$80 + GST non-members

Registration opens:  
Oct. 17, 2007 for IYCV members  
Oct. 22, 2007 for non-members

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

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

## Gabriella Gubliaro WORKSHOP

**March 23 - 25, 2008**

Sunday,  
Asana 10:00 am - 1:00 pm,  
2:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Monday,  
Pranayama 8:30 am - 9:30 am  
Asana 10:00 am - 1:00 pm,  
2:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Tuesday,  
Asana 10:00 am - 1:00 pm,  
2:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Fees:  
\$399.00 + GST IYCV members  
\$439.00 + GST non members

Registration opens:  
February 3, 2008  
for IYCV members,  
February 10, 2008  
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  
(205)386-YOGA (9642)  
[www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

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



# Notes from my Pune Visit, December 2006

by Leslie Hogya

This past December, I attended classes at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune. Guruji's energy appeared boundless! He helped teach the women's class with his daughter, Sunita, on Wednesday mornings; practiced hours a day; spent afternoons in the library; and often appeared in medical classes to teach.

What follows are snippets from my notes.

- Guruji used the sun as a metaphor in many of his formal and informal talks.

In a class on December 6th, he spoke about meditation this way: "When the sun is setting, its rays...diffuse; they start to disappear. This is what happens when you (the students) meditate. My meditation is like the rays of the sun when it is up full in the sky, where there are no clouds. Then the rays of the sun shine... everywhere, (even) to the perimeter."

- Guruji gave an opening address at an evening event at the Yogananda society (Yogananda—author of *Autobiography of a Yogi*).

In it, Guruji talked about the breath. "When you inhale, it is *Bhrama* (creator). Breath you hold is *Vishnu* (preserver). Exhalation is *Shiva* (*Maheshvara*, destroyer of obstacles)." Then he spoke of the breath in relation to devotion. *Bhakti* is the path of devotion. He talked about *Tapas* and purifying ingredients of the body. "Body-mind is transformed to a *satvic* state by the breath. As we inhale, the body becomes the vehicle to the *atma* (soul). Exhale (and the) breath comes out, which allows cosmic breath to come in. Then, the inner layer of soul comes up to (the) inner surface of the skin."

- *Ukti* is skillfulness in action, or the union of *jnana* (intelligence) and *bhakti* (devotion). "Do skillful action. All yoga is one. Yoga practice takes you to the top and develops body consciousness. This lets you climb Mt. Everest—the pinnacle!"

"When we practice we understand *jnana* (intelligence) of body. Then the container reaches to *atma* (soul)." Again, he used the metaphor of the sun: "The midday sun reaches the earth evenly if clouds are not there. If there is a defect (like clouds), the rays don't reach the container of the soul."

- Dec 14th—Guruji's birthday.

When we came in, the entire hall was decorated with flower garlands, especially around the Patanjali statue. Guruji thanked Chandra for the decorations and then he said: "Each *asana* is like a garland of flowers wrapped around the soul." Here also he talked

*Each asana is like a garland of flowers  
wrapped around the soul.*



PHOTO: KAREN MAJOR

Karen Major, Leslie Hogya and Louie Ettling sitting beside the decorations for Mr. Iyengar's eighty-eighth birthday. (We represented Canada for these birthday festivities.)



A statue of Patanjali decorated for Mr. Iyengar's eighty-eighth birthday.

about the sun penetrating to the very edge of the body. "The rays touching the entire perimeter; this is how we must practice."

One of the joys of having visited Pune seven times is that I have met and keep in touch with several Indian families.

My landlord was a well known artist and writer in Pune, Ravi Paranjape. He wrote an award-winning book and I was privileged to attend the book launch and reception.

Other Pune friends invited me to their son's wedding breakfast following the civil ceremony, where the family shared much joy and laughter along with a delicious feast.

On my birthday, I was treated to divine sitar music—a private and spontaneous concert that happened quite by chance.

Sharing experiences with Karin Major and Louie Ettling helped ease the stress of the long distances we had to travel to reach India. Once there, I enjoyed spending time with my roommate from France, Isabel, with Chris Saudek, and with other new friends from around the world.

It was a truly memorable trip filled with all these friends and special events. The richness of Geeta's teaching, the kindness and generosity of the Indian people, Prashant's talks, and Guruji's lectures created a year's worth of memories packed into 31 days! Many, many thanks to Guruji, to the Institute, and to all the Iyengar family for carrying on, for teaching us all. ॐ



## Short WORKSHOP

### Yoga for Feet

with Linda Benn

Saturday, October 20, 2007

12:00 noon - 3:00 pm

Fees: \$36.00 + GST for IYCV members

\$40.00 + GST for non-members

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

Come and  
stabilize yourself  
for the autumn!



Friday, Sept. 2007,  
5:00 – 7:00 pm

Saturday, Sept. 8, 2007,  
10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Fees:  
\$83.00 + GST IYCV members  
\$93.00 + GST non-members

## Refresh Yourself for the Fall

An all levels workshop  
with Ann Kilbertus  
**September 7 - 8, 2007**

This workshop will offer a series of *asanas* to prepare the body and mind for the change of season and upcoming fall term. Ann will be drawing inspiration from her recent journey to India in February 2007.

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$30.00 cancellation fee.

Registration opens:  
May 28, 2007 for IYCV members,  
June 4, 2007 for non-members

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

## A Thank-You



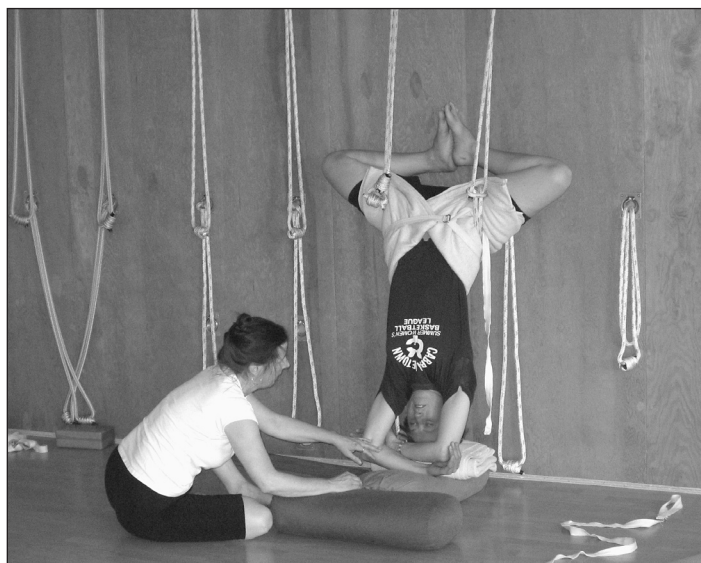
- Nathan Cox and Bruce Cox for painting and repairs throughout the Centre this summer.
- Rosemary Barritt for helping put the kitchen back together after the paint job.
- Edie Poole for sewing new covers for the library cushions.
- Michael Blades for transcribing the Chris Saudek interviews which appeared in the last two issues of the newsletter.



# Teacher Training Intensive Introductory I-II

*Taught by Leslie Hogya and Ann Kilbertus  
July 2007*

PHOTOS: LINDA BENN AND GARY WONG





Board of Governors Workshop

## Keeping the Hearth Fire

We are starting this short column to let our members know what the Society is doing, and a little bit about the Board members themselves. The Yoga Centre (as we call it around here) has been undergoing profound and challenging change over the past six years since we moved into our own space and began managing our own classes. Our membership increased from a collection of friends and supporters to approximately 600 students, teachers and international supporters. At the same time, starting to offer classes required that we hire and pay people, thereby creating responsibility and paperwork, as well as an employer/employee relationship with some of our members.

Now that we are employers and managers, if someone has a complaint, or a desire, we, the same who used to be a collection of friends studying yoga together, must now deny or grant the request. This introduces an element of control and power to the relationship as well as legal and financial responsibility. All of this is opportunity for friction, and definitely for the *vruttis* (fluctuations of the mind) to have a field day!

Admirers from afar often wonder how we do it. I myself have volunteered on

non-profit boards for about 18 years now, and I have seen organizational growth in other organizations that has not been handled well. By definition the people who start an organization are passionate about what they are doing. Their hearts and bodies have been devoted to “their cause.” When growth happens the old way of talking between friends, informally, is lost. Founding members may feel sidelined. Sometimes (though not here) senior members block growth; they see change as threatening the way an organization works and what makes it valuable. Sometimes this is partly true: if change is not handled well it can mean the loss of some valuable things, especially related to the spirit of the organization.

Meanwhile, though, new Board members need to be recruited that have the skills and time to manage a larger organization. Usually these are new people. This creates a tension between new ways, perhaps required to maintain more formal legal processes, and the spirit that guides the organization, usually held by the founding members. Here at the IYCV we are very lucky to have dedicated senior members who continue to play a very active role in the organization. As Board members we often refer to them

for guidance on small matters as well as to resolve conflict, set guidelines, or help us see the larger vision that we need to work towards.

I find that one of the things that makes this Board different from other organizations is the willingness of Board members to examine their own behaviour. We also have an ethical guide that was developed shortly after we opened that sets out guidelines for ethical conduct according to the *yamas* and *niyamas* (check your *Sutras*). Board members pay attention to maintaining balance in their own lives, so they do not get over-extended. This is important, because in many non-profit societies people burn out trying to do “everything” and saving the world. This year we have started organizing retreats, to help ensure that personal and organizational practices remain balanced and yogic.

In future installments of this column you will meet some of the Board members, like Ann Nolan (Secretary) who are new this year, and others, like Leslie Hogya (Past President) who have been involved almost since the beginning.

*Namaste, Silvia Vilches ॐ*



# The Journey: Geeta Iyengar 2007

By Leslie Hogya

Geeta was coming to Las Vegas (of all places!) and my friends kept asking, “Las Vegas? Yoga in Las Vegas?” I put all the teasing aside and packed my props.

The first two days it was a teachers’ only conference. The room filled with 450 certified teachers, who came to Geeta’s feet while she talked and led us in *asana*, *pranayama*, and teacher training.

A three hour opening address launched us on this journey. (Conference DVD’s will be available from Iyengar Association of the United States.)

Geeta is always an ambassador for her father, B.K.S. Iyengar, and his teachings. She was asked to use his book *Light on Life* as the springboard for her presentation to the participants. In our pre-conference information letter, we were told to read the book in its entirety. This inspiring book brings yoga philosophy to life and was written to explain Guruji’s method and how it transformed over the years. Each chapter delves into the meaning of the sheaths, or *kosas* and leads the reader from the outer layers of the body inwards, from the skin to the soul.

Geeta explained that the first sheath is named *annamaya kosa*, this is the outer layer, the physical also known as the food body. Like the eight limbs of yoga, the *kosas* cannot be separated. Guruji’s brilliance is that the correct method of doing the asanas guides us on this path, so we are not led into path of pride. If we stick to aligning ourselves in *trikonasana*

with the tailbone in and in line with the crown of the head, we automatically begin to penetrate.

The five *kosas* (*pancha kosas*) or five sheaths also correspond to the five elements. *Annamaya kosa*, the outer body relates to the earth element. Geeta explained that *maya* in all these words means vastness. Then is *pranamaya kosa* relating to the organic body and water element. Third is *manomaya kosa*, the mind and fire element.

*Vijnanamaya kosa* is intelligence, and air element and finally *anandamaya kosa*, the bliss body, relating to the most subtle element, ether. The yoga journey is from body to bliss.

She further explained that the word sheath was not really the best way to translate *kosa*, it more is like a treasure house for each layer. It is a journey to righteousness. All the *kosas* work together and we are gradually transformed.

Later in her talk Geeta referred to Sutra III 27 which says “By *samyama* on the sun the yogi will have knowledge of the seven worlds and of the even cosmic centres in the body.” This *sutra* refers to the belief that there are fourteen worlds, seven above and seven below, in the universe. These are then reflected in the body.

The seventh one in the lower body is *patala*, relating to the soles of the feet. How do we begin Iyengar Yoga? [By] standing firmly on our feet. Iyengar’s commentary says: “Patanjali instructs the



In the photo left to right are most of the Canadians who attended the US conference: Bridget Donald (Vancouver), Louie Ettling (Vancouver), Ann Kilbertus, Donna Fornelli (Ottawa), Leslie Hogya. Along with Skjei Sharma from Calgary, we went en masse to greet Geetaji at the close of the conference. She looked at us standing in front of her and said “Oh Canada!”

aspirant to direct his mind towards the inner body, to study and gain knowledge of the soul.”

After two days, 400 more people arrived and we packed the room mat to mat. We had only a mat space, with even our props on the mat with us. Again, the first address was a synthesis of the first day’s talk on the *kosas*.

Each day was rich, with *asana* classes, chanting of the sutras, *pranayama*, refining teacher understanding and some evenings there were banquets.

As Geeta taught in this huge space, she could see from the stage all 900 participants. There were teacher helpers in the crowd, but her sharp eyes would see the people who did not understand, who needed guidance. She effectively used the people on stage who volunteered to stand and do what was said. She showed how they needed to correct their actions for deeper penetration.

*Each day was rich, with asana classes, chanting of the sutras, pranayama, refining teacher understanding and some evenings there were banquets.*

One day we were instructed to lie down in *savasana*, and spread our arms to relax. The room was so crowded, this was almost impossible. Louie Ettling said she felt like saying to her neighbor: Please move your wedding ring, so I can let my little finger relax.

Thank you to Geeta for coming and teaching. Thank you to the scores of volunteers from the IYANUS organization who planned and carried out this inspiring event.

*Namaste, Leslie ॐ*

## Some words from Geeta

Just be in yoga.

Go towards righteousness.

Live in truth.

Protecting yourself in not restoring.

The Vedas means felt knowledge.

Yoga is a refining process.

We use the word love indiscriminately.

In India one would use the words like or dislike (especially when referring to objects, foods).

## IYCV WILL BE CLOSED

Monday,  
October 8, 2007  
Thanksgiving Day

Monday,  
November 12, 2007  
Remembrance Day

November 16 - 18, 2007  
Chris Saudek Workshop

## A Class from Geeta

*Recorded by Melissa Perehudoff during her stay in Pune in 2006.*

1. Adho Mukha Virasana
2. Uttanasana to Adho Mukha Svanasana
3. Adho Mukha Vrksasana (arm balance)
4. Parivrtta Trikonasana
5. Bend front knee to Parivrtta Parsvakonasana (both buttocks and lower side chest lengthen back, spine forward).
6. Repeat 3 and 4.
7. Uttanasana to Adho Mukha Svanasana.
8. Parivrtta Ardha Chandrasana
9. Bharadvajasana (when revolving to right, descend left buttock & lower side chest to floor and back).
10. Marichyasana III (when twisting, descend straight leg thigh & lower side chest to floor).
11. Ardha Matsyendrasana
12. Pascimottanasana
13. Pincha Mayurasana with brick & belt.
14. Sirsasana
15. Parsva Sirsasana
16. Adho Mukha Virasana
17. Ustrasana—feet together.
19. Ustrasana—feet apart.
20. Sarvangasana
21. Eka Pada sarvangasana (3 x each side)
22. Pascimottanasana
23. Uttanasana
24. Savasana



IYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA

# 2007-08 calendar

## SEPTEMBER

- 3-7 Student Intensive with Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler
- 4-9 IYCV Registration week
- 7-8 Refresh Yourself for the Fall workshop with Ann Kilbertus
- 22 Teachers, Meeting
- 28 Sutra Workshop with Shirley Daventry French
- 29-30 Going Deeper with Shirley Daventry French

## OCTOBER

- 8 IYCV closed
- 19 Friday Night Gathering
- 19-21 Introductory I/II Assessment, Toronto, ON
- 20 Footnotes Workshop with Linda Benn
- 27 Teachers, Meeting

## NOVEMBER

- 12 IYCV closed
- 16-18 IYCV closed for Chris Saudek workshop
- 16-18 Chris Saudek Workshop
- 16-18 Junior Intermediate II Assessment, Vancouver, BC
- 24 Teachers, Meeting

## DECEMBER

- 14 In the Light of Yoga – Guruji's Birthday Celebration
- 17-21 Sadhana with Corrine Lowen
- 20-21 Winter Solstice Workshop with Ty Chandler



## JANUARY 2008

- 18-20 Heart of Yoga Workshop with Shirley Daventry French
- 26 Teachers, Meeting

## FEBRUARY

- 2 IYCV AGM

## MARCH

- 23-25 Gabriella Gubliaro Workshop

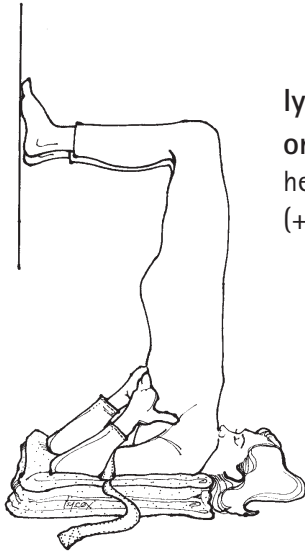
## APRIL

- 8-10 55 Plus Retreat on Salt Spring Island with Leslie Hogya and Wendy Boyer

### *Newsletter submissions*

**Written:** Digital format is preferred—Word file or other files compatible with Microsoft Word, plain text files or emails. Hand written or printed submissions will be accepted; however, they require transposing (typing or scanning) to digital format by the newsletter committee before publication.

**Photos:** Prints or digital images. Digital files must be high resolution (minimum 600 dpi) for adequate reproduction. Acceptable formats are JPG (choose: no compression, high quality, large file), TIFF or EPS. Preferred: save as grayscale EPS files, with no adjustments, sizing or cropping.



## Time to Renew!

Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria membership expires  
on December 31, each year.

The membership subscription fee is \$40.00 CDN  
(+ 6% GST for Canadians) and is renewable each January.

### Membership benefits include:

- 5% discount on all classes
- free practice times at the IYCV
- 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 form below and send to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria.*



ITYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA  
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:

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

**(250) 386-YOGA (9642)**

Membership/subscription fee is \$40.00 + 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.





IYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA

N E W S L E T T E R  
N O V E M B E R / D E C E M B E R 2 0 0 7



*Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hoga and Shirley Daventry French at the Teacher Training Intensive – Junior Intermediate Levels, August 2007.*

*Practice and detachment are the means to still the movements of consciousness.*

*Practice is the steadfast effort to still these fluctuations.*

*Long, uninterrupted, alert practice is the firm foundation for restraining the fluctuations.*

*Renunciation is the practice of detachment from desires.*

– Chapter I, verses 12-15, *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* by B.K.S. Iyengar

# In the Light of Yoga



Come celebrate the 89th birthday of Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar at this special benefit workshop.

**Friday, December 14, 2007, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm**

- Kids Yoga demonstration organized by Ty Chandler
- Asanas lead by Ann Kilbertus
- Refreshments to be served

\$25 – Donations welcome!

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All proceeds from this workshop go to the B.K.S. Iyengar Scholarship Fund which assists teachers, training teachers and committed students to attend classes at the institute in Pune.



## ASSESSMENT DATES

**November 16-18, 2007**  
Vancouver  
Jr. Intermediate II

**February 29, March 1-2, 2008**  
Iyengar Yoga School of Toronto  
Jr Intermediate I

**April 18-21, 2008**  
Yoga Centre Toronto  
Jr Intermediate II/III

**June 20-23, 2008**  
London  
Introductory I/II

**October 17-20, 2008**  
Saskatoon  
Introductory I/II

**October 17-20, 2008**  
Iyengar Yoga Centre Victoria  
Jr Intermediate I

## Teacher Training and Junior Intermediate Workshop

For Levels 3 & 4 students | with Chris Saudek | November 16-18, 2007



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](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

### Teacher Training

**Fri. 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, 3:00 - 6:00 pm**  
**Times subject to change**

Open to all certified Iyengar yoga teachers, or those in Iyengar yoga teacher training programs.

A devoted student of the Iyengars for more than 20 years, Chris studied extensively at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune. Her training as a physical therapist gave her valuable background for her study of yoga. She is a precise and disciplined, caring and innovative teacher. Chris is the director of the Yoga Place in La Crosse, Wisconsin and is certified as a Senior Intermediate teacher of the Iyengar method.

**Note:** Chris will be teaching an extended Level 4 class Monday, November 19, 2007, 4:30-7:30 pm (times to be confirmed). 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**  
**Times subject to change.**

Open to Level 3 & 4 students able to hold headstand and shoulderstand for 5 minutes or more.

#### IYCV MEMBERS FEES:

\$340.00 + GST Teacher Training and Workshop  
\$220.00 + GST Workshop

#### NON-MEMBER FEES:

\$375.00 + GST Teacher Training and Workshop  
\$240.00 + GST Workshop

Fees subject to change.

#### REGISTRATION OPENS:

August 29, 2007 for IYCV members  
September 5, 2007 for non-members

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

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## Newsletter Advertising Policy (Adopted February 20, 2004)

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

1. Advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the newsletter of the IYCV.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar Yoga
3. Priority given to advertisements regarding:
  - IYCV events
  - IYCV sponsored events
  - IYAC events

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(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

## WEBSITE:

For full information on classes and workshops, please visit our website at [www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca).



## IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA NEWSLETTER

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**IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA 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 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, drawings, information or suggestions to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter: 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3. For information on activities and events, call (250) 386-YOGA (9642) or visit our website: [www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca).

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

By Shirley Daventry French



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

The first of Patanjali's 196 *sutras* announces the beginning of an exposition of yoga. Four chapters later, for those who have shown the discipline and perseverance to follow the thread of wisdom contained in this celebrated treatise, the journey culminates in freedom or liberation (IV-34). To reach this destination requires sober reflection, courage and constant vigilance as you observe body, mind and self ever more closely. Most likely it will involve turning one's life upside down (literally and figuratively) by questioning one's most cherished beliefs and habitual ways of reacting to the phenomenal world.

What is reality? That is one of the questions posed in all spiritual texts. In Canadian society you often hear people dismiss the idea of putting spiritual values into their life by saying: "Well, that's alright for those of you who don't have to deal with the real world." I was in a workshop with Swami Radha when one of the participants, an engineer by profession, voiced that disclaimer. A constant refrain of Swami Radha's was that if you were serious about yoga, it was important to make all of your life spiritual life. This man protested that in the real world where he worked this was impossible. Looking him straight in the eyes, Swami Radha shot back: "Which one is the real world?" – a question which has to be pondered by everyone on the yogic path.

Many people have heard my story about how easy I found it to focus on my spiritual life at an ashram or spiritual centre, but on my return home when confronted by the demands of my family and in particular three teenaged children, this idealism went out of the door almost as soon as I entered the

house. It took a sustained struggle to overcome this obstacle, but I could see a goal well worth the effort. And the struggle did not end there, it just metamorphosed into another form. The ego does not give up easily, and will intensify its efforts to distract and divert you when it sees you making some progress!

For most of us it is impossible to be with our teacher all of the time, unless we renounce our family; and there are many stories of people who have done this and become great teachers. I am judging no-one, because it is all a question of priorities, goals, karma and levels of consciousness; there are many ways to enlightenment. Most of us, however, choose to follow the path of a householder for this life's journey.

When we spend large periods of life distant from our teacher, we must draw on our experience, memory and, of course, our own insights from our practice. We are also likely to rely more on the written word when the spoken one is not available to be heard. I love language in all its forms with reading high on my list of favourite activities. I have many books on the *sutras*; three well worn favourites are B.K.S. Iyengar's *Light on the Yoga—Sutras of Patanjali*, I.K. Taimi's *The Science of Yoga*, and Swami Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga*.

The *sutras* are divided into four chapters. The first chapter is called *Samadhi pada* (on contemplation), the second *Sadhana pada* (on practice), the third *Vibhuti pada* (on powers), and the fourth *Kaivalya pada* (on emancipation and freedom). As Guruji points out in his commentary, the first chapter is directed towards those who are already highly evolved, who have "an advanced state of cultured, matured intelligence and wisdom."

In *sutra* I.22 Patanjali speaks of levels of aspirant as feeble, average and keen. Not surprisingly, how quickly they move towards their goal of emancipation depends on the intensity of their practice. Earlier he has listed certain practices which lead to stagnation; to move

*What is reality? That is one of the questions posed in all spiritual texts.*



from stagnation to emancipation demands that we redouble our efforts (I.19 & 20).

Once upon a time a student would not receive any of these teachings unless he or she had reached a high state of consciousness. Today, anyone can come into yoga classes off the street with little or no knowledge of what yoga really is. Some are ready for its message; for others, with no spiritual foundation in their lives, it will be difficult to accept responsibility for an unaware body and an undisciplined mind, and far more difficult to sustain a disciplined practice. Discipline is a scarce commodity these days. It is entertainment that many are seeking when they come to yoga, or a fitness workout. Few beginning students are looking for a spiritual path.

Of course, everyone has to begin somewhere and many of the most distinguished yogis had an inauspicious start to their journey (read *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa* by W.Y. Evans-Wentz).

After doing some yoga, you may be inclined to explore the philosophy. If you are lucky enough to have a teacher who is familiar with the sutras, she or he is likely to direct you to the second chapter which is where most of us need to focus in the beginning. There we find certain practices such as *Kriya Yoga* (the path of action)<sup>1</sup> in the first sutra of the second chapter, and *Astanga Yoga* (the eightfold path)<sup>2</sup> which comes towards the end.

Some years ago, I was thinking of starting a study group on the sutras, to encourage students to make use of them in their daily lives. I wanted them to discover, as I had, that they were not some esoteric text but practical wisdom containing a healthy dose of common sense: that they are as applicable in the Canada of today as they were in the India of old. When I was in Pune, I spoke to Gururji about this, and he said "Start with *The Bhagavad Gita*; sutras are too difficult at first. Then, when some understanding has been

## *Most of us choose to follow the path of a householder for this life's journey.*

developed, move on to the sutras." So this is what I did. The wisdom of the *Gita* is as timeless as the sutras; the knowledge these texts contain is vast.

In the early days of my teaching, the majority of students who came to class were stuck on the physical aspects. A further obstacle was that we were running our program out of the "Y" where others were suspicious about what they saw as a strange Eastern cult. There was some basis for their caution as this was the 1970s when many people purporting to follow Eastern disciplines were using sex and drugs rather than disciplined practice as their preferred method of "raising consciousness."

In fact, I had attended what were grandly called "Consciousness Raising Groups" with a man who had been a Christian minister but who had given up the church, along with his marriage, to lead these groups. He was helpful to me up to a point in that he was very strong and pitted his will against mine showing me how I tended to use my strengths and emotions to impose my will. The problem was that having opened up a Pandora's Box of issues, we were not given any guidance about what to do next. Many of the people I met in these groups ended up changing jobs, changing spouses, and although most were well educated, foul language and uncouth behaviour were commonplace. Some of them were 'high' on drugs much of the time. Whether they continued along this destructive route, I have no idea, because – thank God – I stumbled into yoga.

Under Swami Radha's tutelage at Yasodhara Ashram, my mind and behaviour continued to be under close scrutiny. Clearly some major changes were required, but I was given tools to use to establish new patterns,

---

1 *Kriyayoga*: *tapah* (self-discipline), *svadhyaya* (self-study) and *Isvara pranidhana* (devotion) are the acts of Yoga.

2 *Astanga Yoga*: *yama* (universal ethical disciplines), *niyama* (individual ethical disciplines), *asana* (posture), *pranayama* (expansion of vital energy), *pratyahara* (withdrawal of the senses into the mind), *dharana* (concentration), *dhyana* (meditation), *samadhi* (absorption or profound meditation).

*Once upon a time a student would not receive any of these teachings unless he or she had reached a high state of consciousness.*

and trained in their use. I was also introduced to the philosophy of yoga and shown how to make this a framework for living my life; how to use my energy to overcome the obstacles in my path, rather than shore them up. I was encouraged to discard everything which weakened me. I was taught that practice is essential, and encouraged to establish a regular practice – an essential step towards maintaining these changes when I returned home.

Patanjali defines yoga as cessation of the fluctuations of the mind (sutra I.2) then goes on to speak about the various aspects of the mind. After which, in sutra I.12, he states that *abhyasa* (practice) and *vairagya* (non-attachment) are the means to still this restless mind.

Later, in the second chapter Patanjali speaks of the *gunas* or qualities of nature which have three attributes: *tamas* (inertia), *rajas* (vibrancy) and *sattva* (luminosity). On one of my visits to Pune, while sitting at his desk in the library, Gurujī addressed this topic. He was speaking of a student of his who was a dedicated practitioner, very regular in

his practice, but he kept hurting himself. Gurujī stated the problem was that his practice had vibrancy but no illumination. Vibrancy is seductive, and I returned to Canada thinking a lot about this and how it pertained to my own nature and my practice.

At the “Y”, a few of us persevered in our efforts to offer more than just the physical, and eventually earned sufficient confidence from the Y’s management to introduce some of the spiritual aspects. After all, as we took care to point out to them, the Y’s motto is to promote health in body, mind and spirit. It was a relationship that worked well for many years but eventually outlived its time so we moved into our own space where we experience far more freedom to vary our program.

As students of *Iyengar Yoga*, one of our primary tools is *yogasana*, but we endeavour to use the form of the *asana* to teach yoga in its fullest sense including body, mind and spirit. The teachers we train have to study the yogic texts and learn to apply them in their own lives before their training ends. In fact, in

their assessment they are examined on yoga philosophy along with their practice and teaching of *asanas* and *pranayama*.

New teachers often find it strange and difficult to bring yoga philosophy into their classes, but the assessment is only a first step; at our centre teachers on our faculty are expected to attend monthly meetings which begin with a practice and go on to consider some aspect of philosophy. One of the things which inhibits teachers from introducing philosophy is the feeling that students may be uncomfortable. What matters, of course, is that the teacher is comfortable within him or herself in presenting these teachings. Besides, one never knows who likes, or does not like, such teaching.

I often give talks on some aspect of philosophy at the beginning of my classes. Usually some ordinary event during the day has triggered certain thoughts: I may have been reading a text which was relevant to my experience, or listening to the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) on my drive into town. Or I may have developed fresh insight from my *asana* and *pranayama* practice, or from a discussion with my husband. I endeavour to pass on to the students the idea that their lives are also packed full of these teachable moments if they care to observe this; that the teachings are relevant all day every day. Some students fidget and feel this is a waste of time and wonder why I don’t

## Scholarships & Bursaries

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



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

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.

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

## *I was encouraged to discard everything which weakened me.*

get on with the class. But I am teaching the class! Others tell me how much they value these talks. One never knows!

One of my colleagues, Carole Miller, a certified Iyengar Yoga teacher and a professor in the Education faculty of the University of Victoria, has established yoga as a credit course at the university. Each year she invites some of us from the Iyengar Centre to teach as guest teachers. Last year, when I taught one of these classes, as I entered I asked Carole if she was doing the Patanjali Invocation at the start of the class. She said she hadn't done so yet, but why didn't I introduce it. So I did. This group of young and largely fit students did not respond much to my call, so I found myself both calling and responding to

myself along with Carole. Well, I thought, that didn't go over very well. But at the end, when most of the students took the time to come up and thank me for the class, quite a few of them told me how much they had enjoyed the chant at the beginning. One never knows!

There are a variety of doors which open to deeper learning giving the student a choice according to her or his nature and level of maturity. As teachers we have to be careful not to give too much too soon, but never to underestimate the student. Apart from exceptional cases, the possibility of learning is always there. How well we can transmit this fount of ancient wisdom depends on the quality of our own practice and learning,

and whether we can teach without being attached to a particular result or response. As a student, how well we can receive teaching and guidance from qualified teachers depends on the quality of our practice. As a seeker on the path of yoga, the manner and style of our journey, and how close we will come to the goal of liberation in this lifetime, is entirely up to us. ॐ

*Practice and detachment are the means to still the movements of consciousness.*

*Practice is the steadfast effort to still these fluctuations.*

*Long, uninterrupted, alert practice is the firm foundation for restraining the fluctuations.*

*Renunciation is the practice of detachment from desires.*

– Chapter I, verses 12-15, *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* by B.K.S. Iyengar

IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA  
PRESENTS

## *The Heart of Yoga*

An Intermediate Workshop  
with Shirley Daventry French

For level 3 and 4 students and level 2 students  
who have completed at least 2 terms

Friday, January 18, 2008, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Saturday, January 19, 2008, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm, 3:30 - 5:30 pm

Sunday, January 20, 2008, 12:00 noon - 3:00 pm

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

The founder of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria, Shirley has been the driving force in making the Victoria Iyengar Yoga community one of the strongest and most viable in Canada. Students from across Canada and around the world have studied with her. In this special weekend, students have the opportunity to learn from her in a workshop setting.

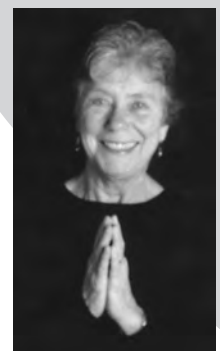
Fees: \$190 + GST members  
\$210 + GST non-members

Registration opens October 22, 2007 for IYCV members,  
October 29, 2007 for non-members.

To register, drop in to or phone Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria  
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Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are  
subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.

January 18 - 20, 2008



# Penetrating from the Annamaya to the Anandmaya Kosha

By Richard Jonas

THIS IS AN ARTICLE FIRST PUBLISHED IN YOGA RAHASYA, VOL. 14, NO. 3; 2007, PP. 29 - 35. MANY THANKS TO RAJVI MEHTA, YOGA RAHASYA EDITOR, FOR GIVING US PERMISSION TO RE-PRINT THIS ARTICLE.

The wealth of insight and guidance Geeta S. Iyengar brought to the convention of the Iyengar Yoga National Association of the United States in Las Vegas in May remains to be fully absorbed.

Fortunately, her five days' worth of teaching on "*Annamayakosha to Anandamayakosha: The Journey from Body to Bliss*" will become part of our archive of knowledge. Details, specific adjustments, will be checked against DVDs and photos. Printed transcripts of the lectures on philosophy may be pondered at length.

For now, memory and inspiration remain vivid. Geetaji urged and encouraged, admonished and cajoled, prodded and galvanized us to pursue our *sadhana* with tireless effort and constant devotion. This was her theme and example.

Without ever being rushed, Geetaji seemed always aware of the press of time, of how much was to be taught, how much to be passed on and practiced. Her teaching was at once pragmatic and profound, as concrete as the movement into asana, as vast and all-encompassing as the arc of yogic philosophy. Through *asana* and *pranayama*, teachers' training

*Geeta compared the kosha-s to spacious rooms.*



Geeta Iyengar teaching in Vancouver, 2001.

classes, *pujas*, lectures, and the chanting of the *Sutras* and the *108 Names of Patanjali*, Geetaji brought specific details and esoteric ideas into a clear synthesis, guiding us to a tangible experience (*pramana*) of philosophical concepts. "Don't just store knowledge that comes from your head!" was one of her maxims.

Preparing us to experience them, Geeta compared the *kosha-s* to spacious rooms, like the *asana* hall where we met. We move through the doorway into the room, sensing its dimensions and expanse. Then we move through another

doorway and on to another room, another *kosa*.

"Penetrate," Geetaji told us again and again, "*penetrate inwards*." Penetration occurred first, of course, within the *Annamayakosha*, the physical body. We moved the femur bone from front to back; we rolled the skin of the back thigh from inside to out, sensitizing it to become the measure of the penetration achieved.

"Charge here!" was a constant direction. After we moved into *Utthita Trikonasana*, Geetaji had us come up, and

PHOTO: NANCY BLECK & SUSAN STEWART



then had us do the asana again on the right side. This time she told us to “Charge the left leg!” and “Charge the left arm!” This simple action, this new awareness, fired the first penetration from *Annamayakosa* to *Pranamayakosha*, opened the approach to the energy body.

Alongside penetration comes sensitivity. “*Make the body sensitive through asana and pranayama*,” Geetaji said. Even our understanding of the *Yama-s* and *Niyama-s* matures as we sensitize ourselves and mature in our practices, as we open another door and move into another *kosa*. As we enter *Manomayakosha*, the mental body, their meaning becomes clear in a new way. Clarity increases still more in *Vijnanamayakosha*, the intellectual body.

In the last morning’s asana class Geetaji guided 800 practitioners into *Anandamayakosa*, the bliss body. “It was just extraordinary,” recalls Senior Teacher Patricia Walden, who observed the class. ‘Earlier, the students were a witness to their actions. They needed that ‘I-am-ness’ to move into the poses. But by the time they finished *Urdhva Prasarita Ekapadasana* the ‘I-am-ness’ was gone. When Geetaji asked how they felt, the ego self had dissolved. Space was everywhere, and gratitude. They were in a state of absorption.”

Another constant maxim was “*Banish the Fear Complex*,” and the way it limits our practice and our potential. This dropping of the front ribs and chest signals depression, and a lack of will and strength. To overcome fear, “*Lift the sternum chest!*” she said. “*Release the trapezius down the back! Roll the shoulder bones back, draw the armpit chest forward! Outwardly rotate the arms! Draw the back ribs and the dorsal back firmly in!*” Do all these actions, then do them still more; in *Ustrasana*, for example, it should feel as if you are “tearing the skin” of the arms and chest.

One student, attempting to sit for *pranayama*, was overwhelmed by tears.

## Make the body sensitive through asana and pranayama.

Geetaji directed Patricia to use her knee to move the student’s thoracic back forward while easing the trapezius down. “Slowly she started calming down,” Patricia remembers how the Fear Complex slowly eased away. Another woman, with the dropped chest of depression and a neck angled strongly forward, performed *Salamba Sirsasana* but with great pain. Geetaji directed the senior teachers to lift her shoulders, move the upper back in and re-align the neck and head, lifting her into a balanced asana, free of pain.

A woman with arthritis and herniations of the neck wanted to do *Salamba Sarvangasana* but could not. She asked for Geetaji’s help. Directing the assisting teachers to ground the student’s upper arms and to lift her back and chest, Geetaji amplified the physical adjustments with a strong exhortation to “*Banish the Fear Complex*.” Geetaji insisted on ever-stronger effort: “*Madam, fight your disease!*” “That small sentence has huge meaning,” says Patricia. “The Iyengars try to give us the tools to bear the pains of life: *asana, pranayama*, props. Geetaji wants to strengthen us to handle everything life hands out.”

Geetaji urged us to teach with a purpose and understanding, with *artha* and *bhavana*. “*What is it I am trying to teach?*” a teacher must ask himself or herself. “*Then the body has to receive the asana.*” “*Don’t jump over the body parts*,” Geetaji said. “*Say hello to the thigh, make sure the thigh is lengthening, then pause. Say hello to the knee, make sure the knee is opening, and don’t go further till it does.*”

To best adjust a student, a teacher must move from the objective – observing the student’s asana – to the subjective – actually experiencing the student’s asana in the teacher’s own body.

Only making that leap, and in the moment it takes to observe, will yield the correct instructions that will lead the student to progress.

While teaching *Utkatasana*, Geetaji found a woman leaning forward like a beginner, remembers Certified Teacher Sally Rutzky from Michigan. Geetaji adjusted the woman into vertical alignment with her buttocks descending properly, but she quickly reverted to her habitual pose. “Geetaji adjusted her again and again, like a jack-in-the-box, until she got it,” remembers Sally. “I was struck by the clarity and the relentless, laser-like quality of Geetaji’s teaching.” It was, she says, “the essence of compassion.”

Geetaji was accompanied by her sister, Sunita Parthasarathy, who led the convention in correctly pronouncing and reciting the names of the *asana-s*, and her niece, Abhijata Sridhar, who demonstrated postures and adjustments on the stage. One could not but be impressed by the depth of learning of these women and the devotion of this family to continual study.

Geetaji herself has been a seeker of knowledge and refinement from childhood. She “officially” began to teach at sixteen, she confided with a smile, though when she was thirteen her school teachers, knowing of her father’s work, would ask her to help with classroom asana sessions.

“Their devotion to yoga is humble and pure,” says Senior Teacher Joan White. “It’s time to recognize the role of women in yoga. Geetaji has devoted her life to the subject. She has tremendous power and wisdom. There is a weightiness behind her learning.”

Arriving in the U.S., Geetaji spent four days with Joan White in Cohasset,

## Go inside and be with yourself

immersing herself in Guruji's *Light on Life*, practicing and resting amid the sounds of the birds and frogs of the Massachusetts coast. One day, three deer appeared as Geetaji watched, entranced, from the window.

In Las Vegas Geetaji was friendly and approachable, joining students for several banquets. She was equally open to the Las Vegas-style extravaganza she attended and to the baby, presented by a student, who reached out impulsively, as if to jump into Geetaji's arms.

*Go inside and be with yourself* Geetaji, the eldest of her family, told a moving story about the child born next after her. This child lived only a few days. A letter from Guruji, already teaching and living away from the family, crossed a letter from his wife Ramamani. She wrote that the child had been born and had died. Guruji wrote that she should not grieve, later telling her of a dream in which the child had come to him, had told him that it desired the great good fortune of being born in a yogi's house. Even knowing that it would lead only to a very short life, the child chose this auspicious birth.

We are all fortunate, Geetaji told us, to have yoga in our lives, to have been interested in yoga, perhaps from an early age, to have had the free time, the financial security, and the health to pursue our interest. This reflects karma from past lives and is something we should be grateful for; more, though, it confers on us an obligation to deserve what we have been given.

In Las Vegas, each of us took our own Journey. For me, the bodily aches I brought with me flew away; I was reconfirmed in my love for the *kriya* of yoga, and deeply moved by Geetaji's wisdom and compassion, by her love for teaching, for yoga, and for us, her students. ॐ



## Short WORKSHOP

### Yoga for Feet with Linda Benn

**Saturday, October 20, 2007, 12:00 noon - 3:00 pm**

Fees:

\$36.00 + GST for IYCV members

\$40.00 + GST for non-members

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

## Thank You

**Stacey Frank** and **Darlene Kakoske** who helped transport props to and from the Salt Spring Island Retreat.

**Leslie Hogya** for hosting dinner for the July Intensive. **Kathryn Wiggins** for her assistance with the July intensive. **Joan Douglas** and **Donna Kolabinski** for serving and clean up of the July Intensive dinner.

**Shirley Daventry French** for hosting dinner for August Intensive. **Corrine Lowen** for organizing dinner for the August Intensive. **Patty Rivard** and **Joanna Hope** for pick up and clean up of the August Intensive dinner.

**Doug Hart** who came to unlock the gates early on a statutory holiday!

# The Beauty of India

Excerpts from Melissa Perehudoff's emails

*Guess whose eyes I was looking into yesterday  
while I was in Downward Facing Dog?*

MELISSA PEREHUDOFF LIVES IN KELOWNA. THE FOLLOWING EXCERPTS ARE FROM EMAILS SHE SENT TO HER FRIENDS IN 2006 WHILE SHE WAS STUDYING AT RIYMI IN PUNE.

**H**ello fellow yogis & yoginis!  
Guess whose eyes I was looking into yesterday while I was in Downward Facing Dog? Yup, BKS, himself on the *Setu Bandha* bench. Seems like everywhere I turn, there he is! When I went to go to pay the balance of my tuition, who should walk into the book room with just Pandu, the office manager and me but...BKS himself. He chatted away with Pandu in Marathi while I stood there thinking, *Feel your feet on the earth, shift your weight onto your heels, breathe.* When he and Pandu finished chatting I had to say something to Guruji, so I extended greetings from my teachers, Deborah and Shirley. Not the most original but at least I opened my mouth to speak!

Then on my first class on Saturday July 1st when I woke up with an eye infection, cold and my period, who should be practicing two people away from me the whole time but, yes... BKS himself, doing all his supported backbends. ...not everyone had arrived yet for the month so it wasn't mat-to-mat full capacity. Mikey, a Spanish woman living in Germany led us in our forward bend practice and the Chilean woman beside me would tap my arm when it was time to come out of the pose or switch legs. Geeta was yelling at

everyone with her microphone on but I could hardly hear her with the monsoon rain pelting in the background.

The first week, it was very difficult for me to tell if they were speaking English or Marathi. I really felt like a beginner looking around to see what pose we were doing or what prop we had to rush to get. It is now Week Three and I am loving the classes...two seven am classes with Prashant, two nine-thirty am classes with Geeta, one with Sunita, Geeta's sister, and Geeta's 6:00 pm *Pranayama* class on Thursdays.

I learn more about the *asanas* from Geeta, but Prashant teaches us how the *asanas* relate to everyday life...[he] compares cooking our food to cooking our *asanas* as we finish off with subtle spices or awarenesses. Sometimes he gets a little carried away and we repeat two or three poses for two hours while he gives us a class in "breathology." He tells us that the exhalation is universal and to use it to purify, sanctify, evolve, mature, stabilize, neutralize. The breath can be as sharp as a diamond or as soft as butter. All this at seven in the morning!

It's all a bit extreme here. In Sunita's class this morning, we did shoulder work for one and one half hours, primarily *Pashcima Baddha Hastasana*, *Paschima Namaskarasana* and *Gomukhasana*! Whose shoulders are these anyways?

At *Guru Purnima*, during Guruji's talk he tells us not to practice aggressively. Beginners use the body to reach the intelligence whereas *sannyasis* (mature students) work from a place of



*Mr. Iyengar in conversation with his granddaughter Sunita).*



*Mr. Iyengar demonstrates kapotasana.*

integration and use the intelligence to touch the body.

So much to learn! Hard to believe that I've been doing yoga for 15 years! I feel like I'm just beginning. Deborah's teachings have certainly prepared me for Pune!

## *From a second e-mail:*

I know I must be feeling better after my week-long health challenges when I spontaneously cry out with affection, "Look at you!" to the four little sisters, each in a different jewel-coloured dress and carrying a basketless basket of sticks on their heads. They laugh, smile back and reach out to touch my hand. ...

PHOTOS: ANN KILBERTUS

*Yes, it takes some getting used to,  
but life in Pune can be pretty good.*

Spontaneous interactions of genuine warmth like this are part of the beauty of India.

To find the beauty of India you have to go beneath the surface layer of dirt, noise, air pollution and poverty. The bougainvilleas and flowering trees in bloom; the green butterfly flitting by; people smiling and laughing as you take a picture of the oxen they are herding in the city street. The people at the temple who greet us with a smile and “*Hare Krishna*,” and give us *prasad* (a sweet). The young clerk at the music store who gives ten-year-old Larkin a flower and chocolate bar because she reminds him of his sister in Mumbai; the twenty-year-old from Varanasi selling drums on Mendoloni Street who helps us cross the street to get a rickshaw after Rena buys a drum from him. Our landlady, Smita, who is concerned about our welfare when there is political unrest and advises us to stay in the Model Colony neighbourhood for the day, and then invites us over for a bite to eat and visit at her place in the evening. The auto-rickshaw driver who speaks no English and sings *mantras* all the way to the

restaurant, then charges us the correct amount and is so surprised when we give him the change. The ladies sitting on the street in their beautiful saris making the sweeping sticks that everyone uses out of the coconut palm tree leaves.

Many people but one planet. How can we learn to cooperate, understand and care for each other?

#### *From a third e-mail:*

I can see why people spend two months here for yoga. One month for the adjustment factor – weather, head bobble, people, food, shopping, yoga teaching style (lots of yelling) – and one month to immerse in it all.

Up at seven am for a cup of tea. Wash some t-shirts and underwear in a pail and wring them out before I hang them to dry. ... Some juice with my Greens Plus from home for breakfast. That was a smart thing to bring. I learned the hard way not to eat before the nine-thirty am class. Even an egg in the stomach interferes with *Purvottasana* (Revolved Triangle). Say “good morning” to my room-mates,

Noah from Colorado and Randa from Hong Kong. Home for a very familiar summertime lunch...cucumbers and tomatoes with cheese and toast. The only difference is that the cucumbers and tomatoes are peeled, the cheese is processed, and the toast is like air with whole wheat in it.

Charlotte was sharing her distress about being yelled at in class when her chair was sliding in *Setu Bandha Sarvangasana*. I told her you can't take it personally and just think of it as a complement when they yell at you. Good advice for me to remember for myself when I get yelled at the next day in class for having my feet too close together in back bends. Yes, it takes some getting used to, but life in Pune can be pretty good. Always time to knock down a coconut from the tree overhanging the terrace, chat with a new Indian or yoga friend, have a nap when you're feeling under the weather, or do some power shopping for gorgeous textiles, sensual incense, bronze statues or sparkly jewelry (*bling* as we like to call it). Sometimes the hum of India courses thru your veins and you're in the chaotic flow of it all. Hard to believe it was only three weeks ago that I felt like I was risking my life every time I crossed the street. ॐ



## *Gabriella Giubilaro Workshop*

March 23 - 25, 2008

Sunday, Asana 10:00 am - 1:00 pm,  
2:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Monday, Pranayama 8:30 am - 9:30 am,  
Asana 10:00 am - 1:00 pm, 2:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Tuesday, Asana 10:00 am - 1:00 pm,  
2:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Fees: \$399.00 + GST IYCV members, \$439.00 + GST non members

Registration opens:

February 3, 2008 for IYCV members,  
February 10, 2008 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  
(205) 386-YOGA (9642) [www.iyengaryogacentre.ca](http://www.iyengaryogacentre.ca)

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



# Retreating to Salt Spring: Beyond Words

by Sharon, Bonnie and Gordon

*Sharon, Bonnie, and Gordon were among forty-three participants who spent a weekend last June on Salt Spring Island with Shirley Daventry French. The following article combines excerpts from their descriptions of that retreat. This is an annual event and fills quickly—register early if you'd like to go.*

There is a little frog in the forest beyond the gardens. He is learning to croak as frogs do. When the sun sets and the shadows lengthen, all the frogs prepare for the night chorus. First one *rivet*, then two, then a cicada-like rasping fills the twilight. I fall asleep to the sound of hundreds of frogs trying to talk and listen to each other. In the early morning hours I again hear the little frog chirping, solo. A pause, then two more respond, and the wave of sound builds before receding into the dark.

On Friday afternoon, a restorative yoga class welcomes early arrivals. Dinner follows: organic salad picked minutes before with a floral mandala, nut loaf (“Martha’s Meatloaf”) drizzled with tahini ginger sauce, roasted yams, steamed veggies and warm chocolate chip cookies. I indulge in seconds.

Two-thirds of the group have been here before. I am one of three males—four, if I count Shirley’s husband. After dinner and the introductions, Shirley’s *Savasana* soothes us towards sleep. Silence is observed from 10 p.m. until after 7:00 a.m. *pranayama*. Breakfast is a delight: rice-pudding, (unsweetened), with big, plump, juicy sultanas. Yoghurt, muffins and granola, all freshly made.

*Asana* practices run from 10:00 to 1:00 and 3:30 to 6:00 in a studio filled

*There is something mysterious about the practice of yoga.*

with light, fragrant bouquets, and diligent students. At the beginning of each class, Shirley gathers us around for a chat. She answers questions arising from the yoga sessions, and touches on various topics such as yoga morality, writers on yoga she has recently read, why we recite only three *Aums* at the beginning of class (an early compromise with the YMCA to permit Shirley’s yoga group to keep teaching yoga there). No commands, no passionate encouragements, no carefully orchestrated sales pitch. A string of thoughtful and measured words. I listen closely and try to understand the meaning behind the words.

Between the morning and afternoon asana practices there’s time for a delicious lunch, a swim, a visit to the market—whatever your heart desires.

Saturday night. My often tight body has been loosened up with five hours of yoga. I watch the smiling faces of the Salt Spring Island Chanters, accompanied by an audience who do their best to follow the Sanskrit words in the song book. The instruments, the music, the obvious joy of the singers, all after a day of yoga make me smile from the inside. Wordless, I turn to Silvia next to me and beam.

Sunday morning, we woke to another *pranayama* class, followed by breakfast and our final asana practice from 10:00 to 12:30. Then it was lunch, goodbyes, and the ferry home.

We could write on and on about the lessons we learned, laughs we had, and



Jeanette Merryfield at the Salt Spring Retreat Centre

thought-provoking conversations we shared. Here’s a taste of the wisdom we took away:

- Yoga is the work of the mind; the body is the conduit.
- Human *being*, not human *doing*.
- What time is it? *NOW!* Where are you? *HERE!*
- *Karma Yoga* = Union through service.
- Our bodies are like books.
- You have about 574,000 breaths; breathe deeply and make them count!
- Some follow the gods willingly; the rest are dragged!
- Anything done in a sincere act does not lead to failure.

There is something mysterious about the practice of yoga. Given space, time and a benevolent environment I find myself drawing more inward and... *Is this* what Shirley described in her chat as the journey of self-awareness? I share my thoughts on words and experiences with Laurie, who has been on the retreat before. “After a certain time,” she says, “words fail me.” There are subtleties and connections which words strive for and fail to express.

There is a little frog who lives in the forest beyond the gardens of the Salt Spring Centre, and he is learning when to chirp, when not to, and about the space in between.

With thanks to Shirley, Jeanette, the staff at the Salt Spring Centre, all those who participated, and everyone who helped made the retreat happen. ॐ

# Teacher Training Intensive

## Introductory Level

by Elizabeth Adilman

The theme this year of the IYCV's introductory level teacher training intensive (July 9-14) was afflictions. We (nineteen participants in total) realized that we are continually challenged by our afflictions (*avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, *dvesa*, and *abhinivesah*) as they move in and out of our lives like the ebb and flow of the tide. We tapped into a variety of learning channels and interpretations of Patanjali's *sutras* on this subject. We came to learn how to ask our selves and each other questions to enhance and improve our knowledge. Marlene Miller, Linda Benn and Kathryn Wiggins provided us with a plethora of useful feedback and points to consider, as they joined Leslie Hogya and Ann Kilbertus in facilitating this year's annual teacher training event.

**All the participants of the teacher training intensive are involved in the Iyengar teacher training program. Those who become certified Iyengar Yoga teachers are extremely well trained. Teacher training is rigorous and spans a three to five year period in which teachers follow a program based on an international syllabus and standards set by Yogacharya Shri B.K.S. Iyengar. Throughout the course of their training, teachers:**

1. Develop maturity in their personal practice of *asana* and *pranayama*;
2. Develop a thorough understanding of the *asanas* and *pranayamas* for teaching purposes;
3. Gain proficiency in teaching skills;
4. Gain a basic education in anatomy;
5. Develop a working understanding of the philosophical basis of *Astanga Yoga* in the Iyengar Method;
6. Learn the various precautions that need to be followed for students with common problems;
7. Practice their teaching skills under the guidance of a qualified training teacher.

**Participants in the Teacher Training Intensive in Victoria were at various levels of readiness for Introductory I/II assesment and certification. We came from all parts of Canada and one student was from Mexico.**

There are a wide variety of interpretations of Patanjali's *sutras*, though most seem to agree that *avidya* is an ignorance of our true nature. Without knowledge of ourselves, be it spiritual or more commonplace, we lack the necessary basic tool of reflection, or ability to move from a place of compassion, because knowing ourselves is like a ground wire: it gives us a place to both come back to and move away from.

*Asmita*, our ego or pride, is the second affliction we studied during the week. We came to understand that each of the afflictions go hand-in-hand with each other, they work as a team. With prompts from each other in small group discussions as well as guidance from readings by scholars such as Bernard Bouanchaud, we contemplated issues such as whether ignorance, (*avidya*) the ego, (*asmita*) attachment, (*raga*) repulsion, (*dvesa*) or fear (*abhinivesah*) dominate us, and how negative impulses influence our behavior. Through singing and readings of various interpretations of the *sutras* each day, their message washed over us, gently cleansing us and offering renewed opportunities for contemplation.

We each created individual presentations to illustrate both a visceral and intellectual understanding of the *sutras*. The presentations were creative and varied, taking the form of poetry, rap songs, personal stories, artwork, a power point presentation, and even an interactive board game. We brought to light our own obstacles in order to find meaning in them and to use them as guides.

The week unfolded quickly with team and peer-teaching; learning how to make verbal corrections; variations on prop usage; assessment readiness; *pranayama*, a timed practice, questions and answers; and a bountiful Indian feast at Leslie's home.

No study in perspective would be complete without an in-depth study of *Sirsasana* and *Sarvangasana*. Leslie and Ann used these inverted perspectives as bookends to our week's work and study, leaving us with firmer borders of understanding and estuaries for further contemplation.

Just as there are many interpretations of the sutras, I asked other participants to submit their impressions of the teacher training intensive for this newsletter as well. Here is what some people said:

"I appreciated the different styles, emphasis and energies that Leslie and Ann each brought to the workshop. It made the point more clear that although we are all teaching the same material we are not robots; instead, we bring with us our own experiences to our teaching. Reading all the points of view of the sutras helped me to understand them better".

"This year, like last I am humbled and awed by the bravery, creativity, sincerity, practice and hard work of my fellow Iyengar Yogis (teachers-in-training, kindred spirits). I am inspired to deepen my understanding of the work and to find in myself the same light I see in others."

And finally: "To learn in such a crisp environment is a real gift. The discipline of the master has really showed in the curriculum and in those who respect and supply the teachings. The format is well laid out which leaves little room for confusion about what is to be worked on. Tools to develop the skills necessary to growing as a teacher were well discussed, explored and enhanced, giving students a clear vision and path to set out upon. Plus, it never hurts to be part of a fun community dedicated to understanding, compassion, and growth. Nice balance – thank you." ॐ



*Introductory Levels, July 2007. Ann Kilbertus teaching Head Stand in the ropes.*

ELIZABETH ADILMAN LIVES AND TEACHES YOGA IN VANCOUVER AS WELL AS ON MAYNE ISLAND. SHE IS IN HER SECOND YEAR OF TEACHER TRAINING WITH LOUIE ETTLING AND INGELISE NHERLAN. IN ADDITION TO TEACHING YOGA, SHE WORKS WITH CHILDREN WHO HAVE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AS A TUTOR AND LEARNING COACH, AND IS THE MOTHER OF TWO TEENAGED GIRLS (16 AND 17) AS WELL AS TWO LABRADOR RETRIEVERS (7 AND 8). "I LOVE THE OUTDOORS, COOKING, MY FAMILY, AND MY YOGA PRACTICE."



*July 2007 Teacher Training Intensive – Introductory Levels participants with Leslie Hogya and Ann Kilbertus*

# 2007 Student Intensive

by Adia Kapoor

I have noticed how September often feels more like the beginning of a new year than January does: a time to make resolutions, change habits, and refocus energies in this season of change from light to growing darkness. What better way to kick off the new year than with a yoga intensive! For many, our practice may have fallen off over the summer. September is an excellent time to re-energize ourselves with focused practice and study.

It is for this reason that I so enjoy the annual Student Intensive taught by Ty Chandler and Lauren Cox. This year, a lucky group of us were able to spend the first week of September practicing three hours a day with these two wonderful teachers. At the end of an intense week of *asana*, *pranayama*, discussion, and reflection, I feel recharged and more grounded in my practice. Definitely a good way to start the year!

Ty and Lauren share a keen dedication to practice, and teach the philosophy that practice alone leads to success in yoga. As the saying goes, "Practice, and all is coming." After an intensive week of practice, the truth in this approach rings clear. Ty had recently returned from studying with Faeq Biria in Blacons, France, and Lauren from teaching and studying in Hong Kong and Pune. So both were glowing from their "summer vacations," their opportunity be students themselves for a while, and full of zeal for sharing their new learning.

Lauren began the week by reading an article by John Schumacher about "what



Ty Chandler teaching Student Intensive, 2006.

makes a good student" – some guiding principles to inform our practice and learning together. Each morning we began with almost one hour of *pranayama*, working from supine practice on Monday to seated on Friday. This was followed by two hours of *asana*, which Lauren and Ty took turns leading each day. Friday, we included a question and answer forum, and had some spirited discussion about practice and the yogic path. Finally, we ended the week with a vigorous timed practice and a delicious potluck for all the students.

We explored what and how to practice, working from the Introductory and Junior syllabi, challenging ourselves with unfamiliar poses and gaining new insight into ones we may have practiced for years. Mid-week, we were led in a restorative practice, balancing our *rajasic* energies with our *tamasic*. At the end of

the week, I was exhausted, exhilarated, and full of new energy. I am grateful to Ty and Lauren for sharing their renewed energy and zeal for practice with us!

At the closing potluck, I heard much discussion about extending the length of the student intensive, with ideas for eight-hour days or three weeks of mornings. While spending more time with Ty and Lauren is always appealing, a strong tenet of their teaching came through in those discussions – that class is not a substitute for practice. We should take our enthusiasm forward with us into our own home practices, and do our best to keep that energy we feel in class with us on our own mats. If daily practice is our food, then class is certainly the juice that keeps us going.

Thanks to Ty and Lauren for a wonderful week, and I look forward to next year! ॐ

*At the end of the week, I was exhausted, exhilarated, and full of new energy.*

ADIA KAPOOR IS A STUDENT AT THE IYCV, AND A MEMBER OF THE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE. SHE EDITED TWO ISSUES LAST SPRING.



# Meet the IYCV Board's Executive

## Silvia Vilches (President)

This is my third term as President, and fourth year since I joined the Board. I have been volunteering and sitting on Boards for about eighteen years now. During this time I have done just about everything, from answering phones, to writing grants, to street theatre, to organizing conferences, to answering a crisis hot line. In my "other life" I have been a student since 1986 when I went to the University of Victoria to get a Masters degree in policy and practice. I am now working towards a Ph.D., doing field work in northern BC on ways of supporting Aboriginal children's health. I also work as a research assistant on a project looking at the impacts of welfare cuts on single parent mothers. My partner and I have a twenty-year-old daughter who attends college in Vancouver. I commute to UBC in Vancouver almost weekly, so we are "part way" in Vancouver. Yoga keeps

me sane throughout this. I first started taking classes at the "Y" with Linda Benn in 1989 when I was a single parent; yoga helped me with my back problem, and with stress. Lately, I am more interested in the philosophy, and I feel my practice deepening, partly because of my involvement on the Board.

## Del Meidinger (Vice President)

I started yoga five years ago in order to increase my flexibility and balance after a running injury. I felt so good doing yoga that I soon became a regular practitioner. Yoga complements my other physical activities, particularly scuba diving and golf, as it increases flexibility, enhances breathing and maintains a calm feeling. It also provides me with a great mental break every day – particularly when working (as a research ecologist with the BC Forest Service). I decided to join the Board as I always felt welcome, comfortable, and enriched when at the Centre, which made me want to contribute to the yoga community at the IYCV. This is my second year on the Board (Secretary and now VP).



*IYCV Board President, Silvia Vilches.*

## Ann Nolan (Secretary)

My family—a husband, two teenagers, and a dog—moved to Victoria five years ago from Northern Vancouver Island. My career in banking has taken us to many communities on the Island, large and small.

Soon after our move, I signed up for an introductory yoga class. It felt right for me from the start. I enjoyed the physical aspect of the practice and, over time, began to welcome even those challenging poses. My teachers have all been wonderful, taking me to places I could not have imagined. As time

## Congratulations

The following candidates achieved certification during the Introductory I/II, June 15 – 17, 2007, Ottawa, ON and Kelowna, BC.

### Introductory I

Anne Marie Stewart, Toronto, ON

### Ottawa, Introductory II:

Karine Ladeuix, Montreal, PQ

Scarlet Ip, Toronto, ON

Madeleine Larose, Brossard, PQ

Sharon Pickle, Ottawa, ON

Karin Rensfelt, Selkirk, MB

Ursula Moser, Pacific Place, Hong Kong

Sara Daly, St. John's, NL

### Kelowna, Introductory II

Dhana Musil, N.Vancouver, BC

Photini McCullough, Kelowna, BC

Eve Johnson, Vancouver, BC

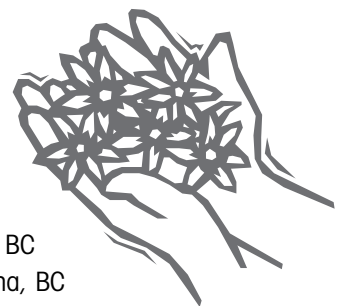
Rose Marie Rodden, Maple Ridge, BC

Marilyn Shepherd, Calgary, AB

Stephen Stewart, (was Winnipeg, MB doing assessment - now moved to Kelowna, BC)

Sandy Martino, Calgary, AB

Kristi Miller, Springstein, MB



passed, I realized just how much depth there is to yoga. The practice is subtly changing my perspective in every-day life. There is so much to learn and experience in yoga that I look forward to continuing to practice for many years. Volunteering as a Board member gives me the opportunity to be part of, and to support, the Iyengar Yoga Centre.

#### **Dave Gelzinis** (Treasurer)

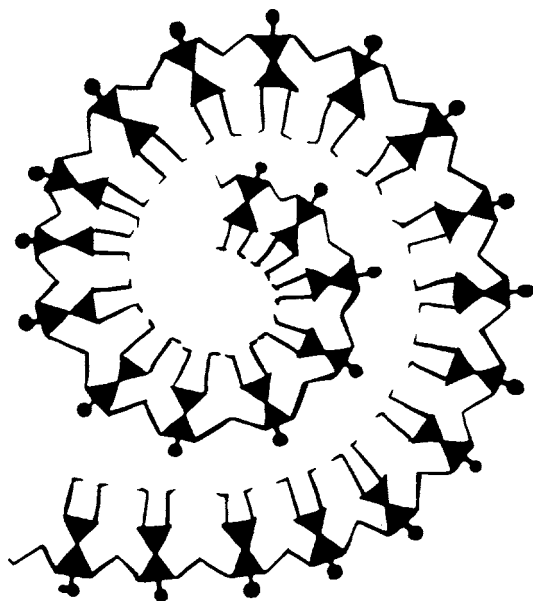
I started practicing yoga about three years ago on the advice of my physio-therapist. At first, yoga was rehab for an injury to my lower back but quickly grew to become a core activity in my day-to-day life. I'm not sure if there was one stand-out reason why I decided to join the Centre's Board. The reality is, I had a number of motives. It was partially a personal choice to continue developing friendships with the staff,



*IYCV Board Executive: Ann Nolan, Secretary; Del Meidinger, Vice President; Dave Gelzinis, Treasurer.*

teachers and members I'd come to know over the last few years. Given my education in economics, and current profession as a policy analyst for the Provincial Government, it was also partially a response to the active solicitation of those same friends who suggested I might fill the vacancy created by last year's outgoing treasurer. But, I suppose

most importantly, yoga had become something more than just exercise to me. Yoga offers a philosophy, and a path to a perspective often difficult to find in our fast-paced lives, and I thought it valuable to contribute to its continuation and development. ॐ



## *Women Working Wisely*

*A Saturday Afternoon Series:  
an **all-levels** workshop with Ann Kilbertus*

Women at all phases of life are affected by the rhythms of their bodies. One's approach to practice will differ at different stages of life but also within any given month. Join your sisters, friends, partners and mothers Take the time to explore different categories of poses with attention and focus on how to change the asana to be in harmony with the rhythm of the body.

*The pains that are yet to come can be and are to be avoided.*

*— BKS Iyengar translating Yoga Sutra 2.16*

Ann, a senior instructor at the IYCV has had to face her own obstacles with attention and careful work over the last few years. Geeta Iyengar has provided her with much inspiration, and Ann is now ready to share some of her understandings.

**Time: 2-5pm**

<b>January 12, 2008:</b>	<b>Utthistha Sthiti/Standing Asanas</b>
<b>February 9, 2008:</b>	<b>Uppavista Sthiti/Seated Poses &amp; Paschima Pratana Sthiti/Forward Extensions</b>
<b>March 8, 2008:</b>	<b>Purva Pratana Sthiti/Backward Extensions</b>
<b>April 19, 2008:</b>	<b>Viparita Sthiti/Inversions &amp; Visranta Karaka Sthiti/Restorative Asanas</b>

Fees each session:  
\$40+GST/members and \$45+GST/non-members

Full series:  
\$120+GST/members and \$125+GST/non-members

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

# Practicing Yoga

## Entering the Light

by Nan Brown

In the past, when following any guided meditation which suggests seeing your body bathed in light, I've had problems visualizing such an image. However, a chance remark from my grandson Max brought the Light!

He was talking about swimming at Matheson Lake, and how much he enjoyed swimming in the rain. That led my mind into remembrance of past swims in the rain, and to memories of swimming in the ocean off an island just south of Jervis Inlet, where I used to holiday when the children were young.

Some years we would be there when the phosphorous was in the water. I'm sure that any kayaker or boater has had that experience, on a dark night with a velvety ocean, stars above in the sky, and jewels in the water from every movement — jewels dripping from oars or paddle, or arms or legs as they came out of the water — bodies wrapped in jewels as they moved through the water. The trails of the oars or paddles, even the fish if they came near the surface.

Now I know how to enter the Light — through the door of memory. ॐ

NAN BROWN IS A LONG-TIME STUDENT OF IYENGAR YOGA. FOR SEVERAL YEARS, SHE TOOK CLASSES WITH SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH WHILE SHE WAS TEACHING IN METCHOSIN, AND HAS CONTINUED TO TAKE CLASSES (IN METCHOSIN) WITH KARYN WOODLAND. NAN'S YOGA PRACTICE HAS ALSO BEEN INFLUENCED BY THE TEACHINGS OF SWAMI RADHA. NAN RECENTLY TURNED 76 - (SHARING THE SAME BIRTH YEAR AS SHIRLEY)! AS A FORMER REPORTER FOR THE *TIMES COLONIST*, NAN WAS ABLE TO INDULGE HER LOVE OF LEARNING AND CURIOSITY ABOUT LIFE: TWO QUALITIES WHICH SUSTAIN HER LONG-TIME YOGA PRACTICE. SHE ALSO HAS A KEEN EYE FOR OBSERVATION AND REFLECTION, AS THIS PIECE CLEARLY ILLUSTRATES.

## Breaking Out of Your Slump

by Jennifer Crowe

In our class a few weeks ago, we were asked us to look at people's ways of walking, and then to study our own habits, while walking and otherwise. I noticed my slumping back and raised shoulders. Not that I wasn't aware of them before but I NOTICED and NOTED that back and shoulders.

Since then, I've tried to remember to lift my front chest whenever I become aware of it, and I think it is starting to become a habit! I hope it will be an established one, and not disappear with life's busyness.

That lifting is like an asana to me. When I first started lifting my chest on a regular basis it actually was tight and a little painful. Now it feels more friendly.

Yesterday, we did some standing poses using the chair. I have not been lifting any of my little weights because it always seems to bother my neck, so to do standing poses such as *Trikonasana* and *Parivrtta Trikonasana* was a challenge. I think doing them with a chair at home, and finding the place where my head is in alignment with my spine, and tucking in my chin instead of trying for straightness (if you know what I mean), might help me be able to do those poses — at least gently.

I am beginning to understand more about my own body, and what I have done to my back and posture, although I still do not know exactly why and what I can do (gently and slowly) to make the best of what is. I have wondered why lying down poses felt better when my knees were bent even though I don't have lower back issues. Now I see that, of course, when the lower back arches, it changes my neck and chest. This is so interesting. When I tried to figure it out earlier, I just did not understand, even with anatomy diagrams in front of me.

It all takes time and doing. ॐ

JENNIFER CROWE HAS BEEN A STUDENT OF YOGA FOR SEVERAL YEARS. WHEN SHE ISN'T DOING YOGA, YOU MIGHT FIND HER PAINTING (WATER COLOURS), LOOKING AFTER HER BROOD OF ALASKAN MALMUTE DOGS, OR VISITING HER GRANDCHILDREN.



PHOTO: JOHN AMUSSEN

*The August 2007 Junior Intermediate Teacher Training Intensive brought 19 participants together for five days of work with Shirley Daventry French, ably assisted by Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hogya and Marlene Miller. "We came wanting information but were asked to discover it for and by ourselves ....to teach from our practice, not from a recipe....to look, see and observe....to notice our habits. ...Then, to finish a wonderful week, we were all invited to Shirley's lovely home for an Indian meal." – Kristine Hodge*



*August 2007 Junior Intermediate Workshop Teacher Training Intensive.*

## 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 17 - 21, 2007**  
6:30 - 8:00 am daily

Fees:  
\$76 + GST IYCV members  
\$80 + GST non-members

Registration opens:  
Oct. 17, 2007 for IYCV members  
Oct. 22, 2007 for non-members

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

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

## Short WORKSHOP

Winter Solstice  
Workshop

With Ty Chandler

**Thursday, December 20**  
6:00 - 8:00 pm

**Friday, December 21**  
6:00 - 8:00 pm

Fees:  
\$60 + GST for IYCV members  
\$66 + GST for non-members

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



# An Impromptu Lecture from Guruji

February 2007

by Ann Kilbertus

It is March 1st at 5 am, and we're sitting in the airport in Mumbai waiting to depart after a month of studies at the institute in Pune.

India feels familiar, and at the same time new, even though I have made the journey many times now. In the city of Pune, large developments, brand name stores, and shopping malls are popping up everywhere. Information technology and globalization are changing the economy. Even the vegetable vendors on the street have cell phones.

Amidst all this, the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Institute remains an oasis for students of yoga from all over the world. Along with classes, there are times built in for daily practice when students can come and work on their own along side Guruji and Geetaji. I have never seen the practice space so full as it is this winter. At times Guruji may practice quietly. Other times, he may work with a visitor or perhaps his granddaughter, Abijata. Often when this happens and he is emphasizing a particular point, a small group will assemble to see what pearls can be gathered. Suddenly, the flow will change, and Guruji will go back to his own practice and the impromptu group will quietly disperse.

On one particular day, Guruji did not come to morning practice. About half-way through the session, someone came up and announced that we should clear the hall as Guruji was going to give a lecture to some visiting students. We were all invited to stay for his talk, or we could choose to leave in the next few minutes! People are always coming and going from the Institute, but in my experience, practice time was never stopped. I had to quickly get over the mind stuff arising from not completing my practice. Then it occurred to me—what an incredible opportunity this was going to be...to have a talk from the Master himself! I had to remind myself that comfort

*Then it occurred to me—what an incredible opportunity this was going to be...to have a talk from the Master himself!*



PHOTO: MICHAEL JP OAKES

and predictability are not to be expected in the presence of a spiritual teacher.

A group of students from a neighboring city were visiting the Institute. They were taking a course which would certify them as yoga teachers in less than a year. Obviously, their instructors wanted to expose them to Guruji and his system of yoga. They may or may not have known it takes years of practice and training to become even an introductory teacher in the system of Iyengar Yoga.

What follows are some of my notes from this inspirational talk. This summary is not meant to be a direct transcription, rather a compilation of notes taken at the time. Any errors or omissions are those of the note taker's.

I see your faces, but I don't see your practice. ....A course is a view on Yoga, not the way of Yoga. Yoga is a way of life.

Gently practice with attentive awareness...so that the five sheaths and how they should be interwoven to interact with each other (is conveyed)...so life is balanced in such a way that there is no disparity in ways of thinking and acting. That is what the practice of yoga teaches.

If you consider all the elements, sheaths, *tattvas*, etc. of the body...you see the body is like a forest...completely dark. It takes a very, very long time to penetrate the contents of the forest, to trace the hidden core of being or the Self.

Taking the diploma and saying goodbye would be a great failure. This is a caution I am giving.

Dig into the subject, taste it. Without digging there is no chance. The subject is an art, science, and philosophy. Get the diploma, and practice repeatedly: *Shtira sukham asanam* (sutra 2.46). Give it thought; use your intelligence a bit, and trace...What does it convey? Observe, watch, reflect, redo, relearn, unlearn. All these things are inborn in Yoga. Just having an oral view has no means. One has to put everything into practice and test whether the views are all accurate or inaccurate.

My message is yoga is discipline. Discipline is religion. Yoga teaches us the art of discipline, so it is religion...it teaches you not to be irreligious. That is how we have to study.

The first sutra, second chapter is the message. Yoga is union, *Kriya yoga* is action: union in action. What is the quality of action?

*You are youngsters; your blood is fresh; your brain is simple, innocent. If you practice you can explain divinity. Arrogance will not take us to divinity.*

*Svadyaya* (self study has to be applied) to find out whether firmness exists or not, and to develop skill to see and reflect if the action of the body has imprinted on your mind and heart. E.g. in *tadasana*...what are the fibres on the right doing compared to the left? Is the shin straight or slanting? Observe that which makes you connect from the gross to the subtle and the subtle to the gross (through the *kosas*). Be critical in every thought, word and deed.

Guruji went on to discuss the *kosas*.

*Ishvara Pranidhana* is not only surrender to God, but devotion to God. Your *sadhana* is *Ishvara*, *asana* is God, *pranayama* is God, *dhyana* is God. Surrender of the self to that which is eternal so that you will be humble. This will take you to *purusha visesa*.

Moral practices of *ahimsa*, *satya*, *asteya*, *aparigraha*, *bhramacharya* were emphasized to counteract the greedy, ambitious, avaricious, clever nature of man. Patanjali is a noble man. He uses opposite words of what we are made of. He uses noble words to educate you.

*Yama* is God and *Yama* is also the Lord of death. You are the Lord of your death if you do not follow that. Don't just take somebody else's words. Find out what Patanjali conveys to each individual. Stick to *Tapas svadyaya* and *Ishvara pranidhana* and other things will follow.

Get ideas, not education. Education comes only by culture. Culture yourselves.

What is in your mind is in my mind. What is in your heart is in my heart. What is in your head is in my head. We are made up of the same stuff. Yoga is universal, and God is one...people call it by different names.

Differentiation is the main source of destruction of our heritage. Can you explain *nidra* if you don't even know of your existence? In [the act of] getting up, I am aware that I/you surface, and make it to exist. Patanjali is asking us in *stira sukham asanam* not only to do padmasana from the outside, but for the inner vision to come from that.

Guruji went on to discuss the limbs of yoga, cautioning the group to be careful when using the word *dhyana*.

In *Hatha*, psychologically, *ath* means will. *Atma* exists everywhere, even here. Intellectual gymnastics are used to maintain a superiority complex...I've established the soul in each and every cell of the body...I have studied each and every part...my Self is there. The Self is enjoying the *asana*, not the mind. Learn not to divide.

The foundation has to be very much firm. The foundation takes years [to build] and [yet] we are all thinking of *samadhi*. If the foundation is firm, the mind is firm.

Yoga is a subject which cleanses the outer and inner body, the outer and inner mind. In temples the god is decorated and you are attracted. *Asanas* are garlands to the Lord, ornaments to the soul. You have to decorate the soul with the ornaments of the body. Each muscle acts as a flower to decorate and to fit onto the Lord who is within.

Effortful effort should become effortless effort, so when struggle disappears ... you are not in the body or the mind. Making the soul to spread throughout the body...that is *dhyana*. *Dhyana* is the broken frontier of *buddhi*, *manas*... everything...it does not mean that you are absent minded.

I am teaching from 1935 up to now. The Light that has come...I will not allow it to fade. A flower does not come to a bee. You have to go; it does not come to you.

Discussion ensued about the classic texts by Patanjali (*Yoga Sutras*) and *Svatramya* (*Hatha Yoga Pradipika*).

*Asana* is a foundation. Practice *yama* and *niyama* and go straight.

You are youngsters; your blood is fresh; your brain is simple, innocent. If you practice you can explain divinity. Arrogance will not take us to divinity. Only *bhakti* brings that innocence. Innocence is a divine experience. Let me move to know what I do not know, let me practice with an innocent heart, with an innocent head. *Vitarca vicara ananda asmitarup anugamat samprajnatah* (sutra 1.17).

And with the recitation of the above sutra and sutra 1.33, Guruji concluded this impromptu lecture. ॐ

ANN KILBERTUS IS AN EXPERIENCED IYENGAR YOGA TEACHER WITH SENIOR INTERMEDIATE I CERTIFICATION. SHE TRAVELS REGULARLY TO PUNE TO STUDY DIRECTLY WITH THE IYENGAR FAMILY.



**No Classes**

**November 12  
Remembrance Day**

**November 16-18  
Chris Saudek Workshop**



IYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA

# 2007-08 calendar

## NOVEMBER

- 12 IYCV closed
- 16-18 IYCV closed for Chris Saudek workshop
- 16-18 Chris Saudek Workshop
- 16-18 Junior Intermediate II Assessment, Vancouver, BC
- 24 Teachers' Meeting

## DECEMBER

- 14 In the Light of Yoga – Gururji's Birthday Celebration
- 17-21 Sadhana with Corrine Lowen
- 20-21 Winter Solstice Workshop with Ty Chandler

## JANUARY 2008

- 12 Women Working Wisely Series Part 1
- 18-20 Heart of Yoga Workshop with Shirley Daventry French
- 26 Teachers' Meeting

## FEBRUARY

- 2 IYCV AGM
- 9 Women Working Wisely Series Part 2
- 23 Teachers' Meeting – Seated poses & forward extensions
- 29-Mar 2 Junior Intermediate I Assessment, Toronto, ON

## MARCH

- 8 Women Working Wisely Series Part 3
- 15 Teachers' Meeting
- 23-25 Gabriella Giubilaro Workshop

## APRIL

- 4-6 55 Plus Retreat on Salt Spring Island with Leslie Hogya and Wendy Boyer
- 18-21 Junior Intermediate II and III Assessment, Toronto, ON
- 19 Women Working Wisely Series Part 4
- 26 Teachers' Meeting

## MAY

- TBA IYAC AGM – date and location to be announced

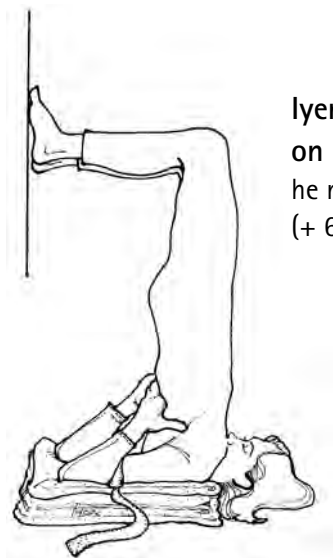
## JUNE

- 6-8 Salt Spring Retreat
- 14 Teachers' Meeting
- 20-23 Introductory I and II Assessment, London, ON

### *Newsletter submissions*

**Written:** Digital format is preferred—Word file or other files compatible with Microsoft Word, plain text files or emails. Hand written or printed submissions will be accepted; however, they require transposing (typing or scanning) to digital format by the newsletter committee before publication.

**Photos:** Prints or digital images. Digital files must be high resolution (minimum 600 dpi) for adequate reproduction. Acceptable formats are JPG (choose: no compression, high quality, large file), TIFF or EPS. Preferred: save as grayscale EPS files, with no adjustments, sizing or cropping.



Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria membership expires  
on December 31, each year.

The membership subscription fee is \$40.00 CDN  
(+ 6% GST for Canadians) and is renewable each January.

**Membership benefits include:**

- 5% discount on all classes
- free practice times at the IYCV
- 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.

# Time to Renew!

*To renew your membership, please fill in the form below and send to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria.*



IYENGAR YOGA  
CENTRE of VICTORIA  
SOCIETY

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Victoria BC V8V 3K3**

**(250) 386-YOGA (9642)**

Membership/subscription fee is \$40.00 + GST,  
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☐ Do not mail me my newsletter during sessions,  
I'll pick one up at my class.

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