



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

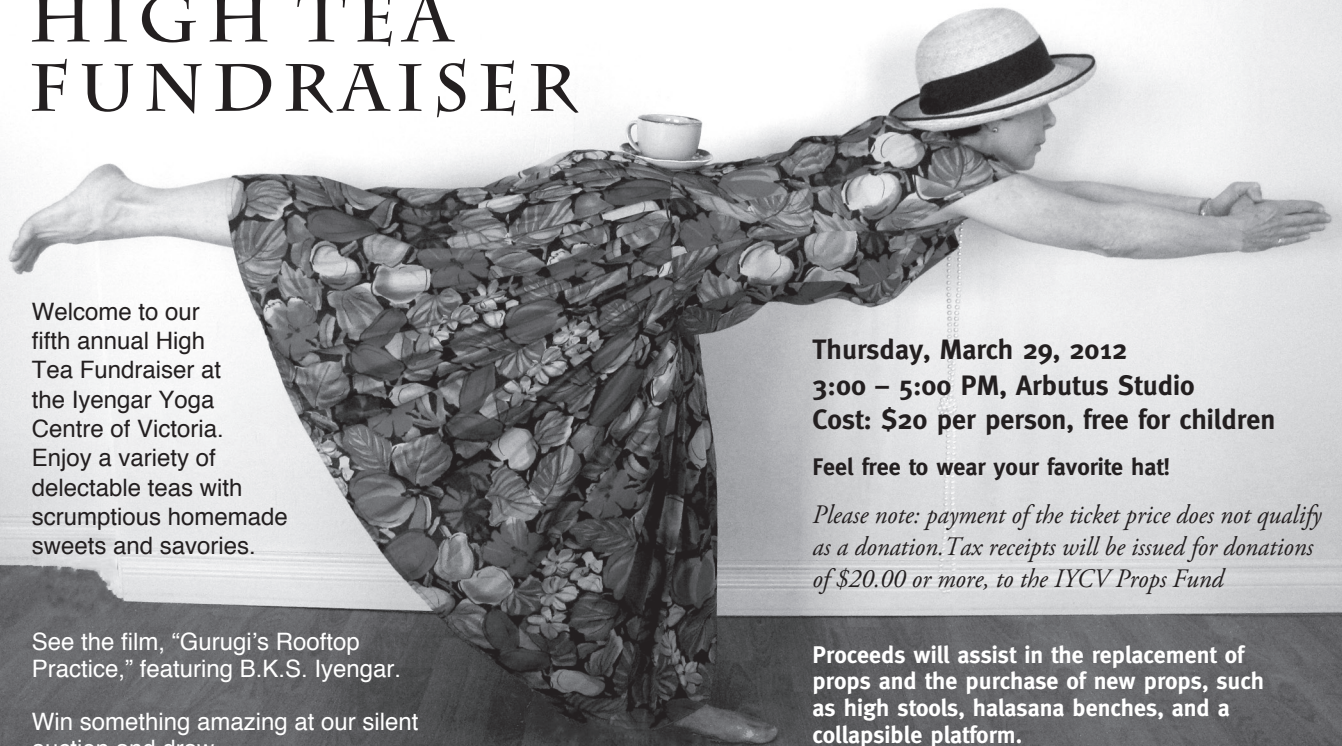
N E W S L E T T E R
S P R I N G 2 0 1 2



Yoga is the art of getting rid of borders. Do not cut your self off from the Infinite with too short ideas. Let there always be the possibility to say "I shall try," "I shall see." Create in the Infinite, do not be limited beings.

– B.K.S. Iyengar

HIGH TEA FUNDRAISER



Welcome to our fifth annual High Tea Fundraiser at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria. Enjoy a variety of delectable teas with scrumptious homemade sweets and savories.

See the film, "Gurugi's Rooftop Practice," featuring B.K.S. Iyengar.

Win something amazing at our silent auction and draw.

Thursday, March 29, 2012
3:00 – 5:00 PM, Arbutus Studio
Cost: \$20 per person, free for children

Feel free to wear your favorite hat!

Please note: payment of the ticket price does not qualify as a donation. Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$20.00 or more, to the IYCV Props Fund

Proceeds will assist in the replacement of props and the purchase of new props, such as high stools, halasana benches, and a collapsible platform.

**Iyengar Yoga Centre
of Victoria
Presents**

**Gabriella
Giubilaro**

March 22-25, 2012



Gabriella is a senior teacher based in Italy and has studied with B.K.S. Iyengar almost every year for twenty years. In 1977, after receiving her doctorate in physics at the University of Florence, Gabriella decided to devote her life to the study and teaching of yoga. In 1989, she opened the Iyengar Centre in Florence, Italy. She is also a founder of Italy's Light On Yoga Association. Gabriella's scientific background is evident in the clarity of her teaching. She is well known for her dynamism, good humour and attention to individual needs. Gabriella has taught regularly in Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic, Russia and the United States.

Fees: Beginners Workshop

\$40 + HST members

\$45 + HST non-members

Fees: General Workshop

\$310 + HST members

\$350 + HST non members

Workshop for Beginners

Thursday, March 22, 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

This workshop will offer beginning students a chance to study with a long time practitioner and international teacher in the Iyengar tradition.

**Workshop for general students
and above**

Friday and Saturday, March 23-24
9:30 am - 12:30 pm, 2:30 pm - 5:00 pm,
Sunday, March 25, 9:30-12:00 noon

Student must know how to set up for *salamba sarvangasana*.

Times are subject to change.

To register, drop by or phone
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC, V8V 3K3
250 386-YOGA (9642)

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee.

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EDITOR Roger Champagne

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE Judy Atkins,
Giles Bixler, Roger Champagne, Lauren Cox,
Shirley Daventry French, Johanna Godliman,
Melissa Hadley, Jayne Jonas, Jane McFarlane

DESIGN & PRODUCTION Cady Graphics

IYCV LOGO Charles Campbell, Lauren Cox

PHOTOGRAPHY Linda Benn, Johanna
Godliman, Leslie Hogya, Jane McFarlane,
Gary Wong

PROOFING Judy Atkins, Jane McFarlane

ADS & ANNOUNCEMENTS Jane McFarlane

DISTRIBUTION Adia Kapoor

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IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

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

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

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

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

Newsletter Advertising Policy

(Adopted February 20, 2004)

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

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

REGISTRATION:

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

Phone: (250) 386-YOGA (9642)

Please visit our website:

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



Spring 2012

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

The words above form the mantra for a healing meditation, which was taught to Swami Sivananda Radha after her initiation in India. Swami Radha practised it extensively, and it is a primary spiritual practice at Yasodhara Ashram, the spiritual centre founded by her in British Columbia, Canada. I was fortunate to spend three months at this ashram in 1976 where daily, sometimes many times a day, we did this practice known as the Divine Light Invocation.¹

The sudden serious health crisis of a very dear friend and the unexpected death of the husband of one of the teacher trainees at our centre brought an urgency to my practice of this invocation. I learned about these events while on holiday in Hawaii, thousands of kilometres away from their locations. Putting those individuals and their families in the Light is the best thing I know to do at this stage and at this distance. Practical help of a varying nature may be needed in the future, but I know from personal experience that to keep the light flowing is a powerful form of prayer.

In my teen years my prayers followed a Christian Church of England path. At my high school there was a daily morning assembly when the headmaster led us in prayer, delivered the lesson for the day and told us how he expected our lives to be conducted. This lesson was delivered in the manner with which he must have addressed his troops during the First World War when he was a Colonel in the British army. I can't believe it inspired them any more than it did most of us! Rather, morning prayers were a

penance which had to be borne if you wanted to stay in that supposedly very good school—unless you were Catholic or Jewish, in which case you were taken to another room; to do what, I do not know. Today such discrimination would not be tolerated, but those students, few in number, were the envy of most of the rest of us.

Quite independently, outside of school, I became a practising member of the Church of England, attended communion and evensong on Sundays and various other church related activities throughout the week. There was no compulsion here; in fact, my parents tried to dissuade me from becoming a communicant. I was following footsteps taken by my older brother eight years previously, and he had turned away from the church. I never learned why! But, in the light of this experience, my parents counselled patience and caution which did not go over very well with me.

I especially liked the choral services when the significance of prayer took on a very special meaning as the church became full of music, energy and life. Although at the time I would not have spoken of this as communion with the Divine, my spirits were always uplifted.

My awareness of the value of prayer was heightened throughout the Second World War when our lives at home were menaced by air raids and there was constant concern for my father and brother who were serving in the Royal Air Force overseas. My prayers were pretty simple and would sound something like this: "Please God keep my mother, father, Alan (my brother), grandmother, all my friends and relations and me safe, for ever and ever, Amen!" Rather than praying for world peace, I was much more self-absorbed.

By the time I met Swami Radha in Canada years later I was a self-proclaimed agnostic. Praying and devotional practices had receded far into the background. What attracted me was the common sense that I detected in the philosophy of yoga as well as the power I sensed in this physically small but

¹ *The Divine Light Invocation: a Healing Meditation*, by Swami Sivananda Radha is available through Timeless Books at Yasodhara Ashram or from Amazon books.

commanding woman. At Yasodhara Ashram common sense was emphasised as we explored the power of the mind, what it could mean to have a prayerful attitude, and the value of service and devotion. While not clear to me at the time, I was being given a foundation in the three main paths of yoga: *jnana marga* (the path of knowledge), *karma marga* (the path of action) and *bhakti marga* (the path of devotion).

This basic teaching of yoga has little to do with what is generally perceived as yoga today with its commercialism, narcissism and ignorance. Not surprisingly this has led to criticism from yoga masters and longtime practitioners. When I say longtime, I mean much longer than the ten or twelve years in which this expansion has taken place. Not surprisingly teachers with little training, and perhaps too much confidence and ambition are causing concern about possible injuries and harm.

I cannot say it often enough or loudly enough—too many poorly prepared people are teaching yoga and before long embarking on teacher training with large groups of poorly trained students. This creates a downward spiral in which the pursuit of excellence (and even competence) is sacrificed to the pursuit of self-aggrandisement and monetary gain.

When we opened the doors of our yoga centre at its current location ten and a half years ago, we were the only designated yoga centre in town. Now we are one of dozens of yoga centres within a few blocks of downtown. However, as a non-profit yoga centre we are a rare anomaly.

In 1970, the message of yoga had reawakened in North America² and ignited the interest of a group of people from diverse backgrounds who had

moved to Victoria from other countries and across Canada hoping to enhance their quality of life, a move which involved renunciation of much that we valued! Thus a small group came together as students once a week at my home, where we practised yoga asana, shared a meal over which we discussed our experience and explored the teachings of yoga and Eastern philosophy. It was a form of *satsang* or spiritual discourse. As a consequence we found something in common, something very valuable: a thirst for yoga which led to the formation of the Victoria Yoga Centre later becoming the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria.

In the 1970's the practice of yoga *asana* or *hatha*, as it was often described, was viewed as a preparation for the serious meditative aspects of yoga. Physical effort was often discouraged; but the group of us who continued practising together could see that a very strong effort was needed to render not only our minds but also our bodies fit for meditation and the spiritual journey. Hence our path to B.K.S. Iyengar whose approach is encapsulated in the following maxim: *Extension means creation of space. Space leads to freedom. Freedom brings precision. Precision leads to perfection. Perfection is truth. Truth is God.*

Swami Radha and B.K.S. Iyengar both referred to yoga as spiritual practice, but I maintained a separation in my mind between this and Christian prayer. I also managed to antagonise many practising Christians at the Victoria Y where I was teaching yoga, and received a request for restraint from the managing director. Forty years ago yoga as a physical practice was tolerable at the Y but as a spiritual practice was to be discouraged.

I continued to teach at the Y for many years with a little more tact and consideration, but most importantly, I continued my own inward journey of discovery. In many aspects of life,

I began to recognise threads which connected my past to my present.

When I think back to my church-going days, my first fiery Irish vicar knew how to use his voice, physical presence and bodily gestures as potent spiritual tools. The services he conducted were a well-directed theatrical production. His curates were of varying natures but also well versed in the art of commanding attention and inspiring effort and persistence. They all played their roles well. The ceremonies in that church were not punishing like those in my school; on the contrary, the combined talents of the clergy introduced many aspects of action, devotion and the pursuit of knowledge. Had I known the word then, I could have called it “yoga”!

My introduction to Guruji's work came through his book *Light on Yoga* published in 1966, which I acquired around 1970. My introduction to him in person took place in Pune in 1979. His classes were pure theatre. He was a consummate actor, director and muse. Coming out of one of our first classes I turned to my husband (an Englishman) and likened it to being back at school in England. The discipline was there, commanding, not to be trifled with, but the motive behind it was quite different as was the purpose of this teaching! This discipline contained the element of compassion. I saw it in Guruji's eyes the first time he admonished me for my ignorance. In Pune the three paths of yoga: *karma*, *jnana* and *bhakti* were interwoven into each and every class. Later, I was to learn that it permeated Guruji's presence out of class: in the library, in chance meetings in the vestibule, in formal discourses and during impromptu conversations.

Guruji's life force and his incredible curiosity about life's meaning and purpose flow uninterrupted. At ninety-three years of age he is vital and living a life full of discovery accompanied by excitement and delight in these discoveries, which are used as a stepping-stone

2 In 1893 Swami Vivekananda travelled to the United States to teach about yoga and Vedanta. His speech at the World Parliament of Religion in Chicago drew a standing ovation from an audience of 7000 people!

to the next realisation. Swami Radha died aged eighty-four and not in good physical health but undiminished in her quest for truth. The last time I saw her, not long before she died, she made me very uncomfortable with some questions for which I had no quick and ready answers. And that in itself was progress for me since on our first meeting she had told me: "You are very quick with words!" Two consummate teachers very different in background and style, but equally undiminished and undeterred in their quest to use this birth to its fullest potential in a quest for knowledge.

On my personal yogic path one step has led to another slowly and steadily. In addition to trusting my teachers, I learned to trust the light of my own intuition. In that regard, when I once described myself as intuitive, Swami Radha shot back: "Are you? Check it out!" And from an article when I thought I was writing about my intuition, Guruji pointed out how I had showed my pride! On the spiritual path nothing is exempt from scrutiny.

Unexpectedly, here in Hawaii, the personal crises among friends and colleagues in the yoga community, which I mentioned at the start of this article, have brought me to a better understanding of yoga practice as prayer, differing from my Church of England roots only in form. Light has dawned!

Light is as much a symbol of Christianity as it is of yoga as well as many of the world's spiritual paths. In the crises which arose recently, I would have found it difficult to say to my friends "I am praying for you" but was quick to say "I will put you in the Light". Nevertheless, the gulf between the prayers of my youth and my current practice of the Divine Light Invocation is being bridged.

Neither prayers nor practice of the Light Invocation determine that a preferred outcome will unfold but rather, illuminate how best to cope with the situation on hand by finding inner strength and channelling it where it will be most beneficial. The words of the Lord's Prayer include the phrase

"thy will be done on earth..." The Light Invocation turns our focus away from limited self-interest towards a sense of higher purpose. The existence of self-interest is not denied but put into perspective.

In life's most difficult times when the outlook appears dark, a well directed selfless effort on our own part or by a friend or loved one can help us find the switch to turn on a glimmer of light. Alone (and when it comes down to it we are always alone) facing the most difficult moments of my life, the Divine Light Invocation proved invaluable. On a plane with engine trouble about to make an emergency landing, I was able to redirect my mind away from fear and terror towards the light. The compromised plane had just taken off from London full of fuel for a transatlantic crossing, so before returning for an emergency landing, the pilot jettisoned fuel over the ocean. This took about one hour, and after an initial struggle to get hold of my mind and emotions, I became incredibly calm and almost curious about how it would unfold! One of Guruji's favourite expressions, often said in exasperation, is "What am I to do?" In that situation there was nothing I could do but endeavour to prepare myself come what may!

On another occasion, when my husband was ill with potentially fatal septicaemia and my children were still quite young, the Divine Light Invocation, together with *asana*, *pranayama* and chanting practices enabled me to stay in touch with my own physical and inner strength and resourcefulness. In both situations I was all too well aware of my inability to influence the outcome directly but could find strength to take charge of my own personal response.

Spirituality is practicality. Nothing exemplifies this better than these words of Guruji: *When there is no inner light, Switch on the outer light!* ॐ



Sri B.K.S. Iyengar, Honorary President

IYAC/ACYI ASSESSMENT DATES

March 2-4
Intermediate Junior I
Kelowna, BC

March 9-11
Introductory II
Robert's Creek, BC

October 19-21, 2012
Introductory II
Saskatoon, SK

November 16-18, 2012
Intermediate Junior I
Location TBA

Check results and upcoming assessments www.iyengaryoga.com



Easter Sunday Timed Practice

With Robin Cantor

Sunday, April 8, 2012
10:30 am – 12:30 PM

\$20 + HST members
\$30 + HST non-members

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

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

Tribute to Dave Rocklyn

By Shirley Daventry-French

The \$50,000 bequest in the Last Will and Testament of one of our students, Dave Rocklyn, was finally deposited in our account just before Christmas 2011. We are truly grateful.

When I heard about the death of Dave Rocklyn I remembered a quiet dignified man whom I had known for almost the entire time I had been practising yoga. Just over a year ago when I first learned about this bequest, I was almost speechless. Not because I thought he was not a generous man but because he lived so simply and modestly. Dave was always supportive of the yoga centre but his support was of a practical nature often involving manual labour.

Our paths had rarely crossed in the last few years, but I have thought about him a lot since hearing about his generous gesture. I was always pleased to see him but rarely sought him out. That said, it's interesting to remember that I had nothing but pleasant connections with him. Why then should our



Diane and Dave Rocklyn

meetings have been so rare? It was partly due to his nature, a solitary man just getting on with living his life, but largely because of my nature! And that's a subject for further reflection!

Clearly it is important for all who value the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria to acknowledge Dave's material gift but also to acknowledge his presence in our community. Whether we knew him personally or not he has given us a spiritual as well as a monetary gift: an opportunity to practise gratitude, a practice fundamental to yoga. Whether

you believe in Divine intervention or not, the first news of this gift arriving a few days before Christmas 2010 at a time of financial constraint at the centre, was masterpiece of timing!

Dave was a member of the centre from its early beginning in the 1970's. In fact he was a founding member. He attended classes and most of the workshops as well as *satsang* (which we held weekly). He was often to be seen at social gatherings. He was a quiet man, a thoughtful and attentive student who got on with what was being taught to the



The 28th Annual Retreat at the Salt Spring Centre

June 1-3, 2012
With Shirley Daventry French

This is your opportunity to attend the annual retreat on beautiful Salt Spring Island and participate in a weekend of Iyengar Yoga with Shirley Daventry French. Renew your Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria membership so you can be in the front of the line for an opportunity to participate in this wonderful event.

Fees: IYCV Members
\$350.00 + HST – shared accommodation
\$320.00 + HST – camping
\$295.00 + HST – commuting

Fees: Non-members
\$385.00 + HST – shared accommodation
\$355.00 + HST – camping
\$330.00 + HST – commuting

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

best of his ability—even faced with some of the extraordinary contraptions Ramanand Patel (a frequent visiting teacher and engineer by profession) thought up.

As I recall those early days, Dave was one of a group of men who were all serious students none of whom were flexible; the word ‘adept’ was not a part of their yoga vocabulary but they were good students who worked well. You could often see them grouped together somewhere at the back of the classroom.

I will never forget one workshop with Ramanand where we were dropping back from *tadasana* into *urdhva dhanurasana* with nothing but the support of Ramanand’s palm placed on our sternum. One by one he guided students through this process starting with a few of the more agile students but eventually getting around to this group of men who despite their trying had not succeeded in becoming invisible. For them Ramanand did make one concession by getting someone to stand behind them as they dropped back just in case they panicked and collapsed. But no one did panic! And all of them—every single student in the large class—did drop back and achieve a reasonable facsimile of *urdhva dhanurasana*, including Dave! Those of you who remember Dave’s body will understand the leap of faith required by him!

Steadfast is one word which comes to my mind to describe Dave although, as I know because he was my student for many years, he could be stubborn. Stoic is another. My Oxford dictionary defines a stoic as “one who practises repression of emotion, indifference to pleasure or pain, and patient endurance.” I don’t know enough about Dave personally to know if he repressed his emotions, but not being a fan of the ‘show it all, tell it all’ climate abroad today with emotions spewing all over the internet, television and elsewhere, in my lexicon ‘stoicism’ is a positive trait!

Dave Rocklyn was a true practitioner of karma yoga. Rarely seen on centre stage and never seeking a starring role, he was content to be a behind the scenes member of the team just getting on with jobs which needed to be done. Little was known about his background or what he did for a living. Perhaps he preferred it that way. *Santosa* or contentment is another fundamental yogic practice.

Our friend and fellow student, Dave Rocklyn, appears to have been a contented man, contented in life and death to be a part of our work at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria.

In remembrance of his life and in gratitude for his gift in support of our work, *Om namah Sivaya*. ॐ



IYENGAR YOGA

Teacher Training Intensives

Fees for each course:

\$585 CDN + HST IYCV members

\$625 CDN + HST non-members

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee.

Registration now open.

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

July 9-14, 2012

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 in other areas of British Columbia and in 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 13-17, 2012

With Shirley Daventry French, assisted by Ann Kilbertus

Intermediate Junior and Senior syllabi for certified Iyengar yoga teachers

This intensive offers the opportunity for certified teachers to refine teaching and practice at their current level of certification, and to prepare for assessment.

Shirley is a direct student of B.K.S. Iyengar who awarded her a senior teaching credential. She 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.

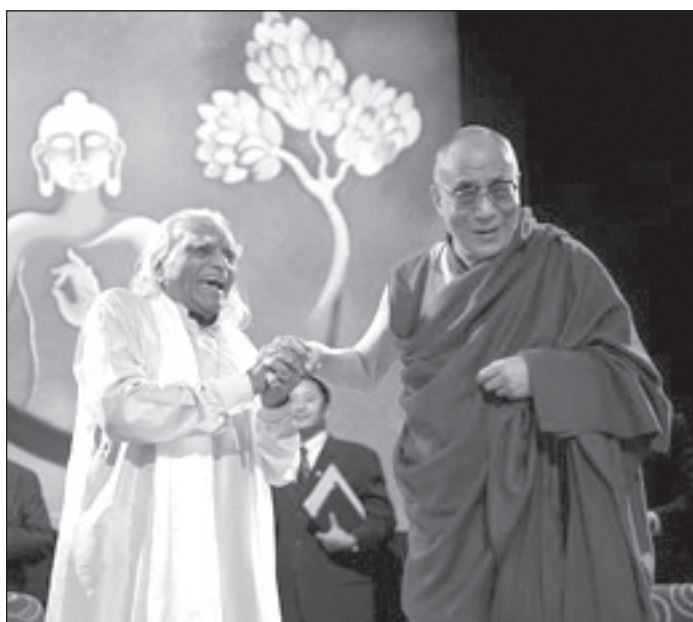
As in previous years, Iyengar yoga teachers from other countries are invited to apply; however, I.Y.A.C. members will be given priority.

Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar in Conversation with His Holiness The Dalai Lama, Part I

*This is an edited transcript of a dialogue between Gururji B.K.S. Iyengar (BKS)
and His Holiness The Dalai Lama (HH), moderated by Mr. Rajiv Mehrotra (RM).*

RM: Your holiness, we are talking here about happiness and cultivation of happiness. Happiness is variously described and understood in different traditions. In both yoga and in Buddhism there is a notion of *dubkha* and the elimination of *dubkha*. What is left behind or what happens or what is the state of mind once *dubkha* is eliminated or erased or transcended? We also have in our eastern vocabularies *sāmadhi*, *nirvana*, *moksha* several words and phrases for this highest experience when *dubkha* ceases. So what is happiness?

HH: I usually refer to Indians as Guru. Over here (Gururji) is a real Guru. I am a *chela* (follower). At the time of my birth he had already started teaching yoga. (Does *namaste* to Gururji).



His Holiness The Dalai Lama greets the audience before commencing the conversation with Gururji.

My English vocabulary is very very limited. When we say happiness it is in a sense more like satisfaction, deep satisfaction. Then, I think *nirvana* / *moksha* is a stage where the source of suffering sort of completely ceases – that is permanent satisfaction. Happiness is not necessarily the feeling of pleasure. So sometimes physical suffering also brings deeper satisfaction. I think, at another level, it is important to make a distinction between satisfaction through sensorial experience and another

level of satisfaction which does not depend on experiences of the sensorial levels but through the mental level.

Again, they are of two types. One is more or less spontaneous and the other type of satisfaction is through training, through civilization, through cultivation and then you use it. For example, compassion, (*māha karunā*). Of course, first you should learn then develop some genuine interest and this genuine interest brings enthusiasm.

When we speak of cultivation, it is normally translated here as meditation. We have to understand that there are different forms of cultivation. Some cultivation practices take one as an object, then focus upon it and then meditate. In some forms of cultivation, you do not take a form of a particular object for cultivating a state of mind.

There are also different levels of awareness. One level of awareness is through word, another level of awareness is through reasoning where you can get some kind of conviction and the third level of awareness is through experience. So in this way you get deeper satisfaction at the level of the mind and not through sensorial experiences. Therefore, like in a dream state, the sensorial consciousness is neither active nor functional but you get some feeling, some experiences at the mental level.

*There are different levels of awareness.
Through word, through reasoning and
through experience.*

So I always stress, as a Buddhist, our main goal is Buddha *purusa* but in the meantime, we also should think to make life more pleasant, more calm, which is the by-product, through training the mind. You are better equipped to compare (their form) so that I always see a nature of separation from Buddhist religion or religion, simply I call secular, to achieve a happy life. So that is happiness.

RM: It's interesting that in yoga too you have the eight stages or eight limbs reaching to that stage of happiness as you do in Buddhist tradition. So there are similarities in the stages / path. What for you is the ultimate goal? Tell us about the goal – the ultimate goal of yoga.

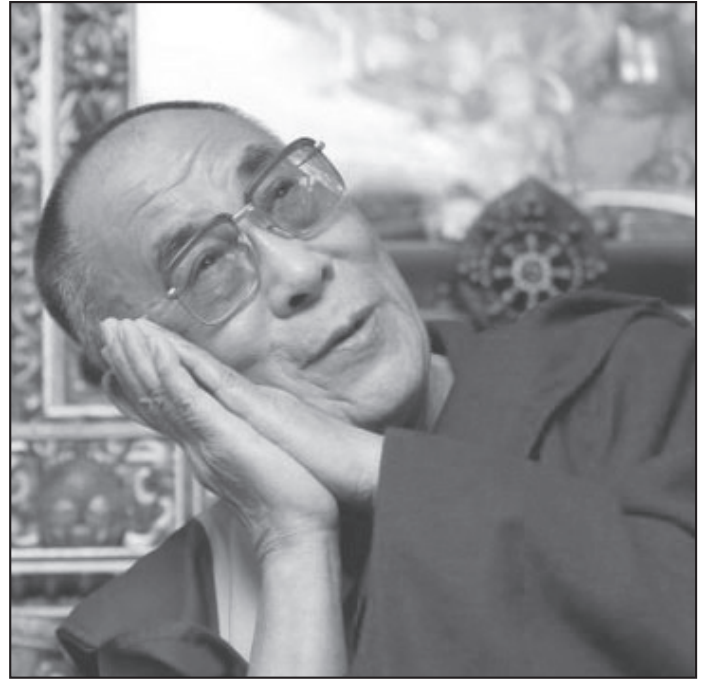
B.K.S: No doubt we all speak of happiness. You know happiness has also got its own compartments. Like health having different compartments, happiness also has got different compartments – physical health, ethical health, mental health, intellectual health, conscious health, conscientious health and divine health. All put together is real health. One cannot say that one is healthy till all these are healthy.

Similarly, there are seven states of awareness – the *sapta prānta bhūmika* of *prajna*. So first awareness is the awareness of these seven states of health. Then comes the seven stages of controlling the *sarira jñāna* or the complete understanding of each and every function of the body (*sarira jñāna*); then *prāna jñana* – how the breath moves, cooperates and coordinates with the *prāna* for cleaning, cleansing the inner body which cannot be visible to our eyes, then each and every cell of our body is ethically disciplined to function healthily. Then comes mental health. We are all caught up in lust, anger, greed, infatuation and pride. These are the emotional weeds that affect the mind. Yogic discipline works in such a way where these weeds are removed. Then, there is love without lust, anger without showing that it is from the mind but as if it is a separate entity. When this art is developed then the mind comes under control. It then experiences a state of poise or I can say passivity, quietness, gratitude. When that state comes, as His Holiness said that that is the state where one experiences what real happiness is.

Happiness is definitely subjective. It depends upon each individual. In the yoga *sūtras*, Patañjali speaks of *vitarka*, *vicāra*, *ananda*, *asmitā* where the head being the logical seat of intellect; *vicāra* – mind being the seat of intelligence. There should be a thorough communication between the intellect of the head and the intellect of the heart. When they get blended together then Patañjali says there is joy or happiness (*ānanda*). The moment, *ananda* comes, the “I” – the quality of “I” fades off (*asmitā*). That is not *ānanda* – it nullifies the consciousness. As it nullifies the consciousness then the last stage is *sat-citta*, experiencing the true quality of consciousness which is pure in itself without any colourization. We call it as the *chidānanda* but it is only *sat citta*. There is no *ānanda*. *Ananda* is the quality of the I. Beyond the I, beyond the mind is *prajñā* or you call it *ātma prajñā*. *Atma* has no happiness, no suffering, nothing and that is unalloyed poise, unalloyed peace, unalloyed joy.

The aim of yoga is to experience the non-colourization of happiness which ends only when going from the skin to the

When the intellect of the head and the intellect of the heart blend together then there is joy or happiness.



inner body; cleansing the inner body, cleansing the mind, cleansing the intelligence, cleansing the consciousness, so that when all these facets of the self are completely cleansed then there is nothing but joy which cannot be called joy but is beyond joy. I call that as real happiness.

RM: So your holiness would you see this in a context – clear of being without any *klesas*; of having transcended any descriptions of this state of experience; being so that you can no longer label it as *ānanda* – joy but a state of being (I am running short of words) but do you see any parallels to it?

HH: When we talk about these various states of mind particularly those that are derived from the meditative experiences, we are dealing with a very very complex and complicated subject. For example, in the Buddhist sources there are descriptions of various levels of absorbed mind. We understand descriptions which explain the states of mind progressively from grosser to subtler levels of absorption beginning with everyday mental experience of sensory world and then moving on to transcending the sensory experiences and so on. Similarly in Buddhist tradition different experiences like in *abhidharma mahākosas* as well as *abhidharma samuccayas*. There are descriptions of various levels of *dhyāna*. Concentrations with each having different characteristics and qualities of mind. But, if you look at the *vajrayana suchi* there is a slightly different explanation of the different levels of subtlety particularly in the highest yoga *tāntra*. So we are dealing with a very very complex issue here.

RM: To bring this down to the level of the unworthy aspirants as we can understand, what is it that makes your holiness happy on an everyday living experience?

HH: My experience is almost zero. Of course, in my daily practice, yoga *mandalas* on each occasion or stage do some meditation. Mainly my interest and also my effort is about investigation about ultimate nature – about ultimate reality that we call *shunyatā* – emptiness. So now there is demarcation between Buddhism and non – Buddhism, between *atma* theory and un-*atma* theory. Un-*ātma* deals with the absence of independent existence. We call that as *shunyata* – emptiness. Of course, the basis of visualization in each yoga practice, each *mandala* practice is the understanding of *shunya*. So without that understanding, visualization is just plain and cannot be grasped. Unless one practices in the Buddhist context based on *mandala* practice which are rooted in a deeper understanding of *shunyatā* – emptiness. It can in fact perpetuate grasping. That is my main interest.

Since that wisdom – understanding of *shunyatā* in order for that to become a counter force even to the subtlest imprints and dispositions of afflictions, it needs to be complemented with skillful means as the method. One of my main practices involves cultivation of Buddha *citta* compassion.

So, that is *Sāmadhi*. It needs hours and hours of meditation. So my excuse is that I have no time. Even if I have sufficient time I don't know. Due to my laziness, I may not practice. (*laughs*)

RM: Guruji, in terms of your practice, *shunyatā* – the emptiness of inherent existence, in some ways aims in our own everyday lives to loosen our sense of grasping at false reality. You get a sense that what appears solid and has an independent existence isn't really so. Would you see parallels to that in the investigations in recognizing that *maya* – illusion, 'the world is an illusion' is a similar aspiration though underlying *ātman*, *pakriti* and so....

BKS: First of all, being human beings we all are struck by *dujikhā* on account of our mental deficiencies. There is no doubt about it. "*Vitarkah himsādayah kṛta kārīta anumoditāh lobha krodha moha purvakah mṛdu madhya adhimatṛa, duḥkha ajnana ananataḥ ity ity pratipaksabhāvanam.*"

So Patañjali gives the reason for the cause of suffering – we are ignorant, we are caught up in the field of lust, anger and greed. On account of this, we struggle to get out of it to experience joy – bliss. So the reason for our weakness is that our understanding of the total cleansing of our mind and the brain with knowledge is still lacking. I showed in the morning how *astāṅga* yoga can improve our understanding by the ethical discipline of each *āsana*. The principles of *yama* and the principles of *niyama* are introduced in each *āsana* so that one can experience a state of equipoise.

We are all sitting here. The silence in the hall which you are all experiencing now – no sound, no noise except our voice – what do you term that? It is nothing but poise – a state of silence. Stable silence which you cannot term as happiness but you are all contented since there is silence. So from this we learn what yoga teaches us that when we all are in the state of the present, it is the only state which gives us real happiness and joy. Present has no movement. Present is moment. When the wheel of the present moves forward it is called future and when the wheel moves backwards it is called past. We do not always live in the present which goes on rolling. We live in the movement of the moment that is the past or the future. Nobody attends to the present.

So when we are in *stambha vṛtti*, we make the mind to remain in the state of present throughout the presentation of the *āsana* so that the practitioner understands the *vartamān kāla*. The present is the only state which gives us real happiness and joy because we are not caught up in the wheel of the past – memory or the visionary feelings of the future but we live in the stable time. When we live in the stable time, the other two times disappear and I consider that time as the best of the happiness each individual can experience while living. That is the beauty of yoga. It makes you to live in the present throughout – neither oscillating nor wandering. You come to a state of steadiness and that steadiness must be like a thread having two ends. The mind has to move without disturbing in the thread keeping the beginning and the end of the thread in a single thread. That is how the mind should flow and I call that mind the contented fulfilled experienced mind. That is for me the real unalloyed joy, unalloyed peace.

Happiness has no terminology at all, no expressions at all for real joy. It cannot be explained. You can only feel it. Therefore, as I am with His Holiness, there is a closeness in my approach, in his approach, in our approach. Therefore I consider that we two should work together and blend the material which we have so that there is a common avenue formed for each individual to experience that joy. We use the words for e.g. *maitri*; *karuṇā*; *mudita* and *upekṣa* which are common to Buddhism and all religions. So this *maitri*; *karuṇā*; *mudita* and *upekṣa* have got a common meaning. You should be compassionate; you should be friendly when needed, you should be glad if your friend is better off than you but not to go against him.

"Yoga makes us live in the present. The present is the only state that give us real happiness and joy."

Indifference means indifference to the pleasures and the pain. The *āsanas* will help you to develop the art of indifference which is nothing but renunciation of the attachment of the body and changing that attachment to be contacted and attached to the self and that is the highest bliss in our *sādhana*.

“We two should work together, blend the material which we have so that there is a common avenue for each individual to experience that joy.”

RM: When we look at Buddhist tradition of practice working with the mind and the emotions – it’s a sense to leave the body and to move into consciousness, it is to train the mind and the body will somehow follow suit. What does HH think of yoga? After all Buddha spent many many years practicing yoga before he sat under the *Bodhi* tree. So what is the place of physical exercises and practices particularly after we have seen here that there is release of negative emotions just by fine tuning alignments in the body? I personally recollect an exchange that I had with Mr. Iyengar two years ago in Pune when he said that he had given up active teaching in yoga as he wanted to concentrate on his practice because he felt there were parts of his body that his consciousness had not reached. So implicit in this path is the ability to carry your consciousness. Somewhere in Buddhism we work on the mind to the remotest deepest recesses of the human body. And, from that follows and flows from inside the change and shift in consciousness.

HH: Of course there is a very deep connection between our body and mind. There is a clear recognition of this in Buddhist sources. There is a great emphasis of getting the right body posture when a practitioner sits down for a form of sitting meditation. A posture should have seven aspects to be a good posture for meditation. One of the key parts in that is maintaining your spine straight. The idea here is that when your spine is straight it allows the energy to flow more fluidly and there is a kind of a certain relaxation in your body. So there is clearly a connection there.

BKS: The body is a seer and the self is the seen. According to Patañjali’s *Yoga sutras*, the conjunction between the seer and the seen is a cause for all unhappiness. So discard that: break that. Being an academic man he states, ‘renounce the seen and stick to the seer’. Realizing that it is not possible for all to understand this academic terminology, he states “they are there for the sake of the soul, for the sake of the self to understand its position.” He has explained this very beautifully. ‘*sva svāmi saktiyoḥ svarūpopalabdhi hetuḥ samyogah*’. This conjunction between the seer and the seen is for you to understand and

uphold the quality of the self. Here understand the knowledge of the self, get the knowledge of the self and experience the sight of the self. For me, *sarira* is not *maya*. *Sarira* is a playground so the *ātma* plays in that playground. The *prakṛiti* and *purusa* get ready together like *ksetra ksetrajña* yoga like the body getting embedded with the self. Yoga also makes the *prakṛiti* to get embedded with the self so that there is no deviation between the elements of nature or the principles of soul. The union of these two is really the union of happiness that one is striving for to experience. I call it a state and His Holiness also said that when *manolaya* comes (they call it *shunya* we call it *manolaya*) there is no difference between *shunya* and *manolaya* or *manojaya*.

Manolaya is a state of quietness. After experiencing that *manolaya* state where the mind does not wander at all and stays in a stable state then there is a constructive use of the mind. Then, it is said that ‘now use the mind’. Use this experienced, tranquil state of the mind as the fifth *purusartha* – *bhakti marga*.

Everybody knows about the four *purusarths* – *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *moka*. The fifth *purusartha* is that after having reached this state of equipoise between body and mind, the body can take care of itself, the mind can take care of itself. Both body and mind releases the consciousness and the intelligence to think of the soul and mingle with the soul. That is the aim of yoga.

Both body and mind release the consciousness and intelligence to think and mingle with the soul. That is the aim of yoga.

RM: Thank you. This has been a great blessing, a great privilege a great honor a great learning experience and a great historical movement for all of us – an earnest and sincere prayer for a healthy and happy life.

Yoga Rahasya thanks Shri Rajiv Mehrotra for organising this meeting! ॐ

(To be continued in the next issue of the Newsletter.)

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Straight from the Heart

by Mary-Ellen Hannah

In a late January workshop taught by Shirley Daventry French and Ann Kilbertus, titled “The Heart of Yoga,” we embarked on a compelling exploration. Through *asana*, *prāṇāyāma*, discourse and laughter on practising from the heart, Shirley and Ann shared their insights, far-ranging observations, recollections and asides.

Pin-pointing the dual qualities of “the vibrancy of the pose” and knowledge as being at the heart of yoga, Shirley and Ann explained how vibrancy is most eloquently expressed in a number of poses through the lift of the chest. As the ninth thoracic vertebra is drawn strongly into the body, towards the sternum (here the image of a drawstring running from sternum to vertebra and back again came to mind), this lift of the chest is further enhanced when the arms are used to their fullest possible extension.

Addressing the vibrancy of inversions, Ann recounted an insight gleaned from her very recent trip to Pune where she continues her studies with the Iyengars. She told us how she had been

fortunate enough to observe Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar guide one of his granddaughters as she taught, and from this dialogue came the recurring advice that the two legs acting in concert as one are essential if the pose is to be vibrant and full of heart.

Ann also led us through an alternate version of *virabhadrasana III*, another development picked up during her latest sojourn to Pune. In this presentation of the third form of The Hero, the body’s trunk isn’t laid along the thigh of the bent standing leg when coming into the final aspect of the pose. Instead, we stepped into the pose, keeping the standing leg as straight and solid as possible while moving the upper body forward in the usual manner, the back leg lifting strongly from the inner thigh. Starting the lift of the back leg from an upraised heel position and pushing off the floor with the ball of this foot, body weight is smoothly transferred to the standing leg in one fluid movement. Although the final form of this entry to *vira III* is the familiar one, it is achieved with less likelihood that the alignment of the hips has been lost as the upper body moves forward and the back leg is raised.



Adho Mukha Svanasana



Sirsasana

Coming out of the pose, the lifted leg is kept straight when it is lowered to the floor to become the back leg and share the body’s weight with the standing leg.

Addressing the role of knowledge in infusing “heart” into yoga, Shirley referenced excerpts on the topic from



IYAC/ACYI Annual Conference

With Dr. Rajlaxmi Nidmarti
and Raya Uma Datta

May 9-13, 2012
Toronto, Ontario

See www.iyengaryogacentre.ca
for further information.

SUMMER SADHANA

July 9 - 14, 2012

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

6:30 am - 8:00 am with Robin Cantor

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

Members \$115 + HST Non Members \$125 + HST

The 1.5 hour Saturday class is open as ‘drop-in’ to ALL students of Level 2
and higher: \$15 + HST

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

Swami Vivekananda's book *Raja Yoga or Conquering the Internal Nature*, adding that she particularly values the practical aspect of Swami Vivekananda's yoga aphorisms. Emphasizing that without personal experience we only have information, Shirley cited her 2011 knee injury as a somewhat extreme example. In all the years of her practice, she observed that nothing had deepened her understanding of the effects of various asanas on the knee than going through her own healing and rehabilitation.

Throughout the *asana* work that followed we were instructed to use our knowledge of the poses to locate the "black holes" in our practice, to infuse vitality into these areas to generate the missing vibrancy. Ann drew our attention to the inner elbow as a common "black hole", one we could illuminate through a fuller extension of the arms.

In poses such as *utthita parsvakonasana* and *ardha chandrasana*, she reminded us that pushing vigorously into the floor with the entire lowered arm transmits a rebounding lift that further extends the raised arm. Opening the back of the knee horizontally and stretching the calf muscle from knee to the back of the heel were also highlighted as ways of enlivening other common "black holes."

As we worked to discover more vibrancy in *salamba sarvangasana* and *salamba sirsasana*, Ann repeated an exercise several times that called for bending both raised legs at the knee, with legs drawn together as if in a mini *utkatasana*. This concretely establishes the contact of one leg with the other, at which point both legs, maintaining this reinforced contact, return to their classical position in the original pose but with an enhanced sense of being more one leg than two.

The workshop concluded Sunday with several poses preparing us for *pranayama*, including an extended *savasana*. Ann asked us to recall that the fifth limb of yoga as outlined in



Parsvottanasana

Patanjali's yoga *sutras* is *pratyahara*, the withdrawal of the senses. She reminded us that this is the yoga of *savasana*, and that it is an active pose without physical activity.

With minds quieted and bodies steeped in relaxation, we then sat for *pranayama*, as supported as each required, but not immediately bowing

our heads. Our fingers tented beside our hips to assist with the lift of the chest, Ann asked us to simply breathe, to experience rhythmic, effortless in-coming breath that gradually deepened, its entry into the lungs describing what Ann termed a "parabola" within the chest. Then, creating the *jalandara bandha*, we moved into *ujjayii pranayama*, sometimes with a small supplementary breath close to the end of the inhalation, sometimes with retention on exhalation, but always allowing the breath to move fluidly, never binding it to a pattern at the expense of remaining in the deep place of inner calm we had entered.

We emerged, hearts and minds glowing, in gratitude for all we had been gifted from Shirley and Ann, from "The Heart of Yoga." ॐ

Congratulations!

The following candidates achieved **Introductory II** certification at the January 2012 assessment in Ottawa:

Debbie Hanisch, London ON
Soheila Panbechi, Toronto ON
Stephanie Tencer, Toronto ON
Diana Tsui, Markham ON

The following candidates achieved **Intermediate Junior II** certification at the January 2012 assessment in Calgary:

Sylvia Guenther, Toronto, ON
Jocelyn Hollmann, Toronto, ON
Samantha Lopeter-Lloyd, Medicine Hat, AB
Eileen Miller, Abbotsford, BC
Cynthia Paluhniuk, Calgary, AB
Skjei Sharma, Calgary, AB
Val Speidal, Vancouver, BC
Krisna Zawaduk, Kelowna, BC

Congratulations to **Mahyar Raz** of Toronto on achieving **Advanced Junior II** Certification in February 2012.

Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada/
Association Canadienne de Yoga Iyengar

Enhancing Creativity – the Yogic Way

By Ashwini Parulkar

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM *YOGA RAHASYA*, VOL. 10, NO.1; 2003.

A couple of years ago, as I attempted to practice *pranayāma*, I had a strange experience. As I let my mind unwind and ease towards the fringe of the subconscious, an unusually long poem learnt in school – and long since forgotten – suddenly surfaced to consciousness. While the incident indicates immature *pranayama* practice because the object of *pranayama* and the successive steps of *astāṅga* yoga are to rise above mental tribulations – it does prove a point: The practice of yoga opens a channel to the more intangible aspects of Being.

The conscious mind is like the tip of an iceberg. It is merely a fragment of the all-pervasive consciousness or *citta*, which includes conscious and subconscious states, intellect (*buddhi*) and ego (*ahamkāra*). Psychologists agree that most creative concepts stem from subconscious experiences. A very similar view is propounded by sage Yajñavalkya in the *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad* when he elaborates on the role of the Spirit in dreams. He likens the “Golden Spirit” in the region of dreams to the “Wandering Swan” creating his own visions of grandeur. In the realm of the subconscious, each Spirit is a Creator and a law unto himself. In most cases, dream experiences are lost on waking. This is precisely where creative persons differ from others. They seem to have an intrinsic ability to access free-floating mental states bordering on sleep and wakefulness. This is the zone from which the creative concept (inspiration)



stems. Once the germ has been accessed, it takes total focus, discipline and conscious effort to structure it into an aesthetic whole.

That our ancient yogis were artists at heart is beyond doubt. The aesthetic value of *āsanas*, as well as the literary merit of the *Upanishads* and similar texts is obvious. In fact, in classical Indian art, music and literature, the aesthetic form is inextricable from the spiritual content. Not surprising, since Lord Shiva, the Father of Yoga, is also revered as the Father of Art. Up to a point, one finds a great deal of similarity between the principles of *asana* and *pranayama* practice and the pursuit of art. There is, for instance, the same need to lapse into ‘alert passivity’; to be sensitive yet detached from internal and external stimuli; to sublimate the ego; to transcend subjective experience and develop a universal perspective. Which is perhaps why a practitioner of yoga can make a better artist.

Neela Bhagwat, classical singer, testifies to this. She feels her performance has improved immensely after she discovered yoga. In fact, so besotted was she with the subject that she used to write poetry on it while travelling to yoga class! At one level, being a voice worker, her performance levels are directly related to lung capacity. Chest-opening postures and *pranāyama* practice helped no end in improving her tonal modulations. At a subtler level, she feels, instructions in the yoga class are more than just that – they are also directions for life and art. For instance, the instruction to ‘activate certain muscles and pacify others’ translates



With Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler

August 27 – 31, 2012, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Learn how to establish and deepen your practice.

All levels

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

Fees: \$235.00 + HST for IYCV members
\$260.00 + HST 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

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee.

directly into music as ‘activate certain notes and restrain others for better rendering of the rāga.’ Not that she wasn’t doing it earlier. However, when an inadvertent action is consciously experienced in a different context, and effectively articulated, it makes for deeper sensitivity and insight into one’s own field.

“In Yoga,” says Neela, “as in music, there is a *sthāyi bhava* (defining characteristics) and a *sanchāri bhava* (innovations within a framework). Very often in class, a simple, basic posture is practised in a totally radical manner to enhance the experience, and that too without distorting its essential form. I find that really inspiring. It lends me the sensitivity and confidence to explore a *rāga* to its full potential, to come up with radical configurations without foregoing essential requirements.” No wonder, then, that Lord Yehudi Menuhin, acknowledged Guruji as his best violin teacher!

As mentioned earlier, the creative process is a combination of inspiration and conscious effort. While inspiration provides the abstract idea, the final product is only achieved through focus, discipline and sheer hard work. This is where *asanas* are really effective. They provide a direct access to the mind through the medium of the body. As the body goes through the rigours of organised movement and struggles to attain precision within a physical framework, the mind is automatically contained within the pose and trained to stay in the present. Mira Nair, filmmaker, has discovered that a daily dose of yoga for her crew during the entire length of a shoot equips everyone to cope better with bizarre work schedules and the general pressures of unconventional filmmaking. While shooting for *Salaam Bombay*, where she did a workshop with 120 street-kids, she found that yoga practice every morning instilled in the children a sense of concentration and discipline, which no amount of lecturing could have accomplished.

Asana and *pranayāma* practice is all about being within oneself and existing in the moment. We have often heard Guruji say, “Create space in the elbow joint!” or, “Open your knees, let the consciousness flow!” Obscure as it may sound to a lay listener, a serious practitioner of yoga knows just what is expected: explore the depths of existence, sheath by sheath, starting with the physical body and moving inwards, till you find a place to dwell within yourself. This ‘space within the self’ is the only respite from the chaos without. It is also the mainspring of impulses, repressed or forgotten impressions and intuitive understanding. In other words this is where the creative instinct springs from. An artist’s productivity is directly proportionate to his ability to locate that instinct and tune into it completely, without undue stress or distraction. Ms. Nair is convinced that since she became an ‘aspiring yogini’ (sic), “Space for instinct has grown.”

Robyn Aaronstam, script supervisor on her *Monsoon Wedding* echoes very similar sentiments: “During a shoot, the only quiet time of the day is the early morning yoga practice. Instead of falling out of bed, and into the melee of many voices and energies, yoga helps me to find my own centre and focus, and prepares me

to achieve maximum productivity in the busy workspace. When the surrounding activities threaten to overwhelm me, I take myself back to the quiet, focused space that yoga has helped me find in myself that morning.” Moreover, serious yoga practice also means fewer mood-swings, temper tantrums and ego-hassles; instead it means greater objectivity, and a more positive and democratic attitude. This makes for better communication and free-flow of ideas, and thus, greater productivity. At a more basic level, *asana* practice helps to overcome certain ailments caused by professional hazards. Sarayu Ahuja, an author, had developed a bad case of cervical spondylosis due to endless hours on the computer. Worse, she suffered frequent blackouts and short periods of amnesia due to hampered blood supply to the brain. A few weeks of corrective *āsanas* were all it took to rectify the situation.

Ashok Salian, photographer, feels that too often people, especially creative people, abuse their bodies, and yoga is the best way to regain health. A few months ago he could barely bend, wasn’t aware of a back body, and had a stiff right arm from holding a camera all the time. All of this changed after he discovered yoga. “I’ve been around just a couple of months,” he says, “but the results are dramatic! It’s too premature to say if I’ve made a creative leap; but I know the subject has immense potential, so I’m hooked for life!”

One needs to realise, however, that the association can be carried only up to a point. Psychological tests reveal that when people are taught to relax or go into a state of reverie, they come up with more ideas. With the relaxation that yoga provides, the muse seems to come more easily. Sarayu agrees. When she’s totally unwound herself in *Savāsana* the ideas start springing up, and her mind is already up and away on the computer! The effort to get herself back into *Savasana* is almost superhuman. This, then, seems to be the hitch. Creativity implies the blossoming of all the faculties viz., physical, mental, emotional and intellectual. Although inspiration comes from within, the content is usually drawn from the external world. Therefore, the mind has to constantly tuned in to outward stimuli and internalise them. Yoga, on the other hand, is the sublimation of all the faculties and a constant tuning inwards, especially in the later stage of *dharaija*, *dhyna* and *samdhi*. This is probably why one would have to be really gifted to be a great artist and a great yogi at the same time.

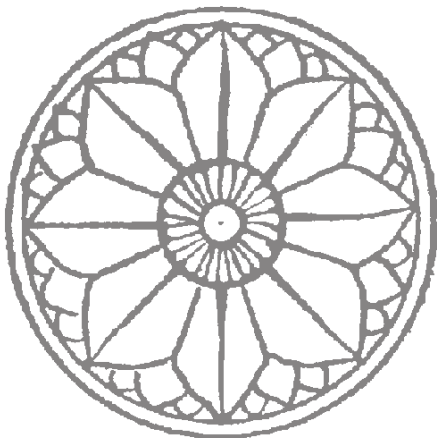
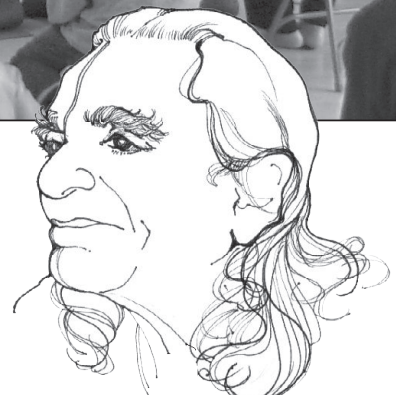
Unless freedom is gained in the body, freedom of the mind is a far fetched idea. – Guruji B.K.S. Iyengar ॐ

MIRA NAIR, A FILMMAKER, INSISTED ON INCLUDING IYENGAR YOGA SESSIONS FOR THE CREW DURING THE MAKING OF HER INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED *MONSOON WEDDING*. THE AUTHOR TAUGHT THE CREW WHILE THEY WERE SHOOTING IN DELHI.

The Iyengar Centre of Victoria Celebrates Mr Iyengar's 93rd Birthday



Mr. Iyengar continues to inspire and enlighten the world at age 93! The highlight of this year's birthday celebration at our Centre was kirtan with Bhavantu Sound.



To register, drop by or phone
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
202-919 Fort Street,
Victoria BC, V8V 3K3
250 386-YOGA (9642)

Working Wisely

With Ann Kilbertus

Saturday, April 21, 2012, 11:30 am - 2:30 pm

In this short workshop participants will learn to study themselves and discover some of the principles of working wisely in asana. How can this wisdom be brought into a personal practice as the demands of life change daily?

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

The cause of pain is the association or identification of the seer with the seen and the remedy lies in their dissociation.

— B.K.S. Iyengar translating the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali II.16 and II.17

Fees: \$45 + HST for members, \$50 + HST non-members

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

Retreat from the demands of daily life to the
Salt Spring Centre of Yoga and join Shirley Daventry French
and Leslie Hogle for

FOOTSTEPS OF PATANJALI

August 22 to August 26, 2012



SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH is a direct student of B.K.S. Iyengar. Since her first visit to Pune in 1979, she has returned regularly for further study. She is the founder of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria. Students from across Canada and from around the world have studied with her at home and abroad.

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WORKSHOP PREREQUISITE:

Minimum 6 months experience of Iyengar Yoga.

FEES: ADD HST TO FEES

\$885 IYCV members for shared accommodation
\$935 non-members for shared accommodation

\$815 IYCV members for camping
\$865 non-members for camping (must supply own equipment)

\$775 IYCV members commuting
\$825 non-members commuting

Option: Pay monthly installments between January and June 2012.

- A non-refundable deposit of \$200 will reserve your space.
- Full payment is due June 1, 2012.

If you withdraw after June 1, the workshop fee is refundable only if your space is filled.

Plan to arrive by 2 pm on Wednesday, August 22

Retreat ends after lunch on Sunday, August 26

REGISTER:

The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
202-919 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
250-386-YOGA (9642)
email: iyoga@telus.net
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Learning the Ropes with Lauren Cox

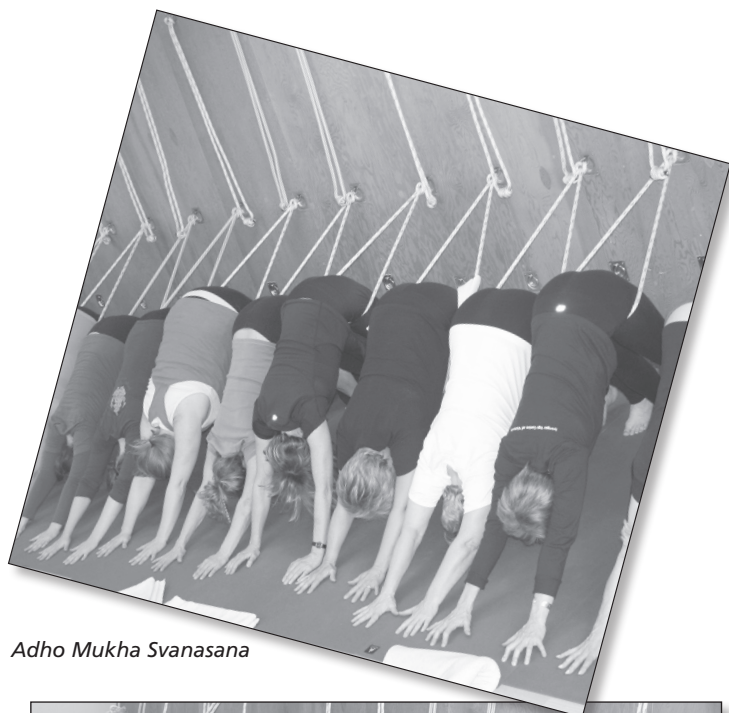
By Sarah Alpert

In Victoria we are fortunate for many reasons. While other provinces are covered in snow, we can get away with wearing light jackets. We have rainforests, beaches, and a certain natural beauty that allow us to be the envy of many (and we are so humble about it!). To add to the many joys of island life, we in Victoria have the good fortune of having the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria conveniently located in the heart of our little city. Consequently we have the joy of learning from its many teachers, one of which is Lauren Cox. Lauren teaches with patience, perseverance and passion. A good thing when you're trying to get a group of twenty people upside-down!

Today was especially meaningful for me. Today is my 27th birthday and as a gift to myself, I decided to attend the Centre's rope workshop as a way to start my big day. I've been attending the Centre's Wednesday ropes classes since the fall of 2010 and, admittedly, working on the ropes was the first time that I really felt comfortable in a yoga class. The ropes gave me an outlet to do yoga in a way that allowed me to embrace my curiosity and inner child while really pushing me to improve my yoga practice. I also love bouldering, so being able to laugh and be a bit of a monkey on the ropes, while doing yoga simultaneously, really changed my entire view of yoga itself. There is nothing like being able to hang upside-down like a bat! You can engage in a way that only gravity and its 9.8 m/s^2 can provide.

The ropes gave me an outlet to do yoga in a way that allowed me to embrace my curiosity and inner child while really pushing me to improve my yoga practice.

Needless to say, I fell in love with the ropes. I have found something that I can do that makes me feel alive, joyous, and at peace every week. Since joining the ropes class, I've begun to explore other classes at the Iyengar Centre. Despite my initial hesitation towards stereotypical yoga classes, I've found that the Centre offers classes that are far from stereotypical, particularly the ropes class, and this has resulted in my enthusiasm for yoga. While I am hoping to get closer to being "good" at yoga, whatever that means, I have been able to develop an awareness and a certain grace as a result of the class, partly because of Lauren's infectious ability to make yoga fun!



Adho Mukha Svanasana

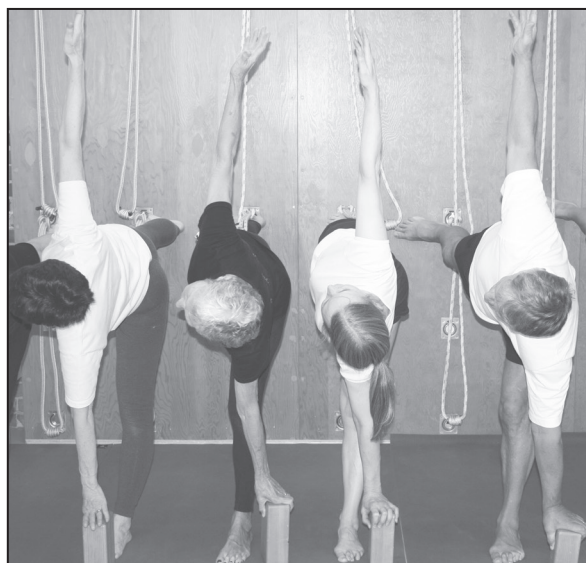


Parsvottanasana



Lauren Cox demonstrates ardha chandra.

The workshop was a beautiful and informative experience with Lauren as our fearless ropes leader. We began with *adho mukha svanasana* in the ropes, followed by *urdhva mukha dandasana*, (which allows the pull of the rope and the aid of gravity to elongate our spines and pull our hips back in a way that simply feels yummy), and, *malasana*. After these opening poses, we proceeded into a variety of balance poses including *vrikasana*, *utthita trikonasana*, and the warrior series all using the assistance of the rope to help create breadth across our shoulders and really feel a sense of repose in our work. We did *ardha chandrasana* and a variety of poses that were assisted by holding onto the ropes and pulling ourselves into delicious twists. We did chest openers including binding our hands in *gomukhasana* and *paschimamaskar* while using the rope to pull, creating traction that left some of us thinking about declaring “uncle!” – but that really helped us to create a sense of space within our shoulders and chests. We concluded the class with pelvic swing for rope *sirsasana*, *niralamba sarvangasana* and *viparita karani*. Between



Ardha Chandrasana

each pose, Lauren demonstrated the pose and then during the poses, we were assisted by Lauren and her assistants, Soo, Jane and Johanna.

In addition to improving our practice, both novices and devotees of the ropes were given an amazing treat: learning something fun from someone who is very aware and passionate about their craft. All levels of comfort and knowledge were able to come together for a workshop filled with fun and challenge. There are those who travel the world for amazing yoga experi-

ences. I would suggest that the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria is a wonderful yoga destination. The wealth of knowledge, experienced teachers, and variety of classes only speaks to just how lucky we really are in Victoria. Especially me! Not everyone gets to take part in an amazing workshop for his or her birthday. Who knows what my 27th year holds in store, but I can tell you that it got off to a great start! ॐ

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

A team of volunteers lies behind all jobs and every special event at our Centre.

Thank you to the board of directors for keeping the yoga centre on track and for organizing the AGM held Feb 12: **Keiko Alkire, Laine Canivet, Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus, Ann Nolan, Christine Peterson, Krysia Strawczynski, and Peggy Taylor.**

A special thank you to **Leslie Hogya** and **Peggy Taylor**, who are stepping down from the board this year. Leslie has been a driving force at the Centre from its beginning. She will continue to be available for consultation. Peggy has served on the board for four years, the last two as vice president.

Through sound management and creative marketing, **Wendy Boyer**, who has kept costs down and increased

the Centre's profile in a saturated yoga market. Wendy also negotiated the new carpet for the front office after the winter flooding.

Ann Nolan helped us secure a Canadian Imperial Bank of commerce (CIBC) grant of \$500.

Our teachers continue their self-education with exceptional dedication and devotion.

Roger Champagne is the editor of our fine newsletter. **Krysia Strawczynski** mails out the newsletter.

Adia Kapoor maintains our teachers' computerized "event-organizer".

Gary Wong created the teachers' computerized event-organizer.

Britta Poisson creates our outstanding posters and e-ads.

Jeannette Merryfield coordinates the distribution of flyers.

Bruce Cox maintains the IYCV website.

Ty Chandler posts to Facebook.

Hilary McPhail handles membership registration.

Patty Rivard manages the library.

Johanna Godliman organized Mr. Iyengar's birthday party and made the Hanuman window decorations.

Bhavantu Sound – Tia Benn, Ty Chandler and Chris Simons – bring Kirtan to our Centre.

Thank you to everyone who participated in Thrifty's smile card venture. We earned \$1000 this round, and will qualify to do another round in June.

Summer Sadhana; Metaphor and Action

Reflections written by Adrienne Else

Day 1

This morning, the first day of the summer *sadhana*, is beautiful and cool. The weather is perfect to begin the six-day summer quest. This is my fourth summer *sadhana*, and I look forward to the solitary early mornings at home when my family is still asleep, my bike ride to the yoga centre and of course the practice. It has become an annual gift to myself.

Today the yoga studio is filled with soft warm sunlight and a calm ambiance. Robin quietly welcomes each of us as we gather our props and get settled. There are eight of us in the class this year, and I see a few familiar faces. Right away I sense a peaceful energy and feel that we are all similarly dedicated to this six-day journey.

We chant three *aums* and the invocation to Patanjali, and then we gather together to share some readings written by B.K.S. Iyengar. We acknowledge and credit Iyengar for the philosophy that will unfold in the next six days.

We are shown a drawing of the *chakras* highlighted inside a human body to

emphasize the interconnectedness and flow of energy. Lotus flower petals surround each *chakra* image. In our *asanas* we are reminded to keep soft like the petals of a flower. We are then shown a drawing of a human body inside the shape of a kite, with smaller kite shapes inside the body – all of the kite strings are attached together at the center. This metaphor demonstrates to me the connected relationships of everything within our bodies and outside of us as well. If I imagine all of the individual parts of myself as small kites working together in the play and flow of energy then I can pull on my kite strings as a way of binding everything together.

Today's *asana* practice focuses on standing poses, and as we move through the morning we use kites and flower petals to guide us. These two metaphors work for me, and as I pull on my kite strings to enliven my *asanas* I use my breath to stay soft like the petals of a flower.

Day 2

I woke up well before the alarm this morning, looking forward to the second day of practice. The slight soreness in my

thighs and along the sides of my torso is a physical reminder of the work I did in yesterday's poses.

Once again the studio is filled with warm luscious sunlight as everyone quietly arrives and settles in. The image Robin shares with us today is the body as a vessel filled by the "soul". When a pot or vessel is filled with water, the water naturally flows to every part of the container and touches the entire inside surface. Similarly we must try to fill our bodies with awareness and let that awareness flow into every crevice evenly.

Throughout this morning's practice of forward bends, we are reminded to fill our vessels and to take our awareness to those out-of-the-way places within ourselves. This new imagery is a welcome addition to my metaphoric kit. As I work with the forward bends and revolved poses I do feel that I am making contact with some new places. My mind feels clear and I feel motivated.

Day 3

It is another beautiful summer day as I ride my bike to the studio. This morning Robin talks about the *koshas*. As we discover and understand these layers or sheaths we move closer to our innermost selves to reach a state of bliss. The sheaths represent our physical needs, the flow of energy within our bodies, our thoughts and emotions, our wisdom or perceptions, and finally our complete happiness or joy.

Robin uses a needle, thread and piece of cloth to demonstrate the weaving together of the *koshas*. The needle represents our consciousness, the eye of the needle our intelligence, and the thread, our mind. The *asanas* help to sharpen the



Prasarita Padottanasana

mind so that it can pass through the eye of the needle in order to bind the internal and external layers together to create a muslin cloth.

When I imagine the flow of a needle and thread, or the shuttle of a loom weaving in and out, I can visualize the merging of the sheaths into a delicate cloth of awareness.

Our practice today focuses on balances and abdominal poses and even though I know I am working hard I feel an unfamiliar lightness.

Day 4

The weather today is windy and overcast, and the light in the yoga studio is serious and grey and is missing the aura of warmth that has enveloped us the past few days. Still, we come together to learn and practice. I really appreciate the closeness we are developing in this summer *sadhana*.

Our group has a gentle mature character and I feel that we are all open to exploring and learning. This morning Robin shares B.K.S. Iyengar's metaphor of a bow, arrow and target. The bow is the body, the arrow is the asana, and the target is the soul. I feel that this metaphor works especially well with *virabhadrasana III*. When in the pose I feel that I am visually mimicking the bow, arrow and target. This morning's backbend practice is demanding – we use the ropes and props to support us in these *asanas*. Backbends are a challenge for me, but today, in *ustrasana*, with my pelvis against the rope wall and the ropes criss-crossed behind my back just below my shoulder blades, I feel a balance of support and freedom as I bend to my maximum.

Day 5

Another cool windy morning and my hands are cold as I ride my bike to the yoga centre. Today our reading is about



Prasarita Padottanasana Complete



Purvottanasana

the different types of students: beginner, medium, keen and intense. The levels are determined by the student's commitment to practice rather than the physical accomplishment in the asanas. The goal is to bind the body, mind and soul together to create one seamless 'I'. Today we are led through a restorative/*pranayama* practice. We do our inversions in the ropes, and I find it liberating to know and trust that the ropes will support me. Being upside down in the ropes reminds me of when I was a child, hanging upside down with my knees hooked over a tree branch. *Pranayama* begins with *brahmari*, the humming or buzzing bee breath. The vibrations and rhythms of our buzzing fill the space. Bolsters then support us as we lie in the room and focus on our breath. I rely on Robin's voice to help keep my focus since it is so easy for my mind to wander. As I listen and feel my own

breath I become less distracted and my attention turns inward. I am inspired to incorporate these simple techniques into my home practice.

Day 6

Today is a brighter day and the last day of our summer *sadhana*. We review all of the metaphors we have shared and worked with this week and then celebrate with sun salutations. This summer *sadhana* has truly been a gift. The experience has enhanced my understanding of both yoga philosophy and my own journey. I will remember to expand outward with my poses, to stretch and reach out, and to fill all of the spaces within myself too. As I expand out I will pull on all of the kite strings and bring everything back together, weaving the layers into a delicate muslin cloth...and I will remain soft like the petals of a lotus flower. ॐ

Children's Yoga Class



Supta Virasana



Janu Sirsasana



Enthusiasm!



Paripurna Navasana

Kids Yoga Class – every Saturday afternoon from 4-5 pm. Come join us for a dynamic, fun yet challenging class of Iyengar Yoga.

Renew!



IFYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA
SOCIETY

Membership

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

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

Membership fee is \$40.00 + HST, renewable each January.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Prov/State: _____ Postal code _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

☐ Please mail me my newsletter as I do not attend classes at the Centre.

☐ Receipt required.

Short WORKSHOP



Summer Solstice Workshop

With
Ty Chandler

Details to be announced.



2012 CALENDAR

MARCH

- 2-4 Intermediate Junior I Assessment, Kelowna, BC
- 3 Teachers' Meeting
- 9-11 Introductory II Assessment, Robert's Creek, BC
- 22-25 Gabriella Giubilaro Workshop
- 29 High Tea Special Needs Fundraiser

APRIL

- 8 Easter Sunday Timed Practice
- 14 Teachers' Meeting
- 21 Working Wisely

MAY

- 9-13 IYAC/ACVI AGM and Conference with Dr. Rajlaxmi Nidmarti and Raya Uma Datta
- 25-26 Introductory I Assessment, Victoria

JUNE

- 1-3 Salt Spring Retreat
- 9 Teachers' meeting

JULY

- 9-14 Introductory Teacher Training Intensive
- 9-14 Summer Sadhana

AUGUST

- 13-17 Intermediate Teacher Training Intensive
- 22-26 Footsteps of Patanjali
- 27-31 Student Intensive

SEPTEMBER

- 20-23 Stephanie Quirk in Kelowna
- 12-14 Chris Saudek

OCTOBER

- 1 Father Joe Pereira
- 19-21 Introductory II Assessment, Saskatoon, SK

NOVEMBER

- 2-3 Going Deeper
- 16-18 Intermediate Junior I Assessment, location TBA





IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

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



Shiva Nataraja, the Lord of the Dance

Retreat from the demands of daily life to the
Salt Spring Centre of Yoga and join Shirley Daventry French
and Leslie Hogle for

FOOTSTEPS OF PATANJALI

August 22 to August 26, 2012



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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE AUGUST 14, 2012

EDITOR Roger Champagne

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE Judy Atkins, Giles Bixler, Roger Champagne, Lauren Cox, Shirley Daventry French, Johanna Godliman, Leslie Hogg, Jane McFarlane.

DESIGN & PRODUCTION Cady Graphics

IYCV LOGO Charles Campbell, Lauren Cox

PHOTOGRAPHY Linda Benn, Judy Atkins, Giles Bixler, Roger Champagne, Lauren Cox, Shirley Daventry French, Johanna Godliman, Leslie Hogg, Jane McFarlane, Johanna Godliman, Jo Anna Hope, Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hogg, Tracy Harvey, Jane McFarlane, Gary Wong

PROOFING Judy Atkins, Jane McFarlane

ADS & ANNOUNCEMENTS Jane McFarlane

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IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

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

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

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

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

Newsletter Advertising Policy

(Adopted February 20, 2004)

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

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

REGISTRATION:

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

Phone: (250) 386-YOGA (9642)

Please visit our website:

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



Summer 2012

A week ago I returned from the annual conference of the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada. Postponed until after my return was the writing of this column for the next newsletter. Now I was ready to get down to it with my mind full of the conference and a packed week, beginning with two days of meetings followed by a daily schedule of classes and talks from 8 am until 7 pm.

I was tired but eager to write about one of the best national conferences I have attended, and I have attended all of them other than two when dental issues forced me to withdraw. My mind was full of memories, ideas and information from classes, meetings, interesting discussions over shared meals and chance meetings in the corridors with friends and colleagues from all parts of Canada.

Since 1988 the Iyengar community of Canada has been gathering in various venues throughout the country from Atlantic to Pacific. This year's conference was held in Toronto. Two emissaries from Pune, trained by Gururji and Geetaji, came with their blessings to be our guest teachers: Dr. Rajlaxmi Nidmarti and Raya Uma Datta. Imbued with respect for the tradition of Yoga and devotion to their Guru, B.K.S. Iyengar, they taught superb classes with humility, compassion and humour.

My intention to get down to writing was in conflict with another demand on my energy. It was a long weekend in Canada and my daughter and seventeen year-old grandson had come over from Vancouver to help us deal with the clutter of forty years of accumulated papers, records and junk stored in our attic. It is a large walk-in attic plus we have a full basement, a back room in our garage and a shed. It was an awesome task! They got right down to it (once we managed to get my grandson out of bed). A vast stack of personal documents and business records were shredded. We filled countless boxes with recycling, garbage and waste material destined for the dump. Then there were boxes of books and papers which I needed to go through before they were thrown out.

One box was full of old Victoria newsletters dating back to the 1980's. There were a lot, because at one time we published twelve issues a year (on typewriters and the literal cut and paste method)! They record the evolution of yoga in our local and national communities as well as glimpses of my personal journey. Once upon a time I had sorted them by year of publication, but the elastic bands I used had rotted and come apart. Three decades of issues were jumbled together so I went through the box to reorganise them and get rid of duplicates. The earliest issues I found were from 1986 and among them I came across a two-part interview with Mr. Iyengar which had taken place during a Canadian Intensive in Pune in 1985. Its title was *On Sharing the Teaching*. Of course I had to read it, and when I did I was excited because the ideas Gururji expounded and guidance he offered reflected much that had happened in Toronto.

Since the Institute opened in 1975—and doubtless before that—Gururji has been consistent not only in his practice of yoga but in his guidance to pupils from all over the world in the way he wishes them to study, practise and build a community of students. He has repeatedly encouraged us to be unwavering in our practice and learning, while maintaining as direct a connection as possible to the source. He has always discouraged us from randomly passing on what we have been given before the work has been digested and some understanding has emerged. He has warned again and again about the danger of becoming gatherers. Maturity will come only when we have thoroughly assimilated that which has been taught.

Following is an excerpt from Part II of this interview published in September 1986 and entitled *On Sharing the Teaching*, a title which reflects my predominant feeling about the Toronto conference.

* * *

Shirley Daventry French: Guruji, the other day you talked to us about teacher training and suggestions you made when you were in England recently. This generated a lot of ideas about how we might work in Canada. As you know, it is a huge country and we are very spread out. Although this is the third Canadian intensive, the other two involved mainly western Canadians. This time we have people from central and eastern Canada as well, and over meals we have discussed our different problems. One idea which has come up is to start a register or network of teachers of Iyengar Yoga in Canada, with the possibility that this might lead to an association of Canadian Iyengar Yoga teachers. Several questions arose, first of all the very obvious one—what do you think about that?

B.K.S. Iyengar: Well, so many organisations already exist in other places; I think Canadians should also have an organisation where they could come together. As long as yoga is important it's going to grow very well. Problems come when yoga is forgotten and personalities arise. We must learn to put personalities aside and keep yoga as the major issue in our discussions. This is what I feel is lacking in many places. The idea that I am important should disappear. I am a renunciate, and have given the use of my name to organisations all over the world without becoming involved myself. I don't want my personality to grow but my subject in which I have struggled very hard to find out the best. That is important!

I will be happy if my pupils give importance to the cultivation of yoga rather than the cultivation of individuals. Unfortunately politics arise in all organisations, it's bound to happen, but we have to find a way to be personally involved and at the same time impersonal. Then I think it is a good idea.

Shirley: So far things have worked very well in Canada because the groups have been small and there has been a

lot of personal contact. However, as our numbers grow it becomes more difficult because there are people who have not been to Pune and who teach your method, or say they teach your method, but perhaps haven't much understanding.

Mr. Iyengar: I know. That is why certification was introduced so that it would be known who are bona fide or non bona fide teachers. Unfortunately politics entered in because people began to say, "I've been to Pune several times." If they come here they are my pupils, they are following my method, there ends the matter. But they build themselves up which is creating friction all over.

Shirley: Do you think having an association would help us come together and share more?

Mr. Iyengar: The world is moving in the emotions so we have to come together. It is very easy to break apart, but an organisation is meant to bring us together to exchange inner experiences and ideas. From that angle I say it is worth having. Also it is necessary so that pupils will know who are the bona fide teachers, because nowadays people are using my name though they have not learned from me or even from my pupils. They take *Light on Yoga* and say, I'm a student of Mr. Iyengar because I follow his book. That is not the right way. In order to stop that we have to have the type of organisation where we can become a single family. If we all put aside our personalities and work together, what an understanding we could bring into the world.

Shirley: It is a worldwide movement, as you said, like a family.

Mr. Iyengar: A family, yes! So what is an organisation? Instead of calling it a family we call it an organisation. In my way I say it is a big family (*laughs*).

Shirley: I see that it might be a way of encouraging Canadians to share their work.

Mr. Iyengar: That is what I want, not only for Canadians—this rule must hold for all. Why not Canadians exchanging views with the U.S., the U.S. exchanging view with the U.K., the U.K. with Canada. This is the way I want you to plan, so that we can live without any ups and downs, so that we are all one. If that happens, whether one is a senior student or a junior student does not matter at all; we all belong to one seed known as the yogic seed.

* * *

The word 'sharing' is over-used and misused these days. People speak of wanting to share when they really want to impose a particular way of thinking or acting. However, at the Toronto conference, Rajlaxmi and Raya truly shared their depth of knowledge modestly and abundantly without a trace of ego but with considerable authority. While they had assumed the role of teacher for the duration of this convention, it was clear that first and foremost they were students of Guruji dedicated to be as clear a channel as possible for the light of yoga. At all times they embodied two fundamental aspects of yoga: practice (*abhyasa*) and renunciation (*vairagya*).

The classes they taught were simple in that they presented basic *asana* and *pranayama*, rarely going beyond the Introductory syllabus established by Guruji. At the same time the classes were complex, with such depth that they added to the knowledge of all levels of students on the fundamentals, complexities and purpose of yoga. This teaching was a fine example of the art of pedagogy as they clearly adhered to the request Guruji voiced in the 1985 interview to "teach the subject"!

Very often their classes answered unasked questions of mine about obstacles I am facing in yoga and life in general. Other students I spoke to had the same experience: that the class had been designed especially for

them. With around two hundred and fifty students at many different levels of experience and ability, this takes consummate skill. Rajlaxmi is a mature and wise woman who told me she first went to the Institute in Pune in 1975. Raya is a young man who began classes as a child and, after completing his formal education is now devoting his life to yoga. As far as Iyengar Yoga is concerned they have impeccable credentials: direct training at the feet of Gururji. Practising as they both do under his eagle eye facilitates progress on the spiritual path enormously.

Their modesty and devotion to their teacher stand in stark contrast to the boastful attitude of many yoga teachers today who may have learned to use the right language about surrender and devotion but at the same time make bombastic claims about their knowledge and experience. Rajlaxmi and Raya while honouring their own natures are truly humble in the light of Gururji's brilliance.

In the 1985 interview Gururji also addressed something else which happened in Toronto last week: the need for us to come together in Canada as a

community, putting our personalities aside and keeping yoga at the forefront so the subject can mature in us and serve as the base for our individual sadhana or spiritual journey.

Some of my colleagues dismiss meetings as "politics" and detracting from the practice of yoga; but I have learned a great deal from my efforts to work with disparate individuals over the past forty years in the attempt to propagate yoga and Iyengar Yoga in particular. As Gururji stated in the above interview, as long as we keep yoga at the forefront and our personal preferences and personalities in the background, we can work together.

During the meetings which preceded last week's conference there were several contentious issues on the agenda, but answers were found when we took time to reread a letter written by Mr. Iyengar just over a year ago and sent to all association members. A familiar expression of Gururji's is: "See how quickly they forget!" which can refer to instructions given during teaching, to conversation, personal communication and directives which have been circulated.

Those of us who travelled to Pune in the early years of the Institute were personally taught by Gururji in classes much smaller than today. What a privilege! It was unbelievably challenging but daily I thank God for the opportunity. Gururji was not only educating us in yoga and our personal practice, but guiding us on the evolution of Iyengar Yoga in Canada.

It is twenty-four years since we began to hold annual meetings. Twice B.K.S. Iyengar has been our honoured guest, and twice we have welcomed Geetaji. We have formed an association and established certification and assessment. For many years we have published a national directory listing bona fide teachers. It has been a lot of work and continues to be a lot of work—but it is work which brings us face to face with many tenets of yoga.


It has been difficult but we have persevered to put personalities and self interest aside and work together, keeping yoga front and centre. It has taken quite a few difficult and even hostile meetings to arrive where we are now. These days, although we are never all of the same opinion, we can debate ideas without rancour and consider them on their merit. Most active members have learned to present a strong argument for their preferred course of action, but to put this aside and carry on with the work if their preference does not prevail.

An added personal benefit for me, from participating in the work of the national association as well as our local non-profit society, has been proficiency in the practice of *likita japa* or writing a mantra. This practice has served me well during many a controversial meeting. It taught me to hold back and think clearly beyond my emotions. Amazingly it enables one to listen better to the words being spoken and the meta-talk or intention behind these words. The opportunity to practise yoga is there in every aspect of life at all times!

In Part I of the 1985 interview Gururji spoke of amalgamation—about coming together to learn from each other and deepen our understanding by removing weaknesses and building on strengths. This is what happened in Toronto!

With gratitude to Rajlaxmi and Raya, to the organisers of the conference in Toronto, my colleagues in the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada, and most of all to Gururji for inspiring and encouraging us all to work together on our common purpose: to propagate yoga.

Om namah Sivaya! ॐ



**IYAC/ACYI
ASSESSMENT DATES**

October 19-21, 2012
Introductory II
Saskatoon, SK

November 16-18, 2012
Intermediate Junior I
Montreal QC

January 18-20, 2013
Intermediate Senior I/II
Victoria, BC

Check results and upcoming
assessments www.iyengaryoga.com

Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar in Conversation with His Holiness The Dalai Lama, Part II

*This is an edited transcript of a dialogue between Gururji B.K.S. Iyengar (BKS)
and His Holiness The Dalai Lama (HH), moderated by Mr. Rajiv Mehrotra (RM).*

Everybody knows about the four *purusarthas* – *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *moksa*. The fifth *purusartha* is that after having reached this state of equipoise between body and mind, the body can take care of itself, the mind can take care of itself. Both body and mind releases the consciousness and the intelligence to think of the soul and mingle with the soul. That is the aim of yoga.

*Both body and mind
release the consciousness and intelligence
to think and mingle with the soul. That is
the aim of yoga.*

HH: In practice of yoga tradition, there is such an emphasis on appreciating the connection between the body and the mind, proper posture of body and how that facilitates the different states of mind. In the *vajrayāna* tradition, there are certain practices which aim to utilize states of mind in dream state and deep sleep state which naturally does not have any co-relation to physical postures. So how would you relate that to the yoga teachings?

BKS: When I presented *Trikonasana*, I showed you the ethical behavior of the body, how some parts are in a sleepy state, some parts in a dreamy state, some parts in a wakeful state in any movement. First, one has to make the people to do the *āsana* and stay, to realize how to get all pervasiveness of the intelligence so that there is no compartment like *nidrā*, *svapnā* *jāgrata*. But, it should be all pervading where all the three *avasthās*, the states, disappear and I consider that as the highest point of *dhyāna*.

RM: You have in yogic tradition, working with dream state when you are in sleep and in different levels of sleep. Do you then work with / use dream state as a part of practice?

BKS: No, it is not like that. Most of the times, yogis do not get dreams. What you have to know is the state of the mind.



In *jagrata*, the mind is in the brain. In a dreamy state the mind is in the throat and that is why many people get choking in dreams. In sleep, the mind rests in the heart, *hrdaye cittasamvit*, so the seat of the mind is the heart.

When we practice *āsanas*, we make the mind to see that we do not do – half part forgetting, half part acting. The entire wakefulness of the brain is diffused towards the bottom of the feet so that the energy and

the electrical power of the intellectual strength is even. What is in the brain is also in the feet. That is active meditation. Please don't think *asanas* are physical. There are two types of meditation. There is active meditation and passive meditation. In active meditation we bring the self to come in contact with the physical body where as in *dhyāna* the physical body moves to the core of the being (soul). In *dhyāna* it is centripetal, in *āsana* it is centrifugal.

If we know these differences in the movements of the mind probably you will all experience the knowledge which is connected with the nature, it is equal, it is on par with the intelligence of the soul. There is a difference in the cultivated intellect of the mind and the dominant hidden illuminative light. If these two join together then I consider that as *dhyāna*. And that *dhyāna* leads to *svarupa shunya avasthā* which we call *Sāmadhi*.

Actually *sāmadhi* is not the highest level. This is the beginning stage as *svarupa avastha* is last because *svarupa pratistha* has not been established. *Kaivalya pāda* states that after experiencing the brightness of the self where the presence of the I fades then the real I comes up. That real I means that you have reached the ultimate aim of *dhyāna* because all these other aspects become steps for *kaivalya-moksa*. So in simple language, *moha* is connected to the body; *moksa* is connected to the self. So freeing oneself from *moha* is for me the freedom of the body.

RM: HH, the moral framework is a crucial entity in yoga. They call it *yama*, *niyama*. However in applied Buddhism or in

After experiencing the brightness of the self where the presence of the “I.” fades then the real “I” comes up.

our everyday learning aspirants, many of us don't wait to fulfill the obligations of the moral frame work before plunging into the path. The assumption in many yoga traditions is that if the mind is very agitated and in deep distress then you might as well apply techniques of *pranayāma* or whatever so you can slow the mind. Then, you can begin to address the issues of morality and subscribe to the moral frame work. So, how important is the order or sequence of moving from one level to the other? What we are talking about is intellectually stimulating but certainly, I am speaking for myself – the people here are far more evolved than I am. But, it is certainly not attainable in this life time. So we are stuck in morally bettering lives and struggling with that. What are the aids that we can access?

HH: *Sheila samadhi prajñā* are common in Buddhism. *Sheila* means training of mindfulness and awareness. So, you need to apply these two faculties of mindfulness and awareness in order to uphold to an ethically disciplined life. The reason why the morality practice is so important is because in the context of leading a moral life you are in some sense fine tuning your ability to apply these two mental faculties, mindfulness and awareness, and in fact these are the two important factors in the context of cultivating *dhyāna* as well.

Now when you look at the *dhyāna* concentration where the key quality of that is the single pointed-ness of the mind, stable mind with a stable pointedness and in itself from a moral point of view it is neither virtuous nor non-virtuous. What makes it virtuous is the other factors as to the kind of objects it focuses on, complementary factors and so on. That's why in the Buddhist context, the role of wisdom – *prajñā* becomes very important. Therefore in the Buddhist traditions we make distinctions between *Vipāssana* in a mundane level and *vipāssana* on a non-mundane level. That demarcation is done on the basis of the kind of object that you take on in your practice and application of wisdom. And, whether that particular practice of *Vipāssana* (whether the mundane or non-mundane level) becomes from the Buddhist point of view a cause for attaining *moksa* (liberation) again is determined by the kind of motivation that underpins. Whether it becomes cause


You need to apply these two faculties of mindfulness and awareness in order to uphold to an ethically disciplined life.

for liberation from separate existence or state from Buddhahood is again determined by the under pinning motivation.

As you are aware Mr. Iyengar, in the Buddhist context we also use the term yoga particularly in the *vajrayana* tradition. In the *vajrayana*, traditionally we speak of four classes of the *tantra*, the Buddhist *tantra- kriyā, charya, yoga* and *anuttarayogatantra*. So all though in the first levels of *tantra* there are few forms of yogic practices that involve kind of usage of your breathing processes like *pranayama*. However, it is in the *yoga tantra* particularly in the *anuttarayogatantra yoga, tantra* sense of yoga is understood in the Buddhist context.

In the Buddhist tradition particularly the *vajrayana* tradition the term yoga is used in a particular way where the special feature of the *vajrayana* practice is the utilization of the bodily energy as part of the meditation practices and there is a recognition that the movement of the mind is very intricately connected with the movement of the body. Therefore if one wants to train the mind and discipline it, one also needs to find the calming of the turbulences in the mental states and mental level and that needs to be done by cleansing and training the bodily energy the *vāyus- the pranas*. In order to do this you need a certain kind of flexibility of body and we have physical exercises in the Buddhist text as well as part of that preliminary practice of yoga.

One question that I would like to ask you is the following: Clearly when one attains a state of mental equilibrium, where there is no conceptual thought processes going on where one is in a state of equilibrium and where one is in a kind of neutral state there is no evaluation and no judgment. Clearly when one is in that state where there is no thought arising, manifestations level where there is no anger, no attachment and so on. The question is that subsequent to that experience what would act



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Sri B.K.S. Iyengar, Honourary President

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A bird needs two wings to fly. Similarly to climb the ladder of spiritual life, we have to follow two wings of ethical practice – yama and niyama & shilata – fierceness and virtuousness.

as a remedy against a conflict of reflected emotions? In the Buddhist tradition, amongst the various factors that afflict our mind we have more states like anger, attachment and jealousy and so on which seem to require certain kinds of approaches to calm them down. There are more cognitive types. In Buddhist tradition there is an understanding that in order to counter these pure non-conceptual thoughtless approach isn't enough. You have to actively cultivate an inside understanding that takes into approach the opposite forces of our destructions. So you need this recognition in addition to the non-conceptual state of mind, you also need an active inside. So that is the question.

BKS: There is a very good *shloka* in *Hatha Yoga Pratipiksa* 'indriyaia manonatah manonathastu marutah. marutasya layo nathah ca layo natha mashritah' It is a very important *shloka* – where the mind is the master of the senses (senses are the spokes of the wheel) and prana is the master of the mind. So the moment you realize and master the rhythmic flow of breath the mind becomes calm. *chale vate chale cittam nishchale nischala bhavate*. As the wind blows so the mind moves. There is a tremendous connection between *prāna sakti* and *manas sakti*. If these two are coordinated together, the mind cannot wander at all because *prāna* is brought into a rhythmic state. That is why pranayama is the foundation for experiencing the spiritual aspect of life. So *prāna* is very important which I agree with them. At the same time we should know that a bird cannot fly with one wing. It has two wings to fly. So similarly as we have to climb the ladder of spiritual life, then we have to follow two wings – one is the ethical practice of *yama* and *niyama* and the other is *silata* – fierceness and virtuousness. Both have to be balanced to know the real truth of our art of living. I think we are all working for that experience.

RM: You think that in terms of our aspirations – happiness in Tibetan Buddhist tradition is often encouraged that when we have klesas, the negative state of mind, to meditate on an antidote that will diminish the power of that negative emotion? To move beyond merely the calming of the mind, getting the mind and the body – the subtle elements in sync and harmony – is there a role for something to work on thoughts ideas or emotions?

BKS: It has been clearly said that if there are negative currents then you have to think of the opposite currents to function.

Vitarkabādhane pratipaksa bhāvanam. It has two words *badhane* and *bhāvanam*. You can experience what is *bādhane* and what is the *bhāvana*. Suppose in *Trikonāsana* what is the *bādhane* on the right side and what is the *bhāvana* on the left side?

So synchronize the *bādhane* with *bhavana* so the *badhane* disappears; the bondage disappears. So *pratipaksa bhāvana* is also in the yogic term but it is meant for the intellectuals! So what about the common people? For a common man of average intelligence, Patañjali states that after exhalation remain quiet for sometime and experience the state of the mind so you experience the state of *manolaya* after exhalation. The first lesson Patañjali gives is about waiting, pausing, after exhalation, passive exhalation not forceful exhalation. Air has to be released not to be expelled. So you have to learn that so that the mind gets the quality of quietness and tranquility.

From that we have to develop on how we have to improve to conquer the five elements, the five *tanmātras*, the *manas*,

SUMMER SADHANA

with Robin Cantor

July 9 - 14, 2012, 6:30 am - 8:00 am

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

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Focus: learning to let go of the impediments that obstruct progress on the path to realizing the true Self.

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buddhi and the ego. Patañjali explains in the third chapter how *asanas* help to conquer the elements of nature, the *pancha tanmātras* – the atomic infra-structures. He calls it as nature then he speaks of *sarira* which has a hold for you to improve further where the *indriya* become quiet. When the *indriyas* become quiet the mind becomes quiet; the mind becomes quiet then the cosmic intelligence dissolves in the nature and *purusa* shines.

RM: Thank you. This has been a great blessing, a great privilege a great honor a great learning experience and a great historical movement for all of us – an earnest and sincere prayer for a healthy and happy life.

Yoga Rahasya thanks Shri Rajiv Mehrotra for organising this meeting! ॐ

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IN OUR MAILBOX

To our Yoga Community,
Words cannot express my appreciation for your help and compassion towards us. All the donations were so lovely and warm and surprised me in fact. I felt all your high qualities through all the gifts to us. Love the blanket, I take it everywhere to warm me!

I felt I have extended my family that will heal me faster. I am also thankful for Nanaimo yogis who mailed me cash! Thank you so much for your support help and love. It warmed my heart to know that I am not alone. Meant so much.

Thank you. All the best to you.

Love and Big Hugs to you all.

arigatuou, gazai mashita

Satoko, Mila and Lucca

Mr. Iyengar Honoured

Dr Iyengar has pioneered the applicability of yoga as a universal solution to human suffering. He has made it possible for ordinary human beings to experience the wisdom of the yoga sutras – and thereby improve the quality of their lives. – India Merchants Chamber

On April, 8, 2012,
B.K.S. Iyengar
was honored for his
outstanding leadership
in spreading awareness
of the effectiveness of



yoga as an Indian methodology for health and fitness. He was awarded the very prestigious IMC Juran Quality Medal at the hands of famous author Shashi Tharoor and industrialist Neeraj Bajaj. This medal is associated with quality, quality management and in the past has been awarded to top industrialists of India. The award has been named after Dr. J M Juran, the man who taught Japan how to manage for quality, is a visionary and has pioneered seminal contributions in the field of Quality Management worldwide. The IMC part of the medal's name comes from the India Merchants' Chamber, who manage the award. Guruji being the hall mark of quality, is one of the only two non-industrialists to receive the award.

Congratulations!

On May 25 and 26 the following student teachers successfully passed their **Introductory I** assessment at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria:

Adia Kapoor
Johanna Godliman
Linda Walker
Soo Youn Ham



Leslie Hogya, Marlene Miller, Ty Chandler and Linda Benn were present as assessors and mentor teachers.

Thanks to the students who participated and to **Jane McFarlane** for taking care of many details. Thanks to **Jane Jonas** for timing. Also a big thank you to **Billy Essa** for donating lunch and **Sharron James, Lori Webber, Zoe Jackson, Betsy Gutnik**, and **Ty Chandler** for helping with cooking and many others who volunteered and supported our trainees and the process of teacher training.

Gabriella Giubilaro Workshop

March 22-24, 2012

By Karen Woodland

Gabriella Giubilaro works with the attention to detail you would expect from someone with a master's degree in physics, and the freshness of someone who, since 1983, has made regular visits to Pune to study with B.K.S. and Geeta Iyengar.

In an interview I found in an on-line version of *Yoga Journal*, (although I could not find the date), Gabriella says this of Gururji's influence: "The most important thing he passed on to me is not just knowledge; it is the tools of how to work on myself, how to understand the wisdom of the body. The body has its own intelligence: the ways it should move; the proper relation of the outer body with the organs and with the mind."

And work on herself, she clearly has.

Looking at her lovely, long, and perfectly aligned 'Indian' legs, it is hard to believe she was once 'bow legged.' She told us this, adding, she changed her shape with a lot of hard work and we could do the same, but not to expect immediate results. (After all, Rome wasn't built in a day.)

In the workshop, she often brought our attention to the hands and the feet.

"Do not let the hands shrink!"

"Work the feet and everything else follows!"

And I find myself thinking, this is indeed a workshop, like the workshop of the artist or artisan; the site of transformation, where the raw material of nature—wood, clay, and stone, are turned into objects of beauty and purpose. Or, in this case, where the raw material of the body—the muscles, the bones, the brain—is sculpted into something both more functional and more beautiful.

"Draw the hip into the hip socket. Always!" "Work the legs from inside out and outside in!"

Action. Alignment. Absorption. The correct action brings alignment. The focus to create alignment brings absorption ... *dharana*.

"Why do you think we do yoga?" she asks. "Not for the acrobatics."

Gabriella's teaching is simultaneously intense and light. She clearly loves to challenge herself, (and her students), and have fun doing it.



In that same *Yoga Journal* interview mentioned earlier, Gabriella was quoted; "I like to do yoga poses when I'm riding my big Vespa motor scooter."

Mid *ardha chandrasana*, we heard several cries of, "Mamma mia!" While we struggled to get the "head straight" and the "tailbone in!" Gabriella found her camera and began taking pictures... not of us, totally absorbed in *ardha chandrasana*, but of the massive, marine blue, fully-kitted-out Harley parked in front of the Yoga Centre on Fort Street.

We can all appreciate her fascination. Yoga practitioners know the liberation and joy of cruising through life in a finely tuned vehicle. ॐ

Reverend Father Joseph H. Pereira to Visit Victoria in October



The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria is thrilled to announce that Reverend Father Joseph H. Pereira will be visiting us October 1-2, 2012.

Father Joe, known as "the Singing Priest," is a practising Catholic priest from Mumbai, India;

a senior Iyengar yoga teacher, and the founder and managing trustee of the Kripa Foundation, an organization devoted to the rehabilitation of those affected by chemical dependency and HIV/AIDS.

Yoga practices developed by B.K.S. Iyengar are a component of the Kripa program. Kripa is a Sanskrit word, meaning grace. Father Joe is also the national co-ordinator in India for the World Community for Christian Meditation. He has received many awards for his work, including one of India's highest, the Padma Shri award.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 1

5:00 pm Film on Father Joe's work with addictions and yoga

5:30 pm - 8:30 pm All-levels asana class, including restorative poses

Film and class: \$68 + HST, Film only: \$15

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2

12:00 noon - 2:00 pm Film, followed by pranayama and meditation

\$45 + HST

2:00 pm - 3:00 pm Q and A for teachers, \$23 + HST

Evening program in the community – details to be announced.

High Tea Fundraiser

by Robin Cantor

Every year in March, the Special Needs class hosts the High Tea Fundraiser. Proceeds of the tea, draw and auction assist in the purchase of new props for the Centre. Let's hear what the organizers had to say in all their excitement over its success:

Wendy Boyer: Just phoned Bruce from YVR and heard we made about \$4,000 on the tea. WONDERFUL news! Thanks so much to Krysia, Laine, Dawn, Jane, Jaya, Robin!

Laine Canivet: Confirming that the silent auction bids add up to \$2,265.

Jaya Malaviarachchi: It's incredibly rewarding to see the final result. I admire the inspiring feeling of great warmth and generosity within our community.

Dawn Cox: This fundraiser is a fantastic thing to be a part of and it never ceases to amaze me how much love there is in every dish and every act of helping that occurs around it. It's been so great working with the same volunteers each

Celebrating the High Tea Fundraiser from left: Dawn Cox; Shirley Fleet; Jaya Malaviarachchi

year. Everyone just did what had to be done and knew what to do.

Ann Kilbertus: An amazing amount of work and cooperation took place to make this such a grassroots community event... I really was able to enjoy myself this year and that's because so many were involved from the beginning to the end in arranging each and every detail and moving through any obstacles. The true precision of Iyengar yoga came through! BIG BIG thanks to one and all!!

Robin Cantor: ...this is all fantastic news! A big thank you to Dawn and Jaya. You're a terrific team to work with. Dawn stays completely unruffled

in the back making everything look beautiful before it goes out. Jaya did a super job on attracting people to the draw. Some amazing gifts this year. All went smoothly. This year I'm delighted to announce that our tea expenses were 'ZERO'. Krysia and Laine did a superb job organizing and putting our first auction together. Thank you Jane for always being there and for being so reliable with whatever you do,

no matter what the task is.

Thanks to Dorothy and Patty for being so elegant and gracious as the meet'n greet hostesses. By now you know that the tea was a huge success. Also special thanks to all the many wonderful people who baked, picked up, delivered, set up, cleaned up and donated items for the draw.

Thank you to **Darvin Miller** of the Renaissance Retirement Residence for his very generous loan of tables, dishes & linens. Thank you to Robin's husband **Jim Pask** for borrowing a truck and transporting it all to and from the Centre. ॐ



Student Intensive

With Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler

August 27 - 31, 2012, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

All levels: Learn how to establish and deepen your practice.

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

Fees: \$235 + HST for IYCV members
\$260 + HST 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

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee.

From The Source: Notes on the 2012 IYAC Conference in Toronto

by Glenda Balkan Champagne

Victoria is now my home, but I lived in Toronto for 20 years and its draw is subtle but persistent. When I heard the news that this year's IYAC/ACYI Conference and AGM was to be held there, I found myself in front of my computer early enough to land a good deal on a flight.

Members of the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada/Association canadienne de yoga Iyengar often must travel great distances to attend the AGM and sometimes the expense and inconvenience prevents us from participating. In order to be certified at a higher level, Iyengar teachers must travel to the Ramamani Institute in Pune, India to receive teaching "From the Source". In fact, this conference was entitled "Iyengar Yoga Today: From the Source" and we were very fortunate this time to have the source travel to us!

Two teachers were sent, Dr. Rajlaxmi Nidmarti and Raya Uma Datta. Rajlaxmi is a mature teacher in her 60's and Raya is a young fireball in his early 30's. They couldn't have been more different in their presentation. However, they were similar in their devotion and dedication to the work. They played off each other as though they had worked together myriad times before when in fact this was the first time they had been paired. They attended each other's classes and continued the thread of each other's teachings, weaving for us a garment of glowing Iyengar silk.

Each of us absorbs the learning differently. Some remember details such as how to rotate the arms, or stretch through the thumb and forefinger, or lift the arches. Metaphor and imagery were used, such as the bracket of the trestle being akin to the sides of the neck and arm bones. Each seemingly small, detailed instruction led us on a journey. We understood that one cannot move one part of ourselves without it affecting the rest. What happens if you turn your arms from the inside out? What happens to the shoulder blades? What effect does this have on the chest? Diaphragm? Lungs? Breath? Spirit? We were reminded again and again that the work was to draw us deeper, more fully into ourselves and to point the way to the Self.

It will take some time – certainly beyond a single lifetime – to realize these teachings. The brilliance of B.K.S. Iyengar is that through his devotion and discipline, he embodies this work. He fully inhabits himself from the outside to the deepest core. His gift to us is that, even at 93 years old he is willing, even compelled, to continue to teach us.

The journey undertaken by Rajlaxmi and Raya "From the Source" to Toronto, Canada was to carry the seed of Mr. Iyengar's teaching to the hundred plus students in that room. With this gift comes the responsibility to keep learning, to continue to practice with tapas (zeal), to share the tiny particle of our understanding as truthfully and faithfully as we can.

My resistance to travelling to AGM's and conferences across Canada feels small and inconsequential after this. It only takes willingness. ॐ



Left to right: Shirley Daventry French, Lynne Bowsher (President of IYAC), Dr. Rajlaxmi Nidmarti (guest instructor)



Roger Champagne and Raya U D (Uma Datta) guest instructor



Jane Jonas, Mary Young, Glenda Balkan Champagne (IYAC Board), Lori Berenz, Leigh Ann Milne



Jane Jonas (IYAC Board), Nancy Searing (Secretary IYAC)

Margaret Lunam: A Force of Nature

Nov. 22, 1921- April 26 , 2012

By Deborah Lomond

Deborah Lomond has been a student of Iyengar Yoga since 1987. She began teaching in 1991 and has since obtained her Junior Intermediate III Certification. She studied at RIMYI, Pune, India in 2002 and is preparing to return for studies in July 2012. Deborah continues to teach Iyengar Yoga at Kelowna Yoga House where she is currently President of the Board of Directors. She also teaches blind and visually impaired children in School District 23. She spoke about Margaret Lunam at the gala dinner in Toronto at the recent IYAC/AGM.



Some of you know that our long-time friend and teacher, Margaret Lunam died on April 26 in her home in Kaslo, B.C. Margaret was 90 years old. She felt that she had completed her life's work and was ready to move on.

Twenty five years ago, there was no Iyengar Yoga in Kelowna. It all began when Margaret Lunam moved from the Comox Valley. She had studied with Norma Hodge in Victoria.

At that time, Margaret was already in her early sixties and ready to begin a new life teaching Iyengar Yoga in the Okanagan Valley.

She eventually bought a house on Clifton Road and converted the basement into a yoga studio. Many of the teachers that are now valued members of the Iyengar Yoga community such as Lynne Bowsher, Melissa Perehudoff, Vicky Catchpole, Barbara Young, Darcia Fenton, Phofi MacCullough, Krisna Zawaduk and myself started their yoga journey with Margaret.

Margaret had been trained as a physiotherapist. During WW2, she went overseas to England and France to work with the troops who were injured in the

field. It was there that she met her future husband, Jim Lunam, who was training to become a doctor. They returned to Canada to eventually live in Fanny Bay, on Vancouver Island and to raise a family. They had two sons and one daughter.

Margaret was very interested in alternative communities. In the seventies, she traveled on her own to Aurobindo, India and Findhorn in Scotland. I think that it might have been her love of the unconventional and her interest in the body that eventually led her to Norma Hodge.

Margaret was not introduced to Iyengar Yoga till she was 59 years old. That would have been around 1981. She said that it was love at first sight. She strongly connected with the power of Iyengar Yoga to heal the body and mind.

She did not believe in 'general' classes. Most of us had some kind of individualized program. Margaret always referred to herself as a rusted out physio. She wrote copious notes in the margins of her class plans so she would remember to find the right posture to help that problem. I can still remember the look of disbelief on a young man's

face when she loudly proposed a specific program to deal with his "flatulence". Tact was not her forte.

Margaret was a strict task master. If she showed you something once, there was a strong expectation that you would remember it. We didn't dare forget. It is probably the reason that so many of us became teachers. We remembered.

Margaret inspired many of us with her thirst for knowledge, her passion for the work and her generosity. She always had a bursary fund and was particularly partial to young mothers, but her generosity extended to many.

One of my favourite stories about Margaret was told to me last Christmas by a person that I just happened to meet by chance. My husband and I were going to the Birken Forest Monastery for a few days and we had put our name on their ride board offering to take other passengers. A woman by the name of Margot was visiting her brother in Kelowna and contacted us requesting a ride to the monastery. On the way there, the conversation somehow came around to Margaret. Margot said, "Are you referring to Margaret Lunam?" She had studied yoga with Vicky Catchpole on the island and she said that Vicky was always telling stories about Margaret. She remembered the one about the jar of money that was always on the table in the entry to the yoga studio. The money was for young moms in the class to pay their babysitters.

Margaret conducted classes in her home studio for many years till the creation and opening of Kelowna Yoga House in 2001. She generously donated the funds to purchase and build Kelowna Yoga House. Much of the work was done by volunteers from the community that Margaret had created.

Margaret also worked tirelessly as an activist and an environmentalist. In 1971, her concern for humanity and the environment led her to Green Peace and to protesting the Amchitka Nuclear Bomb testing in Alaska. Later in the mid seventies, she was arrested during a protest against the Trident submarine base in Washington State.

She was a consummate networker who rapidly built a community of personal friends and fellow supporters of her various causes. Never afraid to travel the roads least traveled; she challenged herself and those around her to break new ground and spared no one. In Kelowna, Margaret was a regular visitor to the Council Chambers at City Hall to oppose or support various causes. She even managed to get some of her city taxes reduced. She was adamant that she should not have to pay a fee for garbage collection when she produced none. Her picture was in the paper showing her with her one yogurt container of garbage a month. Everyone who knew Margaret has a story to tell about her. She was indeed a remarkable woman.

The poem that she read to me over the phone the day before she died epitomizes Margaret's love of the earth and her simple, direct pragmatism. I am blessed to have known Margaret.

I bequeath myself to the dirt
To grow the grass I love
If you want me again
Look for me under your bootstraps
Walt Whitman ॐ

No scents makes good sense!

Some of our members and teachers are very sensitive to any products that have scent. Some get migraines and have to leave the studio. Please refrain from using all perfumed products including soaps, powders, creams and detergents prior to class.

Sheri Berkowitz Honoured

by Leslie Hogya

At the recent IYAC Annual General meeting, I had the honour of recognizing Sheri Berkowitz. I nominated her to be a life time honorary member of the association. At the meeting, I made the following presentation:

Over the years, since we began to work together as yoga teachers and practitioners, a few people have worked hard and long to further us onto the path of yoga, spearheaded by our beloved teacher, Guruji B.K.S. Iyengar. Taking the path of yoga implies personal integrity and one who follows all the eight limbs of yoga, which begins with the ethical precepts of non-injury and compassion. Sheri Berkowitz is one of these people. She served as an advisor to our organization in the early days. She set an example of how to work collaboratively. At various early and sometimes contentious meetings, she helped us all towards a model of building consensus. One early meeting, I was to chair, I was very relieved when I found out Sheri would be there by my side.

To work with Sheri, is to be with someone with a steady hand, a quiet, yet strong presence and an intelligent mind. I found out quite by accident that she recently celebrated her 70th birthday with family and friends. I have looked to Sheri for guidance on this yoga path, and I know others have as well.

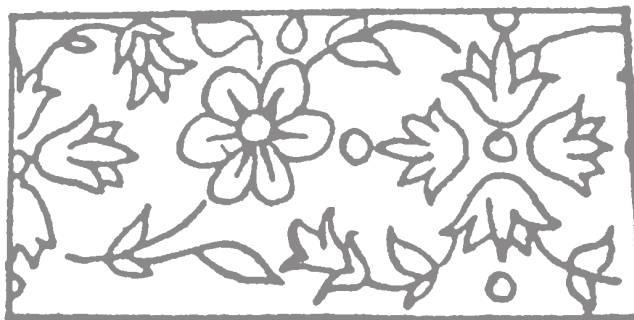
When I was speaking to Shirley Daventry French about Sheri's nomination, she had this to say:

Sheri really deserves to be recognized in this way. She was one of the first wave certified by Guruji at the start of our formal national association and since our very early informal meetings in the 1980s has lent her expertise to the national community—particularly as we floundered around trying to bring together the disparate groups in the country. She was on the first Board of Directors and is still serving as an assessor. I have benefitted from her wise counsel and appreciated her consummate grace under pressure, as has the entire community.

Sheri has served our organization in many capacities over the years, and currently is one of our assessors and one of the handful of people that is able to moderate an assessment.

I move that we accept Sheri Berkowitz as a new honorary lifetime member of the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada/ Association Canadien de Yoga Iyengar in recognition of her years of commitment and service.

Respectfully, Leslie Hogya ॐ



Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Board



Maureen Nicholls joined the yoga centre three years ago and will be serving on the board for a second year. In addition to yoga, Maureen enjoys cycling, golfing, hiking and community activities.



Ann Nolan has served on the executive of the Board for five years, and is starting on her sixth year. She has been Secretary for one year and Treasurer for four years. Ann began practicing Iyengar yoga when she moved to Victoria in 2002.



Laine Canivet has been practicing yoga for eleven years, seven of them at the Iyengar Yoga Centre. This is her sixth and final year on the Board of Directors and her fourth year in the position of Secretary. When not involved in yoga, Laine is a

fiber artist and volunteers on a national organization.



Krysia Strawczynski has been a member of the Iyengar Yoga Centre for over ten years. This is the fourth year she is serving on the Board as President. "I think the centre is one of the biggest boons to health in Victoria and I am grateful for the teachings offered here."



Keiko Alkire has been practicing yoga since 1988. She worked on the Newsletter Committee prior to the Centre acquiring a computer and she remembers getting blisters from stapling the newsletters. She has also volunteered in the special needs classes. This is her fourth year on the Board. Keiko will be serving on the Scholarship & Bursary Committee for a second year.



Ann Kilbertus has been a student and practitioner in the Iyengar Tradition since she moved to Victoria in 1984. In the late 80s under the guidance of Shirley Daventry French, she began teaching. Ann began going to Pune, India in 1992 and returns every few years to study with the Iyengar family, most recently in November, 2011. She is involved locally in the training of teachers as well as the program committee at the IYCV. She has seen much of Canada through her varied involvement in the national association: The Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada (IYAC) over many years. ॐ

New board members (Amanda Mills, Carole Miller, Bev Kallstrom) and stepping down members (Peggy Taylor, Leslie Hogg) not included.



IYENGAR YOGA

Teacher Training Intensives

Fees for each course:

\$585 CDN + HST IYCV members

\$625 CDN + HST non-members

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee.

Registration now open.

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

July 9-14, 2012

With Leslie Hogg, 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 in other areas of British Columbia and in 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 13-17, 2012

With Shirley Daventry French, assisted by Ann Kilbertus

Intermediate Junior and Senior syllabi for certified Iyengar yoga teachers

This intensive offers the opportunity for certified teachers to refine teaching and practice at their current level of certification, and to prepare for assessment.

Shirley is a direct student of B.K.S. Iyengar who awarded her a senior teaching credential. She 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 invited to apply; however, I.Y.A.C. members will be given priority.

Message from the 2010-2011 IYCV President

by Krysia Strawczynski

This is my fourth annual report as president and I am beginning to run out of synonyms for how much and how well our volunteers, teachers and staff contribute to the centre. Nevertheless, here goes.

First the board. Again as in past years, every member has been a pleasure to work with and we usually reached agreement easily. This is because each member gave respectful consideration to others' opinions. This year two members of the board are resigning. Peggy Taylor has served on the board for four years, the last two as vice-president.

We are also losing Leslie Hogle. Leslie has been and continues to be a driving force in the centre. For the past several years she has served in the capacity of past president. We will miss her wise counsel, although she is only a phone call away.

We ended this financial year in the black after a couple of years of deficits. The main reasons are expenditure control and more students. We are attracting new students and previous students are coming back. It is the quality of our teaching that keeps people coming back. I am a firm believer that in the long run, quality lasts. It starts with B.K.S. Iyengar and through Shirley Daventry French and senior teachers like Leslie Hogle quality permeates all our teaching.

It also helps that we are fortunate in our General Manager, Wendy Boyer. It is due to her capable management that our money is spent wisely. And it is through her creative new approaches that we come to the attention of new students.

I think everyone who comes to the centre appreciates the friendly, helpful reception they get from Britta Poisson, Bruce Cox or Hilary McPhail. They help make the centre an attractive place to visit.

This year as from the beginning, our volunteers made the centre's operation

possible. Our volunteers come from teachers, staff and students. They assist in special needs class, write, publish and distribute the newsletter, bake cookies, help host open houses, fix things, make bolsters, etc.

This year I want to make special mention of Jane McFarlane who has volunteered to be our facilities and props manager. She does a lot of the maintenance work herself. I also want to mention Theron Morgan who again this year has done all our bookkeeping as a volunteer.

Finally, as I did last year, I would like to thank everyone who helps make the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria the precious resource that it is. ॐ

2012 AGM Report from the General Manager

by Wendy Boyer

In 2011, the Centre celebrated both the 10th anniversary of our home at 919 Fort Street and Shirley's 80th birthday. Good news on the fiscal front this year! After two years of registering deficits of over \$12,000, the Centre finished the year in the black with a \$2000 surplus. To what do I attribute the turn around? Very hard work, good ideas and risk taking!

The Centre hosted four open houses last year; delivered posters and flyers everywhere around town; sold two on-line coupons; initiated monthly e-marketing; posted regularly to Facebook; started making bolsters in-house, and invited drop ins to any regular class, which cut the cost of hosting free classes at beginning of each term. Now new students to the Centre get their first class free anytime. The largest cost saving in 2011 was that we enlisted two very committed volunteers to do bookkeeping and Centre maintenance. The budget was cut to the

bone and we have stayed on track.

The biggest change to what we offered students in 2011 was selling passes for classes. We started selling flexibility and, in this competitive yoga market, that's critical. The \$209 Unlimited is very popular. Students take any class at their level, anytime. The Om Pass for \$55 offers six hours of class time. Attendance is up. We are seeing new faces, past students are returning to the Centre, and several workshops have been full with waiting lists, something that has not happened for several years.

Two volunteers have made a huge contribution to this year's fiscal surplus. Jane McFarlane has put in hundreds of hours maintaining the Centre – everything from daily cleaning, annual painting, and hauling the props to be laundered, to making chai for the four open houses. Theron Morgan, as volunteer bookkeeper, has contributed countless hours learning complex and unfriendly accounting software. The Centre is so grateful to you both!

Our amazing bakers really stepped up this year. We held four open houses with over 150 people attending each one in 2011. That's a lot of cookies! Thanks to all of you for the delicious contributions.

Marketing consumes much of the staff time these days. Thanks to Britta Poisson who manages the office and whose posters and e-ads help us stand out; Bruce Cox who maintains the website and Hilary McPhail who handles membership registration. There are so many dedicated volunteers at the Centre – I am mentioning just a few here. Thanks to Jeanette Merryfield who coordinates the distribution of posters with a team of teachers and volunteers; Ty Chandler who posts to Facebook; Patty Rivard for managing the library and Johanna Godliman for her help with many events.

The bulk of my time as general manager is spent on keeping costs down

and increasing the Centre's profile in a saturated yoga market. We renewed our lease on Fort Street for five years, without increase. Last winter was a wet one in Victoria and the flat roof of our building leaked many times saturating the carpet in the lobby. In December the landlord replaced the carpet so the entrance now has a face lift.

Thanks to the board for their work in 2011. Special thanks to Kryisia, as president, and Ann as treasurer, and also to Laine for her continued support as secretary, among many other things. Leslie Hoga who has been on the board for more years than we can count is stepping down this year. Thanks to Leslie for her constant dedication to the Centre! Peggy Taylor who, as vice president, organized the AGM for several years, leaves the board this year. Many thanks, Peggy. ॐ

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to the indispensable volunteers for Special Needs class and Muscles and Joints class:

Glenda Balkan-Champagne, Robin Cantor, Billy Essa, Johanna Godliman, Laura Johnson, Jayne Jonas, Adia Kapoor, Jaya Malaviarachchi, Jane McFarlane, Lynn Palfrey, Brandy Baybutt and Elizabeth Peckham.

Thank you to the teaching crew; **Wendy Boyer, Shirley Daventry French, Derek French and Adia Kapoor; Corrine Lowen's baking crew and Laine Canivet's set-up/clean-up crew** who volunteered for the Open House on April 28.

Thank you to **Ty Chandler and Gary Wong** for supervising members' practice.

Iyengar Yoga Centre Treasurer's Report

Year ending October 31, 2011

By Ann Nolan

We began 2011 with a conservative budget based on the reality of the past few years. Our goal was to contain expenses and grow our revenue through student enrolment in classes and workshops along with donations. This year I am very pleased to advise that we have achieved these goals in balance and end the year with a small operating surplus a significant turn around from our 2 previous years.

Total revenue for 2011 was \$412,601. as compared to \$434,296. in 2010 and \$451,977. in 2009. Class enrolment for the first half year was disappointingly light however the trend reversed for our summer and fall terms. Our year over year revenue venue for class enrolment for the year is lower than planned but we believe the marked turnaround in the second half of 2011 signals very positive change.

Higher workshop enrolment resulted in an increase of \$12,130. in revenue over 2010, an improvement of 12.7%. Our donations continue to grow year over year, we received \$25,825. this year up \$6,910. from 2010 up 36%. In addition to personal donations we have been soliciting corporate donations over the past two years. This year we have received a corporate donation from CIBC in the amount of \$500. and raised \$1000. through our member participation in the Thrifty Foods Smile Card Program. Our board continues to pursue sources of donations from the community at large.

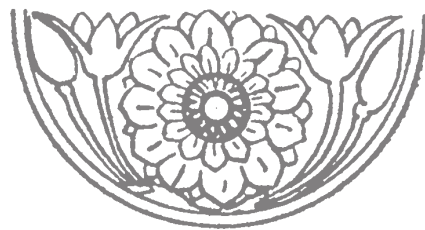
Total expenses for 2011 were \$410,290. as compared to \$447,778. in 2010 and \$470,319. in 2009. Cost savings measures were initiated implemented whenever possible. Our General Manager, Wendy Boyer and

staff have worked wonders monitoring and managing expenses throughout the year. As a result we have achieved a reduction of \$37,488 in our overall expenses year over year.

We end the year with a net surplus of \$2,311. a great result compared to the deficits we experienced over 2010 and 2009. Through good planning and governance over the years, the board has set aside surplus revenue in a contingency fund providing the centre with a cushion to weather unexpected costs and economic uncertainties such as we are currently experiencing. The Iyengar Yoga Centre is managed prudently and overall the financial health of our centre remains strong, our financial reserves permit us to carry on the Centre's objectives and activities.

At the time of writing I am pleased to advise that we have now received our legacy donation of \$50,000 from a former IYC member. We have invested this conservatively in guaranteed investment certificates. This additional reserve will certainly help our association navigate safely through the coming years.

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



The Syllabus

By Leslie Hogg

REFERENCE: YOGA RAHASYA. IYENGAR, GEETA. "WHY DO THE BEGINNERS CLASSES START WITH STANDING POSES?" VOL 18 NO. 4, 2011, PG.11.

Most of 2011 and now into 2012, has been for me a time to recover from a strange and lingering virus. Any small activity such as washing a few dishes would leave me exhausted, and needing a nap. During the first year of this illness, I did supported poses for the immune system, and a special practice given to me by Gulnaaz Dashti (see Victoria newsletter summer 2011) for which I am very grateful. After some months, I was able to add supported inversions.

Then, one day, I thought, "Ok, it's time to stand up!" I found I could once again do the lateral standing poses with support, especially *ardha chandrasana* (half moon pose). Standing against the trestle, wall, or the grill, I felt my body open and breath spread as I balanced on one leg, arm holding on to the rope or trestle. It was possible to hold this pose for increasing amounts of time, and it did not leave me exhausted as some poses did. I felt my confidence grow as I was able to hold this pose for longer periods.

Even with this careful approach, other days I would feel drained and I would revert to my full restorative practice.

Recently, I have been able to do more complex poses, but I travel to those poses by beginning at the beginning with the elementary standing poses. For example, I could not do *virabhadrasana III* (warrior III) until I built my stamina in *virabhadrasana I* and II. I did not start doing the revolved standing poses until I could hold the lateral versions.

In *Yoga Rahasya*, Geeta Iyengar elaborates on this topic in an article titled: "Why do the beginners classes start with standing poses." She quotes the *Kathopanishad* which says, "You have to first stand; you have to awaken yourself." (see reference above.)

Further, Geeta elaborates, "You need really strong determination for the standing *asanas*... The variety of movements that are done in the standing *asanas*... make the other *asanas* become easier." The standing poses activate the legs, the spine, all the joints located in the hips, knees,

ankles, shoulders, wrists and more. I have found the return journey to a full practice began with these standing poses. My determination was necessary to explore what was possible, and what was still to be developed.

When Mr. Iyengar first gave us the lists of poses for various levels of syllabi, I didn't always understand the importance of some introductory poses. But as I venture into a full practice, I am ever more humbled by his genius. The sequence in which the poses are introduced is brilliant. Each pose leads logically into the next.

For so many months, I had not even been practicing many forward bends, as the emphasis over the year was to open the chest. I was only doing upright seated poses the L shaped or *upashryi* versions. I started bending forward with poses like *padangusthasana* and *pada hastasana* (standing forward bend with hands holding the toes or under the feet). These standing forward bends are on the introductory I syllabus. I have a deeper appreciation and respect for them. Pulling on the feet in concave

stages activates my shoulders and brings the shoulder blades deeper into the dorsal spine. This action of pulling on the feet also helps release tightness in the hips and the hamstring muscles. As a bonus they spread the joints of my fingers and palm, and the wrist joint. The concave position of the spine is an essential movement in all seated forward bends. And as the head comes forward, the mind becomes quiet.

Part of my restorative practice included supported back bends. Moving to the unsupported versions, I went step by step through the syllabus. I started with *urdhva mukha svanasana* (upward dog) and then using the ropes; gradually progressed until I could lift into *urdhva danurasna* (upward facing bow) from a chair, then bolsters and finally the full pose from the floor. These poses help me regain stamina and vibrancy.

I want to express my deep gratitude to Guruji, B.K.S. Iyengar, for his teachings that developed this brilliant system. Thank you also to Geeta, and Prashant for carrying on their father's work. *Namaste.* ॐ

For sequences for the immune system see *Path to Holistic Health* by B.K.S. Iyengar.



Working Wisely Workshop

By Missi Hegyes

The workshop, Working Wisely, was based on some thoughts from Patanjali as translated by B.K.S. Iyengar:

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

The cause of pain is the association or identification of the seer with the seen and the remedy lies in their dissociation.

Ann cautioned us at the start that this workshop would move slowly, positions would be held for longer than normal and we were to go inside our own bodies and think about as well as feel what was happening. This was not a class that she would teach to beginners.

The first hour we worked on seated poses to prepare the legs for the standing poses. Ann used the elements to describe the nature of parts of the body, the belly like water, the chest like fire and earthy elbows. We were asked to look at ourselves, sculpt ourselves and told that the application of intelligence can alter us and our poses.

After a long hold in *dandasana* where we manually rolled the thighs inward and scooped the calves to the heel, pressed out on the big toe mound while moving the little toe back to the outer knee and did I say there was a brick between the knees and our calves were firmly belted at the widest part, Ann asked, did the legs gather any intelligence? She added an



interesting point from Mr. Iyengar as we were belting our calves; “what goes out must come in and what goes in must come out”. The time we took sitting in *dandasana* gave us opportunity to align the

bones, see the differences between each leg, how the quads were working and which way the knees were facing.

Another position I really enjoyed was one called the hip injector. It is a basic action of the leg where the compacted outer hip is absorbed into the body. We were introduced to a new *parivritta* pose- *parivritta utthita hasta padasana* – certainly a gateway pose for all the revolved poses. These are just some short notes on a workshop which dealt with a very important subject, practicing our own yoga wisely. We must be willing to change to reshape and gather. We must keep doing our work with intensity and love.

Thank you, Ann. ॐ



Learning to work the arms and groins in adho mukha virasana



Leg work to help develop the correct arm actions in sirsasana preparation



Gathering intelligence from the arm and leg work for salamba sirsasana

Farewell to the Yoga Centre

By Bill Marsh

*The world is in the bonds of action,
unless the action is a consecration.*

– The Bhagavad Gita

My wife first brought me to the Yoga Centre sometime ten or so years ago. It was soon after the centre opened and before the small downstairs studio was closed. We took our initial classes with Gwyneth. I remember asking her which *asanas* I should practice at home. “Standing poses,” she said. This was not the answer I hoped to hear – standing poses were too hard. Developing a practice had to wait awhile, but I kept coming to my weekly class and within a few months started taking more than one class a week. For several years, I have been at the centre for class or to practice four or more days a week. But now we have left Victoria and I want to express my gratitude to the centre and my admiration for an exceptional community.

The first gift I received from yoga was relief from stiffness in the morning. At the time, I was in my early fifties, but when I arose in the morning I moved like an eighty year old, creaking downstairs one step at a time. With a couple of yoga sessions a week, this vanished. I began to bounce out of bed, and I still do. I also ached less after playing squash. I could bend down, twist and reach a pan stuck in an awkward position at the back of the lower kitchen cabinets. This was all unexpected.

Some other changes were more subtle, but also more important. My not always sunny disposition brightened up. The waves and troughs of my emotional life smoothed out and settled down. It was easier for me to make changes in my behavior.

These blessings came because I was taught, excellently, by Gwyneth, then Corrine, Jeanette, Marlene, Ty and Ann, plus almost all the other teachers at the center at one time or another, and a succession of visiting instructors at the centre’s first-rate workshops. The quality and consistency of the yoga instruction I have received is remarkable. I think it comes from two sources: first, the extensive and rigorous training required in Iyengar yoga, and second, the collegiality of the teacher community that has been established by the founders.

In almost every class, my teachers have expressed their love of yoga and their reverence for their teachers. All organizations have an ideal that they aspire to. Most, in my experience, compromise their integrity of purpose in one way or another. The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria is one of the rare places



Bill Marsh and friends

in the world where daily activity thoroughly embodies timeless value. I have personally benefited enormously from this, but, quite apart from my benefit, this is an achievement of great worth and great beauty. ॐ

BILL MARSH, A LONG TIME STUDENT AT THE CENTRE, RECENTLY MOVED WITH HIS WIFE MELROSE TO TORONTO.

Congratulations!

The following candidates achieved **Junior I** certification at Kelowna, British Columbia in March, 2012:

Azita Bafekr, North York, ON

Frema Bram, Edmonton, AB

Sharoni Fixler, Calgary, AB

Michele Gunderson, Calgary, AB

Deborah Peake, Vancouver, BC

Tim Ruddy, Montreal, QC

Nicola Tiburzi, Roberts Creek, BC

The following candidates achieved **Introductory II** certification at Roberts Creek, BC in March, 2012:

Ken Brewer, Nanaimo, BC

Tracy Forsythe, Kelowna, BC

Patty Rivard, Victoria, BC

Sandra Headrick, Edmonton, BC

Asha Rao, Victoria, BC

Linda Larson, Brentwood Bay, BC

Jessie Kerr, Comox, BC

**Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada /
Association Canadienne de Yoga Iyengar**

Iyengar Yoga meets the Costalegra (the Happy Coast) of Mexico

By Jo Anna Hope

Between mugs of green tea, I first sweep and then hose down the part of the plaza where I teach yoga twice a week to small classes of between one and seven students. The songbirds sing, the grackles “grak”, and the surf is gently audible as I sweepsweepsweep down the 50’ length of this outdoor “studio” on the edge of Plaza Olivia. The water from the hose is, at first, cool to my bare feet and then comfortably warm as I grow accustomed to it. When class begins, it’s about 23 degrees outside and has warmed to about 29 by the time we finish, an hour before the sun reaches its zenith.

As with any yoga class, these students include people who are adept at the practice as well as those who have health and/or injury challenges, and those who are just “plain old stiff.” All are willing...willing to look at their individual issues, willing to accept guidance on how they might work with them, and willing to try



something new. *Savasana* is as welcome here as it is at the end of any class anywhere but with the added sweetness of the song of the sea close by and the soft kiss of the sun on the tile floor, perhaps even on our outstretched feet.



Students practicing in the open air of the plaza.

Class is over and all, students and teacher alike, are grateful for the gift of yoga and for the opportunity to practice and learn together. My gratitude extends to my community in Victoria and to my teachers within that community . . . I that wonderfully supportive group which I always look forward to rejoining.

Om om ॐ



Going Deeper

with Shirley Daventry French

An opportunity for all interested students to deepen their understanding of asana, pranayama and the philosophy which lies at the heart of yoga. Shirley is a direct student of the great contemporary yoga master, B.K.S. Iyengar. Since her first visit to Pune in 1979, she has returned regularly for further study.

Shirley is the founder of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria and her energy has contributed to a vibrant yoga community in Greater Victoria. Students from across Canada and around the world have studied with her. We invite you to join her for this special workshop.

An Iyengar Yoga
Workshop for Students
of all Yoga Traditions
November 2-3, 2012

Friday, November 2
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Saturday, November 3
11:00 am - 2:00 pm
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Fees:
\$130 + HST
for IYCV members

\$140 + HST
for non-members

\$100 + HST
for observers

To register, drop in to or phone

Iyengar Yoga Centre
of Victoria
202-919 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3

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

Workshop and Teacher Training with Chris Saudek

14-16 September 2012

WORKSHOP

Fri. 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Sat. 10:30 am - 1:30 pm,
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Sun. 10:30 am - 1:00 pm

Open to Iyengar Yoga students, general level and above. Ask your teacher if you are wondering about attending.

REGISTRATION OPENS JULY 2

IYCV MEMBER FEES:

\$240 + HST Workshop
\$72 + HST Teacher Training
\$305 + HST Workshop & Teacher Training

NON-MEMBER FEES:

\$264 + HST Workshop
\$79 + HST Teacher Training
\$336 + HST Workshop & Teacher Training

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee.



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)

TEACHER TRAINING

Sunday 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Open to certified Iyengar yoga teachers and teachers in training.

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

NOTE: Chris will teach an extended, Intermediate class on Monday, October 17, 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm.

There is a nominal surcharge for students registered in the regular Monday night Advanced class.

Renew!



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE OF VICTORIA
SOCIETY

Membership

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

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

Membership fee is \$40 + HST, renewable each January.

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☐ Please mail me my newsletter as I do not attend classes at the Centre.

☐ Receipt required.



In Pune

*Above: The bookstore at the Institute.
Below: Zarin and Parvez are long time yoga practioners at the Institute.*



2012-13 CALENDAR

JUNE

16 Ropes Class

JULY

9-14 Introductory Teacher Training Intensive

9-14 Summer Sadhana

AUGUST

13-17 Intermediate Teacher Training Intensive

22-26 Footsteps of Patanjali

27-31 Student Intensive

SEPTEMBER

14-16 Chris Saudek

20-23 Stephanie Quirk in Kelowna

24 Teachers' Meeting

OCTOBER

1-2 Father Joe Pereira

19-21 Introductory II Assessment, Saskatoon, SK

NOVEMBER

2-3 Going Deeper

16-18 Intermediate Junior I Assessment, location TBA

24 Teachers' Meeting

DECEMBER

14 Gurugi's Birthday Party

20-21 Winter Solstice Workshop

23-31 Christmas Break

JANUARY 2013

1 New Year's Day Practice

2-5 Interim Classes

2-6 Winter Sadhana

7 Regular classes resume

18-20 Intermediate Senior I/II Assessment

FEBRUARY

9 Teachers' Meeting

10 IYCV AGM



Detail from Burmese tapestry sold at High Tea auction



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

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



"The beauty of a lake reflects the beauty around it. When the mind is still, the beauty of the Self is seen reflected in it." – B.K.S. Iyengar



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EDITOR Roger Champagne

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE Judy Atkins, Giles Bixler, Roger Champagne, Lauren Cox, Shirley Daventry French, Johanna Godliman, Leslie Hogya, Jane McFarlane.

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IYCV LOGO Charles Campbell, Lauren Cox

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PROOFING Judy Atkins, Jane McFarlane

ADS & ANNOUNCEMENTS Jane McFarlane

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IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

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

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

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

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

Newsletter Advertising Policy

(Adopted February 20, 2004)

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

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

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



Fall 2012

It was a jolt last week when, after six weeks of holiday, the alarm went off and I got ready to go to the centre and teach a week long intermediate teacher training course. That first morning I was somewhat disorganised as I showered, dressed and prepared myself to change gears from the leisurely unstructured days of the preceding weeks.

The practice and study of yoga are constant companions in my life, and I am always making notes and gathering relevant articles some of which lead me to books. These may or may not be specific to yoga but in my opinion illustrate one of the fundamental principles on which the practice of yoga is based. As the intensive comes closer I review writing and gather ideas I consider relevant for this year's course. My colleague, Ann Kilbertus, was to be an assistant teacher so I met with her, and touched base with yoga centre General Manager, Wendy Boyer and Office Manager, Britta Poisson, both of whom had expended a lot of energy in organising and promoting this course. They are also respected teachers at our centre who were going to participate in the course, and once it was underway I wanted them to step aside from their administrative roles.

Gradually my mind was being drawn to the centre which I had not entered for a couple of months. I was getting in gear for the work, but early that Monday morning the gears were not fully engaged. Showered and dressed I sat gazing at the ocean and mountains across the Juan de Fuca strait, sipping tea and letting my mind drift, one of the inordinate pleasures of unstructured days; then I glanced at my watch only to see it was time to leave—now! From my home it is about 25 km to the yoga centre and can take anything from 30 minutes to almost an hour depending on traffic. That morning I wanted to be there early.

In my youth I was always in a rush in the morning as I prepared to go to work, having usually stayed up late the night before and consequently not wanting to get out of bed the following morning. I don't enjoy that style of life anymore and, in any case, it is not good for my blood pressure!

As the week progressed, each day I became better organised making sure there was time for a personal practice even though it was shorter than usual. At the end of the first day of teaching, I had arrived home physically and mentally exhausted sat silently at the dinner table opposite my husband and went to bed very early. The second day was better; in the evening although I was physically tired because you do a lot of walking in six hours of teaching I was mentally alert. As I became more and more engaged with the teaching and with the students my energy began to flow, I slept well and was ready to teach the next day.

As both student and teacher, I am very interested in linking the practical aspects of yoga with its philosophical underpinnings and connecting this with how we live our lives. Questions abound. What makes my life worth living? What does it mean to live a spiritual life? What has this to do with pulling up my kneecaps, with physical effort, *asana* and *pranayama*? What is the purpose of my life? What is my nature, when does it serve my purpose and when does it impede and hinder? This intensive is for certified teachers, who have already spent years addressing these and other issues. Several of them were senior teachers themselves. Practice was vibrant and discussion time lively. We learn from each other which is one of the real benefits from working with peers. Was there any illumination? Time will tell!

Yoga speaks of the three *gunas* or qualities of nature which in sanskrit are called *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, and in English translate as luminosity, vibrancy and inertia. One day in the library in Pune, Guruji suddenly began to talk about inability to move beyond vibrancy. He had just finished speaking with one of his senior students who was experiencing many injuries. "He is a good student and practises regularly but he has vibrancy and no illumination; that's why he keeps hurting himself". Each of the *gunas* serves a purpose in our lives and ideally all three exist in harmony with each other.

Some students are attracted to inertia always seeking to rest, use props and bolsters and longing for *savasana*. Not liking to exert themselves they

are constantly finding an excuse not to persevere. Underdoing is common for them. I am not speaking of those suffering from illness or recovering from injury who have to monitor their recovery and the effect of increasing their activity and level of difficulty. Guruji reminds us that there are two sides to *ahimsa* (non-injury) and that underdoing is as injurious as overdoing!

Other students are drawn to activity and become attached to vibrancy which like every other attachment will become an obstacle and may also lead to injury. Mastery in yoga demands that we discriminate between when it is important to make an effort and do more, and when to back off or stop. In both cases this requires that in addition to knowing the subject we know our tendencies, our nature, ourself.

Many of us involved in the course had watched the Olympic Games in London the previous two weeks and seen evidence of both sides of *ahimsa*: athletes who for whatever reason underperformed, and others who found an extra gear and went far beyond anything previously achieved. We also saw athletes who sustained a level of excellence which they had shown in previous competitions many times over many years. Few had the intention of underdoing (although some Badminton players were disqualified for just that) but in most cases when it happened it was unintentional. Nevertheless, something lay behind it.

I was curious what went on in the body and mind of an American pole vaulter who was a favourite to win the competition but in the Final did not clear the pole at all. He did not blame or whine or look for excuses. In fact, afterwards he said: "The conditions were perfect. The track was fast. The stage was set and it just didn't go. Everybody wants to go in medaling, but my goal is to win. I failed in my mind on what my goal was." No doubt many people consoled him with memories of past

success, but he himself spoke of the future and not being ready to quit even though, as he said, in his mind he failed. Something in his mind/body connection clearly failed at the moment of competition.

Always after the Olympics there are a lot of disappointments and excuses accompanied by much talk about the importance of simply taking part. Each athlete is competing at the highest level of their sport, and we should respect that and their achievement in even getting to the Games; but in each event only one can win and two others get medals. Superb athletes all, they are not all winners.

I read an interesting article about this in our local paper written by Andrew Cohen of the Ottawa Citizen which is entitled "Olympics are the last refuge for excellence". I agreed with much of what he wrote. He sets the tone of the article by this statement: "In a world of ersatz, the Olympics are authenticity. In a world of mediocrity, the Olympics are superiority. They are a last refuge of excellence in today's pedestrian world."

Mr. Cohen goes on to say that "It's all terribly decisive and wholly unsentimental": athletes either succeed or fail. Sadly, these days in many sports activities in Canada no-one is allowed to fail, everyone gets a ribbon or a medal. His article moves on to include education, and in this field I have heard horror stories from my children who are all teachers.

My high school teacher son has told me that if a child is failed because they are not handing in assignments or not attending classes, they (and often their parents too) protest that it is unfair and unjust. He and some of his colleagues are also frustrated because they are discouraged from giving a zero if work has not been handed in. This is in stark contrast to my experience in an English high school where the only marks you could achieve in one general knowledge class taught by our headmaster were ten out of ten or zero—and definitely no chance of complaining. I am not advocating such drastic measures, but I did study these lessons well and never got zero. I believe my school was too strict in many ways but agree with Mr. Cohen that these days many students graduate from high school in ignorance, "unable to think critically and ignorant of their country's history and government". Does this do anyone a service?

Universities too are compromising and students challenge their grades. Once I taught a class for a colleague who has established a credit course in yoga at the University of Victoria. At the end of class as she and I prepared to leave, a student approached her complaining that she had received an A and not an A+ which she felt she deserved because she had answered all the questions. How sad at any level of education to think any of your answers left no room for further learning and improvement!

SCHOLARSHIPS & BURSARIES

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

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

Scholarship applications for weekend workshops are due one month prior to the workshop. Scholarship applications 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.

Yoga is not a competitive sport despite some attempts to get it admitted to the Olympics but it does involve higher education and the acquisition of knowledge. It is not about competition and winning awards, but about aspiring to achieve a higher state of consciousness. This necessitates embarking on an individual journey to explore one's own potential "to the maximum", as Gururji would often say when teaching his classes. Since I cannot possibly fulfil anyone else's potential, it is ridiculous and a complete waste of time to try. If I take the time to look at my own limitations and what it is that sustains them, perhaps I will find ways to overcome them physically, mentally or on a spiritual level. This is an achievable goal!

Yoga is an adventure like climbing a mountain or trekking in the wilderness. If we are wise we first make use of guides who show us how to minimize risk and deal with hazards which

may arise. Practising yoga without a qualified guide is also dangerous and I am fortunate to have B.K.S. Iyengar, Geeta and Prashant as guides. I am also guided by Swami Radha who is no longer alive but her wisdom lives on.

At the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria we have many years of experience of working as a group of teachers in a collegial manner. We currently have four senior teachers on our faculty and we encourage junior teachers to work with them, as well as with each other. The senior teachers meet regularly in formal and informal meetings as well as in class. The teacher training intensive mentioned at the start of this article is not focused on passing higher levels of assessment, although if that is your goal it could be valuable. It is about deeper learning, something which is important for all teachers junior and senior alike. Two senior teachers were teaching (Ann and I) but

three other senior teachers participated as students (Leslie Hogg, Marlene Miller and Linda Shevloff). They each contributed some of their knowledge and we all benefitted.

This collegial approach means that the centre is not dependent on any one of us, as was evident when I broke my kneecap eighteen months ago. The work went on as it should. What we have established here in Victoria ensures this, which is what our Gururji would expect of his pupils. ॐ

NOTE:

Last month's cover photo was from the article "Enhancing Creativity – the Yogic Way," Yoga Rahasya, Vol. 10, No.1; 2003, reprinted in the Spring 2012 edition of the IYCV Newsletter.



Sri B.K.S. Iyengar, Honourary President

**IYAC/ACYI
ASSESSMENT
DATES**

October 19-21, 2012
Introductory II
Saskatoon, SK

November 16-18, 2012
Intermediate Junior I
Montreal QC

January 18-20, 2013
Intermediate Senior I/II
Victoria, BC

Check results and upcoming
assessments at
iyengaryogacanada.com

IYCV Open House

Saturday, September 8, 2012
12:00 noon – 5:00 pm

Free! Come one, come all!

Homemade cookies and chai served all day.

- 12:00-1:00 Chanting with Bhavantu Sound
- 1:00-2:00 Intro Yoga
- 2:00-3:00 50+ Yoga
- 3:00-4:00 Yoga for all levels and traditions
- 4:00-5:00 Yoga is a Way of Life; talk by Shirley Davenport French and Dr. Derek French; plus Meet the IYCV Teachers



Gurubhai

With an introduction and commentary by Juniper Glass



Steve Horn

In April 2008, during a quiet afternoon in a stone house high above a mountain lake, five women gathered, with 195 years of yoga practice among them. They are each senior Iyengar Yoga teachers who assembled for the unique occasion of being students together at the ascent intensive taught by Geeta Iyengar. These women were some of the first to root Iyengar Yoga in North America — “the vanguard,” as Felicity Green calls them during the ensuing conversation. Now they are entering new territory, again at the forefront, exploring how to live their senior years as teachers and yoginis.

Felicity was the host of the conversation, gentle yet matter-of-fact. Now seventy-five and living on Lopez Island, Washington, her yoga teaching really picked up speed at the age

I gladly took up the invitation to witness the discussion between these five women. What they spoke of has universal relevance: how to bring forward past experience into the present, not just as memory but as stepping-stones for what we become in each new phase of life.

of fifty when her family responsibilities had been fulfilled. Joan White, one of the few people to hold an Advanced Certificate from B.K.S. Iyengar, shared her stories and reflections with verve and Philadelphian cadence. Elegant and measured in her movements and speech, Margot Kitchen has been teaching yoga since the early 1970s and now devotes much time to the certification of new teachers. Leslie Hogya of Victoria is the president of the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada; she exudes warmth and humility. In a delightful British accent, Shirley Daventry-French alternates between self-deprecating wit and reflections that reveal her independent mind and depth of experience in yoga, which she has practised since 1969.

I gladly took up the invitation to witness the discussion between these five women. What they spoke of has universal relevance: how to bring forward past experience into the present, not just as memory but as stepping-stones for what we become in each new phase of life. I am in a different phase than these women, starting a family and building my body of work, and I have only a cursory experience of the Iyengar approach to yoga; yet I was drawn to their reflections as if toward light.

There was a sense of community in the small group, something that many of them miss out on in their day-to-day role as teachers, and relief perhaps to find themselves among *gurubhai*, peers in the same yoga lineage, grappling with similar

challenges. I realized the courage it takes to reveal one's self-questioning as well as to share stories about injury, illness and aging. There was a strong desire to be honest about these challenges, both for their own benefit and for others. This conversation, then, is an offering ...

Felicity: A couple of years ago, I developed a heart problem. And that was a big shock because I thought, Oh, I do yoga, and I'll be healthy until I die. Right? Other things happened and my health sort of went downhill. And it was like, Okay, maybe I've got to give up teaching yoga. Maybe this is a message that I am too attached to it. I realized that I had made a lot of sacrifices to do all the teaching that I had done.

I thought that I needed to find something else to be passionate about. But I really know that yoga is my passion. I still want to teach, but I am limited in what I can do myself. And so my question was: how do you grow old graciously in yoga and be ethical — because Mr. Iyengar has always said, "Don't teach what you do not do."

Joan: I'm also in a situation where I can't demonstrate certain poses. In 2005, I had a very life-changing accident. I got pitched up in the air from a horse. It broke most of the ribs on the right side of my body; it punctured my lung; and for the third time, I broke my back. In the past, I've been pretty much able to recover most things. And this time I'm too old to recover all of them.

I'm so used to demonstrating every pose and I can't. Is this fair to the younger students? Am I making people see Iyengar Yoga as "old people's" yoga? I'm sort of caught in that whole bind. How much can I teach?

And as Felicity said, my whole life has revolved around yoga. I have been teaching since 1971. I gave up over and over and over again many things in terms of life choices, family choices, friends — because I never had any time. I am still teaching nine classes a week and doing a certain amount of traveling, but what do I do now?

But you know, here we are. We are literally the forefront. I started with Mr. Iyengar in '73, so he calls me his "oldest student in America." [laughter] I have this wonderful privilege, and I want to continue learning and sharing what I know. I feel like there's a whole new horizon that has opened up. I have talked a lot with Geeta about this and she says, "Go to the essence." You know, we just have to get out there and do it, because we are the examples that yoga is more than what *asanas* you can do.

Margot: Yoga is more than *asana*, period.

Joan: But what's hard is that most people who are coming to yoga ...

You know, we just have to get out there and do it, because we are the examples that yoga is more than what asanas you can do.

Felicity: ... want to do *asana*.

Joan: As we age, we are adding more and more philosophy and *pranayama* into our teaching. You feel it yourself and you realize all the other sustaining parts of yoga. You finally put *asana* in perspective.

Margot: And that's where we can be an example now. I've also scaled back because of a heart problem that came very suddenly two years ago. And so I've had to really look carefully at what I've been doing. I was in India in October at the Iyengar Institute, and I spent a month in medical classes. I've always helped in the medical classes; I've never been a patient! It was great but very humbling. I struggled. I think I cried for a month just because it was all back bends to open the chest after some surgery.

I realized that surrendering is very difficult. I've also had accidents, like you have, Joan. When are we going to learn to slow down? So at this point, I think it is starting to filter in. [laughter] I think that Iyengar Yoga attracts type A personalities. I think that most people in this room are type A personalities! Unfortunately we had to get bashed before we started realizing how to temper our practice, how to deepen it.

Margot: I look at people my age who are retired. One woman came up to me and she said, "You are so blessed to have a passion," which you were mentioning, Felicity. And that's right. My yoga practice is changing but it doesn't make it any



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from the Base**

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September 20 - 23, 2012*

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less passionate. I find with the supported practice that I'm doing, the insights are deeper.

Joan: There are things that improve with age. My body doesn't forget the way my mind does. Even if it's injured, I still have found more body awareness as I'm aging. It just gets better, the body awareness — even though the ability to remember what I have become aware of may be slowed down! [laughter]

In yoga philosophy, we often hear about going from the gross to the subtle in our sense perceptions and our yogic practices. This depth of experience and understanding is the hope of aging; it is the "wiser" in growing older and wiser.

Yogic texts describe a human life as occurring in four twenty-five-year phases, the ashramas. It is interesting to see how relevant these phases are, even though they were devised in ancient times. The shifts felt by these women at the elder stage of life, as well as my own current focus on family and community, echo the ashramas. During the first twenty-five years, brahmacharya, we study the world and the basics of spiritual practice and theory. From studenthood, we become householders, family men and women, grihastha. Around age fifty, we enter vanaprastha, deepening our spiritual practice and also sharing what we have learned with those who seek us out, becoming teachers. The final ashrama, sanyasa, is a retreat, renouncing attachments and dedicating oneself to the highest goal, to become one with the Divine.

These yoginis show that we create our lives not just once but many times over. Being faced with greater limitations has brought all of them to question what they do with their time and energy. This is one of the fundamental choices of life, and we face it many times every day.

Felicity: I've noticed something about making commitments, because my energy goes up and down. In the past, if I made a commitment, I'd do it, come hell or high water. But I'm not going to do that to myself anymore. If people ask me to make a commitment, I say, "Okay, but it is contingent on me feeling well at that time."

Shirley: You remember Gurujii used to say if you invited him, "God willing!"? [laughter] I have cut back on a lot of commitments too, and become very, very selective. When I was younger, I was cramming too much in. And that's my nature. This is where the blood pressure comes in. Now I look at each new year and plan time off, family vacations, time together with my husband. It is working much better. Gradually I came to the realization that, from now on, this is my life, making these changes.

Leslie: Well, I'll speak for Shirley — she has learned the art of scheduling her vacations first! [laughter] We are fortunate in Victoria that our yoga centre was founded as a nonprofit society. We work together, so when one person is out of the loop, there are all the other people that can help keep things going. That's been a real blessing.

For myself, fortunately I'm a type B personality [laughter], and physically things are okay right now, but I'm facing the whole thing about family and retirement. My husband's retiring and he's been on study leave this year. Before, my husband was always busy, and now he's not so busy! He's going to go live somewhere for two months and I want to go with him.

Joan: I think if you have a family, the pulls become stronger at this age instead of less strong. I have a grown son. I now have grandchildren who I love and would love to have more time to spend with them because they're really fun. But what

Reverend Father Joseph H. Pereira to Visit Victoria in October



The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria is thrilled to announce that Reverend Father Joseph H. Pereira will be visiting us October 1-2, 2012.

Father Joe, known as "the Singing Priest," is a practising Catholic priest from Mumbai, India; a senior Iyengar yoga teacher,

and the founder and managing trustee of the Kripa Foundation, an organization devoted to the rehabilitation of those affected by chemical dependency and HIV/AIDS.

Yoga practices developed by B.K.S. Iyengar are a component of the Kripa program. Kripa is a Sanskrit word, meaning grace. Father Joe

is also the national co-ordinator in India for the World Community for Christian Meditation. He has received many awards for his work, including one of India's highest, the Padma Shri award.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 1

5:00 pm, Film on Father Joe's work with addictions and yoga

5:30 pm - 8:30 pm, All-levels asana class, including restorative poses

Film and class: \$68 + HST, Film only: \$15

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2

12:00 noon - 2:00 pm, Film, followed by pranayama and meditation, \$45 + HST

2:00 pm - 3:00 pm, Q and A for teachers, \$23 + HST

Evening program in the community – details to be announced.

*And then it suddenly hits you
that people are dying all around you...*

am I doing? I'm going off to teach yoga, and it is a passion. It's obviously been my passion to do it all these years. But what about the rest of my life? And then it suddenly hits you that people are dying all around you...

Felicity: Yes, I mean, how long am I going to wait?

Shirley: Well, we always have the choice. But it means surrendering and getting rid of some attachments.

Joan: Exactly!

Shirley: I think you have to keep questioning and really looking inside, using the reflective practices we've learned to find out if it is time to drop this. And it wouldn't be a bad thing in Victoria if I pulled back. It's not going to fall apart because I go.

Margot: So at what age are we in our fourth *ashrama*?

Shirley: Seventy-five. I'm in it.

Felicity: Me too, I'm almost there.

Juniper: Congratulations! [laughter]

Shirley: This is a funny story. When I was about to turn sixty, I wrote to Gururji to ask if I could come to the Iyengar Institute. Because I was planning to go around my birthday in October, I said in the letter, "Since I am entering my last *ashrama*..." I

had thought each phase was twenty years. He wrote back and said, "Well, you can come to Pune, but sorry, you've got fifteen years more of work!" [laughter] So, of course, I am in it now. The more I look at these stages of life, the *ashramas*, the more it makes sense.

Margot: If we keep pushing and pushing, we're not giving the right example. The experience of our years, the insights that are coming now — that's what we have to give. So it is a gift to everybody else — and ourselves — when we pay attention and start surrendering.

What do we look for in a teacher? Authenticity is what attracts me most to teachings and teachers, the feeling that they know what they are talking about, from experience. I think if teachers understand their own story and are attuned to the unfolding of their own life, then they inspire the same attention in their students.

And yet, these women shine light on the fact that "our story" and our identities are always evolving. Rather than solidifying their identity as yoga teachers, the elder years have caused them each to step back from their life's work, at least through reflection, in an attempt to lighten their attachment to it. In this process, the teachers spoke of the inspiration they gain from the niyama, the five observances concerning the self, outlined in Patanjali's Yoga Sutra. Samtosa is especially important; it is as Felicity said, "the one niyama that is never translated any other way that I have seen in any translation of the Yoga Sutra. Samtosa is always simply 'contentment'."

Joan: In my classes, I try to explain that if you don't have some feeling of contentment, then you're missing out on a good part of this yoga. In the moment-to-moment practice, we say, Okay, I can do better in this pose if I notice where this is and that. But how about the sense that you did the pose, that you made the effort? There should be some sense of contentment that you did it, with room for improvement.

Leslie: Yes, I was just talking about this the other day, that *tapas* and *samtosa* work side by side. We have to constantly challenge ourselves with the fire of the practice and constantly accept that this is who we are and what our limitations are. Geeta has been talking about that too.

Joan: Yes, in the course she's asking, "How do you know what your limit is?"

Felicity: For me, I feel I need to just keep in touch with myself and come out of a pose if it's not right.

Shirley: I think that is absolutely important. I mean, what would Geeta say to us if we weren't doing that, you know? Not the doing but to not do.

Margot: Well, Gururji quietly said to me at the end of a month of classes in Pune: "I have observed you. Now you must do

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less.” I came home and told my husband and he went, “Yes!” [laughter] We are talking about how far we can go with the poses. But it’s really, how far can we go with the things we are doing in our life?

Joan: That’s right. It becomes a life issue. I think about this idea of letting go. I’m just trying to figure out what and where can I let go.

Felicity: The thing is that when we have done something like this for a long, long time, we begin to identify with that aspect of ourselves. “I’m a yoga teacher.”

Joan: “This is what I do.”

Felicity: So if you are not teaching yoga, who are you?

Joan: I’m a life learner.

Felicity: Like Swami Radha once said, when something happens to you — you have an accident or a divorce or whatever it is — if you’re a teacher, you have to look at that as a blessing. Then you have compassion for anybody who is going through the same thing because you know what it means. If it’s just a word, you don’t really understand. So it is the same with our health problems. We find out how to make it better and then we are better teachers if somebody comes to us with the same sort of problem.

Joan: Yes, some students have been with me and watched me go through the whole process of recovery from the injuries, so for many of them it is very uplifting. As they develop their own problems, they know they’ve seen me work back from this.

Felicity: I must say, this is my reason for having this conversation with all of you. We’ve had the privilege of working with Guruji. And Guruji has shared with us what he knows. And now we’re the vanguard in a sense — people who are still seriously involved in yoga, who haven’t dropped out, and we are all getting up there! Are we able to put it out somehow to people who are younger, so maybe they don’t make some of the mistakes we have? It’s a warning: don’t over-identify with being the yoga teacher. Keep a balance; don’t cut your life down narrowly. I think those are important things to help others to do it better.

Margot: Definitely.

Shirley: But I mean, looking at your life, would you want to go back? Would you?

Felicity: No, I wouldn’t.

Shirley: Sometimes there are regrets and things. But I wouldn’t want to let go of any of the awareness I have developed whatsoever. You know, this body is clearly aging. But the value of all the experience — all the experience — this is the yogic path. ॐ

TEACHER BIOGRAPHIES

Felicity Green has been practising yoga since 1963 and teaching since 1970. She has studied extensively with B.K.S. Iyengar in India and holds an Advanced Certificate. Swami Sivananda Radha has also contributed to her personal yoga and teaching style. Her interest in yoga encompasses its philosophical and therapeutic aspects, seeing it as “a way to create yourself and your life, instead of being a victim of circumstance.” www.felicityyoga.com

Margot Kitchen has studied at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, India, many times and has been certified most recently at the Senior Intermediate II Level. She has written and produced numerous yoga television programs, and is currently focused on retreats, teacher training and teacher certification in Canada and Mexico. “Yoga has helped me to see me more clearly, and be more tolerant of others because of what I see.”

Leslie Hogya has been teaching in Victoria since the early 1970s and serves on the board of the Iyengar Yoga Centre. She has taught in the US, Thailand, and most recently in Mexico. She says, “Yoga has taught me to cultivate gratitude, given me focus and brought me richness beyond measure.” www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Shirley Daventry-French is a longtime student of B.K.S. Iyengar and one of North America’s most experienced teachers of Iyengar Yoga. She has been teaching in Victoria since 1972, and gives workshops nationally and internationally. She has also studied extensively with Swami Sivananda Radha. “Yoga has affected my life in every way, not making it easier, but infinitely more interesting and worthwhile.” www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Joan White has been teaching yoga in Philadelphia for three decades. She currently serves as certification chair for the Iyengar Yoga National Association of the United States, and is involved in a study for people with stress-related high blood pressure being carried out by doctors at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. www.joanwhiteyoga.com

Juniper Glass lives in Montréal. She is a yoga practitioner and new mom who works for the empowerment of girls (www.fillesdaction.ca). She enjoys receiving responses to her articles at juniperglass@hotmail.com.

Steve Horn is a northwest Washington documentary photographer. His book, *Pictures without Borders: Bosnia Revisited* (2005), chronicles two Balkan trips more than 30 years apart. Retracing the original route, he located people he had photographed as children, now with families of their own. www.stevhorn.net

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Atha Yoga Anushāsanam

By Raya Uma Datta

RIMYI, January 1999, 9.10 AM:
I was about to leave the Institute after attending my class.

“Ae Raya.” A voice came from nowhere. I looked here and there with disbelief. “Come here.” He was looking straight into me. I got intimidated by the sight under the bushy eyebrows. He was standing with a taut face and a slight grin.

‘Did he really call me? Or was I day-dreaming as always?’ I looked at him. He was standing outside his house with white *veshty* and the crème *kurta*. The students were greeting him and touching his feet. Why was he calling me?

I was twenty. I had quit studies halfway. I could be called a drop out. People around me were deeply worried that this chap is going nowhere, only wasting his time. I was a lost person. I had started working at a desk top publishing firm like an office boy and earning some amount of money. The eightieth birth day celebrations were over a month before that. During the celebrations, I did help with publishing activities and was also a part of the kid’s demonstration.

‘Come here.’ He called me again. I felt like running away but I walked to him and touched his feet. ‘What are you doing NOW?’ he asked.

‘Nothing. Going home,’ I answered sheepishly.

‘I mean what are you doing NOW in your life?’ His eyebrows became even more curved and his eyes drilled me.

In my life? What does one have to do in life? Nothing much! I thought. I shrugged my shoulders. ‘I work with this firm.’ I started telling him my daily routine. ‘I earn money...’

“What is use of that?” He sliced my answer halfway. I felt like a bowler thrown over the ropes by Tendulkar.

“Why don’t you practise?” he asked me.

“I come for the classes very regularly.”



Raya demonstrates while Dr. Nidmarti teaches.

I was fumbling over the answers.

“Why don’t you practise?” He was not backing out. I was perplexed. Where was this conversation heading? His next question was like a bolt. “Do you know how to practise?” I was dumb-struck with a blank look in my eyes. “What am I here for?” With one hand on his waist and the other questioning he asked. “I will teach you. You should not waste your time here and there NOW. *Atha Yoganushasanam!*”

I nodded yes. “But what about my job?”

“Is that your life? What respect do you have with this job?” He was bombarding me questions that I was running away from. “Start practise. That will bring you some good life.”

“A better life?” I was really shaken with what was happening.

“Be disciplined.” He gave the last boost with a warm smile.

I had just started getting comfortably numb with the life I was living. He churned me inside out. As I walked out of the Institute gate, I was shocked, surprised and scared with excitement. Did this actually happen? Guruji himself called me by my name. I pinched myself.

Eleven years have passed. Guruji initiated me into the practise. He asked me to follow the ‘discipline of practice’. I remember the conversation very vividly. Guruji started with NOW and concluded with DISCIPLINE. This directly connects to what Patanjali has stated. *Atha yoga anushāsanam*.

Today on *Patanjali Jayanti* let’s look at this sutra: *atha yoga anushasanam*.

atha: Now, here on, here after
yoga: union, to unite, to yoke, *sāmadhi*
anu: to follow something, to go after, to trace behind
shāsanam: order, training, educating, directing, rule

NOW begins the exposition of yoga.

Atha — NOW:

Such a magnificent start! Patanjali does not ask, what have you done earlier? Where do you come from? Whosoever shows the inclination and courage can walk on this path. The *darshan* - subject is available as a guiding light. Start, at this very moment. Not later. As you are! With whatever you have. NOW!

A few years ago a guy walked in. Small build with anxiety on his face and his eyes

stressed. He had faced a combat. He was HIV positive. Very hesitantly he went to Guruji. "Life is not over. Don't lose your heart. What happened, happened!" Guruji consoled. "From NOW on don't miss your practise." He is still walking on this path.

On numerous occasions this hall has seen Guruji ask, "Can you tell me, where are you not reaching in the *āsana*?" We generally miss the bus looking for a correct 'answer' – bottom foot or the top of the head? We forget the silent NOW in the question. He is asking, "Where are you NOW? Is your awareness spreading everywhere uninterruptedly? Are you aware of NOW?" Our answer is based on yesterday's answer. Guruji is asking us in the present and we are reacting from the past. We live in yesterday. The NOW is dismayed.

This is the tender connection between Patañjali and Guruji. What Patañjali has said centuries ago, Guruji is re-iterating now.

After *atha* — NOW, the next term in the sutra is yoga.

Yoga is to unite. To yoke. To join. The second sutra defines yoga about which I will not go into details.

Anu — to follow:

The term *anu* follows yoga! *Anu* means to follow. Patanjalī's objective approach is clearly expressed in this word. He does not direct us to follow any human. He only points to follow the subject – the *darshan*. He transcends the boundaries of person-nationality-ethnicity-religion-tradition-culture. The yoga sūtras lead us like the road maps. Guruji tells us, 'keep the practise on top of your priority list. Other things will follow.'

Mr Joglekar, almost six feet tall, a broad man bent towards his late sixties. The three men who brought him in, sat down gasping. He suffered from a massive stroke - paralysis. "Can I get any better?" With his slippery tongue he asked Guruji.

"Yes," Guruji said. Mr. Joglekar's paralysed face emotored slides of disbelief-hope-determination-will-negativity and positivity.

"From NOW on, if you are ready to follow practise you will get better". Guruji gave him an '*anushāsana*'.

Mr Joglekar started coming regularly months on end. One day I overheard him telling Guruji, "I drove the car to the institute." His voice was full of joy. For me it was unbelievable. I thought, Guruji just asked him to follow the discipline. It encouraged him, gave him confidence to stand by himself. The entire process was *anushāsana* for him.

Once I was sitting in the library reading something. A couple of people walked in. They had built a hall for asana classes. They were asking for Guruji's guidance on the essentials to conduct a class. They told Guruji that they have the grill, the horse, ropes on the wall but nothing else. "Do you have any students?" Guruji asked them. They nodded, yes. "Then that's it," Guruji leaned back in his chair. "All you need is students who want to learn. The rest of the things are not of importance. They can be managed with or without." Guruji pointed towards the core.

Following yoga is going towards the core. *Anushāsana* takes us towards the core.

We look at the word *anushāsana* with a very limited perspective. We take it as discipline. By action Guruji has expanded the meaning and added wisdom to that.

End of summer. I was riding back from Raigad at night since it is a very pleasing environment to ride at night. I took an uncommon road and climbed the difficult Warndhaa ghaat. I parked my bike and stood at the cliff and in the front, the valley spread down below. I could hear only the wind hissing. The shades of darkness were spread across. I closed my eyes. The shades of darkness even matched. Suddenly a long spark cracked in front of my closed eyes. Light moves faster than sound. Thunder followed.

The earthy smell filled the ambiance. Rain drops started washing my face. I stood there. Eyes closed. Ears open. Skin soaking in the coolness. I was on the edge of transition. Nature was turning the wheel. Summer was leaving and rains

approaching. A line, an edge between summer and rains. There is none. It is boundary-less existence. It was an experience of a natural phenomenon. A feeling and an inner understanding of oneness. Everything exists in relationship. A profoundly deep relationship. The apparent separate entities follow one *shāsana*. Nature is intuitively in harmony. The harmony is internal coordination. From that comes spontaneity, naturality, intuition. To achieve such simplicity and ease in living, *anushāsana* has to be observed.

We store everything in memory. Memory shadows spontaneity. Memory leads to habit. Last year Abhijata spoke about how a 'habit is a disease'. We are all diseased.

Let us take the example of *ardha chandrasana*. How do we do *ardha chandrasana*? Keep aside the technical details. The moment I hear 'go to *ardha chandrasana*' my memory starts intervening. I get entrapped in comparison. Comparison of yesterday's *ardha chandrasana* and today's *ardha chandrasana*. A judgemental opinion erupts. I am doing superior or inferior or equivalent than yesterday. The comparison ceases if the core of *ardha chandrasana* is reached. I would not be doing *ardha chandrasana*. There would be only *ardha chandrasana*! It would be boundary-less existence in the present.

The other day Guruji came back from Bangalore. He came in at two in the afternoon. At 2:45 he walked into the library. Sometimes I think he forgets his age! Today, I push my work to tomorrow. I postpone my today to tomorrow.

In Guruji's daily life, *anushāsana* and *atha* have interchanged their place! We have to start with now and follow the discipline. Then comes a stage after following the discipline comes the NOW. That NOW which is a *poorna* – complete.

In modern times, people behave as if they are at war with themselves. In such conditions, we get disconnected with ourselves. We feel an urge, a need of internal harmonious dialogue. Yoga-*darshan*

gives a direction, a hand for stopping the damage and fall of oneself.

Many of my friends work as software professionals. Time and again I hear their discussions about changing jobs and more salary. I asked one of them, 'why do you have to change the job so many times?' She said, 'to see more'. More? I did not understand, what more? Maybe more was with respect to the salary coming in!

We want more. We ask for more. We jump up with the idea of having more for tomorrow. We keep on wandering. A wandering swing manifests between the past and the future. The other day, Guruji said, 'wandering mind dissipates. One pointed mind retains energy. If wandering is between past and future, then being one pointed is in the NOW. Patañjali asks us to follow the *shāsana* that leads to one pointed mind.

Short WORKSHOP

Winter Solstice Workshop With Ty Chandler

December 21-22, 2012
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

FIRST NIGHT:
forward bend practice with inversions.

SECOND NIGHT:
backbend practice with inversions.
Not recommended for beginners.

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



Raya accepting a gift

Is it only the military order, the
anushāsana?

When we accept the *shasana*, it is not an externally imposed law and order. It is not the structure of crime and punishment.

Guruji speaks about the open chest-opening the mind. Actually, he removes the separation of 'on the mat' and 'off the mat'. He joins the *asana-prāṇayama* learning to the way of life. A *trikonasana* or a *viloma prāṇāyāma* becomes a metaphor. As we observe every pause we take in *viloma* carefully, similarly every moment we live, we need to be aware.

No scents makes good sense!

Some of our members and teachers are very sensitive to any products that have scent. Some get migraines and have to leave the studio. Please help by refraining from using all perfumed products including soaps, powders, creams and detergents prior to class.

Riding my bike through the ranges of Himalaya, I was in Ladakh. Three of us. You may call us the three musketeers or three idiots! When we were there, there was a cloud burst. All the roads we could have taken to return were blocked. No one knew when the roads would reopen. The situation was completely out of our control. On the other side, the 'time-out' from responsibilities was getting over. We had to leave the bikes back there. One of my friends was completely dejected. He was not ready to leave the bike. Finally we flew back and after much awaiting, the bikes too followed.

Our emotional grip did not want us to leave the bikes back. We often stress reality in such emotionality. *Anushāsana* gives us clarity and courage to get over such an emotionality which only binds us. Every moment has its own truth. There is no conflict if we confront it. Harmony surfaces.

Eleven years have passed. The path which began with Now and Discipline is not a linear road anymore. It is a wide spread space.

Atha yoga anushasanam ॐ

RAYA UMA DATTA STARTED CLASSES AT THE INSITUTE WHEN HE WAS MERELY 10 YEARS OLD AND BY THE AGE OF 20, HE WAS TEACHING THE CHILDREN'S CLASSES AT THE INSITUTE. IN 1998, HE PERFORMED ASANA AS PART OF GURUJI'S 80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS.

AT THAT POINT IN TIME, GURUJI TOOK HIM ASIDE AND TOLD HIM TO TRAIN DIRECTLY WITH HIM AND HE HAS BEEN TEACHING GENERAL CLASSES (ADULTS) SINCE 2002.

HE WAS PART OF GEETAJI'S ENTOURAGE AND DEMONSTRATED ASANA FOR THE SA CONFERENCE IN 2011, TRAVELLED TO RUSSIA IN 2009 AND CHINA IN 2011. RAYA HAS STUDIED HIS B.A. AND M.A. IN PHILOSOPHY.

The Intensive: Introductory Yoga Teacher Training, July 2012

by Suzanne Tremblay

"It's called 'Intensive' for a reason!"

We were half way along during this week of Introductory Teacher Training when, with a big sigh, I bowed my head down and let my shoulders relax. It must have shown that I was feeling tired because, looking at me, Lauren Cox, my mentor teacher said with a smile: "It's called 'Intensive' for a reason!" Indeed, it is.

This year was my second Teacher Training Intensive with Ann Kilbertus and Lesley Hogya. It was a lovely experience, at the beginning of the week, to meet some other trainees from the previous year as well as meet new ones from outside Victoria, some from as far afield as Calgary and Kelowna. The atmosphere of support and kindness pervading our daily activities quickly morphed to become a fun one as well all the while remaining very serious and focused on our learning.

Each day offered a most renewing *pranayama* session, an intense *asana* practice, some *sutra* chanting and discussing, and practice teaching. The Intensive is designed to prepare us for upcoming assessments, and therefore offers those among us who have passed their Introductory I assessment an opportunity to have a test run of the Introductory II assessment. The rest of us were offered a couple of opportunities to teach one *asana* in small groups. In providing us with detailed feedback, Ann and Leslie were assisted by other teachers from the Centre who are also Iyengar assessors: Ty Chandler, Marlene Miller, Linda Benn, and Lauren Cox. During the timed practice on Wednesday morning, mentor teachers carefully observed their mentee students, and subsequently provided feedback on our *asana* performance.

Each year, Ann and Leslie choose a handful of *sutras* for chanting and discussing. We practice these *sutras* every day, chanting them in Sanskrit and reading various translations in English. The different translations help develop a deeper understanding of their meaning. It is interesting to observe how, from the beginning of the week to the end, our Sanskrit chanting improves: at first, no one dares risking chanting the longer *sutras*, while at the end of the week, we are comfortable enough to give it a try. *Sutra* chanting also serves to offer a rest from the intensity of either practicing *asana* or focusing on teaching *asanas* under the watchful eyes of assessors.

Each year, students make presentations on a yoga theme determined by our teachers. On Monday, Leslie announced that this year the theme was "Precision, Timing and Sequencing," as illustrative of Iyengar yoga and of the *sutras* we were learning. Her instructions to us were minimal: we



could do whatever we chose provided it served to illustrate the three Iyengar concepts of "Precision, Timing and Sequencing." While daunting at first, we all quickly rolled up our sleeves and prepared our presentations. We were treated to presentations that were funny, moving, serious, musical and choreographed.

Our daily *pranayama* practice felt invigorating and restorative. We practiced supine and sitting *pranayama*. So few of us can devote 45 minutes or more on a daily basis to their *pranayama* practice, that it felt luxurious to be indulging in such long *pranayama* practice daily.

On Friday Leslie and Giles Hogya hosted a lovely vegetarian Indian meal catered by Spice Jammer. Neither the rain nor the thunderstorm dampened spirits that evening as we enjoyed our food and as guitars, ukulele and voices joined in joyful music warmed by Leslie's hospitality.

As the week ended, participants felt a renewed sense of commitment to their training and yoga practice reinforced by friendship among teacher trainees. We all felt very lucky to be surrounded by friends and mentor teachers who generously and expertly guide us in our journey.

Prayatna saithilya ananta samapattibhyam

"Perfection in an *asana* is achieved when the effort to perform it becomes effortless and the infinite being within is reached." (Sutra II.47) ॐ

"Perfection in an asana is achieved when the effort to perform it becomes effortless and the infinite being within is reached."

(Sutra II.47)

The Rewards of Starting a Home Practice

By Anne Kirkaldy

I was so grateful over a year ago to return to my Iyengar yoga practice, after a period of recovery from a broken pelvis. The Thursday evening classes at the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre with Corrine Lowen have become a really important part of my weekly routine. Having previously benefitted from a daily yoga practice at home, I wanted to start a home practice again. But somehow, it just wasn't happening.

Having previously benefitted from a daily yoga practice at home, I wanted to start a home practice again. But somehow, it just wasn't happening.

I enrolled in the Summer Sadhana with Robin Cantor, hoping this daily instruction would “kick start” my return to daily home practice. And it has worked! I am now practicing yoga every day and am very grateful for the opportunity to do so, and for the wonderful rewards of this practice.

When I am in my weekly class, I am listening intently to the invaluable lessons from Corrine. When I practice at home, I can hear her voice reminding me of what I can do to derive the most benefit from each *asana*. I can apply the lessons to each part of my body in each *asana*, and I become aware of where I can make changes. I can concentrate intensely on each *asana*.

I am finding that as I put one part of my body into the correct position for an *asana*, other body parts seem to “fall” into place. For example, I am gaining much more stability in *tadasana*

It doesn't matter to me that my return to daily practice has been delayed. What does matter to me is that my return has been so rewarding.

– I cannot tilt my pelvis down unless my thighs are pulled up. This increasing awareness of the whole body nature of each *asana* is a wonderful gift of my daily practice.

I am a very physically active person, and the wonderful stretching and strengthening I gain from my daily yoga practice complement and support my other activities – swimming, running and cycling.

As I reflect, I realize that over the last month, my sleeping has become longer and deeper, I crave the healthy foods that really nourish me, my concentration and focus on each moment of living is deepened, and my heart is lighter with joy and gratitude for the gifts of life.

It doesn't matter to me that my return to daily practice has been delayed. What does matter to me is that my return has been so rewarding. And all this in only one month!

Thank you so much to Corrine, Robin and the other teachers at the Iyengar Yoga Centre, and to my dear friend Sharon who led me back to yoga. ॐ

how to start a home practice

WITH LESLIE HOGYA

October 20, 2012, 3:15 pm – 5:15 pm

Special price for members \$15 + HST,

Non-members \$30 + HST

In this session we will do a practice sequence together, and you will be given ideas on how to practice at home. Bring your questions.



Robert's Creek Introductory Level II Assessment: Fond Memories of the Sunshine Coast

by Johanna Godliman

Nicola Tiburzi organized the Assessment at Yoga by the Sea; a mixed, and unique attic yoga studio in the centre of Robert's Creek. It rests half-way between Gibson's and Sechelt on the Sunshine coast of south west British Columbia.

There were two beautifully appointed spaces for the candidates and the assessors. Nicola seamlessly co-ordinated volunteers and the various duties of schedules, food and accommodations for assessors and timings. Resources and props were plentiful and the location was light and airy. Well in advance we were given a list of possibilities for B&B and other alternatives and had all found places to stay nearby. Our home away from home included chickens scratching in the garden which ran right down to the beach. We spent the first full day exploring while the candidates ran through their timed practise, finishing up a relaxing day of practise and walks by listening to an informal recording of one of Shirley Daventry French's philosophy classes together in the comfort of the cozy cabin.

Kelly Murphy and Nicola Tiburzi were the timers. Sheri Berkowitz acted as moderator, with assessors Judith Mirus, Louie Ettling, Claudia MacDonald and Deborah Lomond, assessor in training. There were local students and eight candidates from Vancouver Island and from the BC mainland as well as further afield (Kelowna) and Alberta (Spruce Grove). This was a committed friendly group, keen to join in, with both male and female students aged from mid 20's – late 50's. Nicola Tiburzi's own Yoga Studio "Largo" was available to the candidates to practice and prepare. The schedule allowed for long breaks to investigate the Artisan's studios and walk along the sea shore, or just visit each others' accommodations.

There are several original business in the village, including a well stocked gem shop with one of the largest quartz crystals I have ever seen! This is a busy vibrant centre – active with children and all generations shopping, meeting up for conversations in the café, or library or local stores. The musical whimsy on the windows of the music shop next to the Gumboot Café was particularly intriguing.



particularly intriguing.

Each evening we would regroup in the Gumboot Restaurant and rehash the day and celebrate being together. There were different students each day, with some of us able to attend the whole weekend. Other students traveled up from Vancouver for the day so that there was always a full quota of eight



students for the candidates to teach. And teach they did, with great passion and skill!

The weather was delightfully spring-like, except the last morning when the waves were literally frothing over the gate at the end of the garden, with huge stands of old tall timbers swaying mercilessly in the strong seasonal storm. Most of us left on the Monday in the middle of the severe storm, which made for interesting travel – especially by boat. Those of us travelling back via the first crossing from the dock off the island just made it before they started cancelling ferry sailings. Confirming that the world is indeed a small place we met our accountant, Theron Morgan, one of the long term volunteers from the Victoria Iyengar Yoga Centre at the Tsawassen Ferry terminal while waiting for the eventual return ferry ride to the island. ॐ

In the Light of Yoga

Join in the celebration
of the 94th birthday of
Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar
at this special benefit workshop.

Friday, December 14, 2012
6:00 pm-9:00 pm

By Donation

All proceeds go to the B.K.S. Iyengar Scholarship fund
to assist teachers and committed students to attend
classes at the Ramamani Institute in Pune, India.



The Gift of Sacrifice

By Bhakati Jane MacRae

Bhakati Jane MacRae is a member of the Special Needs Iyengar yoga class at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria. She was in a car accident which left her with left side weakness (hemiplegia). She is a long time student of Sri Chinmoy, and she has recently become an equestrian with Victoria Riding for the Disabled.

In recent months, I have been privileged to benefit from the teachings of B.K.S. Iyengar as well as the riding program at Victoria Riding for the Disabled (VRDA). Reflecting on the inner experience, the outcome of both is the same – joy!

From the Vedas and my teacher, Sri Chinmoy, I have learned that the horse symbolizes sacrifice “beyond earthly and heavenly price,” the ultimate gift. My horse responds to my movements, my requests to walk on, to stand, to turn or to walk faster. To do this, she must rein in her own acute senses to benefit me. Through her offering of companionship and willingness, I feel expanded, confident, stable and balanced.

Linda Benn has graciously and self-givingly helped me to improve my alignment and posture. Chair twists have improved my awareness of my sit bones.

And so, with the rise and fall of my friend’s four-legged gait, I can lift my sternum and feel harmoniously connected to heaven and earth.

*In this cold commodity culture
Where you lay your money down
It’s hard to even notice
That all this Earth is hallowed ground –
Harder still to feel it
Basic as a breath –
Love is stronger than darkness
Love is stronger than death
The gift keeps moving –
Never know
Where it’s going to land.
You must stand
Back and let it
Keep on changing hands*

– From *The Gift*, a song by Bruce Cockburn ॐ



Bhakati with Linda at the horse



“Balanced between heaven and earth”



Yoga, In My Own Words

by Terry Tustain

From all that I have read, and from my personal experience of yoga, it seems to me to be an exquisite middle ground, found only through the surrendering of self and through the seeking of union with what might be called the divine. If this sounds esoteric, it is not. It has to do with finding the middle path and learning how to stay there.

The work of yoga, or finding that middle path, never ends. *The Bhagavad Gita* says work must be done for its own sake, and not for the end result or for a final reward. Success and failure are to be viewed as irrelevant. This reminds me of what Kipling said in “If” (the poem so many of us had to memorize as children): “If you can meet with triumph and disaster, and treat those two imposters just the same...” At the end of the poem, the young boy has a set of guidelines for becoming a man (one hopes Kipling would advise a daughter in the same way). At the end of the *Gita*, Arjuna has some idea of what yoga is, where his work lies, and how to live a life compatible with what yoga demands.

Constant work for its own sake, and the adherence to the path of moderation, bring balance into the life of the person who chooses yoga. The key seems to be consistency and steadiness in all things: in balancing work with rest, effort with relaxation, waking hours with sleep. Extremes of all sorts are to be avoided. In this way, there can be no overwork or laziness, no overindulgence or starvation. Part of the work of the yogi is the maintaining of this balance in everyday living, something which for most of us is a daily challenge.

Walking the middle path, or finding the essence of true balance helps bring calmness or stillness to the senses. As

“Yoga is the method by which the restless mind is calmed and the energy directed into constructive channels”.

– B.K.S. Iyengar, *Light on Yoga*

B.K.S. Iyengar says in his Introduction to *Light on Yoga*, “Yoga is the method by which the restless mind is calmed and the energy directed into constructive channels”. This begins to make yoga sound very much like a form of meditation, and I think that it has much in common with meditation. My own experience with asana has often had the effect of reining in my thoughts to the point where I am concentrating on one thing only. My mind is entirely engaged, along with my physical self, in doing the work of asana. The more consistent I am with my practice (and I did not reach consistency until practice had become a daily routine) the more easily I find this entire engagement, and the less likely I am to be bothered by what my senses might otherwise lead me to do or not do. The focus of my mind seems to help generate energy in my physical body—it is as if the energy normally dissipated by the unruliness of my senses has been gathered and channelled into a single purpose.

Finding balance in asana practice and in life does require some surrendering of the self. To what or to whom do we surrender ourselves in yoga? The idea of self-surrender has not been easy for me; it often seems too much like self-abnegation. The encouraging thing is that, the longer I spend in practice and in study, the more easily I can feel myself becoming absorbed by yoga, rather than by my self.

In the *Gita*, Arjuna was told to devote himself to his Lord (Krishna) and to perform his duty. It is difficult for me to view my practice of yoga as being

devoted to any particular deity, and yet there does seem to be some greater purpose for my devotion to this practice than my own desire for self knowledge. This may signify that I am working my way towards union with the divine, or it may simply mean that I am becoming able to see where the path of duty lies. Either way, it is progress.

Chitta vrtti: smrti-memory and its relevance in my life

Smrti is explained in *Light on Yoga* as “memory, the holding fast of the impressions of objects that one has experienced”. Mr. Iyengar then goes on to suggest that this can be a negative thing, especially if people are so caught up in their good or bad memories that they become entrapped by them: “they cannot break their fetters”.

I think memory does not have to be as much of a prison as that, although my own experience with it has been instructive. At my age, there is lots of memory to work with—or memories, to be more accurate. It is easy for me to spend more time thinking about the past than the present; I often find myself trying to figure out why things happened the way they did, especially things that happened within my family. Trying to imagine how my parents’ lives were shaped is something that I have spent a lot of time doing, in recent years. Because there remain questions without answers, I try to fashion the answers out of whatever evidence I can call to mind. This line of thinking inevitably brings feelings of regret – I could have asked my parents

more about their early years than I did; I could have listened more closely when they did talk about their lives. The regret has been instructive in so far as it has helped me place more value on relationships. But I have also had to acknowledge that my time is not unlimited, and that too much time spent searching for answers is time wasted. When I find insights into the past which help me with my current problems, then I can justify inhabiting the past. More often, it is an interesting and comfortable place to be and it is easy to lose myself there.

As my yoga practice progresses, I find that I have to move away from that comfortable refuge. It simply is not possible to explore the path of yoga while remaining obsessed with the past. Yoga forces me to come to terms with the past, or at least to let things go, while pushing me forward on the path to better self-knowledge. This is not to say that it discounts the usefulness of the role that memory can play. Rather, it puts in perspective the value of things learned. Yoga helps remove the limits imposed by memory, and encourages a healthy curiosity in the future.

Yama and Niyama

Aparigraha: The concept of non-hoarding or non-collecting is something I often think about. It's a *yama* which seems to be quite close to home, in a literal sense. I have only to look about my house to see the things which I have acquired over the years, many of which are quite unnecessary to my life. As much as I like simplicity in design and interior decoration, it seems I have a natural inclination to accumulate things I don't really need. I have an equally strong inclination not to get rid of them. It is as if the acquiring and keeping of things will protect me from something. In fact, *parigraha* diverts my attention from what I know I ought to be doing. The adding of more "stuff" to my life is a way of entertaining myself, of delaying the work at hand, or in a larger sense, the putting off of the doing of my duty.

It is also the denial of faith in any higher power to provide what might be needed in the future.

In the section of *Light on Yoga* which deals with *aparigraha*, Mr. Iyengar says that the yogi keeps faith "by keeping before him the image of the moon". The moon waxes and wanes but does not "stray from its path" and is "indifferent to man's lack of appreciation". It knows that its fullness will return, and with it, our admiration. It does nothing but its own work, with a firm faith in renewal. In my yoga practice I try—not always successfully—to have faith that a consistent and steady practice will yield consistent and steady results. It is when this faith falters that I can overdo things, eager for more and quicker results. This overdoing, without patience or trust that progress is usually slow but sure, often causes injury. This, I think, is also a form of *parigraha*. It has always been a challenge to me to accept that progress tends to be slow. Mr. Iyengar goes on to say that "by the observance of *aparigraha* the yogi makes his life as simple as possible and trains his mind not to feel the loss or the lack of anything". Later, he says that the *sadaka* develops the capacity to remain satisfied with whatever happens to him. This equal acceptance of success or failure is very much a work in progress for me.

Tapas: I have always found something appealing in the notion of *tapas*, even though it has much to do with self-discipline and austerity. Mr. Iyengar says that *tapas* "is the conscious effort to achieve ultimate union with the Divine and to burn up all desires which stand in the way of this goal." The idea that this might be done at all is inspiring. It conveys a single-mindedness of purpose and great determination. I have certainly not chosen to bring *tapas* to all my endeavours, but when I have brought even a small amount to bear on a particular task, the work has been easier. Mr. Iyengar adds that *tapas* involves working without any selfish motive or hope of

reward. This brings a more challenging dimension to the concept; it involves *tapas* of the mind and requires an attitude of tranquility whatever the results. This I find much more difficult than determination and hard work. It means recognizing the value of work for its own sake and abandoning (as much as possible) the ego.

I would like to say that I always bring *tapas* to the mat with me when I practice yoga. In fact, it often seems to work the other way around: the practice itself is what helps me generate self-discipline and determination. When I began yoga, I thought that being able to do the more difficult poses was the goal, and that the more difficult the pose, the greater the reward. It has taken me years to learn that difficulty is not in and of itself a goal, or even always a good thing. There can be a lot of ego attached to difficulty if the student finds fulfillment in the achieving of difficult poses. I must admit that poses that I have regarded as difficult and then learned to do—*pincha mayurasana*, for example—have caused me to feel very pleased with myself. It is easy for me to forget that what made it possible to do any arm balances at all was the steady practice of very elementary back bends. That was where *tapas* came in. I have come to appreciate how transformative the consistent practice of basic poses can be.

Tapas, it seems, has much to do with consistency. A daily practice is *tapas*, but so is learning patience off the mat, in everyday life. Just as we have to come back again and again to a pose like *trikonasana*, so we have to meet the repeated needs of family and friends with acceptance and willingness to help. It seems that the fire of *tapas* which Mr. Iyengar describes as burning up desires is not a brief and intense flare, but rather a slow, steady flame. ॐ

TERRY TUSTAIN IS IN TEACHER TRAINING
IN KELOWNA.

The Language of an Asana

by Alan Goode

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM YOGA RAHASYA, VOL. 10, NO.2; 2003

This article explores the language used in Iyengar yoga, focusing on the way instructions are used in a specific form to structure the learning process, and, the way teachers use these terms to guide and shape the student's experiences.

The selection of specific words at crucial moments to link mind and body is implicit in the Iyengar method, in a way, that is unique to this style of practice for two reasons. First, because Iyengar yoga uses the *asanas* as a vehicle of exploration of the mind, it has devised a set of phrases and descriptive terms (because everyday language does not adequately meet the task) to sequence and engage the experience (ie: draw up, lengthen, etc.). Secondly, as *asana* is an experience in the moment (a philosophy in action), language is also used in a qualitative way (terms such as hit, cut, squeeze, etc.). Thus yoga is not only about what you do, but how you do what you do, and its language is the medium by which this is transmitted from a teacher to the student.

Here, I identify four uses of language in the yoga class.

Descriptive language is used for technical aspects of the asana.

This often requires the use of anatomical language (e.g. femur, iliac). As an *asana* becomes more refined then description of subtle parts of the body require a greater degree of nomenclature. Hence, for example: 'big toe mound,' 'armpit chest', 'inner chip of the knee' – is anatomical language developed out of a need for finer detail when dealing with the body. In medicine, as discoveries were made and as science developed, a common language was needed so that doctors could record information and share these advances between one another in an understandable way. Likewise, in the yoga room, a language was evolved either to meet the need to describe areas of the body that don't have distinct references in terms of traditional anatomical language, or, to be utilized when these anatomical terms are too cumbersome or technical. The tension between medical (anatomical) language and common terms requires the teacher to inform and educate the student about both a higher level of understanding of the body, and also of a "common language" that is unknown outside the Iyengar community. We 'tuck the buttock', 'roll the shoulder blades down the back' and 'press the outer heel down'. These terms mean nothing outside the yoga room and are in themselves only understandable through demonstration, repetition and perception of the experience. Thus the words become an experience in each student's body — the words become real through action.

One of the great benefits of teacher training in the Iyengar method is the degree to which a student can move from school to school, and even across countries and find the language and terms almost identical.

Language creates a form for us to engage with sensation.

When beginners encounter new sensations these often intense, and/or confronting experiences may cause the mind or body to contract and pull away. At times like these, the teacher's words provide a vital vehicle for the student to shape the way they respond to these experiences. In doing so, the teacher leads the student through the experience and offers the student a way of holding the *asana*. For example, in *adho mukha svanasana*, to 'press the thigh bone back', 'broaden the calf' and 'lengthen the outer heel', is not merely a set of sequenced instructions but a set of individual movements that requires the student to engage in a very particular way. The experience of the *adho mukha svanasana* is arrived at rather than aimed for. It is neither something imposed on the body nor forced on the mind.

Through this level of work, we must look into the *asana's* sensations and qualify our assessment of what we feel. In so doing, the teacher's language and emphasis creates a structure with which we can engage sensation (to make sense of what we feel) and a comparison point by which to measure our experience (i.e. the teacher's words in comparison with our own experiences). Thus, the teacher makes the pose accessible.

Language is used to shape the experience.

Through the use of specific terms we are able to give an *asana* its intention. By using the instruction 'lengthen the arms' as opposed to 'straighten the arms' or 'lock the elbows', we not only straighten the arms but also add a direction that makes the action more potent and effective. To 'lengthen the arms, and extend from the back armpit through to the fingernails' is a qualitative action.

Thus the placement of a word within a set of instructions gives the language an added component with which the teacher shapes an *asana* within the student. By listening to the difference in the teaching of *ardha chandrasana* and *virabhadrasana 3*, we can hear changes in volume, pacing and quality of language as an example of how a teacher gives voice to the way the *asana* is to be performed attitudinally. In so doing, the teacher signals the quality of intent the student should use when performing each *asana*. An effective teacher teaches as much by the way they say something as by their choice of words.

Poetic language is used to transmit the essence of the pose.

Having taught the *asana* (described it, engaged the sensations and signaled its intention) the teacher transmits a final experience of how the pose feels. This level of language is often poetic as the teacher searches for a phrase or word to describe the essence of the pose, and its expression within them as they practice. For example, to 'wring the abdomen' or 'churn the abdomen' in *jathara parivartansana* are two examples of more than just 'turn the abdomen'. Whilst these expressions may be bad English, they are more effective than good grammar in this case because they take the student beyond simply doing (or forming) the *asana* to how the action feels. In so doing, we experience ourselves.

The four stages mentioned above are not sequential or applied in a manner to lead the student from A to B, but can co-exist in each *asana* and become part of a range of options the teacher has when directing the student in class. Hence on any one day, a teacher may emphasize grounding – points, sequencing, method, definitions etc, and on another expression – lift, lightness, flow and breath.

Often these choices are not thought through or planned by the teacher, but chosen in response to the feel they get of the performance of an *asana* by the group. If teaching is seen as a response to what the teacher sees in front of them from moment to moment, then the *asanas* become a forum for two people (teacher and student) to communicate that most intimate experience of how they feel to themselves.

Once a common language has been formed and understood, it can be used to touch on and express a more essential experience within the individual. In this sense, teaching is all about timing and delivery because a mistimed instruction or observation does not communicate anything at all. Instead, it objectifies and philosophizes about 'what could be', and reduces teaching to lecturing about the subject rather than experiencing it.

Each teacher creates a set of expressions or terms – a framework – which, when used effectively allows them (and their students) to move efficiently like a spider on its web. This framework, or web, is a device to traverse quickly, a sensor through which the spider feels out an area greater than its own physical position. What is important here is not that each web is identical but that the way a teacher moves about on their framework allows them to touch the *asana* in a more comprehensive way.

As a final thought on language, it should be acknowledged that there is a role for nonverbal teaching as well. The methods outlined above are tools used by the teacher to enhance and broaden the student's understanding. The student's landscape opens out as the breadth of that experience deepens. Because language by its nature describes, it intercepts the student's attention so that at a certain level of proficiency, instruction

distracts the student from his or her own experience. To avoid this, a teacher may move from the four methods mentioned previously to join the students in doing the *asanas* as a way of exposing them to their own knowledge. Physical adjustments could be seen as an example of nonverbal communication. This touch may be used to bring a student's attention to a particular area within the body or to define a specific sensation.

It is astonishing to reflect that this language did not exist when Guruji began teaching. He was not drawing on a recognized use of descriptive terms. It appears that Guruji, in an attempt to bring the student closer to the experience of each *asana* has delved deeply within himself over many years to clarify the experience and clearly express it. The language that he has developed gets the students to know their bodies, and his instructions to perform an *asana*, matches and guides their experience. He has developed the language, refined it, added to, and honed the delivery. It is an extraordinary achievement from an extraordinary man. ॐ

ALAN GOODE HAS BEEN PRACTICING YOGA FOR OVER 35 YEARS. HE HOLDS A SENIOR INTERMEDIATE CERTIFICATE (LEVEL III). ALAN IS THE DIRECTOR OF YOGA MANDIR – AN IYENGAR YOGA INSTITUTE IN CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA. DETAILS CAN BE VIEWED AT WWW.YOGAMANDIR.COM.AU.



Marie-Andrée Morin is coming to Victoria

FEBRUARY 22-24, 2013

A yoga practitioner since the 1970s, Marie-Andrée Morin has been studying Iyengar yoga since 1984 and has been to Pune many times to study directly with Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar as well as Geeta and Prashant Iyengar. She also has been a student of Faeq Biria for many years. Apart from being an assessor and a teacher trainer she is also the founder of the Centre de Yoga Iyengar de Montréal, which opened in 1989. She currently holds an Intermediate Senior III certificate.

In possession of a lively spirit, she is known to be a demanding yet compassionate teacher, enlivening her teaching with her sense of humour and insights gained over many years of devoted personal practice.

Schedule to be announced.

\$230 + HST for members, \$250 + HST for non-members

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

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee.

THANK YOU TO OUR IYCV VOLUNTEERS



Thank you, **Johanna Godliman** for often providing and always caring for the plants and flowers that beautify the Centre.

Thank You, **Sarah Jarvis**, for donating eight books to our library.

Thank you, **Linda Poole** and bolster stuffers **Wendy Boyer, Laine Canivet, Johanna Godliman, Jane McFarlane** and **Jeannette Merryfield**, for another round of gorgeous bolsters. Thank you, **Roger Champagne** for editing this newsletter.

Thank you, **Robin Cantor**, for many years of organizing the billeting of guests to Victoria needing a place to stay for workshops and intensives. Thank you, **Lucie Guindon**, for offering to carry on this job.

Thank you, **teachers**, for helping out when one person is away, ill

or unable to teach a class. All the teachers step up to help. Sometimes this substituting is without pay, for example, when the absent teacher is working for the national association. Our community of teachers is so cooperative and supportive!

Thank you, teachers from our region, for donating your time and expertise as members of the board for the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada: **Glenda Balkan-Champagne, Lucie Guindon, Corrine Lowen, Nancy Searing.**

Renew!



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE OF VICTORIA
SOCIETY

Membership

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

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

Membership fee is \$40 + HST,
renewable each January.

Membership benefits include a 5% discount on classes, a discount on workshops, borrowing privileges in our library, free members' practice, eligibility to become a board member and eligibility for workshop scholarships.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Prov/ State: _____ Postal code _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

☐ Please mail me my newsletter as I do not attend classes at the Centre.

☐ Receipt required.

Billet at a yogi's house in Victoria

Did you know that the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria offers billeting to out of town participants in our workshops and intensives?

For \$40 a night you can stay at a yogi's house.

To make arrangements, just call the IYCV at 250-386-YOGA (9642).





2012-13 CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2012

- 8 IYCV Open House
- 14-16 Chris Saudek
- 20-23 Stephanie Quirk in Kelowna

OCTOBER

- 1-2 Father Joe Pereira
- 19-21 Introductory II Assessment, Saskatoon, SK
- 20 How to Start a Home Practice
- 20 Teachers' Meeting

NOVEMBER

- 2-3 Going Deeper
- 16-18 Intermediate Junior I Assessment, Montreal, QC
- 24 Teachers' Meeting

DECEMBER

- 1 50+ Balance and Strength in Iyengar Yoga
- 14 Gurugi's Birthday Party
- 21-22 Winter Solstice Workshop
- 24-25 Centre Closed
- 26-30 Interim Classes
- 31 Centre Closed

JANUARY 2013

- 1 New Year's Day Practice
- 2 Regular Classes Resume
- 18-20 Intermediate Senior I/II Assessment, Victoria, BC

FEBRUARY

- 9 Teachers' Meeting
- 10 IYCV AGM
- 22-24 Marie-Andrée Morin

MARCH

- 8-10 Introductory II Assessment, Edmonton, AB
- 9 Teachers' Meeting

APRIL

- 6-7 Heart of Yoga
- 13 Teachers' Meeting
- 26-28 Intermediate Junior III Assessment, Toronto, ON
- 26-28 Introductory II Assessment, Vancouver, BC

MAY

- 23-26 IYAC Conference in Victoria

JUNE

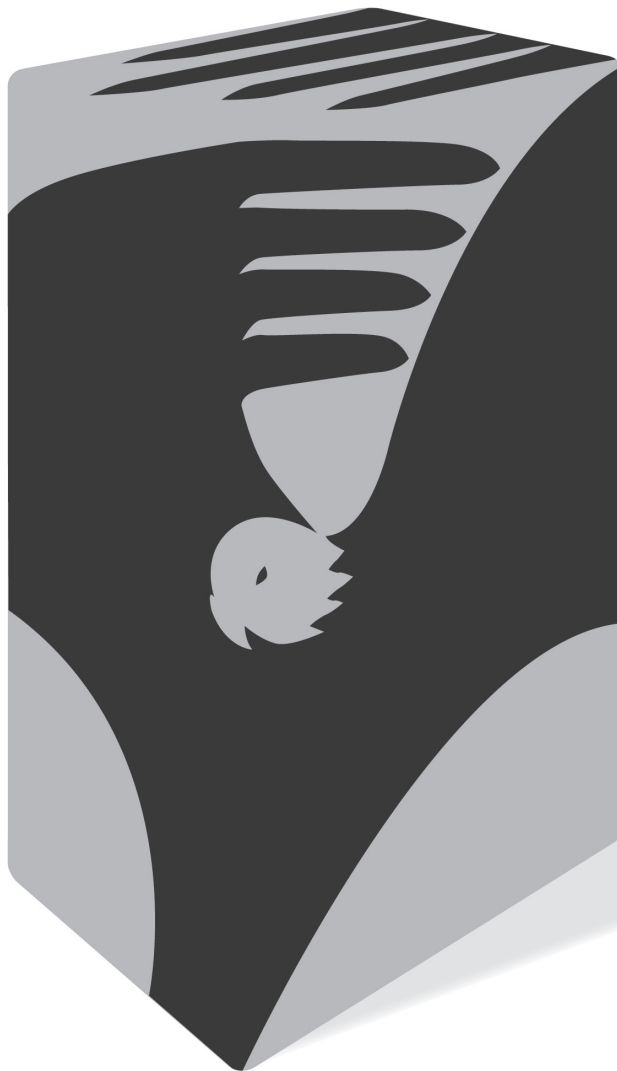
- 15 Teachers' Meeting
- 21-23 Introductory II Assessment, Ottawa, ON
- 21-23 Introductory II/Intermediate Junior I, Montreal, QC



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

N E W S L E T T E R

W I N T E R 2 0 1 2



Iyengar Yoga:

Interweaving the
Threads of Practice

May 23-26, 2013, Victoria

Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada
Association canadienne de yoga Iyengar

IYAC/ACYI AGM AND CONFERENCE

MAY 23 - 26, 2013



Iyengar Yoga: Interweaving the Threads of Practice

Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada
Association canadienne de yoga Iyengar

Mark the dates May 23-26, 2013
on your calendars!

Our conference this year is offering
16 hours of teaching by Canadian Certified
Junior Intermediate III and Senior level teachers.

The first session is on Thursday,
May 23 in the afternoon.

There will be a social gathering just before
Part 1 of the AGM with sumptuous finger food.
This is an opportunity to meet and chat with
everyone!

Come to the AGM (Part 1 and 2) to find out what
IYAC/ACYI has accomplished the past year and
what is planned for the coming year.

Our venue and accommodations this year are at
The Harbour Towers Hotel & Suites, in the heart
of the beautiful Victoria inner harbour, near great
restaurants, the Museum, the parliament and
other sight seeing opportunities. You can even
take a harbour ferry ride or go whale watching!

Harbour Towers Hotel and Suites,
345 Quebec Street Victoria, BC,
has set aside a block of rooms for our
attendees. Visit www.harbourtowers.com

Stay Tuned!!! Check out the IYAC/ACYI website
<https://iyengaryogacanada.com> and the IYAC/
ACYI Facebook page
www.facebook.com/IYAC.ACYI for ongoing
updates on the conference fees, hotel rates, and
schedule details.



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

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EDITOR Roger Champagne

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE Judy Atkins, Giles
Bixler, Roger Champagne, Lauren Cox, Shirley
Daventry French, Johanna Godliman, Leslie
Hogya, Jane McFarlane.

DESIGN & PRODUCTION Cady Graphics

IYCV LOGO Charles Campbell, Lauren Cox

PHOTOGRAPHY Lauren Cox, Johanna
Godliman, Tracey Harvey, Leslie Hogya,
Jo Anna Hope, Ulana Switucha

COVER PHOTO Charles Campbell

PROOFING Judy Atkins, Jane McFarlane

ADS & ANNOUNCEMENTS Jane McFarlane

DISTRIBUTION Adia Kapoor

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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.

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(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
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2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar
yoga.
3. Priority will be given to advertisements
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REFLECTIONS



By Shirley Daventry French

Fall 2012

On my third visit to the Iyengar Institute in Pune, during the Wednesday morning Ladies' class, Geeta Iyengar expressed her frustration and impatience with students who do not practice between classes. First she turned to a group of Indian woman and told them in no uncertain tones that they simply had to find the time to practise: it was not enough to come to class once a week. Knowing their strong sense of duty to family, she added that their husbands and children would benefit too.

Along with a few other Westerners I stood by somewhat smugly knowing I had developed a personal practice and that Geeta probably knew this. Moreover she had seen us practising during practice times at the Institute. My puffed up pride was about to be deflated as Geeta turned and pointed to our small group. "These foreigners, they practise," she said, and her tone of voice conveyed in an instant that what was coming next would not be a compliment: "But what do they practise? First they're over there doing this, and then over here doing that, and then on the ropes or topsy-turvy, up and down, all over the place with no idea of sequencing!" Her facial expression mirrored her words!

Having wrestled with pride in my second class with Gurujī, I knew a little about how it inhibits learning. It is always hovering nearby waiting to convince you that any criticism is unfair, unjust and unwarranted. I also knew this is a very uncomfortable experience—particularly when it happens in front of others. However, by this time I trusted the teaching of Gurujī and Geetaji and knew that having revealed my ignorance, they would endeavour to remove it and enlighten me. My task was to remain open.

During these few weeks of general classes and the Canadian intensive which

followed, Geeta made sure that before we returned home we would have at least a rudimentary understanding of sequencing. I was excited and happy. Now I knew more about how to sequence a practice as a student this would inevitably help in structuring classes as a teacher. But little did I understand that this was merely the entry point into a much deeper and constantly evolving aspect of learning.

One day, not long after I returned from this third visit to Pune, I was looking through notes I made during my first time there when Gurujī was the teacher for all the classes. I had made extensive notes and to my surprise, discovered much about the art of sequencing which I had not been able to see before. In his words and actions, Gurujī had sequenced not only each class but the entire intensive from beginning to end. He is a consummate guide!

The intensives before us and the ones that followed would not be the same. How they were taught depended on who was being taught and what they were able to catch. The principles of yoga are unchanging but the sequencing and teaching techniques will vary.

Although I had practised diligently since my first class with Gurujī, at that time I did not have ears to hear or eyes to see far beyond the surface. Too much technique given too quickly can lead to drowning. When I think about my experience with him I can see tremendous restraint on his part as I took my time to learn. Thankfully he gave me the opportunity to go on learning, not by making the teaching easy—every class with Gurujī, every conversation about yoga, is intense, stimulating and challenging. I learned the value of staying with one tradition, one Master, rather than mixing up methods.

Recently our national association received some questions on how sequencing is approached in Iyengar Yoga along with a request to have these questions addressed by a senior Iyengar teacher. For a variety of reasons I chose not to respond directly to these questions although on the whole they were thoughtful and well presented. I did not have



enough information about the person seeking this information nor how and where it would be used other than on a blog! Further, some of the questions were in the form of statements based on a false premise that we always 'do' or always 'don't do' certain things.

Principles of structuring and sequencing are systematically introduced and taught in all Iyengar classes gradually becoming more complex as students advance. They are an essential element of our three-year teacher training apprenticeship and refined in our ongoing post-graduate training. They are to be found in all authentic Iyengar teaching.¹ With regular students, we can see whether they have digested previous information

¹ Holding a certificate does not necessarily denote an Iyengar Yoga teacher in good standing. This involves meeting certain requirements for post graduate training and following guidelines imposed by B.K.S. Iyengar. The certification mark shows that teacher has fulfilled and currently meets all these requirements and is recognised by the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada and Mr. Iyengar.

Seemingly simple at first, sequencing in the Iyengar tradition is complex and can only be understood slowly.

and if they are ready for more depth and detail. Continuity is a vital ingredient. This is why regular attendance is encouraged along with practising what has already been taught; otherwise learning is fragmented and the practice lacks consistency.

Seemingly simple at first, sequencing in the Iyengar tradition is complex and can only be understood slowly. First you have to build a sound foundation and then acquire experience from putting these principles into practice on and off the mat. In the past week several discussions took place on this topic between a few senior teachers. As part of this process, Louie Ettling, from Vancouver,

put some of her thoughts into writing and we are pleased to publish them in this newsletter.

Gurujī is not noted as a patient man. He is impatient for us to see the Light of Yoga, but despite the inability of so many of his pupils to grasp and retain what he teaches, he has shown remarkable patience in continuing to lead them from ignorance to the light of knowledge. As his 94th birthday approaches, I thank God for his patience and perseverance and the brilliance of his teaching. ॐ



Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Presents

the Heart of Yoga

April 6-7, 2013

**An Intermediate Workshop
with Shirley Daventry French
and Ann Kilbertus**

Saturday 11:00 am - 2:00 pm
Saturday 4:00 - 6:00 pm
Sunday 12:00 - 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.

Ann has been a student in the Iyengar tradition for over twenty years. She continues to study with Shirley Daventry French and has been teaching since 1988 locally and nationally. Ann began going to Pune, India in 1992 and returns every few years to study with the Iyengars. Her practice and training as an occupational therapist offer a valuable contribution to further understanding of this work.

Fees: \$168 + HST members
\$184 + HST non-members

Registration opens:
February 16, 2013 for IYCV members
February 23, 2013 for non-members

To register, drop in to or phone
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Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.



Guruji Iyengar on How he Evolved the Concept of Alignment

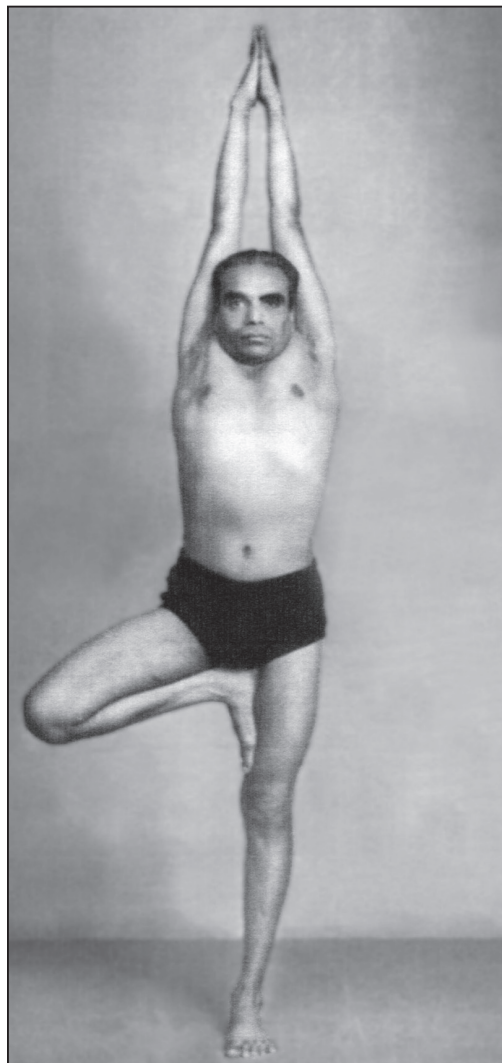
I had no inclination towards yoga at all, either to practise or to become a yoga teacher. I was destined. It is the destiny which made me to practise yoga. Destiny made me to teach yoga. And it is destiny which has taken me all over the world. When I was a boy of 16 or 17, I was called to teach in schools and colleges. I had not even entered the premises of the college since I was an ineligible student at that level. I was not educated academically as such. I was called to teach yoga to grown-ups who were more intelligent and educated than me. It is at this time I began reading books on the subject. My knowledge was very poor, very raw, so I used to go to libraries, to see if there were any books on yoga. I would pick them up, and sit there and look.

My practice of yoga was like the flying of a kite. It was going in all different directions. Only the determination was like the thread in hand. It kept me fixed.

In every book I used to see the theory of yoga, which was perfect, but when it used to come to *āsana* or *prāṇāyama* I could not see any synchronization or harmony. They would write something but the presentation was quite different.

For example, when they explained *tādāsana*, they said that the legs should be straight, but their knees were bent; they said, 'feet together', but they never kept their toes together. You can see even today, many books showing like this.

The techniques say something and the figure or photo shows something else. They would say that in *sirsāsana* the legs should be straight – perpendicular to the floor. When I used to look at *sirsāsana*. I could see one leg straight, one leg bent. Sometimes, the legs almost diagonal to their heads, sometimes they were back, sometimes they were in the front, sometimes on side.



Then, I thought that I have to coordinate the theory and practice.

Whenever I used to teach, I used to look at these small little mistakes and correct them. When I started teaching, I was too young and my pupils were all grown-ups. I had to show some 'quality' in me, otherwise, the aged people and college students would not have accepted me due to my age. My body and appearance, at the age of 20, was an enemy for the propagation of yoga. My weak and underdeveloped body was not only the cause of mockery but in a way, an anti-propaganda on the very subject of yoga. More than apprehension I took the remarks and comments of the students as a challenge and built up the determination in me.

My guide for teaching was only my practice. So I used to practise correcting myself and ask them to do as I was doing. That's how I built up the characteristic to be a good teacher. The determination came because of those mistakes which I saw. I said to myself that I will do something better even if I don't reach the highest aspects of yoga.

That is how I learned the word alignment. I realised that unless I align each and every tissue of the body in par with the other end it would not attract the people towards yoga.

As a raw student of Yoga my idea was on the gross body, skeleto-muscular body. I started working on bringing alignment to each and every joint and muscle of the body.

As a raw student of Yoga my idea was on the gross body, skeleto-muscular body. I started working on bringing alignment to each and every joint and muscle of the body.

So I started with the skeleto-muscular body. If my big toe stretches then I would see if my other toes also follow; the side toes, the latitudinal stretches on the sides of the toes. I used to observe that.

Longitudinal stretches are different; latitudinal stretches are different. So, I was learning that longitudinal and latitudinal stretches should meet. There should be a meeting point. I started working on how to bring that alignment on each and every joint and each and every muscle of the body.

Asanas are artistic. *Prāṇāyāma*, though artistic is not perceivable by the people. Only through *āsanas*, can one perceive the artistic presentation. You cannot perceive in *dhyāna*. Individually you can conceive but when you have to attract the public towards yoga, you have to study which one is artistic. That is why only *āsanas* count. Art is very sensitive – as it is very sensitive you have to be very sensitive to maintain the subtlety of the art. Therefore, I thought of the skeleto-muscular body first. If I align the right side the left side the front side, the back side.

Asanas are artistic. Art is very sensitive. As it is very sensitive, you have to be sensitive to maintain the subtlety of the art.

Then I thought on how to feel the mind flowing there. Then I connected the skeleto-muscular body with the mind. The mind is important but the mind was not judging whether the actual parts are evenly balanced. That is why I had to bring

my intelligence; whether my intelligence was balanced. Flow of awareness is intelligence.

When the flow of awareness on the outer side is stronger, the awareness was not at all there in the inner part of the leg. Then I said, ‘Why do I feel the outside and I don’t feel inside?’ So I developed and brought the length, width and circumference of the awareness in the body. The legs are circular, arms are circular, chest is circular so the circumferential action is also important. Therefore, I thought unless and until the vertical, horizontal and circumferential actions coordinate evenly I do not exist in the presentation of the art.

Division started showing. *Asana* is different, I am different. So when I started with the awareness, this awareness made me to forget myself and to understand each *āsana* — its beauty, its elegance what we call *lāvanya*.

I learned all these things with my own practice.

What is ‘alignment’, which everybody treasures?

You all say that “Iyengar-system” means alignment.

You are all taking the word, “**body**-alignment.” But I take the alignment in a different way. If you fill a jar with water the water touches the surface, the inner surface of the jar. When I practise *āsana* I want to feel that inner mind, touching evenly everywhere in the body as the water touches evenly the jar. In various *āsana*, I would see whether I could make the inner mind to reach even the remotest parts of the body, where the mind

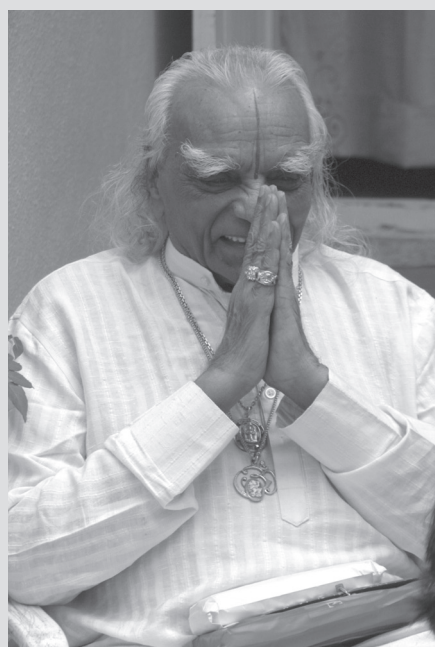


PHOTO: KEVIN MASON

In the Light of Yoga

Come celebrate the 94th birthday of Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar with yoga, food and chanting!

Friday, December 14, 2012, 5:00 pm – 8:30 pm
All are welcome at this free event.

- 5:00 pm Asana with Shirley Daventry French
- 6:00 pm Potluck
- 6:30 pm Kids’ Demo
- 6:45 pm Personal experience stories of learning with B.K.S. Iyengar
- 7:15 pm Bhavantu Sound

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cannot reach. This brought the new awareness and I developed the mental alignment.

The physical alignment, the muscular alignment or the actions such as contraction, extension, or circumduction and so on are nothing but the movements like fan which fan the inner body. But from these movements and actions what one has to learn is, in which way they fan; where the coolness and dryness are felt or where the cells recede. As the body responds to such movements and actions terminating into stability, I started noticing the recession of mind. The physical alignment led me to go towards the mental alignment. That mind which was encapsulated in the envelope of the body taught me to experience the vastness of the consciousness.

This way of thinking process and thought process made me to work with a determined effort, to reach the fineness in each *āsana*. This refinement led me to know the intricacies and depths of each *sūtra* of Patañjali and their application in a practical way.

Flow of awareness is intelligence.

When I started with the awareness, this awareness made me to forget myself.

The practicality of theory in the *sādhana* was a key point for my determination. For instance, or to be more frank, the two *sūtra* guided me throughout in the beginning stage of my practice. I am not a Sanskrit scholar or my teacher did not teach me *sūtra* of Patañjali but while reaching with very little knowledge I liked two *sūtra* of Patañjali.

One of this is *tatra sthitau yatnah abhyāsah* (Y.S., 1.13)

Practice is the steadfast effort to still these fluctuations. It gave me such a great relief that I have to practise regularly by

respecting my own *sādhana* and faith, without keeping any time bound limit.

The second *sūtra* was: *yogāṅganusthanat asuddhiksaye jñanadiptih avivekakhyaṭeḥ* 11.28. By dedicated practice of the various aspects of the yoga impurities are destroyed: the crown of wisdom radiates in glory.

This *sūtra* gave me assurance that with practice the impurities will be washed off and the sun of wisdom will rise one day if not immediately.

A *sadhaka* has to be eager but not in a hurry. Similarly he should not be only interested but 'intensely' keen without hastiness. I was determined, keen and intense but practised knowing my own standard of understanding at every stage and phase of my practice. That not only built up the confidence in me but brought clarity so that I could proceed having no doubt or conflict.

It took me 50 years to give a new flavour to this subject. I am sure that it may continue for another 50 years if the sensitivity is maintained. If my students create that alertness of awareness in each *āsana* — probably this may remain forever — eternal. Otherwise, 50 years.

Like the spokes of the wheel go up and down, the practical way of presentation of the art may come down and again may go up. It is like spokes of the wheel. There may be a fall and there may be a rise again. ॐ

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Working Wisely

With Ann Kilbertus

Saturday May 4, 2013, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

In this short workshop participants will learn to study the use of their arms and legs in different categories of *asana* to create space in the abdomen and chest.

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

The cause of pain is the association or identification of the seer with the seen and the remedy lies in their dissociation.

— B.K.S. Iyengar translating the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali II.16 and II.17

Fees: \$50 + HST for members, \$55 + HST non-members

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

How is an Iyengar Yoga Class Sequenced?

By Louie Ettling

This seems like a straightforward enough question. But as soon as an experienced teacher tries to answer the question, it sprouts further questions, as fast as *vinyasana* can possibly flow.

There are sequences of poses within a class and there is progression in class from week to week and from season to season. There is sequencing within a class that shifts from year to year as students become more mature in their understanding.

In a regular ongoing Iyengar yoga class there might be a variety of sequences going on; a student might be busy with a menstruation practice, a man next to her could be doing something that looks very much like this menstruation practice and someone else might be doing a pregnancy practice – all while the larger group is following the specific day's instructions. Sometimes these special practices happen to fit in with what the regular class is doing and sometimes not at all. In a medical class each student has her/his own sequence and this situation can get so complex that only senior teachers are licensed to teach therapeutics.

An astute student might recognize that a teacher adapts this same group sequence by saying "All go to the left, but A – you need to go to the right." Or, "All twist to the right, but A, you need to do *adho mukha svanasana* in the ropes." Now there are five different practices in the room. The following week the whole room might be doing the same sequence.

A teacher might change the progression of a class on the realization that students' energy is low, in which case the class might become either more active than planned or more restorative than planned. Although a class plan might

be in place, there are improvisational adaptations and shifts in sequencing, depending on what the teacher observes in students' practice that day.

Where is the order in all of this? What are the principles? What are the rules? Where are the secret formulae? Is sequencing enough – does the "success"

Although a class plan might be in place, there are improvisational adaptations and shifts in sequencing, depending on what the teacher observes in students' practice that day.

lie in the sequence or in adapting a given sequence for different people and in different circumstances? Is the sequence the end or the beginning of a process?

A few examples of the many factors that determine sequencing are:

- a new pose or a challenging pose the teacher builds a class towards
- a theme the teacher has been working on, for example twists or external rotation of the hip joint or the way arms work to open shoulders in different categories of poses
- a progression from the previous class. Students might have learned *bakasana* and are studying poses this week that will lead to *parsva bakasana*
- the mental state or energy level which the teacher hopes to support students to achieve on a particular day
- the yoga training and practice experience of students. In Iyengar yoga beginners learn standing poses first and will likely do them in each class.
- the age, fitness level and health of students

- the weather and the season
- the maturity level of the teacher
- the stage/era/decade of Mr. Iyengar's and his family's own research and practice

One of the guides Iyengar teachers learn to use is the syllabus which Mr. Iyengar developed over the more than seven decades of his teaching. Iyengar teachers worldwide undergo extensive training to receive an Introductory II certificate, the official International Iyengar entry exam, which then allows the teacher to teach the roughly eighty poses from the two Introductory sections of the syllabus. Twenty years later, with much more professional development and home practice, the same teacher might be working off seven levels of the syllabus, each progressively built on previous ones and teaching all 200 poses over the stretch of a year.

It takes much practice and observation of practice for Mr. Iyengar's teachers to come to understand why certain poses were chosen for specific levels of the syllabus and the reasons are not always obvious. Sometimes changes are made for different students in different cultural environments or because of what the teacher focuses on that day. Are students doing backbends in order to understand *tadasana* or *tadasana* in order to understand backbends in that class? Are they stretching their legs to prepare for drop-overs or are they stretching their legs to balance the body after drop-overs?

One of the reasons why Iyengar teachers tend to go back to the source of learning in India is precisely because Mr. Iyengar's teachings are not formulaic and have continued to develop as does his own practice and study of his students' practice. He makes suggestions to help people understand poses or a family of

poses and then he might notice three years later that this very same helpful instruction has resulted in students having overdone a good idea at the cost of healthy balanced practice. As part of addressing this imbalance Mr. Iyengar might change a technique related to a specific pose, or he might change a sequence leading up to a pose that has become problematic, in order to encourage practitioners to discover answers for themselves.

I look with keen interest for sequences that Mr. Iyengar or his family develop for children or victims of an earthquake, for groups of students with chemical addictions, for someone who has multiple sclerosis or for people dealing with anxiety, lethargy and depression. As teachers watching the Iyengar family at work, we are often surprised at the unpredictability of some sequences, at when adaptations take place within the given sequence and why. After some weeks, changes could be made to a practice and new poses added. People working closely with Mr. Iyengar or Geeta Iyengar might receive an explanation based on shifts that take place within the student; maybe the breath flow or skin tone changes, or the mobility improves and a new challenge becomes appropriate.

We are stimulated to observe and to respond to what we see in our own practice and in our students' bodies with more present intelligence. Is this creative and reflective response from moment to moment not the very heart of Iyengar yoga and likely all yoga, whether we practice or teach? Is this not one of the main reasons why we do any kind of practice – to encourage presence in daily life?

To come back to the original question: In Iyengar yoga we do *salamba sarvangasana* after *salamba sirsasana* (although their could be poses between them, depending on the sequence of the day) so that the nervous system does not become aggravated. We teach students standing poses and forward bends before

we teach them backbends, so that they won't hurt their spine through incorrect arm and leg action. We teach students how to support the trunk in *asana* before we teach them breathing (*pranayama*) practices. We follow backbends with more neutral extensions of the trunk rather than doing deep forward bends right away and vice versa. We may do faster movements (mobility practice) with students who are new and then keep them in poses longer to observe the deeper effects of these positions only once they learn to concentrate and do their poses in a healthy and balanced way. And we teach progressive hip opening poses, over months or years, before students are thrown into poses like *padmasana* (lotus pose). In essence, Iyengar yoga sequencing is a science and an art.

There are now many books available showing some of these sequences. However, those working directly with the Iyengar family know that "sequences are merely ingredients for a recipe." The sequence in and of itself is not an answer to problems a student might have. The sequence will not necessarily create energy flow where there is too little. An experienced teacher can track a student's response to a given sequence and will know when to adapt the sequence in order to maximize balance within an imbalanced body.

Some teachers are better at grasping this work than others. We are encouraged to study our own responses to sequencing in order to know best how to assist our students. We learn to unmake the rules. We learn to understand the principles already in place

I was looking at the question of sequencing in Iyengar yoga today as though I were holding poses for a bit longer to experience their effect. I took my time to pause and reflect, to undo rather than to take action fast.

Now, after writing, I will first need to do *adho mukha virasana*, arms active but head supported. I will do *sirsasana*

and *sarvangasana*, with variations. There will be forward bends with the head supported today. If I had slept more last night I could have chosen a different set of poses. ॐ

LOUIE ETTLING IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE YOGA SPACE IN VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA. (WWW.THEYOGASPACE.CA). AS A TRAINER OF TEACHERS AND AN ASSESSOR OF NEW TEACHERS, SHE SERVES ON THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF THE IYENGAR YOGA ASSOCIATION OF CANADA (IYAC/ACYI).



IYAC/ACYI ASSESSMENT DATES

January 18-20, 2013
Intermediate Senior I/II
Victoria, BC

March 8-10, 2013
Introductory II
Edmonton, AB

April 26-28, 2013
Intermediate Junior III
Toronto, ON

April 26-28, 2013
Introductory II
Vancouver, BC

June 21-23, 2013
Introductory II
Ottawa, ON

June 21-23, 2013
**Introductory II/
Intermediate Junior I**
Montreal, QC
Note: in French

**Check results and upcoming
assessments at
iyengaryogacanada.com**

Spreading Grace

By Leslie Hoga

Father Joe Pereira, a Catholic Priest, disciple of Gurujii and teacher of Iyengar yoga visited our centre in October. In 1981 Father Joe founded the Kripa¹ Foundation in order to help addicts, alcoholics, and sufferers of HIV/AIDS. He was in Victoria as part of a two month travelling and teaching tour throughout North America and Europe. He credits his practices of meditation, *pranayama* and Iyengar yoga with providing the energy needed for his grueling schedule. Also, his purpose is clear: it is to raise funds in support of the Kripa Foundation. There are now over 60 projects in 12 states in India. These beacons of healing are staffed, in large part, by those who have overcome their addictions.

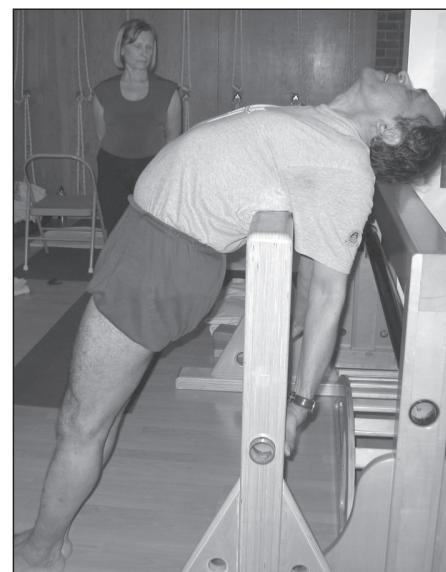
Gurujii has now given Father Joe and the Foundation the right to add Iyengar

to their title. The three-month residential program offered by Kripa includes counselling, meditation and a sequence of Iyengar yoga poses developed by Gurujii.

Father Joe also showed an inspiring short film that was made about Kripa's work. Many have asked about this film, so if you missed it, or want to watch it again, here is the You Tube link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=_--8kfhjxII.

The practice we did together led us deep into the quiet within through our *pranayama*, and/or meditation practice. His voice, his sequences, and his devotion to the work as a priest, and his understanding of Iyengar yoga was truly moving and inspiring.

Thank you, Father Joe, for sharing the deep work of your inner journey with us. ॐ



Father Joe Pereira demonstrates purvottanasana on the trestle

1 "Kripa" means grace.

Charles Campbell Designs AGM Logo

PHOTO: SHAWN SHEPHERD



The AGM logo featured on this month's cover was created by Charles Campbell, a full time artist in Victoria, who teaches at the Iyengar centre as well as managing a busy family life.

Campbell feels that his teaching and personal practice have contributed to "a certain contemplative approach" that is beneficial to both his approach to life and his creative process. He says, "Yoga puts you in the present, and it's there that you make your choices and change can occur."

For this work on the logo, Charles began by considering West Coast symbols and related *asanas*, such as trees, (*vrksasana*), eagles, (*garudasana*), and mountains, (*tadasana*). Weeks of trial and error followed. The breakthrough came after a frustrating afternoon in which he was unable to proceed with his planned work at a downtown studio. While there he looked over the shoulder of another artist preparing a logo for a local restaurant. The image made use of knives and forks, which Campbell immediately realized were the "tools of the trade" for a restaurant. He saw that the missing element to the logo was the props...tools of the Iyengar system. The logo came together that afternoon.

He says that yoga has helped him to be open to those, "moments of possibility," both in his art and his life. To see more of Charles Campbell's art please visit his website at charlescampbellart.com. ॐ

Dear Charles,

On behalf of the members and the Board of the national organization, IYAC/ACYI, I would like to extend our thanks for your contribution to our upcoming AGM/Conference 2013.

Victoria, with the support of neighbouring communities will be hosting the event. Your logo depicting the 'garuda/eagle' on the yoga block is very fitting for our West coast. We know that this dynamic graphic will work with all our promotional material and help in creating interest and support for this annual event.

With thanks,
Lauren Cox, Chair,
2013 IYAC/ACYI Conference

Footsteps and Karma

By Janine Bandcroft

Cycling along the wooded Galloping Goose trail, crossing fields and farmland between Victoria and Swartz Bay, I thought about Patanjali. Climbing the hills of Salt Spring, nearing the retreat centre, I pondered his world. I considered the challenges they faced so long ago. How many of those remain, timeless? How many were relieved as technology brought freedom from discomfort? How much has that same technology shifted the environmental balance, bringing new challenges?

I set my tent atop a patch of straw at the edge of a vast meadow, nestled under trees of the adjoining forest. I was one of four Iyengar campers, though the forest was adorned with the tents of Karma Yogis sharing their labour at Salt Spring's Yoga Centre. This is going to be an awesome weekend, I decided. I hadn't been camping for many years and I looked forward to connecting deeply with the earth's energy, in addition to sharing in Shirley and Leslie's wisdom.

After a fresh, organic dinner followed by an evening Kirtan with some of the locals, a sweat in the wood-fired sauna and an outdoor shower in the cool night air, I returned to my nest. Aaahhh. This is the life, I thought, as I cuddled in under a vast star-lit night.

A free afternoon followed the morning's *pranayama* and *asana* practices. I found a willing Yogi to join me for a swim in the lake. I hadn't packed hiking boots, my sturdy sandals seemed ample for an easy summer hike. That's how Patanjali would have walked, right? We crossed neglected greens and overgrown fairways on an abandoned golf course, and followed a little path at the end of the boardwalk to the dock. We returned in time for the late afternoon program, dinner, and discussion of the Yoga Sutras.

The second night was colder, I noticed as I crossed the meadow to my tent, past the deer grazing peacefully, my thoughts on this year's theme of *karma* and what it means to us individually. For decades my life as an activist has included selfless service – to the earth, to social justice, to personal and global peace. I practice *ahimsa* every day, at every meal. Surely my *karma*, overall, is in good stead, I reasoned. Of course, each moment brings with it tests and challenges that might upset the apple cart of life's *karmic* balance. Little did I know the enormous *karmic* assessment about to present itself.

In the middle of the second night my feet and lower legs screamed me awake. My mind raced to the post-swim

*I practice ahimsa every day, at every meal.
Surely my karma, overall, is in good stead,
I reasoned.*



Full arm balance and variations

discussion of leeches and other potential lake hazards. I threw off the covers, grabbed my flashlight, and examined the itchy rash, maintaining as much calm as is possible in such a situation. What was it? Had I contracted a viral bug that was slowly consuming me? What could I do? I was in the middle of a field, it was the middle of the night. I reached for my little first aid kit and began pouring Thieves Oil¹ all over my lower legs, brow furrowed and teeth clenched.

I waited, and the intense pain and itch began to subside. I considered the challenging environments Patanjali and his friends might have encountered, and the plight of my homeless brothers and sisters about to face another cold Canadian winter. I counted my blessings and asked myself – had Patanjali's footsteps ever known such affliction?

The next morning Yogi friends declared it 'stinging Nettles,' nothing serious, it will pass. Alternatively I soaked my legs in salt water, swiped them with apple cider vinegar, and accepted help from Wendy's personal first aid kit. The pain was assuaged somewhat, temporarily, long enough to get through a session, or put my mind and body to sleep at night.

¹ In 1413, as the bubonic plague decimated France, four thieves were arrested for robbing dead and dying plague victims – a crime punishable by burning alive. The judge offered them leniency for their terrible crimes if they would share the secret which enabled them to expose themselves to the plague without contracting it. The thieves explained that they were perfume makers and spice merchants who were unemployed due to the closure of France's sea ports. They had prepared a special mixture of essential oils which they applied to their hands, ears, feet, masks, and temples and this protected them from infection. As promised, the judge did not burn the men alive – he hanged them instead. Soon after, plague doctors began to wear beak-like masks stuffed with absorbent material soaked in Thieves' Oil to protect them from disease. marseillesremedy.com



Deep rest in the yoga space at the Footsteps retreat

We were encouraged to consider the importance of balancing *rajas* (over-abundant activity and restlessness) and *tamas* (inertia, dullness, lethargy). I began to realize my personal challenge. I tend to rush into things head first, without necessarily considering the consequences of my actions. During my hike to the lake I'd been chatting with Mercedes, not really watching where I was going. After the retreat, I decided an infrared sauna would help flush whatever was causing the rash. A few days after that, as I sat waiting at the Emergency Room with legs so swollen I could barely walk, I realized that awareness is instantaneous, but changing one's temperament takes a bit more time. At every step along the pathway, I need to slow down and think about what might happen next.

The doctor diagnosed my condition as "contact dermatitis" and said it looked like poison oak. Poison oak? Who knew there's poison oak on our islands? I left the hospital with a prescription for steroids and cortisone cream, but, like those of Patanjali's world, I would follow the footsteps of natural healing. For the next two months I tended my indescribably uncomfortable situation with various herbal tinctures, teas, vitamins and minerals, and acupuncture.²

It all brought me closer to understanding Patanjali the healer – the trials he and his people must have gone through while cataloguing medicines, and how deprived the species became when his medical texts were lost. I'm grateful to everyone who's shown care and concern during my healing, and to the teachings and teachers of yoga. It was my core strength that pulled me through this ordeal, the *salamba sarvangasana* and *sirsasana* that helped shift my energy towards healing. I have a new relationship with the earth, a new understanding of Patanjali's Footsteps. ॐ

² For a complete description of the herbs and natural healing methods I discovered, visit janinebandcroft.blogspot.com and search "How I Survived Poison Oak."



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

Scholarships and Bursaries

**Members' scholarships are available for
the Marie-Andrée Morin Workshop,
February 22-24, 2013
and Heart of Yoga
with Shirley Daventry French,
April 6-7, 2013.**

Scholarship applications for these workshops are due ten weeks prior to the workshop start date.

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

Applications for both are available at the reception desk.

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

Thank you, Ann Nolan!

Ann secured a \$500 contribution for the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria from her workplace, CIBC

Excerpt from the approval letter:

Dear Ann Nolan,

CIBC Community Investment recently reviewed your volunteer funding application and we are pleased to advise that a contribution of \$500 recognizing your volunteer involvement with Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Society has been approved. In the next few weeks, you will receive a cheque...



Wendy Boyer accepts CIBC cheque from Ann Nolan.



Laine Canivet and Ann Nolan retiring from IYCV Board

Long Serving Board Members Stepping Down

Laine Canivet and Ann Nolan are both ending their sixth consecutive year as members of the IYCV Board. In accord with our bylaws, they will be leaving the Board at the next annual general meeting. They will both be greatly missed.

Ann has served as our Treasurer. Working with Wendy Boyer, they have provided the Board with well-presented and realistic annual budgets for our approval and then kept the Board well informed of our financial status throughout the year. Elsewhere in this newsletter, we acknowledge Ann's obtaining significant contributions for our Centre from her employer, CIBC.

Laine has served as Secretary and as such she has provided Board members with succinct and timely records of our meetings. She also brought her previous experience as a project manager to special projects such as the Special Needs Tea silent auction and preparing an RFP for the redesign of our web site.

Both Laine and Ann have been exemplary in fulfilling their Board roles. They have been thoughtful contributors to Board discussion and they have been fun to work with. Thank you both.

Krysia Strawczynski,
IYCV President

Congratulations!

The following candidates achieved Introductory Level II certification at the October 2012 Saskatoon assessment:

Deborah White, Toronto, ON
Vivek Mehta, Calgary, AB
Martina Walsh, Calgary, AB
Gary Wong, Victoria, BC
Tom King, Calgary, AB
Barbara Deneka, Sherwood Park, AB
Petra Rykers, Stillwater Lake, NS
Leigh Stevenson, Greely, ON

No Scents Makes Good Sense!

Some of our members and teachers are very sensitive to any products that have scent. Some get migraines and have to leave the studio. Please help by refraining from using all perfumed products including soaps, powders, creams and detergents prior to class.

The Why of Workshops

By Arno de Boer

It was a little over a month after Chris Saudek's workshop that I was asked to write about it. In all honesty, I could think of nothing I specifically remembered from her whole weekend of teaching! So, if I promptly forget so much of a workshop in so little time, why would I keep signing up for and paying for workshops?

The same question, "why did I sign up?" figures prominently in my mind in the days and minutes before a workshop starts (when you know full well it is going to be hard!). After the morning session of a Gabriella Giubilaro visit I decided the work could be most succinctly described as "exquisite torture". Why would one pay good money and designate a whole weekend for that?

Well, two or three hours in a workshop session are clearly very different than even a strong two- or three-hour practice in the comfort of home. An experienced, respected teacher is going to take almost all of us well beyond our comfort zone. No matter at what level we practice, working with teachers of high repute for eight or ten hours over two or three days is going to result in new poses, new sequences, leading deeper into poses and, inevitably, some longer holdings in poses – especially in poses we may not like very well. Each senior teacher one has the opportunity to practice with brings new and sometimes unimagined, perspectives to the work.

As a forgetful student who mainly just loves doing *asanas*, I emerge from a workshop motivated to practice more and more deeply, and, inevitably, very inspired by the depth and



Shirley Daventry French teaching *sirsanana*

detail possible within the Iyengar tradition. Years later there may be only one specific pose or instruction I associate with that teacher, but, the insights that endure cumulatively form the base of a solid practice. After the Faeq Biria workshop, I now almost always start my early morning practice with *supta*



February 22-24, 2013

Friday
6:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Saturday
10:30 am - 1:30 pm
and 3:30 pm - 5:30 pm
Sunday
10:30 am - 1:00 pm

Marie-Andrée Morin is Coming to Victoria

A yoga practitioner since the 1970s, Marie-Andrée Morin has been studying Iyengar yoga since 1984 and has been to Pune many times to study directly with Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar as well as Geeta and Prashant Iyengar. She also has been a student of Faeq Biria for many years. Apart from being an assessor and a teacher trainer, she is also the founder of the Centre de Yoga Iyengar de Montréal, which opened in 1989. She currently holds an Intermediate Senior III certificate.

In possession of a lively spirit, she is known to be a demanding yet compassionate teacher, enlivening her teaching with her sense of humour and insights gained over many years of devoted personal practice.

\$230 + HST for members, \$250 + HST for non-members

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

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee.

padangusthasana; I find this allows an easing (horizontal) into the practice which requires much less “doing” than starting with standing poses or even sun salutations. Gabriella’s fierce determination was an inspiration in itself but her last workshop’s enduring theme, for me, was about the outward rotation of the upper arms in all poses, even in *urdhva dhanurasana*. Chris Saudek inspired me with the clarity of her ongoing instructions: if you stay tuned to her voice every single word will help you deepen your pose; there are no superfluous or repetitive instructions, not even “come on people, work harder, this is important”. Father Joe Pereira renamed our modest wooden blocks “intensive care units” which somehow inspired me to finally make my own new blocks and to start working with them much more in my home practice.

I have only had one regret to do with yoga since a friend casually suggested I try a class at the Y, twenty-eight years ago: there were 14 years when my children were young during which I practiced but did not attend classes or any workshops. I know now that every workshop or class I didn’t go to was a significant opportunity missed! I would line up overnight outside the centre if that’s what it would take to get into another workshop with a visiting senior Iyengar yoga teacher. Being in *asanas* with this calibre of teacher means that every single word they share helps you go both deeper into the pose and deeper into the belief that the Iyengar yoga tradition is a perfectly vital ingredient of a life well lived.

I’ll be at Marie-Andrée Morin’s workshop, I hope to see you there and that it is well attended, and that many more fabulous teachers will come bless our center with their presence here in Victoria. ॐ

Reflections on my First Yoga Teacher

By Leslie Hogya

I attended my first yoga classes at the Victoria YMCA in 1972 with Jessica Tucker. She was a pioneer in bringing yoga to Victoria, and began the yoga program at the Y in the late 60s. This past October, I attended her funeral mass, and have thought a great deal about her in the last while. I was a young mother, and exploring the next stage and direction for my life. I found those early classes to be full of significance. She had not been trained in Iyengar yoga, as this method had not reached Victoria yet. But she did introduce us to *Light on Yoga*, telling us it was the best reference available.

The classes were harmonious, and I remember the deep sense of peace and connection to my inner self at the end of those sessions. The beginning of every class we did the yoga walk, which was a quiet meditative walk across the room, slowly shifting from one foot to another. This part of the class usually lasted ten minutes (some people didn’t like this, and would consistently arrive about ten minutes late!) Occasionally at the end of a class we would take time for reflection and she would give us paper and pencil to write down our thoughts. Or we would explore the eight limbs of yoga.

But, the sequencing we understand was there. We did standing poses, back bends, twists, forward bends and *savasana*. We didn’t have props, beyond a rigid foam mat for *savasana*. Shoulder stand was held briefly, and we called it candle pose, as we were on our upper back, not up on our top shoulders.

Within two years of beginning classes at the Y, I was invited to begin teaching. I had a Bachelor’s degree in education, so I already had the ability to speak, and give instructions to a group. And fortunately, I had some natural flexibility at that stage of my life.



Jessica Tucker

After a while, Jessica invited her teacher, Bina Nelson, from Vancouver to give a fairly large group of us more training. We studied the philosophy, anatomy and more. Donna Fornelli, who now teaches Iyengar yoga in Ottawa, was part of this initial group.

Jessica also introduced us to Swami Radha, who came to Victoria for classes and workshops. My other colleagues at the Y were Shirley Daventry French, Carole Miller and Amanda Mills.

Jessica was born in India in 1914, and eventually ended up moving here with her husband and children. In those years, yoga was not well known, and becoming a yoga teacher was an oddity. I honour Jessica’s memory, those early classes came at pivotal time for me; she had a profound influence on my life. Jessica Tucker was a woman with broad interests, a sharp intelligence, grace and courage. I doubt I would be a yoga teacher today, if I hadn’t encountered her and her teaching forty years ago. ॐ

Billet at a yogi’s house in Victoria

Did you know that the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria offers billeting to out of town participants in our workshops and intensives?

For \$40 a night you can stay at a yogi’s house. To make arrangements, just call the IYCV at 250-386-YOGA (9642).

Summer Sadhana 2012

By Deborah Jones

Summer Sadhana has become a much welcomed tradition at the Victoria Iyengar Yoga Centre. I recently completed my second one and volunteered to write about my experience. *Sadhana* is a daily practice and spiritual quest and takes place over six days, typically, sessions are early morning (6:30 - 8:00 am) at the height of summer. Even those with difficulty getting up in the morning can participate and enjoy the warmth, sunshine and bird songs on their way to the Centre.

An important part of the *sadhana* was studying the Yoga Sutras I.30 through I.39. The Sutras were about overcoming obstacles and impediments in our life. We learned that life is a balance of surrender and practice; letting go and never giving up. Each session started with breath work and the invocation, followed by teachings, a group discussion and *asanas*. During the six-day workshop, our practice focused on all of the *asanas*, moving from standing poses; through seated, forward bending, backbending, inversions and *pranayama* to a vigorous practice of Sun Salutations.

We learned that life is a balance of surrender and practice; letting go and never giving up.

The discussions on day one taught us about examining our core issues as a way of managing impediments and helping us move forward in our journey towards enlightenment. Oftentimes obstacles are not in the outer world, but rather inside us. When we are critical of ourselves and our growth process, we may have hit an inner obstacle that must be rooted out if we are going to experience joy. This discussion was followed by *asanas* to help focus on and enhance awareness of our *bandhas*. The *bandhas* are about controlling the lift of the pelvic floor and the drawing back of the abdomen and contribute to toning our abdominal organs and maintaining optimal health. I worked on maintaining my awareness of the *bandhas* throughout the day, remembering for example, to avoid tilting my pelvis. This increased awareness of proper alignment is really helpful as I sit at a computer throughout the day.

We discussed flexibility of the mind, on the second day, as a way of dealing with life's obstacles and impediments. What someone finds a challenge could be perceived by another as an exciting opportunity. Enhancing awareness of our obstacles was a challenge for most of us. It is sometimes easier to give up rather than try and look at a challenge as an opportunity.



Chaturanga



Head wrapped in namaste

On the third day, we examined resentment and discussed ways of handling it. We learned that our resentments prevent us from moving along our path.

Day four dealt with forgiveness, of ourselves and of others. Forgiveness is a very helpful tool in moving us forward in the path to spiritual enlightenment. It is also easier said than done!

The discussion on day five was about facing our obstacles instead of avoiding them. How do we confront life directly and consciously and remain in the present moment? Again, this is definitely a challenge for many of us!

Our discussion on the final day was about recognizing opportunity and increasing our awareness of the opportunities that present themselves to us. We learned that a positive attitude and state of being can help us to have a new perspective, enabling us to recognize and act on opportunities.

The discussions throughout the week were lively and resonated with all of us. Although I did not know any of the participants at the beginning of the workshop, I felt very much part of a community of yogis by the end of the week. I'm looking forward to next year's Summer Sadhana, and of seeing some of my fellow students at the Centre during the year.

Thank you to Robin, to the Iyengar Yoga Centre and to all of the Iyengar masters and teachers for a wonderful Summer Sadhana, 2012. ॐ



Lessons on the Mat – Lessons in Living Life

Connections & Interconnections between the Yoga Sutras

By Gary Jaeger

While it is my great pleasure to teach yoga part-time, I work full-time as a philosophy instructor. The experiences of teaching my yoga students and my philosophy students are not always as similar as I would like. My philosophy students often seem to come to class because they are required to and remain uninterested in what I am trying to convey to them. My yoga students, on the other hand, have an enthusiasm and presence of mind that I always find refreshing.

It is because I cherish their enthusiasm that I am careful in how I incorporate lessons about the yoga sutras in to my yoga classes. I have on occasion allowed these lessons to seem a little too academic, and when I have, that ordinarily bright look in their eyes begins to look as disengaged as the look I sometimes see in my university students' eyes. To avoid this, I use three different strategies.

First of all, I try to make the sutra lesson seem relevant to their practice. This does not usually mean that I use the sutra to teach them to do the *asana*. Rather, I use sutras to explain how they should psychologically or emotionally experience *āsana* or *prāṇāyāma* practice or sometimes I use the experience they are having on the mat to elucidate the sutra.

Presenting the sutras in this way sets me up for my second strategy. Not only do I try to make the sutra seem relevant to their practice, but in making that connection, I hope to show them that *āsana* is not merely exercise nor is *prāṇāyāma* merely

breathing — a common misconception among novices to the field of yoga. The lessons they learn on the mat are actually lessons about living life. Sutras, then, are the vehicle through which practice becomes relevant to their lives.

Finally, I like to teach the sutras so that my students can see how they are all interconnected. While it is important to pay attention to where Patañjali places each individual sutra, it is also important to realize that there are threads that run through the whole of the yoga sutras. By showing my students how sutras in one *pāda* connect to those in another, I invite them to make connections of their own without thinking that the sutras is a collection of disparate aphorisms. This means that I will often reiterate certain themes, but I never worry about seeming repetitive. Just as I would not hesitate to repeat an important instruction about how to do an *āsana*, I do not hesitate to return to important themes in the sutras.

Silent Moments

The Yoga Sutras are masterpieces not only because they diagnose the conditions of human suffering but because they offer practical strategies for resolving these conditions.

It is one thing to say, for example, that the conflation of the practitioner's pure consciousness with the world it perceives is the source of all pain, but it is quite another to offer up the solution. This is, however, precisely what Patañjali does when

he tells us that, “study of the silent moments between rising and restraining subliminal impressions is the transformation of consciousness towards restraint.”(111.9)

This sutra comes at the beginning of the third (*Vibhuti*) *pāda*, as Patañjali explains the series of successive transformations (*parinama*) that the consciousness goes through as it moves towards a state of perfect tranquility. At first the consciousness is scattered. It is in this state that we spend the vast majority of our lives and begin our development as yoga practitioners. One of the biggest challenges faced by new students is learning to move past this state of consciousness. You can see in their eyes and hear in their breath just how scattered their attention is. Rather than focusing inward, their mind is anywhere but on their practice. Rather than being present in their *asana*, they are already thinking ahead to the future when they will be allowed to come out of the pose.

Eventually, as Patañjali tells us, the practitioner must transform this scattered consciousness into a one-pointed (*ekagrata*) consciousness. A single point is only one dimension and so cannot contain within it the content of any thought, much less the collection of competing thoughts that usually makes up our regular mental chatter. Eventually even this one point becomes redundant as the consciousness transforms itself into a no-pointed consciousness.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

The Annual General Meeting
of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
will be held

Sunday, February 10, 2013, 2:00-4:00 pm
at 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C.

* * *

2:00 Asana Practice
3:00 Annual Meeting for all Members
with tea and refreshments

As a non-profit society, we meet annually to appreciate our Board and volunteers for all the work that they do. All members have a voice and are welcome to attend. Business will include the election of board members and the review of annual reports. The past year's financial statement and reports will be available at the front desk prior to the meeting.

If you are interested in serving on the board, please contact the front desk for application forms.



But how do we begin to make this journey toward the no-pointed consciousness? Patañjali's answer is simple; study the silent moments between thoughts. As the mind moves from one thought to the next there is a moment (*ksana*) no matter how small, that is right in the middle of those two thoughts, and where no thought is present. By recognizing these moments and learning to extend them, one can create larger and larger moments of tranquility in which the consciousness is undisturbed by the images and impressions that ordinarily bombard it.

Students can often feel as if they are being bombarded by their teacher's instructions, so it is the teacher's job to explain what those instructions are meant to do and how they are meant to be received. Instruction helps a student to become more aware of his or her body and mind. Through that awareness, the student can begin to focus inward and move away from a scattered consciousness toward a one-pointed one. When we practice alone, it is important to not only recall the instructions of our teachers, but as we move from one point to the next, we must learn to detach from those thoughts and to be present in the silent moments between them.

The Active and the Passive

If the point of yoga is to still the fluctuations of consciousness (1.2) and one approach to that end is to detach from one's thoughts by studying the silent moments in between them (111.9), then why do we devote so much time to the arduous practice of *asana*? Patañjali tells us that practice and detachment lead to the cessations of the fluctuations of consciousness (1.12), but these two approaches can seem to contradict each other. Detachment can seem like a very passive pursuit while practice seems very active. In fact, not only are we meant to practice, but our practice should be long, uninterrupted, and alert. (1.4)

The conjunction of these two pursuits is not the only seemingly paradoxical prescription that Patañjali gives us. He includes, for instance, both *tapas* and *santosa* on his list of personal disciplines (*niyamās*). *Tapas* is practicing with a burning zeal while *santosa* is often defined as contentment. How can we be both zealous and content? Doesn't zeal imply desire while being content implies just the opposite? The answer to these puzzles lies in understanding who we really are and what it means for us to be active. The true essence of any individual is a soul, which can be understood as pure consciousness.

Thoughts and desires are not part of this consciousness, but impress themselves upon it. This is why when one identifies with these thoughts one does not identify with one's own true splendor.

These thoughts and desires can be understood as being passions, because the consciousness passively receives them. In order to exist in its own true splendor, consciousness must actively resist these passions; only then is it active and not passive.



Cam Wallace and Lauren Cox in bhujapidasana

Detachment and contentment, then, should not be understood as passive states that one finds oneself in, but rather should be seen as practices in their own right. Looking at things this way helps us to understand why *abhyasa* (practice) and *tapas* on the one hand and *vairagya* (detachment) and *santosha* on the other are not at odds with each other, but it doesn't help us fully understand how they support each other either. Practicing, especially with an arduous zeal, is most certainly active, but it seems to be active in very different way than detachment or contentment.

It seems to be different, because we often think of practice as being motivated by desire. This assumption, however, is not correct. If it were, then practice would be passive because it would be caused only when desires impress themselves upon the consciousness. Practice, whether it be *asana* practice or any other type of yogic pursuit, should not be motivated by ambition, competition, or any other type of desire. It must be motivated simply by our conscious decision to practice. Detachment and contentment help to militate against the force of these desires so that pure consciousness can be in control. Moreover, long, continuous, and alert practice strengthen the consciousness so that it can exist in its own true splendor.

The Seer and the Seen

Students don't like to hold hard poses for any amount of time. When I make them hold poses, my students have a way of letting me know that they are unhappy. Their faces grimace and some of the more audacious among them will even grunt and groan. Those students who take the practice seriously, however, will listen when

I explain that I am not the source of their unhappiness, but rather it is, as Patañjali tells us, "the association of the seer with the seen and the remedy lies in their dissociation." (11.17)

Learning the Ropes: 3 Workshops

With Lauren Cox

Ropes & Standing Postures
Saturday, January 12, 2013,
11:30 am - 1:30 pm

Ropes & Forward Extensions
Saturday, February 2, 2013,
11:30 am - 1:30 pm

Ropes & Twists
Saturday, March 16, 2013,
11:30 am - 1:30 pm

1 session \$30/\$35 non-members
2 sessions \$55/\$60 non-members
3 sessions \$80/\$85 non-members

To register, drop by or phone the
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria,
202-919 Fort St., Victoria, B.C.
V8V 3K3
250-386-YOGA (9642)



When we think of a seer, we think of an individual person delimited by a physical body, and it is that physical body that feels muscle fatigue, aches, cramps, and the other intense physical sensations that often accompany āsana practice. Patañjali, however, does not identify the seer with a physical body, but rather with pure consciousness or the soul (*ātman* or *purusa*). Strictly speaking it is not even an individual soul, but is instead part of a universal and everlasting soul that runs through us all. Nevertheless, it is through his or her individual instantiation that a seer experiences himself or herself in the world. In an important sense, the body does belong to the soul; it is its nature (*prakṛti*).

It is through that body and its organs of perception that the soul comes to see the world. As part of nature, however, the body, in another sense, really belongs to the world more than it does to the soul. An ache, a cramp, or a pain is just a physical sensation that can be experienced by the soul, but is not actually in the soul. Of course, the natural thing to do is to identify with those physical sensations when we are in the midst of practice. This, however, is to associate ourselves with that which we are perceiving. Our true self, pure consciousness, “witnesses nature without being reliant on it.” (11.20)

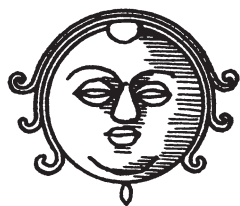
This does not mean that we should ignore our physical sensations. In fact, those sensations can tell us how well we are doing a pose, whether we should bring life to one portion of our bodies or invite softness into another.

Nevertheless, as we make these assessments, we must stand back from our sensations and witness them as being in the world and distinct from our consciousness. It is because we can stand back that consciousness has dominion over nature. It might seem that yoga, because of the physical intensity it brings, accentuates this problem of identifying the seer with the seen. After all, if we did less yoga, we would have fewer sensations from which to dissociate. This, however, would be the wrong way of looking at things.

Yoga provides us with the great opportunity to be face-to-face with our bodies and all of its perceptions. Without that opportunity, we could not learn how to stand back from our *prakṛtic* nature. We should be grateful to our aches and pains because they give us the practice we need to do this. ॐ

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Short WORKSHOP



Winter Solstice Workshop With Ty Chandler

December 21-22, 2012, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

FIRST NIGHT: forward bend practice with inversions.

SECOND NIGHT: backbend practice with inversions.

Not recommended for beginners.

Fees:

For one night:

\$30 + HST IYCV members, \$35 + HST non-members;

For both nights:

\$55 + HST IYCV members, \$65 + HST non-members;

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

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

IYCV Open House

Saturday, March 6, 2013

12:00 noon - 5:00 pm

Free! Come one, come all!

*Homemade cookies and chai
served all day.*

Free classes on the hour.
Stay tuned for schedule details.

www.iyengaryogacentre.ca



Calling All Iyengar Yoga Centre Members



Now is Renewal Time!

All memberships expire December 31, 2012.

Membership in the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria gives you lots of benefits!

Your membership gives you a discount on classes and special member's prices on workshops.

It allows you access to the library, the ability to stand for the board, free admission to members' practices, and a special, free New Year's Day class. Out-of-town members receive the IYCV newsletter by mail at no charge.

The Iyengar Yoga Center of Victoria's Newsletter is a special resource. It is sent around the world and is even on the shelves of the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, India. Your membership supports its production as well as the running of the Centre.

Now is the time to ensure your membership continues.

Please renew today!

Use the renewal form on page 23
or phone 250-386-9642.

THANK YOU TO OUR IYCV VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to those who helped during Father Joe's workshop: **Robin Cantor**, for bringing her projector and screen; **Charles Campbell**, for technical support; **Johanna Godliman** and **Jane McFarlane**, for helping with clean up and set up; **Marilyn Shepherd** for organizing a community event at St. Joseph the Worker parish church; and **Leslie** and **Giles Hogya**, for hosting.

Thank you, **Keval Kostyna**, for your donation to the library: *Introduction to Sanskrit, Part I*, by Thomas Egenes. This is an excellent, easy-to-follow textbook (that is not easy to get hold of).

Elizabeth Peckham co-ordinated this year's Going Deeper Workshop. Thank you, Elizabeth. Thank you to the Special Needs volunteers: **Brandy Baybutt**, **Robin Cantor**, **Johanna Godliman**, **Laura Johnston**, **Jayne Jonas**, **Rachel Kahn**, **Jaya Malaviarachchi**, **Jane McFarlane**, **Lynn Palfrey**, **Seamus Stolth**, **Suzanne Tremblay** and **Leslie Watson**.

Reminder: Check for Class Cancellations in January

Victoria is hosting a major Intermediate Senior I/II assessment January 18-20, 2013.

**Please read the your class schedule carefully
to be aware of class cancellations
over this weekend.**

Corrine Lowen's Beginner class (9:30-11:00 am)
and Gary Wong's Kids' class (4:00-5:00 pm)
will not run on Saturday, January 19.

No classes will run and no members practice
will be held on Sunday, January 20.



Local Iyengar Yoga teachers at one of the monthly Teachers' meeting at the IYCV.

PHOTO: JO ANNA HOPE

New Year's Day

All Levels

Timed Practice

With Ty Chandler

January 1, 2013
12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Free for 2013 IYCV members
– renew NOW

\$40 + HST for non-members

Pre-registration is required by
Friday, December 21, 2012
Not recommended for beginners

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

All memberships expire
Dec. 31. 2012 Renew now!



Membership

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

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

Membership fee is \$40 + HST,
renewable each January.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Prov/ State: _____ Postal code _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

☐ Please mail me my newsletter as I do not
attend classes at the Centre.

☐ Receipt required.

Membership benefits include a 5% discount on classes, a discount on workshops,
borrowing privileges in our library, free members' practice, IYCV Newsletter,
eligibility to become a board member and eligibility for workshop scholarships.



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

2012-13 CALENDAR

DECEMBER

- 1 50+ Balance and Strength
in Iyengar Yoga
- 14 Gurugi's Birthday Party
- 21-22 Winter Solstice Workshop
- 24-25 Centre Closed
- 26-29 Interim Classes
- 31 Centre Closed

JANUARY 2013

- 1 New Year's Day Practice
- 2 Regular Classes Resume
- 12 Learning the Ropes 1
- 18-20 Intermediate Senior I/II
Assessment, Victoria, BC

FEBRUARY

- 2 Learning the Ropes 2
- 9 Teachers' Meeting
- 10 IYCV AGM
- 22-24 Marie-Andrée Morin

MARCH

- 2 Open House
- 16 Learning the Ropes 3
- 8-10 Introductory II Assessment,
Edmonton, AB
- 9 Teachers' Meeting

APRIL

- 6-7 Heart of Yoga
- 13 Teachers' Meeting
- 26-28 Intermediate Junior III
Assessment, Toronto, ON
- 26-28 Introductory II Assessment,
Vancouver, BC

MAY

- 4 Working Wisely
- 23-26 IYAC Conference
in Victoria

JUNE

- 7-9 Salt Spring Retreat
- 15 Teachers' Meeting
- 21-23 Introductory II Assessment,
Ottawa, ON
- 21-23 Introductory II/
Intermediate Junior I,
Montreal, QC

JULY

- 8-13 Introductory Teacher
Training Intensive
- 15-20 Summer Sadhana

AUGUST

- 12-16 Intermediate Teacher
Training Intensive
- 21-25 Footsteps of Patanjali
- 26-30 Student Intensive