



the Thread that Binds Us



PENINSULA YOGA CENTRE

Issue #4 | February 2012

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As the January dawn broke, I watched the early morning horizon transform. Beautiful pink and peach clouds floated up against an intensely bright, azure sky. It was a gorgeous, breathtaking sky: a new start. It inspired me to consider the year ahead.

I don't often verbalize my New Year's resolutions, acknowledging that somewhere along the way I usually lose track of them. This year however, I have been reflecting on a class in Yoga philosophy taught by Shirley Daventry French. Shirley brought to our attention an old Buddhist phrase that struck me with its simple truth:

Before you speak ask:
Is it true? Will it hurt anyone? Is it necessary?

How different the world and our relationships within it would be if we each took the time to consider those three questions.

To be mindful is such an enormous undertaking; mindful of what we say and do; mindful of what we eat; mindful of our footprint on the earth.

In this edition of the newsletter, Nancy speaks of the first two limbs of yoga: the yamas and niyamas, the ethical observances that give us the guidelines of how to live. She explains ahimsa, which means non-violence or non-harming, living your life with love in your heart.

Our other focus is Karunta or "Puppet" yoga. This is an asana practice using ropes at the wall. It is a fun way to practise and brings us many additional benefits. Marlene shows us how to adapt this practice in our homes.

My resolution this year then, is to try to be more mindful, to be more aware of the importance of ahimsa. I will do my best and with a little perseverance I will try to accomplish my other goal, scrubbing the baseboards in my kitchen!!!

One final thought for the New Year is the beautiful quote from the Dhammapada, translated by Juan Mascaro:

*"Better than a thousand
useless words is one single
word that gives peace."*



Lorette Hickling



Irene Crampton

Namaste,
Lorette Hickling, Editor and
Irene Crampton, Associate Editor

Photographer: John Cochrane

This way to Samadhi

By Nancy Searing



The body is the temple of your being; the vehicle for your soul on its spiritual journey. In Iyengar Yoga we use our body, which is the known and refined instruction to begin the journey, to penetrate the layers of our being. This allows us to connect our awareness to the spirit within, the unknown. Working from the gross body, through the subtle to the casual body, we make the journey inward to merge into a state of freedom beyond consciousness known as Samadhi.

Patanjali was an Indian sage who lived more than 2500 years ago. He is still considered the authority on yoga. Patanjali wrote the Yoga Sutras describing an eight-limbed path that is the structural framework for yoga practice.

Yoga means union: union of body, mind and individual spirit with the universal spirit. The eight-limbed framework described by Patanjali illustrates astanga (the eight limbs) yoga.

The first two limbs, the **Yamas** and **Niyamas**, are the ethical observances, which give us the guidelines of how to relate to other people and our environment, and how to deal with ourselves.

Yamas are considered the guiding principles for universal morality. They give us the rules for living in harmony with others and our world.

Ahimsa translates as non-violence or non-harming. It means the cultivation of friendliness, compassion, joy and thoughtful consideration of other people and our planet. Through the practise of Ahimsa we acknowledge the web of life that connects us all. Live your life with love in your heart, be considerate and do no harm.

Satya translates as truthfulness. It means speaking the truth, yet being discriminating. If speaking the truth is harmful to another it is better to say nothing at all.

Asteya means non-stealing. Don't take anything that is not yours or that is not freely given to you.

Brahmacarya is sense control. Often described as sexual abstinence this can be seen as using our sexual energy responsibly and in a manner that does not harm others.

Aparigraha is non-greed or non-hoarding. It means to take no more than you need. It means letting go of attachments to things and understanding the only constant in life is change. Everything is impermanent.

Practicing the Yamas contributes to the health and happiness of society by purifying the human nature of desire and attachment.

Niyamas, on the other hand are the personal rules for living.

Sauca translates as cleanliness.

This means not only keeping our bodies clean on the outside by bathing but also on the inside by eating foods that support good health. Practicing asanas and pranayama purify the body of toxins and the mind of negative emotions such as hatred, passion, anger, lust, greed, delusion and pride.

Santosa is contentment. This means feeling content with what we have and finding contentment even when facing the challenges life offers. Be happy and accept what life brings.

Tapas means self discipline. The word tapas is derived from the Sanskrit word tap, which means to burn or to heat. Tapas in our practice means not only purifying our physical body through the practice of yoga but also burning away the desire and attachment for and to things. Tapas can be paying attention to our breath, posture and the food we eat. Purification is not necessarily easy but necessary as "the pains which are yet to come can and are to be avoided" (Y.S. 2:16) if we are to attain our spiritual goals and good health.

Svadyaya is self study. Sva means self and adhyaya means inquiry. Know thyself. Learn to be self-aware, understanding our strengths and limitations. **Isvarapranidhana is surrender.** Isvarapranidhana means to surrender to the divine creator.

Let go of our ego and allow our inner wisdom to guide us. Twelve Step programs are based on this premise. "Let go and let God". Acknowledge that a force greater than our individual ego is guiding us.

Asana is the third limb of astanga yoga, and is the most well known aspect. The practice of physical postures in Asana improves our health, mobility, stability, strength and flexibility. It has a

profoundly calming effect on our mind giving us a deep sense of well-being. The first three limbs are known as the outward practices.

Pranayama is the fourth limb. It is the beginning of the inward practices. Prana means life force and yama means extension. Pranayama extends the life force through control of the breath.

The disciplined practice of Asana and Pranayama produce the tapas that purify the body and mind.

The fifth limb **Pratyahara** is known as withdrawal of the senses from external objects. Generally, our senses attach to the outer world and feed our desires leaving us feeling discontent. Controlling the senses brings peace of mind and tranquility.

The final three limbs are known as the quest of the soul and bring the yoga practitioner into harmonious contact with the ultimate creative force or divine universal spirit. The sixth limb **Dharana** is concentration of the mind on the universal spirit. Here the mind is still

and brought to one-pointed absorption at which point there is no feeling of "I" or "mine". The seventh limb **Dhyana** is meditation, contemplation of the nature of the universal spirit. The final limb **Samadhi** means union with the divine universal spirit.

Acknowledgments: Light on Yoga, B.K.S. Iyengar, Light on the Yoga Sutra, B. K.S. Iyengar and The Eight Limbs: The Core of Yoga, by William J.D. Doran

Yoga Kurunta
(Ropes) by Glenda Hingley



As new students come in to the yoga studio at Mary Winspear Centre, they often look at our beautiful rope wall and ask, "What is this for?"

When they hear the answer, the reactions range from excitement and curiosity to extreme trepidation. The more adventurous students will ask regularly when they can try the ropes, while others look a little nervous any time the ropes are mentioned. - continued next page.

"Yoga is Samadhi
and Samadhi is Yoga"

B. K. S. Iyengar, Light on the
Yoga Sutras of Patanjali



- continued from page 3.

Eventually the day arrives and we get out the ropes. Most often it is for a simple version of Downward Facing Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana) and once blankets are arranged, feet and hands properly placed and mats sorted out, a special hush fills the studio. Though most students will have had many opportunities to do Downward Dog and generally have used various set ups and props, there is nothing quite like the experience of using the ropes for this important pose.

With the help of the rope, the side body is lengthened, the diaphragm releases and the spine feels deliciously long and relaxed. With the support of the ropes, the arms and shoulders no longer bear the weight of the body and they, too can release and relax. For those with tight shoulders or lacking strength in the arms, rope Adho Mukha Svanasana is an opportunity to explore and maybe even enjoy the pose without the added work of holding up their body weight. For students with shoulder injuries, it may be the best or even the only way to gain the benefits of the pose until the injury has healed.

As well as supporting the body, the ropes also give valuable clues about how we need to work in the pose. Using Adho Mukha Svanasana again as an example, the pressure of the rope indicates how we need to press the top thigh back and the upward pull, particularly when the top rope is used, gives a clear impression of how the outer hips need to lift.

While Downward Dog is almost universally enjoyed, inversions and active poses such as "Rope One" are more challenging and not always instant favourites. The novelty of hanging bat-like upside down on the wall is so much fun and the sense of accomplishment is seen on every student's face. Rope work can help remove what Geeta Iyengar famously calls the "fear complex" and help us gain the confidence needed for other poses, such as headstand away from the wall.

While most of us will not build ourselves a complicated rope wall to enhance our home practice, a simple version is quite easily done with "eye" bolts drilled into wall studs and a few meters of good quality rope. And for those of us with no space or inclination for a rope wall, Downward Dog can be done using just your yoga belt, mat and a sturdy door handle. If you have not yet seen this demonstrated in class, ask your teacher soon!

Our member library has instructions for a simple rope wall and a full book on "yoga kurunta" (the Sanskrit word "kurunti" literally means "puppet") with dozens of poses and variations shown. Rope workshops are always well attended when we have them, so keep your eyes open and register early when the next one is posted.

A brief history of rope Mallakhamb, followed by an impressive demonstration by three young women. [Web links http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOTmNh8BbL8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOTmNh8BbL8)

Kurunta Yoga Practice

By Marlene Miller

This yoga practice shows how to improvise the use of ropes and straps in your practice at home.

You do not need an expensive, professionally installed yoga wall with ropes in order to get the benefits of rope support in your practice.

One can simply loop a strong strap around the doorknobs of a sturdy door that has at least three strong hinges.

If you wish to have a more permanent set up, eye bolts, either with or without rings (with a 3" – 4" stem) is another inexpensive approach. The bolts should be screwed securely into sturdy 2 X 4's in a wall. The ropes can be purchased. (See the photographs below.)

Before using the ropes or straps ensure they are securely fastened. I hope you enjoy many insights that the use of ropes and straps teach us in our practice.

Poses can be held from 30 sec – 1 or 2 min. as appropriate & time permits.



1. Strap is looped over a door handle. Before beginning ensure the door is very securely fastened by the hinges. Also, best to have at least 3 hinges on the door.



2. Urdhva Hastasana in Tadasana – Strap or rope loop over top of door.



3. Adho Mukha Svanasana



4. Baddha Konasana – toes opening onto door



5. Upavistha Konasana – belt below shoulder blades



6. Supta Padangusthasana



7. Dandasana – blanket support



8a. Ardha Uttanasana – with chair



8a. Ardha Uttanasana



9. Chatuspadasana



10. Savasana – feet lengthening on support of book on door.

I'm often asked why I keep going to back to India. It costs a lot of money. It is not easy to face the challenges of a completely different environment and culture. It is hard to be away from home. India is not a place which one generally feels ambivalent about, yet it offers so much. Being at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute (RIMYI) is an opportunity to deepen my practice on every level.

In India, far away from my everyday life, I have the opportunity for a different kind of practice. A deep practice, that I find challenging to achieve at home. There I am involved in the day-to-day routines that make up my life. At the RIMYI time is available to just practice. At home, I practice, but sometimes life demands me to give myself to my other responsibilities. At RIMYI, every day but Sunday, a two-hour class and a three-hour practice time are scheduled for foreign students. On my last trip I was fortunate to have an additional 2 hours of class every day. Seven hours of practice every day is precious time. I am able to work on penetrating the layers of my being. Practice is discipline, learning to become a disciple (learner or follower) unto one's self, or to learn about one's self and the true nature of the self.

While this trip was very much about me having time to practice at RIMYI and on my mat practicing asana and pranayama, it was also time for me to practice many of the other aspects of yoga in my day-to-day relationships with others. My family came to join me at the end of my time at RIMYI for three weeks of travel. I met

my husband Gary, older son Eli and his partner Heather, younger son Nils and his girlfriend Lynds in Delhi to begin our journey. We traveled by train through Rajasthan to Jaisalmer and went on an overnight camel safari. The fort at Jodpur was fabulous as was our "havali", a family run heritage guesthouse. In Jaipur the chaos of the Elephant Festival and the Holy Festival, where people celebrate by throwing coloured powder and coloured water at each other, was fun and crazy. We saw a tiger at Rahambore National Park. I loved the Golden Temple at Amritsar. McLeod Gang was another favourite and I visited their Iyengar Yoga Centre. In Rishikesh we stayed on the banks of the Ganges at another Iyengar Yoga Centre. We had three fantastic days in Corbett National Park. The final day we saw the Taj Mahal.

Being with my family in India was treasured, precious time. However, moving six people through time and space, on a full schedule that often met unforeseen complications, proved to have it's challenges. It was hot, filthy and often physically uncomfortable, as well it was emotionally difficult to face the grinding poverty, human suffering and suffocating pollution. We were all pushed to our limits. For me those challenges were all the more manageable because of my yoga practice. The many days on the train or fully engaged in travel did not leave time for getting on my mat, but every day I was able to draw on the well of my practice and find contentment and acceptance, most of the time.



The Recipe Box



Carrot Cake with Lemon Frosting

Submitted by Louise Beaudry

This cake was served (and enjoyed) for Marlene's birthday last July at Craig and Allisa's house.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1 cup flour | Lemon Frosting |
| 1 tsp baking powder | 125 grams ricotta cheese |
| ½ tsp baking soda | ¼ cup icing sugar |
| ¾ cup brown sugar | 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice |
| 1 large carrot grated | |
| ½ cup chopped canned pineapple, drained | |
| 2 eggs | |
| 2 tbsp vegetable oil | |
| 1 tsp cinnamon | |

Preheat oven to 350 °F

Sift together flour, baking powder and baking soda, add sugar to combine.

Add carrot, pineapple, eggs, oil and cinnamon and mix well.

Spoon batter into well greased and floured 7inch round cake pan.

Bake 35 – 40 minutes or until cooked when tested with a skewer. Let stand in tin for 5 mins before turning onto wire rack.

Make frosting by mixing ingredients well in food processor. Spread over top of cold cake.

Competition Winner

Congratulations to Kathy Gilbey who submitted the only correct answer to the competition in our last issue. The mystery photograph was taken in the Mount Newton Valley but Kathy narrowed it down to the exact spot – the field at the old Saanichton Elementary School. Kathy won a yoga belt!



"We are very pleased that both Susan Leacock and Kirsty Williams have taken on the task of newsletter distribution. A huge "welcome on board", Kirsty and Susan! Many thanks to Louise Gauvin, who did a wonderful job in setting up the distribution list and for her work in distributing the newsletter last year."



Calendar, Schedule and Resources

January 9 - March 31 AND April 2 - June 28, 2012

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Saturday
	* Pranayama 7:00 - 8:00am			
55 & Better 10:00-11:30am	Level I 9:30 - 11:00am	Level II 9:30 - 11:30am	Level I & II 9:30 - 11:00am	** Level I & II 9:00 - 10:30am
Specific Needs 1:00-2:30pm				
	Level II & III 6:00 - 8:00pm	Level I 6:00 - 7:30pm	Level II 5:30 - 7:30pm	
	Level I 8:00 - 9:30pm	Level I & II 7:30 - 9:00pm		

January 2012

Mon 9 Winter Session Begins

April

Mon 2 Winter Session Begins

Mon 9 No Classes

May

Tues 8

Sun 13 No Classes

Mon 21 No Classes

Library? What Library?

By Peninsula Yoga Librarian, Marilyn Ming

Have you noticed the books and DVDs on the stand by the outside door of the yoga studio? I hadn't really noticed them, and I certainly wasn't aware that they can be borrowed. Yes, this is a collection for the use of PYCS members. If you've paid your \$20 for the year to join, you may sign out any of these materials for a month or so. We don't really have a deadline, but do want them back – it is a library no matter how small. Just find the card in the file box for the item that you are taking; write your name, phone number and the date on the card and put it back. When you bring your item back, please cross off your name on the card.

Browse through the collection before or after class one day and you'll find information about yoga philosophy, asanas, and pranayama. Many of the materials come direct from India but all are in English. Each issue of the little magazine, Yoga Rahasya, is usually devoted to one subject, so take a look at those too.

Perhaps if there is more interest in the library, we could make a case for expanding it. Any suggestions for additions should be directed to me at marilyn.ming@gmail.com

While our book collection is small, it does contain some of the classic Iyengar texts including Light on Yoga and Light on Pranayama both by B.K.S. Iyengar. You've seen the teachers refer to their edition of Light on Yoga frequently, but its sequel, Light on Pranayama is well worth perusing too. The introduction that we receive in class is but a small part of pranayama. Light on Pranayama discusses the respiratory system in terms of both modern anatomy and the ancient yoga texts. It also explains how pranayama fits into the eight limbs of yoga, and the difficulties and dangers the student may encounter when practicing some techniques on one's own. This fundamental text gives a good introduction to Iyengar's writing style and the broader scope of pranayama practice.

Certified Iyengar Yoga Instructors

Marlene Miller (MM) - Senior
Nancy Searing (NS) - Intermediate
Jayne Jonas (JJ) - Intermediate
Glenda Hingley (GH) - Introductory
Linda Larson (LL) – Introductory I
Linda Walker (LW) – Apprenticing

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Check out or website at www.penyoga.ca

We encourage you to submit articles and photographs to continue to make this newsletter a reflection of our wonderful yoga community on the Peninsula. Please forward submissions to:

penyoga@shaw.ca

Articles may be in plain text or any version of MSWord. Please ensure your photographs are the highest possible resolution. If you do not have access to a computer, please pass along your material to your Yoga teacher.

The editors reserve the right to edit all articles and withhold publication at their discretion.

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