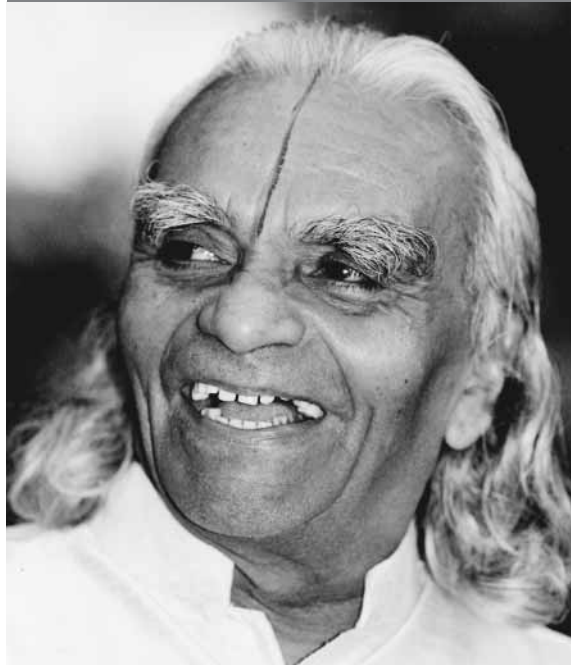


Yoga Vancouver

Iyengar Yoga Vancouver Newsletter

MARCH 2004



*We are always seeking
contact with heaven,
But how many of
us have made any
reasonable contact
with mother earth?*

B.K.S. Iyengar



B.K.S. Iyengar
Yoga Association

Yoga Vancouver is distributed to members, associate members and other subscribers. For information on membership, or to contact the Board of Directors, write to: B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association P.O. Box 48253 Bentall Centre Vancouver, B.C. V7X 1A1 For more information, call 604-980-5775.

CELEBRATING 85 YEARS – MR. IYENGAR'S BIRTHDAY

The Lower Mainland's Iyengar Yoga community gathered Sunday, December 14 in the Roundhouse Community Centre to celebrate Mr. Iyengar's 85th birthday with food, music, videos and generous door prizes.

After a welcome from Claudia MacDonald, Maureen Carruthers spoke about the beginnings of Iyengar yoga in Vancouver and about her own inauspicious beginnings as an Iyengar student – she was ordered out of the room. Happily, she survived banishment, studied with Mr. Iyengar, and brought his teachings back to Vancouver early in the 1970s. Her students and their students are the foundation of the lively community we share today.

Long-time teacher, and one of the senior Canadian certifiers, Ingelise Nherlan gave a toast and led the singing of happy birthday, just before a chocolate cake, baked by Vanoula Steinberg, was cut and portioned out among the guests.

About 150 people took part in the celebration, many of them pausing to watch the large-screen footage of Mr. Iyengar as a young man, practicing with his guru Sri Krishnamacharya. A later videotape, from 1979, showed Mr. Iyengar in a dazzling display of the precision and intelligence of his asana practice.

Board members Claudia MacDonald, Bridget Donald, and Louie Etling organized the party and the success of the event reflected the hard work of many enthusiastic yoga student volunteers and the generous donations of stu-



Photo: Sandra Laird

Iyengar teachers and trainees ready to cut the cake.

dents and local community businesses and organizations.

A special thank you to the Roundhouse Community Centre who co-sponsored the celebration and to staff members Elizabeth Kidd, Larissa Fayad, and Terry Rodealuk who provided set up and technical support.

Thanks to on site volunteers Elizabeth de Balasi, Ulrike Hobrueker, Nicole deMargerie, Katherine Morgan, Mary Kibbe, Minh Truong, Susan Stevenson, Claudine Warburton, Peter Helland, Geri Premerano, Faith Rostad, Feona Spalding-Smith, Nadine Jumelle, and musicians Karen Graves and Paul Gitlitz and photographer Sandra Laird.

Thanks also for door prize donations from: Lululemon, Half-Moon Yoga Props, Banyan Books, Fullbloom Flowers, Festival Records, True Confections, Fiona Spalding-Smith, Faith Rostad, Heather Hay, Barbara Meihuizen, Vivian Zuba, Eve Johnson, and Angela Long. ■

In November, many members of our community contributed to a booklet of birthday tributes to Mr. Iyengar, which left Vancouver in time in time to reach India by December 14. This association also sent a cheque with birthday wishes.

On behalf of all Lower Mainland Iyengar students we echo the sentiments of one of the birthday tributes:

"Happy Birthday, Guruji. Thank you for being you and for sharing who you are with us. Our world is truly a better place for having you in it."

In response, Sarah Godfrey received this letter:

Ramamani Iyengar
Memorial
Yoga Institute

Ref NO- 539/2003

Dear Godfrey & Students in Vancouver,

My grateful thanks to you for your good wishes and also for the gift of 200 dollars which you have sent with love and affection.

It is really nice of you all to have thought of me and sending me your good wishes on this auspicious day.

Yours affectionately,
B.K.S. Iyengar
(B.K.S. IYENGAR)

1107-B/1, SHIVAJINAGAR,
PUNE - 411 016, (INDIA)
GRAMS : "YOGADIPIKA",
PHONE : 9656134

13-12-2003

Workshop report: Faeq Biria

May 7 to 11, 2003 at The Yoga Space,

by Bridget Donald

Photo: Eve Johnson



Faeq uses Bridget Donald to demonstrate some of the finer points of Marichyasana III.

Last May, nearly fifty yoga students gathered at the Yoga Space in Vancouver for a five-day intensive workshop with world-renowned teacher Faeq Biria. Faeq is the director of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Paris and has worked closely with B.K.S. Iyengar for twenty-five years. For the past several years, Faeq has spent much of his time traveling internationally to teach yoga intensives.

As a participant in the Vancouver intensive, it seemed to me that Faeq's particular mission is to transmit what he has learned from Mr. Iyengar directly, with as little mediation as possible. And although you might be hard pressed to find a dedicated Iyengar instructor who does not attribute his or her knowledge to the Iyengars and an affiliated line of teachers, Faeq's teaching stands out in the way that it conveys the depth and proximity of the Guru's influence.

Marichyasana III

For the most part, we concentrated on the intermediate phase of the pose (as set out below) instead of going to the full pose, which involves binding with the arms.

Getting into position (for Marichyasana III to the right):

1. Sit on two foam blocks (or equivalent height) with your legs extended in front of you (in *dan-dasana*). Place a block on the floor behind your hips for your right hand, or sit a little less than an arm's length from a wall (with your back facing the wall to begin with) so that you can take the right hand onto the wall (the right elbow should be slightly bent).
2. Bend your right leg, bringing the heel close to the blocks on which you are sitting, and take the left leg out about 30 degrees from the centre. (This is to prevent the groins from getting jammed.)
3. Cross the left arm over the right leg, and take the right hand to the block behind you or the wall. Keep the left arm bent at the elbow, palm

and fingers stretched upward, fingertips pointing upward toward the ceiling.

Movements and Actions

1. Lower back / sacral band:
 - a) Prepare: take the tailbone in and stretch the spine. Lengthen the pubis.
 - b) Exhaling, relax the abdomen completely and turn to the right from the inner groin of the left leg. Continue for a few breaths until you can't go any further.
 - c) On your next exhalation, turn from the inner groin of the right leg.
Maintaining the length you have created in the trunk, move on to the next section of the twist.
2. Middle back:
 - a) Concentrating on the left side of the back rib cage, move the outer face of the ribs to the inner face of the ribs.
 - b) Turn the "pack" (i.e. of ribs on the left side), and then make it concave and turn it again.
 - c) "Dig" the part of the pack of ribs near the spine in, move the left kidney in and up.

especially since he moved around the room so swiftly that he could materialize quite unexpectedly at the end of your mat.

If the participants' energy seem to flag occasionally, the teacher's never did. He talked constantly throughout the intensive, and considering that each day consisted of four or five hours of *asana*, an hour of philosophy, and an hour of *pranayama*, this was no mean feat. He would build up a set of instructions for a pose and then repeat those instructions several times at a rapid-fire rate. The subtlety of detail, the repetition and the pacing of the information are designed to keep mind and body in lockstep, and indeed, maintaining concentration seemed easier than usual, especially when the prescribed actions sounded impossible. In these situations, learning the *asana* seemed to demand a combination of imagination, will and faith – in other words, the full engagement that seems all too rare in everyday practice.

One of the most vivid examples of this detailed approach was *Marichyasana III*, a seated spinal twist to which we returned many times throughout the five days. Faeq identified this as a special pose for two reasons. From a technical point of view, the pose is unique in that it is double-rooted: the action starts from the inner groin of one leg, then the other. From a psychological perspective, the pose removes doubts -- a possibility intriguing enough to warrant lots of repetition. ■

Bridget Donald is a yoga student and teacher in Vancouver. She participated in a second intensive with Faeq Biria last October in Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania.

3. Upper back:
 - a) Move the left shoulder blade in (i.e. deeper into the back, towards the chest) and bring the right one back to turn.
 - b) Turning your attention now to the movement of the front chest: inhale; then exhaling, turn more from the "bottom nipple bone" on the left.
 - c) Lift the top of the sternum and turn.
4. When you've turned as much as possible, suck the skin of the back in, and turn the skin to the left.
5. Finally, moving up to the face, which is the ethereal region of the body, inhale, and then exhale from the face, which softens the pose.

Note: If you've done the pose several times and/or have worked very deeply, "touch" the pose (i.e. do it very briefly) on the right side before moving on. (This is assuming that you have just finished up with a deep *Marichyasana III* to the left – returning briefly to the right side restores balance.) ■

The Faeq Biria intensive was a big event, and it went smoothly because of the work of several volunteers. Special thanks go to the following people for their extraordinary efforts:

Franklin Schryver, for conceiving of the idea, persistently inviting Faeq, then coordinating the workshop;

Louie Ettlting, for ensuring that the Yoga Space was the excellent venue that it was, and together with Sarah Godfrey, arranging for rentals, last-minute accommodation, and other details;

Khairon Quadir, for providing delicious soup for fifty people, made from scratch every day after she participated in the intensive! ■

- Bridget Donald

Workshop News:

Workshop committee members Heather Graham, Louie Ettlting, Mary Little, Susan Bull, Val Speidel continue to bring an exciting roster of senior provincial teachers, Canadian teachers from outside B.C. and international teachers to Vancouver.

Remember that as a BKS Iyengar Yoga Association member, you receive a discount on workshops and three weeks advance notice before registration is opened to the wider yoga community.

Some financial assistance is available for association-sponsored workshops. Check with your teacher for details.

ASSOCIATION WORKSHOPS

GABRIELLA GIUBILARO comes to Vancouver Wednesday March 17 to Sunday March 21. Gabriella is a senior teacher based in Italy and has studied with BKS 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. She is also a founder of the Light On Yoga Association Italy.

Gabriella's scientific background is evident in the clarity of her teaching. She is well-known for her dynamism, good humor and attention to individual needs.

Although Gabriella has taught regularly in Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and the United States, this is her first workshop in B.C.

The workshop is open to students who have studied Iyengar yoga for a minimum of eight years. The cost is \$465 for members, \$495 for non-members.

Workshop report: Felicity Green Teachers Training, July 2 to July 8, 2003 at The Yoga Space.

"Yoga is meant to give us a work in, not a work out," Felicity Green declared at the beginning of her teacher training workshop. In the seven days that followed, which included a general weekend workshop, she showed us many fruitful ways to achieve that "work in."

Here are some nuggets culled from the workshop:

- "Space is the most important thing. Any lack of flexibility creates lack of space. Work first for space, then for strength."
 - "Every movement of the body is circular."
 - "Good results come quickly with asana, bad results come slowly. The reverse is true for pranayama. Bad results in pranayama are pressure in the eyes or ears, incipient headache, mind busier at the end than at the beginning. If you experience any of these symptoms four days in a row, then stop the practice and seek help from an experienced teacher."
 - Study sutra I:30 of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, which lays out the obstacles to mastery of the inner self: "disease, inertia, doubt, heedlessness, laziness, indiscipline of the senses, erroneous views, lack of perseverance, and backsliding," (as translated in *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, by BKS Iyengar)
- Then: "ask which obstacles create the most



Photo: Eve Johnson

difficulty for me and hold me back from my practice? How many do a suffer from? Pick the one or two that are most troublesome in your life, and ask: 'How do they operate in my life? What can I do to help myself get over this? What action can I do?' Keep a spiritual diary to track your progress."

- "The body is always in the present moment. The mind is almost never in the present. To bring the mind into the present, all we have to do is bring it into the body."
- "Yoga is a process, not a goal. Being in the pose is not the important thing. What's important is how you got into it." ■

For more information contact Louie Ettlting, at louie5@direct.ca or phone her at 604-253-0465.

MAHYAR RAZ-KHORZAD will teach in Vancouver September 10 - 12, 2004. Mahyar has studied with Mr. Iyengar and Geeta every year for many years and has been awarded a Senior Intermediate III, by Mr. Iyengar.

As a result of her studies with the Iyengar family and her work at the Gupta Yoga Hospital in Lonavla, India (not far from Pune), she is an expert in medical yoga.

Mayhar interprets the Iyengar's work with artistic flair in a charming and challenging manner. Her students describe her as a dedicated, committed and creative teacher.

Originally from Iran, Mahyar is the founder of the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Tehran. She now directs a yoga studio in Toronto.

Contact Louie Ettlting, 604-253-0465 for more information.

AADIL PALKHIVALA will teach a four-day workshop, November 25 to 27, 2004, on "Living the Eight Limbs of Yoga." Aadil is a senior Iyengar teacher, who holds an Advanced Certificate. He started studying with Guruji at the tender age of seven, and is the founder and director of Yoga Centers in Bellevue, Washington. The workshop will be held at The Yoga Space.

For more information, phone or email Susan Bull, susansusanbull@hotmail.com, 604-985-1994.

WORKSHOPS SPONSORED BY ASSOCIATION MEMBERS:

HEATHER GRAHAM is pleased and proud that her teacher, **MAUREEN CARRUTHERS**, will join her to teach in Mexico in March, 2004 for a week-long workshop. Participants will enjoy a deep and enriching yoga experience with friends. Between yoga sessions, there will be time to swim, read by the pool, enjoy the ocean

Continued on next page

Yoga Philosophy: *Ingelise Nberlan continues her series of articles on the niyamas, or rules of discipline, with an examination of Saucha (cleanliness). The remaining niyamas are Santosa, (contentment), Tapas (religious fervor) Svadhyaya (self-study) and Isvara Pranidhana (surrender to God).*

Very rarely will one come across a person who is unclean in body and at the same time attracted to Yogic practices. It is rare indeed that a person who can bear to live in an unclean body should be sufficiently awake and sensitive to appreciate the concept of Yoga. In those rare cases the solution is right there: Yoga asanas create purity of body/mind and soon a student persevering in practice will awaken to physical cleanliness.

Before morning pranayama one washes hands and face and brushes teeth as very minimum requirements.

It is unbearable to practice asanas with food still digesting in the intestines – and in fact, even dangerous.

Even water should not be consumed during practice. An open mind in an empty body

is necessary for spiritual practices.

So what about Saucha on a more refined level?

Nothing pollutes more than a bad conscience. Better than to break the cup and glue it is not to break it at all.

Nothing pollutes more than a lie. Lying arises from a “spineless” state. The truth although painful at times is healing in the long run.

Nothing pollutes more than backstabbing: A sick need to build one’s own ego at someone else’s cost.

Nothing pollutes more than – well – the list goes on and on.

Maybe the worst of all is the pain from a person who has wronged you and who keeps walking on oblivious to or claiming ignorance of the hurt they left behind.

Arrogance, indifference to another’s pain, cold-heartedness, twisting of words etc., all give birth to a little worm of sorrow which, once created and maybe dormant for a while, is always lurking to fester given the slightest opportunity. It imprisons its owner and puts a damper on joyful living.

Yet, all of the above and many more can so easily be avoided. I guess that is why each language contains sentences like: “I am so sorry” and “Please forgive me.”

Outer cleanliness is a given. Maybe the closest we can come to describing inner cleanliness would be the concept of ensuring a clean conscience. With a clean conscience we can look everyone in the eye and know that: “to mine own self I am true.

With inner cleanliness of that caliber we will sleep peacefully. ■

Ingelise Nberlan teaches in West Vancouver. You can reach her at ingelise@shaw.ca or at Room for Yoga, 604-926-6985.

Workshop News Continued

view and stroll to Puerto Vallarta’s famous beach.

The emphasis for the week will be on restoration, awareness and enjoyment – a week of sun, excellent food, relaxation and yoga that will help students reach a deeper level of body-mind awareness.

Maureen is one of Canada’s most respected yoga teachers. She has been granted Senior Intermediate Instructor Certification by B.K.S. Iyengar. Heather began studying the Iyengar method with Maureen in 1989.

The cost is US \$825 and includes meals and accommodations. For more information, contact Heather Graham at (604) 515-9201 or Twila Pattyson at (604) 536-0835 or email yogatreecentres@hotmail.com.

GLORIA GOLDBERG will conduct a residential intensive for Iyengar teachers and students at the Edenvale Retreat and Conference Centre in rural Mount Lehman, B.C., September 1 to 7, 2004.

Gloria has taught Iyengar yoga since 1980 and has been a certified Iyengar teacher since 1987. She founded the teacher training program at the BKS Iyengar Yoga Institute in Los Angeles in 1992. She remains its director and co-curriculum coordinator, and was the founding president of the U.S. national association Iyengar Yoga association (IYNAUS). She continues to work closely with the Iyengars.

For further details and registration, contact Barbara Yates at 604-856-7758, or RNBY-ATES@direct.ca. ■

News and Notes:

AGM 2003

Fifteen members attended the B.K.S Iyengar Yoga Association’s annual general meeting on Sunday, November 30, 2003 at Yoga on 7th.

Claudia MacDonald led us in an hour-long practice, beginning at 1 p.m.

President Sarah Godfrey chaired the meeting. The association is on a sound financial footing due to several successful workshops. The board will continue to work this year to raise awareness of Iyengar yoga in the general population.

The board was elected as a slate, with assignment of new positions put by until the first board meeting of the new year.

Attendees will receive copies of the minutes by mail. Minutes are available by email on request. Contact Bridget Donald at b_donald@telus.net if you would like to receive a copy.

GURUJI’S APHORISMS

The Victoria Yoga Centre has asked for donations toward the publishing costs of a book of Mr. Iyengar’s aphorisms, partnered with illustrations by Lauren Cox and other artists in the yoga community.

“It is our aim to produce a book worthy of our teacher which will inspire and uplift his students in Victoria and, hopefully, further afield,” writes Shirley Daventry-French.

The book will be published to honor Mr. Iyengar’s 85th birthday, Dec. 14, 2003. Once the costs have been recouped, proceeds from sales of the book will go to support Guruji’s

charities in India and the Victoria Yoga Centre’s charities, which include special needs classes, scholarships and bursaries.

The board of the BKS Iyengar Yoga Association donated \$150 to the printing costs, and sent a letter wishing the Victoria Yoga Centre the best of luck with project.

CONGRATULATIONS:

- Gerie Primerano passed her Introductory Level I and II assessment in June 2003 and is now a certified Iyengar teacher. Geri did her teacher training with Wende Davis; she teaches at The Yoga Space.
- Longtime association member Eve Johnson launched a new book this fall. *Eating My Words: How Marilyn Monroe is Like a Grilled Artichoke and Other Observations on Food* (Whitecap, \$19.95) is a collection of a dozen recipes and of 50 essays - delightful trips into the world of food history and philosophy. Eve now teaches at Yoga on 7th, and is preparing for her introductory certification. ■

B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association of Vancouver Board of Directors, 2004

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