

Yogaville Calendar

NOVEMBER

- 4-6 Deepening Your Practice with Swami Asokananda & Swami Karunananda
 11-13 Opening to Grace Through Anusara Yoga with Suzie Hurley
 12-20 Cardiac Yoga® Training for Health Professionals with Mala Cunningham, Ph.D.
 18-20 Yoga and Kabbalah with Prahaladan Mandelkorn, Latifa Kropf & Heena Reiter
 18-20 Self-Discovery Through Hatha Yoga with Prajapati & Letitia Swaine
 25-27 Celebrate Body, Mind and Spirit with Swami Priyananda
 30-Dec 4 Structural Yoga Therapy Certification Program with Mukunda Stiles

DECEMBER

- 2-4 Ananda Dance: Joyful Yoga-Inspired Dance with Supriya Swerdlick & Sumati Bates
 9-11 Yoga Tune-up for the Holidays with Dr. Amrita McLanahan & Sahaja Evans
 17 Celebration of Sri Gurudev's Jayanthi
 28-Jan 1 New Year's Silent Retreat: Undo and Renew for the New Year

JANUARY

- 7-Feb 4 Basic Hatha Yoga TT in Mexico
 13-15 Open Your Hands to Health: Self Healing through Acupressure with Dr Ketan Shah
 20-22 Rejuvenating Your Health Through Yoga with Dr. Amrita McLanahan & Cinmayi Payne
 27-29 Breath=Life: Pranayama Workshop with Bhaktan Eberle

FEBRUARY

- 3-5 A Yogic Approach to Anger Management with Ramanan Schultz
 10-12 Experience and Explore Love: A Valentine's Couples Workshop with Radha & Gopal Bello
 12-Mar 5 Intermediate Hatha Yoga TT with Swami Asokananda
 17-19 Mindful Stress Reduction—A Spiritual Journey with Susan Stone
 24-26 Back to Basics: Introductory Yoga Weekend with Lakshmi Sutter

To make a reservation or receive a Yogaville Program Guide, contact the Ashram Reservation Center (ARC) at 800-858-YOGA(9642). IYTA members receive a 5% discount on TTs and a 10% discount on Weekend Programs.

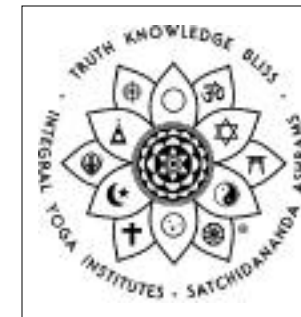


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Winter 2005



Integral Yoga® Teachers Association Newsletter

Volume XI, No.4

November 2005



Teachings on Sangha Sri Swami Satchidananda

Q: I know practicing Hatha Yoga and meditation brings about changes. How would you go about making specific changes in areas you would like to improve?

Sri Gurudev: The most important change to make is to be sure you are in good company. Put yourself in the right company. Come to a spiritual community, or if you can't do that, surround yourself with spiritual books. You will still be with spiritual company—spiritual thoughts. And, you can create positive changes at home. The pictures you put around, the things you read, the TV and movies that you see. Let all of them bring good thoughts to you, and that will take care of everything else.

There was a question put to Acharya Shankara, "How can I become a Jivanmukta (living, liberated soul)?"

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The Importance of Sangha on the Spiritual Path

by Swami Chidananda

What would a school be without students? What would a church or temple be without a congregation? What would a prison be without inmates? What would an Ashram or Yoga center be without yogis? Throughout our lives we are always coming together with different groups of people. We go to school when we are young. We go to work when we are older. If we misbehave, we may go to prison. If we are on a spiritual path, we go to a church or temple, a mosque or to some sacred place.

Sometimes we have little choice in the people we are with, such as in primary school. When we were younger, our parents chose our school as well as our church or temple for us. As we get older, we start to make our own decisions—who we want around us and where we want to go. These are extremely important decisions, for we are greatly affected by those with whom we spend our time.

In Buddhism, the concept of sangha, a community of like-minded spiritual seekers, is given very much importance. It is through God and guru, the spiritual

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Letter from the Editor



Hari Om dear yogi! I am grateful to now be actively participating in the Integral Yoga Hatha Teacher sangha. Graduating from the Split Basic TT in September has reaffirmed my belief that surrounding myself with compassionate, courageous, good people helps deepen and accelerate my spiritual growth. Many saints and sages of all the ages have pointed out that keeping company with spiritual-minded people bestows innumerable benefits for the spiritual aspirants' progress toward Divine Realization. According to a Satchidananda devotee's knowledge of the Bible, if you take one log away from the group of logs burning in the fire, it smolders. The fire symbolizes the sangha and the log is each one of us. In Buddhism, devotees practice taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha in their path to Enlightenment.

You might ask yourself, "How can I take refuge in sangha here, and now?" One way is to read the IYTA newsletter and Integral Yoga Magazine. Take an active part in the Forum by answering the questions posed by fellow yogis or by simply

reading the Q&As. Another way to feel the support of sangha is by making a commitment to attend and participate in weekly satsangs with local yogis in your city.

In this sangha-themed newsletter, Swami Chidananda shares with us the liberating fact that we as adults have the freedom and responsibility to choose our company for our soul's growth among his many other morsels of wisdom. *Of Yoga Mats and Briefcases* and *Like a Lotus on the Water* show how we can receive opportunities from the Universe to practice what we've learned during our formal/structured Yoga practices in our daily life. As illustrated in *Partner Yoga*, this sacred dance of life flows more easily and deeply when we open to the support given from Divine through those with whom we come in contact. As you will read in *Sacred Ash* and *Sandra on Sangha*, when we each strengthen in our Divine awareness, we can "create that heavenly atmosphere" for others to experience greater awakening.

What a sacred blessing to serve Divine through practicing and teaching Hatha Yoga! Jai!



Blessings of Peace, Joy, Love & Light,
Bharati (Meredith) Dufour

INTEGRAL YOGA® TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Founder: Sri Swami Satchidananda

The Integral Yoga Teachers Association is a membership association open to all Integral Yoga teachers. Its mission is to provide mutual support and spiritual fellowship, to share information, to provide inspiration, and to conduct ongoing training and guidance.

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The Goal of Integral Yoga

"The goal of Integral Yoga, and the birthright of every individual is to realize the spiritual unity behind all the diversities in the entire creation and to live harmoniously as members of one universal family. This goal is achieved by maintaining our natural condition of a body of optimum health and strength, senses under total control, a mind well-disciplined, clear and calm, an intellect as sharp as a razor, a will as strong and pliable as steel, a heart full of unconditional love and compassion, an ego as pure as a crystal, and a life filled with Supreme Peace and Joy."

Attain this through asanas, pranayama, chanting of Holy Names, self discipline, selfless action, mantra japa, meditation, study and reflection."

*Om shanti, shanti, shanti,
Ever yours in Yoga,
Swami Satchidananda*

Integral Yoga Senior Speakers' Schedules

Please contact local representatives for times, costs, pre-enrollment requirements, schedule changes, etc.

 Swami Asokananda	Nov 4-6	Deepening Your Practice with Swami Karunananda	Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville Buckingham, VA 800-858-YOGA arc@yogaville.ORG
	Dec 28-Jan 1	New Year's Silent Retreat	Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville
	Feb 17-19	Deepening Your Hatha Practice	Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville
 Swami Ramananda	Nov 5	Resolving Inner Conflict and Painful Emotions	Yoga Gallery Winston-Salem, NC Contact: Judi Malloy 336-725-4119 judi@yogagallery.net
	Jan 7-Feb 4	Work, Love, Lunch, Laundry: Integrating Yoga into Daily Life	Contact: Satchidananda Ashram
	Mar 17-18	Basic Hatha Yoga TT in Mexico	Yoga on High Columbus, OH 614-291-4444 info@yogaonhigh.com
 Swami Karunananda	Nov 4-6	Deepening Your Practice with Swami Asokananda	Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville
	Nov 17 Nov 19 Nov 20	Deepening Your Meditation Healing Power of the Breath Making Changes: You Can Do It	Integral Yoga Institute New York, NY 212-929-0586 info@iyiny.org or www.iyiny.org
	Dec 28-Jan 1 Feb 19 and Feb 26	New Year's Silent Retreat Various Presentations	Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville Temple of Living God Christ Unity Church St. Petersburg, FL
 Swami Vidyananda	Jan 18-20	Mysore Tour	Integral Yoga Institute Coimbatore, India 91 422 2556770 or 91 422 2542651 hariom@md2.vsn1.net.in
	Jan 20-31 Feb 2-Mar 2	Sacred India Tour Basic Hatha Yoga TT in India	IYI Coimbatore, India
 Mataji	Jan 17-Feb 23	Various Presentations	Vidyalayam in Mettupalayam, India
	Feb 23-Mar	Various Presentations	IYI Coimbatore, India
	March	Various Presentations	Teramo, Italy Contact: Uma Cocchi 39-33-5776-8559

Yogaville® Programs

Transforming Lives

Winter 2006

New Year's Silent Retreat:
Undo and Renew for the New Year
 December 28-January 1, 2006

Open Your Hands to Health:
Self-Healing through Acupressure
 Dr. Ketan Shah
 January 13-15, 2006

Rejuvenating Your Health Through Yoga
 Amrita McLanahan, MD & Cinnay Payne, M.S., R.D.
 January 20-22, 2006

Mindful Stress Reduction—A Spiritual Journey
 Susan Stone, Ph.D.
 February 17-19, 2006

Yoga for People with Cancer Teacher Training
 Jnani Chapman, RN
 March 19-26, 2006

arc@yogaville.ORG www.yogaville.ORG 1-800-858-9642

Yogaville Opportunities for IYTA Members

As an IYTA member, you can participate—either full-time or part-time—in Yogaville's Support Staff program or Living Yoga Training (LYT) program. Both programs are free of charge to IYTA members. The Support Staff program is for individuals who can come to Yogaville for one to three weeks; whereas, the LYT program is for those who can stay from one to three months. With full-time participation in either program, IYTA members can also earn credits toward TTs and other programs at Yogaville.

Being in either program is a wonderful opportunity to live at the Ashram and to enjoy the support of its spiritual environment, including daily meditation, Hatha Yoga, workshops, classes, and being with other Integral Yoga teachers and sangha members.

LYT PROGRAM

(1 to 3 months)

3/4 Time Service: Free room and board.
Full-Time Service (5 1/2 days per week): Free room and board plus a \$200 credit for selected programs and guest stays each month spent in the LYT Program. For more information, please contact Rev. Kumari DeSachy 434-969-3121, ext. 117 or email at lyts@yogaville.org.



SUPPORT STAFF

(up to 3 weeks)

3/4 Time Service: Free room and board.
Full-Time Service: (5 1/2 days per week): Free room and board plus a \$50 credit for selected programs and guest stays for each week spent in the Support Staff program. For more information, please contact Brahma Rosenberg at 434-969-3121, ext. 112 or email at brahma@yogaville.org.



From Our Members

Sacred Ash

(Excerpt from correspondence with a prison volunteer)



Teaching Yoga in a medium security prison was not something that I sought. I had taught in Yoga studios, in health clubs, Y's, and civic clubs. Then one afternoon a neighbor confided, "Our Buddhist Prison Outreach went into a prison this morning, and I'm exhausted."

"I taught Yoga class this morning, and I feel great," I replied.

"Hmmm. The men have been asking for Yoga," he responded.

I said with unaccustomed certainty, "I'll do it."

I wrote to the prison presenting a proposal that stressed the scientific documentation of the benefits of Yoga. I attended the three-hour prison-certification class. The State presented me with, and I signed, a document acknowledging that prisons are dangerous places—my safety was not guaranteed. Then, the prison agreed to allow a trial Yoga class under the auspices of the psychology department.

No one wanted to co-teach a Yoga class at the prison with me so I drove to the prison alone, chanting my mantra on my way. As I approached the gates, I called out to God and Gurudev in my heart. "I'm approaching the prison. Please be with me." Without a doubt in my mind, I was aware that Gurudev heard me, walked with me, guided me, protected me, advised me, and gave what was needed. I was by myself, but I was not alone.

The prison is encircled in razor-edged barbed wire. There is a double-chain-link fence. As I approached the entrance, the guard in the tower shouted down to ask why I was there. Then the electric gate opened, and I walked inside. The gate clang shut behind me.

A psychologist appeared and escorted me through the "yard"—a barren concrete open area where inmates sat at concrete tables. As we walked through, I could feel all eyes watching us. It was unusual for an un-uniformed woman to walk through the yard. Then we entered the empty chapel room. There was nothing there but a concrete floor covered with indoor-outdoor carpet. The men were not permitted to bring blankets or pillows. They were also not permitted to remove their socks or their belts.

The first night I taught, the class plan did not go smoothly. There was an altercation among the guards—the daily "count" of inmates had been disturbed by the men leaving for the Yoga class. As the psychologist and I stood waiting in the empty room, the head guard entered. They chatted as

they waited and laughed about the dinner menu. As they talked, the guard blithely mentioned that three men would be selected at random and strip-searched at the end of each class. Although I stayed centered, the guard's comment unsettled my senses.

Because the first class began late, it was quite short. As an official gave opening remarks, the men slumped with bored, wiseguy expressions. A guard sat in each doorway, hands on their pepper-spray. As I approached one inmate to tell him to soften his shoulders, the nearest guard sat bolt upright and grabbed his pepper spray. As the class progressed, something was changing. Faces became quiet, respectful, and revealed centered intelligence. Then it was time to end the class. While I chanted the traditional "Asato Maa, Sat Gamaya," a wave of yogic strength and peace drifted through the room.

On the third week, we were granted an hour and a half for our class period. As class settled in, a harsh shouting came from outside the room. It was a guard who had not been made aware of the change in class times, and he was shouting angrily to the guards inside the room. They hurried outside, and a heated argument began. I could tell that the inmates were anxious, and the psychologist was disturbed also. I asked the psychologist if he wanted to go outside and smooth things out. He left hurriedly.

Hah!!! I was "alone" in the chapel with 24 inmates. I felt an uneasy current run through some of the men. "Something" said to me, "Just stay focused and peaceful and continue teaching class." I did, and the men also deepened and focused. We all behaved beautifully. After a few minutes, the guards reappeared and took their places in the doorways, and the psychologist took his place on the floor.

The following week, I noticed the guards were no longer tense or blocking the doorways. Something had changed. I also noticed that three men were no longer taken into what they uneasily referred to as "the blue-light special." After the class ended, a senior guard approached me. He said, "I don't know anything about this Yoga stuff, but I have never seen a room full of inmates be so peaceful. I wish it could be like this all the time."

It was then that I realized the peace that happened in the room, that happened in the men, that happened in me, did not just "happen." It is always there. We are born with it; it lives inside of us. It is our root nature. If that deep peace were

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Taiwanese Pilgrimage to Yogaville: Live Like a Lotus on the Water

by Swami Sharadananda

We all know Yoga is booming around the world—and of course, that includes Integral Yoga!

A new studio is opening in Taipei, the capital of Taiwan. Malika Jini Chen, a deeply devoted devotee and teacher, is



now creating a sacred space in the city where she's brought Gurudev's presence for so many years—and where Hatha Yoga reigns!

In June, Malika brought 32 Taiwanese Yoga Teachers for a pilgrimage to Yogaville! What fun! What laughter! What a

challenge! Only 3 or 4 knew English, so Malika did all of the translating all day long: classes, talks, workshops, satsangs, orientation, ashram tour—all of the elements necessary for these lovely, loving souls to have the true experience of being in Sri Gurudev's home.

It was a huge success, and Yogaville is in love! Lunch clean-up became the most popular activity in the ashram, because the pilgrims filled the kitchen with song, dance, and joy. It really makes you want to visit Taiwan!



The patchwork class they taught us? Wow! Even our most advanced Hatha yogis were challenged by the flexibility and stamina of these light and lithe sisters (and a few brothers) from the other side of the world. Most of our other programs during the week focused on Yoga philosophy, which is not as well known as Hatha Yoga there. The emphasis was on the importance of flexibility of mind, the other side of the yogic coin.

It just so happened the visit took place during the week when Dragon Boat Festival is celebrated in Taiwan, one of the biggest holidays of the year. There was a true holiday hustle and bustle as we went searching for bamboo leaves, sticky rice, and other exotic ingredients so that the group could make their native dishes for us all. They also treated us with song and dance.



To introduce you to Malika, I'll simply inform you that the beautiful stage curtain with the lotus flowers was a donation from

her. The last time she brought a group, some years ago, she noticed that we needed one—and went home, had it made, and sent it as a surprise offering to Gurudev. As that it is fading with the hot Virginia sun, she's working on designing us a new one (Malika is also an artist) and having it made.

Now the dedication Malika exhibits is also reaching out to the people of Taiwan in the form of a Chinese translation of Sri Gurudev's Sutra commentaries—a timely offering, as the very next week a gentleman came from China who planned to open a Yoga centre in Shanghai, and was thrilled to know that Gurudev's book would be available.

A special thanks is offered to Supriya Butz who came from Fredericksburg to help host, feed, love and pamper these delightful Taiwanese yogis!

OM Shanti. Jai Gurudev! Jai Malika!

COSTA RICA RETREAT

March 11–17, 2006

Get away from the cold winter and transport yourself to the beautiful virgin beaches of Costa Rica,



surrounded by exotic jungle. Enjoy the sun, blue skies, warm weather, as well as the daily meditations and Hatha Yoga classes with our Integral Yoga senior staff. Return

home refreshed and revitalized. We have priced this vacation very reasonably so many of you may come. (From \$695 per person.)

Please contact our Ashram Reservation Center at 1-800-858-YOGA or our website www.yogaville.ORG for more information or registration.

The Importance of Sangha—

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teachings, and the sangha that one can attain Nirvana or Self-realization. To make progress on the spiritual path, we must choose our friends and associates well.

If we are trying to give up drinking or smoking, is it wise to associate with people who drink or smoke? How can we overcome an addictive behavior if we are in the presence of those with these habits? We say,—“You are what you eat.” We can also say, “You become like those with whom you are friends.” When we consciously begin on the spiritual path, we want to associate with like-minded people. In this way, our commitment and dedication to spiritual pursuits is reinforced and strengthened by those around us.

In the Bible, Christ says that when two or three come together in His name, He is there. Not that the Divine spirit is not always with each of us, but He is making the point that a group coming together for spiritual activity increases the power and strength of the presence of the Divine spirit. This becomes satsang, the gathering of spiritual seekers, and this is an extremely effective way of deepening our commitment to our spiritual goal.

As Yoga teachers, we have a most wonderful opportunity to not only share the inspiring teachings of Hatha, Raja, Karma, Bhakti, and Jnana Yoga, we also provide the place for seekers to come and practice together and be together. In addition to the Hatha class, we can also offer scripture study, kirtan, vegetarian cooking classes and Karma Yoga projects. All of these give more opportunities to increase awareness of

how to live a happier, healthier, and more peaceful life. This will bring your community together to form a most supportive sangha.

Often times on our internal quest, we have to decide who will be our friends and with whom we will spend our time. This can result in difficult and emotional changes for any of us. As we get more rooted in the yogic practices, we can see this more clearly and make such decisions more easily. But for those newer on the spiritual path, this can be most difficult and can be one of the biggest stumbling blocks for wandering off the path. As Yoga teachers we often are requested to act as mentors, and we should give our students the strength, courage, and clarity to make tough decisions that will result in their happier lives.

Our beloved Sri Gurudev, Sri Swami Satchidananda, very well realized the importance of sangha and developed our Integral Yoga Centers and our Satchidananda Ashram. In these yogic environments, we can more easily study and practice healthy ways to improve ourselves and come together with our brothers and sisters on the path to strengthen our resolve and deepen our dedication.

Gurudev would often say that Yogaville should be a heaven on earth. All the proper ingredients are being offered here to those who are seeking them. So too, in all our Yoga centers, big and small, we can offer that heavenly atmosphere—all the teachers and all the students can come together and be nourished in that oneness of spirit.

Of Yoga Mats and Briefcases—

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beautifully.

Our goals for the event included: bringing more awareness to Yoga, creating greater exposure for all the teachers, and raising money for the SAFE shelter. I think we accomplished these goals, and many more.

Seventy-five participants donated their time, ranging from Senior Sunrise Yoga to a Raja Yoga lecture, a Pranayama workshop and Yoga for Kids. The teachers and the community poured out praise. As for me, seeing the faces around that room after I lead Laughing Meditation was a gift that I won't soon forget.

As a result of our partnership from this event, SATYA and the SAFE shelter plan to provide on-going Yoga classes for the women who are victims of domestic violence at the SAFE Shelter, and perhaps even the children.

So you see, the bridge between my two worlds isn't really all that great after all. Yoga helps me maintain sanity in a

stressful business environment; and my business skills come in handy when organizing the Yoga group and its events.

I encourage you to search for your own sangha or form a group. I am ever grateful for my Yoga sangha and the Yoga teachings that help me bring each day, at work and home, to a more spiritual level.

Peace, peace, peace. Om Shanthi, Shanthi, Shanthi.

Ann Carroll is a Vice President for United Community Bank in Savannah, Georgia and is a Yoga Alliance Registered Yoga Teacher at the 500-hour level through Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville in Buckingham, Virginia. She can be reached through her website at www.aikyaYoga.com. The Savannah Area Teachers of Yoga (SATYA) website is www.savannahareaYoga.com.

NOTE: SATYA has organized the Wave of Hope Tsunami Relief that included an Art Show to benefit Unicef and “A Day of Yoga” on January 29, 2005 (Yoga Day USA) to benefit the Coimbatore, India Ashram Fund.

Sacred Ash—
continued from page 3

not the basis of our beings, it would be impossible to create it in just a few minutes, especially in such a difficult environment.

One of the biggest laughs we had in class was when I told the men about one of my first visits to an “ashram.” I told them that someone had come around the room placing a sweet-smelling powder on our foreheads. I asked a swami who sat near me, Swami Suddhananda, what it was. She replied, “It’s Sacred Ash.”

“What’s Sacred Ash?” I then asked.

She bent down, and with a mischievous giggle said, “Burnt cow dung!”

The inmates laughed with delighted appreciation at her candid remark. As the laughter died down, one inmate said with soft strength, “If cow manure can become Sacred Ash, there is hope for us all.”

The Yoga class was allowed to continue for six months. The officials had predicted that “these men have no ability to focus on anything. They’ll come for one or two classes, and then it will be over.” Their prediction was inaccurate. Many of the men did not miss a single class. I was met with deep sincerity and charming humor. Although gifts were forbidden, I was presented with a card signed by everyone. One inmate wrote the comment, “Yoga has helped me to discover places in myself that I never even knew existed.”

People ask if I was afraid. Yes, I was. It is valid and wise to be aware. I ALWAYS called to God and Guru and asked for guidance and protection. I recalled that Gurudev’s house had

a guardhouse at the end of the driveway. Guest Services is locked when no one is in attendance. Gurudev said once that even the eyes have eyelids to protect them. Prisons can be very raw, tough places. Inmates and administrations can be raw and tough. Inmates develop “skills” to maneuver on the “inside.” Just like on the “outside,” some men are con men. If anyone asked where I worked or where I lived, I gently said “the reason that brings us together is Yoga, and we only have a short time to practice, so let’s practice.” So I kept my dukes up when I needed to, and let my guard down when there was love and peace and genuine inquiry. I was aware that sometimes my peace and trust generated peace and trust in others.

Some people are no longer who they were when they committed the crime that put them “inside.” Being in prison can cause a person to deeply question the meaning of existence. Inmates often have a degree of sincerity, seriousness, thoughtfulness and commitment to spiritual practice that humbles those of us from the “outside.” In my experience, the inmates with whom I had contact were protective of me, grateful for Yoga, and were deeply thoughtful men. Also, because the inmates are in an environment where everything comes with great difficulty, they did not take the Yoga classes for granted. They are beautiful flames working to brush the dirt away from their spirits. In other words, they are just like you and me. Doing Yoga with them was one of the most meaningful and inspiring experiences in my life.

Sri Gurudev—
continued from page 15

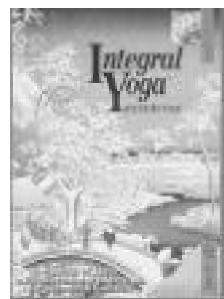
Don’t you see normally the fellow who wants to practice some boxing? What kind of pictures will he keep around his house? All the best boxers, right? Automatically he feels inspired by them. A person who wants to be a movie star will have pictures of stars on her wall.

Your company makes it easier for you to achieve whatever you want to achieve. Keep the good company and achieve your goal.³

³ SASTRI CD, SAYVA, February 23, 2002



Integral Yoga Distribution



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www.yogahealthbooks.com

From Our Members

Of Yoga Mats and Briefcases

by Ann Aikya Carroll



In my car there are Yoga mats and a briefcase full of bank loan applications. In my closet, Yoga pants and business suits. My calendar looks like two people share the space, with business meetings one hour and Yoga classes the next.

I’m a banker by day and teach Yoga each evening. Though I have mastered the technique of trading high-heels and a jacket for Yoga whites in mere seconds, my life is not about being superwoman; it’s really about finding balance and understanding my myth.

About Myths

A couple of weeks before my fortieth birthday I was honored to teach Yoga for the participants at a Deepak Chopra seminar in Savannah, Georgia. Dr. Chopra mentioned that each of us is living out a myth. He pointed out that Bill Clinton and Martha Stewart could have learned something if they’d studied the story of the ancient Gods and of the mortal Icarus, who, thinking he was invincible, flew too close to the sun and burned up his wings.

With a milestone birthday approaching, it was the perfect time to ponder, “What is my myth?” The answer came to me in meditation. I am the one balancing between two worlds. One foot is placed upon the Everyday world and the other is placed upon the Yoga world. I’m standing as though the two worlds are my shoes.

Having spheres for shoes makes for a difficult balancing act. Aikya, my spiritual name, means Unity or Oneness, and is certainly a trait that I strive to possess and one that seems to still evade me. I am hopeful that in my forties, being older and wiser, I will begin to bring those two worlds just a bit closer together.

Merging the Two Worlds

One way I have come a bit closer to that balance is through forming a sangha in my hometown. After years of wondering about all the other Yoga teachers in town, sometimes blindly calling a teacher to cover classes and having limited time to explore their different styles, I decided to invite them to come together and share their teachings with one another.

I’d like to say that I had lofty goals in forming the group; I’d like to say that I knew of the spiritual benefits that would come; but I must say truthfully that I had selfish motives. I had recently started teaching a pre-natal Yoga class (the only one in our city with a population of 258,000) and I wanted a

forum to get the word out to other teachers.

At first, there was hesitation among some of the teachers. Would the “power” yogis and the “traditional” yogis get along? I think everyone had some hesitations. Imagine how stressful it would be to teach other instructors and put your teachings in the spotlight. The truth is that we learned from each other. We learned that Yoga can be diverse in style and yet the same at its core.

In the first year we had patchwork Yoga classes, group discussions and even a book study session. We’ve had vegetarian potlucks and workshops on specific poses and on pranayama practices. Yoga training for teachers is hard to come by in the Southeast. The benefits of gathering with a group of like-minded people, who all share a love of Yoga and can bring together the teachings of different styles, were many.

The group is now two years old and includes sixty-one members. We call our group SATYA (Savannah Area Teachers of Yoga Association). The accomplishments and the direction the group has taken have come from various members from different disciplines.

The group’s most recent accomplishment was organizing a Yoga Celebration Day at Savannah Mall. It was a major endeavor, and one well worth the results. The theme, “A Day of Yoga,” offered students all types of Yoga classes in a variety of styles with a variety of teachers. Funds raised from the event went to SAFE Shelter, a local anti-domestic violence organization. SAFE Shelter saw the event as an opportunity for public exposure and a way to earn some much needed funds. We saw it as an opportunity for reflection on the principles of *ahimsa*, or non-violence. What a perfect fit!

The following months were a whirlwind of meetings and work as everything fell into place. The Savannah Mall offered us a free place to hold the event. A local hospital, Memorial Medical Center, agreed to promote the event through a wellness initiative program called “The Feel Better Challenge.”

The sponsorship money started rolling in as volunteers were designated to chair: Advertising and Public Relations, T-shirt sales, Sponsorships, Class Schedule design, Facilities, Goody Bags, Registration, Website design, and many other details. So many people pitched in and really put an incredible amount of energy and love into the event; it came together

Continued on Page 17



INTEGRAL YOGA UPDATES

Yogaville Renovations



Through the grace of the Guru and the generosity of Satish and Venu Daryanani, longtime devotees of Swami Satchidananda, Yogaville's

parking lots and LOTUS road have been paved! Less dust and easier snow removal are a few of the benefits from this improvement project.

Congratulations to Nataraja Nelson

Nataraja Nelson moved from Yogaville in mid-September to assist Swami Ramananda at the New York IYI. Nataraja selflessly served at the Integral Yoga Academy in the Continuing Education and Teacher Training departments. His skills, good cheer, and outgoing and friendly nature will be certainly missed in Yogaville and certainly great assets to the New York IYI. Blessings and three OM Tryambakams to you, Nataraja!

IY Academy Welcomes Sadasiva Greenstone

The IYTA is so very pleased to welcome a long time sangha member into its fold! Sadasiva Greenstone is now serving as coordinator of membership and continuing education for the IY Academy & Teachers Association. Many of you know Sadasiva. For many years, he and his beloved wife, Satya, oversaw the Vidyalayam (Yogaville school). Sadasiva and Satya have been teaching many populations for several years. Sadasiva is a teacher, and has led teacher trainings around the world, including a recent Basic TT in Portugal.

As we begin the new year, Sadasiva will be available to answer your questions regarding your membership status and services. He may be reached by phoning 434.969.3121 ext 177 or by emailing siva@yogaville.org.

BOOK REVIEWS

Radha: Diary of a Woman's Search

by Swami Sivananda Radha
Review by Ambika Abouchar

A beautiful and absorbing account of this Western woman's pilgrimage to India in the fifties, and the six months she spent there by Swami Sivananda's side. An intimate record of her challenges, pains and victories, as she was transformed from Sylvia Hellman to Swami Sivananda Radha, through her courage, determination and devotion. I could not put the book down. Inspiring, honest and uplifting! The book mentions Swami Satchidananda as a very young and very committed disciple. Swami Radha used to call him Swami Christmas Tree, because he carried around bags of things for Master Sivananda. She refers to him with much love and respect.



Sparkling Together

by Jyoti Ma

This Divine treasure contains eight stories that depict the adventures of Starbright, from Planet Om, and Sky Heart and his sister Rose of Planet Earth. Each

story illustrates a real life challenge common to childhood experience, including: self-esteem, negative feelings, environmental awareness, a new home, a new sibling, illness, and death of a pet. Guided by Starbright, Sky and Rose discover that heartfelt love is the main key to success while they face life's various challenges. Chandra Devi brings these stories to life with her radiant and imaginative illustrations. The first story can be viewed at www.sparklingtogether.com.

Sri Gurudev—

continued from page 1

He answers, "Go, and have good company."

The whole quote in Sanskrit is:

Satsangatve nissangatvam, nissangatve nirmohatvam, nirmohatve nischalitvatvam, nischalitatve jivanmukti.

It means, "By putting yourself in good company, the immediate benefit is that you are not in the wrong company. Then, because you are not in the bad company, you are not deluded. Then, because you are not deluded, your mind becomes steady. Because the mind is steady and peaceful, you attain jivanmukta." That's why we should always make sure we are in the right company. See the right things; hear the right things; say the right things; do the right things.

Are you all familiar with the three monkeys? "See no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil." The more you see evil, the more you are living with evil. The more you hear evil, the more you are living with evil. Unfortunately, that's what is happening nowadays in the name of our "media." So much that you read and see in the media is tainted. If anyone gets married, even if you pay the media money, they won't write a thing about it. But if they get divorced, you have to pay money to stop it; even then you cannot! What kind of media is that? You are made to always think, and see, and talk about the wrong things!

The world is a mixture of both good and bad. If you keep on reading and seeing dirty things, you become dirty yourself. Often, we fail: we forget to see the good side of things, the bright side of things. Many years ago, I was on the Mike Douglas show soon after the Woodstock Festival. He asked me what I thought about it, because he knew I was the one who opened the festival. I told him, "The festival was a great success, fantastic. However, I'm very disappointed with you fellows—the media people—none of you wrote anything nice about it. All you saw was a few people running naked, a few people smoking marijuana, leaving a lot of trash when they finished the festival.

That's all you saw. You didn't see all those six hundred thousand young people living together, without even a scratch, without any little quarrel. In those trying conditions, day and night, three days continuously, music going all night also, rain pouring, lack of food, lack of sanitation. Under those trying conditions, all those six hundred thousand people lived happily. There was not even a single policeman to control them. You didn't appreciate that."

It's like the media had a vulture's eye. Vultures, though they fly so high, have their eyes always on dead matter, looking for carrion. They don't see good things. So, let us not be like the vultures. We should clean our eyes. We should

shun the dirty things. "See no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil." "As you think, so you become." All the languages, all the religions, talk about that. "As the mind, so the man." If the mind keeps on thinking and seeing negative things, how can it be clean? So, that is the reason to keep good company, good company, good company. It's so important. It will lead the way to the final salvation—realization."¹

Q: Dr. Dean Ornish speaks of loneliness as being the cause of illness. Is this true? Don't the Scriptures say, "It's best to be alone"?

Sri Gurudev: These are Scriptures that do say that. There is one which says, "Keep your eyes open; your stomach always hungry; be alone always and be happy"! But, one of the great sages of India, Sri Sankara, says, if you can't be alone, then be careful about your company. People seek others for a lot of reasons, sometimes personal reasons. That's not what is meant here. *Sat* means truth; *sangha* means company. Keep company with the truth. When you cannot be all alone, choose the right company. Select your friends well, because your company makes you who you are. Be careful not to be selfish in your relationships. Then you will be at ease always.²

Q: It is said sometimes that the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. What can I do when I find that I am lacking the discipline to do my spiritual practices?

Sri Gurudev: Let spirit win over the flesh. It is always a tug of war between your own inner consciousness and your outer mind. Do you want to take the side of the spirit? Then, ignore the argument of the flesh. It has been spoiled and wants to go back to its same old routines. Don't give in. Control it, or if you can't control it, ignore it. That is an eternal in all spiritual approaches.

Of course, the easiest way is to keep the company of people who want to achieve the same thing. If you are in good company, even without your knowing, you will be able to achieve the discipline. That's what you call *satsanga*.

Sri Sankara talks about *satsanga*. It will lead you to the jivanmukta state, the state of a living, liberated soul. When you are in *satsanga*, the mind never wavers. It is very easy to have steadiness of purpose. If you are in a group where the majority of people are into something, automatically you are into it, too. You can always have good company, not necessarily people only. You can have pictures for company, your books as company. That way, your thoughts will be involved in the same positive atmosphere.

¹ SASTRI CD, SAYVA, January 31, 1998

² SASTRI CD, SAYVA, September 2, 2000

Continued on Page 16

Extending Español Sangha



The Spanish sangha is vast and increasingly growing. Uniting the beautiful practice of Karma Yoga with the soul support of sangha, a dynamic network of Spanish-speaking teachers, translators, devotees and centers from South America, Spain and the United States *Sri Gurudev en Español* was born. *Sri Gurudev en Español* is an association of spiritually minded souls transcending their human experience through their joyful service in translating Sri Swami Satchidananda's teachings from English to Spanish. This branch of the enormous Integral Yoga tree grows from the Integral Yoga International Office and is nurtured under the loving wing of Swami Sharadananda.

Translation of the entire Teacher Training (TT) program and its materials are the group's top priority. A first draft of the Basic Hatha Yoga TT manual has been completed and is in its second drafting process. The *Meditación* booklet has



already been published in Spanish and is now available through Integral Yoga Distribution. A first draft translation of *The Golden Present* is in process, as well as the *Breath of Life* booklet. Additionally, five helpful handouts introducing Yoga to Spanish-speaking Hatha students, such as *What is Yoga? Who am I? The Guru and You*, were translated into Spanish

and widely distributed. These same short, illuminating handouts are now able to be downloaded from www.iyta.org

for you to distribute in your classes. Simply click on the Members Home link at the top of the main page. Enter your email address as the login and "iyta" as the password (sans quotations). Scroll down the left margin and click on "Downloads." Then, click on "Spanish handouts" at the top right.

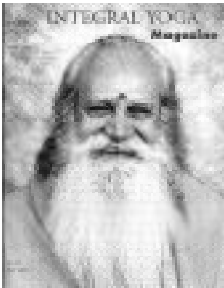
Taking part in *Sri Gurudev en Español* is "a perfect act," bringing only benefit, to oneself as well as to others. This Karma Yoga opportunity with sangha helps to awaken souls for generations to come. It's a long-lasting and concrete way to apply the teachings of compassion and service to others, allowing you to plug in to the enlightening teachings of Sri Gurudev every day. Participating with *Sri Gurudev en Español* offers infinite opportunities to develop long-lasting relationships with others who are active, building, directing, and guiding good to humanity through their sadhana, all while having fun! Serving as a translator is welcomed when you have some years being bathed in the teachings of Sri Gurudev, expressing the same spirit in which the teachings were given. Assistance in translating Sri Swami Satchidananda's satsangs, which have already been transcribed into written form, would be gladly received. Support the group by contributing your "Wisdom Offerings," a bank account opened for these projects, or by learning to teach Yoga in Spanish. To link up with *Sri Gurudev en Español*, contact Sister Maitreyi at srmaitreyi@yogaville.org.

Integral Yoga Magazine

This quarterly journal is for seekers who want to deepen their practice of Integral Yoga® and their understanding of many faith and wisdom traditions.

It's a wealth of Sri Gurudev's teachings on Integral Yoga. It's about Yoga, your spiritual practice, study, and inspiration!

Every issue of *Integral Yoga Magazine* (IYM) features outstanding articles that reflect the breadth and depth of the Integral Yoga tradition, and always hit the central point: deepening your practice on and off the mat.



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To order call our secure 24-hour order line: (434) 969-3121 ext. 242. Mention your membership in the IYTA to receive your discount.

For more information, please visit us online at www.iymagazine.org.

CONTINUING EDUCATION CORNER

2006 YOGA TEACHER WEEKENDS & YOGA TRAININGS

Mark your calendars and make your reservations!

- November 2005
30-Dec 4 Structural Yoga Therapy Certification
- February 2006
12-Mar 5 Intermediate Hatha Yoga TT
(OPTIONAL: Take first half as a Split TT, finishing with the last half in July)
- March 2006
19-26 Teaching Yoga to People with Cancer TT: Part 1 of 3
- April 2006
20-23 New Teachers Seminar and Reunion
- May 2006
31-June 4 Integrating Yoga into Western Rehabilitation with Bill Gallagher
- June 2006
8-18 Cardiac Yoga® Teacher Training
21-25 Teaching Yoga to Young Adults and Teens with Learning Disabilities with Kathi Casey
23-Jul 2* PreNatal Yoga Teacher Training (*tentative dates)
25-Jul 16 Intermediate Hatha Yoga TT (see February notes)
- July 2006
14-23 Stress Management Teacher Training
23-30 Gentle Yoga Teacher Training
- August 2006
7-26 Raja Yoga Teacher Training
- September 2006
22-29 Yoga for the Special Child TT
27-Oct 1 Adapting Yoga for Larger Bodies with Meera Kerr
- October 2006
20-22 Adapting Yoga to Individual Needs with Marc Whitwell

Intermediate Hatha Yoga Teacher Training

with Swami Asokananda & Arati Hulburt

February 12-March 5, 2006

In order to accommodate those people who are not able to take our Intermediate Teacher Training in the summer, we are offering ITT in the winter. Furthermore, if you cannot take the course in three straight weeks, you could split it, and take the first half in the winter, and the second half in the summer. Details will be posted to the IYTA Forum as they develop.



April 2007
12-15 10th Annual Teachers Conference

From Our Members

Partner Yoga

by Heike Mayer



My experience with Partner Yoga has been quite touching. The absolute highlight was at a Yoga Congress, where I was guiding 70 people of all ages through an hour and a half session. After demonstrating the flow of the session with my assisting Yoga teacher, Sattwikiji, I guided the group through the pranic dance with wonderful, soothing Reiki music in the background. The atmosphere in the room was overwhelming, filled with loving care and total focus on the uniting of two bodies and souls in the name of Yoga. Some people said it was one of their deepest Hatha experiences and were amazed about what they and their body were capable of doing under the helping hand and supporting energy of another person. Totally aware that I am just an instrument of God's grace, I was moved to tears in my great gratitude.

Just last week, I dedicated a whole session to partner Yoga in my advanced classes, and everybody, really everybody, loved it. Even the skeptical ones, who told me that they typically do not enjoy partner exercises and the "tough guys" admitted how much they were enjoying it.

I also offered it for the first time in one of my children's classes, where the age varied between ten and fourteen. Boys

and girls were equally enthused by it, and their attention was so focused that you could have heard a needle drop—really beautiful.

What inspired me was a wonderful workshop given by Mangala Warner at a Teachers Conference in Yogaville. Years later a friend and publisher asked me to write a book with her. I asked her, "About what?" "About Yoga," she said, which made me break out with laughter. I said, "Nowadays you



can find anything about Yoga on the literature market. What do I have to add?" Several days later I called her back asking whether she had ever heard of Partner Yoga and if she could do some research on it in existing publications in the German book market. There was nothing. So the work began, and it

didn't take long to find a publisher who knew our Beloved Gurudev from the Annual Conferences in Zinal, Switzerland.

May you also be encouraged to experience Partner Yoga for yourself and may it be an inspiration for your own creativity. Enjoy! Om Shanti and Jai Gurudev.

Partner Yoga allows us to experience Hatha Yoga with a totally different dynamic and intensity. The support of our partner enables us to go beyond our perceived limits in a truly amazing way. When practicing the different Yoga postures, you quickly notice that the soothing, warming hand of your Yoga partner will help you to go deeper into the desired posture in a more relaxed way.

The support of your partner will make it easier for you to transcend limits and feel a new depth of body and self-experience. The more you open to the shared Yoga posture, the more you will grow into an integrated whole with your partner for the time the posture is held. This is reflected

Ask yourself as to whether, and to what degree, you have already internalized the aspects mentioned:

- How open are you towards your Yoga partner?
- Is your attention directed towards the practice and towards your partner?
- Are you joining with your partner unconditionally and without expectations?
- Are you respecting the boundaries of your partner, and can you deal with them in a gentle manner?
- Can you successfully perceive yourself and your partner without any value judgments?

by the synchronous breathing that forms a bond between you and your partner on the gross (physical) level and on the subtle (spiritual) level as well. You will be amazed at how quickly you will develop a sensitivity to feel exactly when your partner needs your physical support in order to go deeper into a Yoga posture or to get out of it more easily, or in which moment you can support him/her simply by your presence of mind.

Partner Yoga creates a pranic dance between two bodies and souls. The ha-tha energy will flow between yourself and your partner, finding its fulfillment in him/her. The resulting interplay of giving and receiving as well as of tension and relaxation is

From Our Members

Sandra on Sangha

by Sandra Supriya Lupton



When asked to share my thoughts of sangha, particularly of how creating a new Yoga studio has led to creating sangha, I had to ponder: "What is sangha?"

Sangha is community, a gathering of like-minded people with a common goal. Though the word is often heard in yogic contexts, I think we are all part of a sangha. The biggest sangha of all is being human. Our common goal is To Be Happy—to be free, to awaken, to have long lasting peace, to be the best we can be.

Did I embark on a sangha-creating crusade as I established the studio? Not intentionally. The unforeseen opportunity of the studio fell into my lap. The studio was quite small, much smaller than the corporate gyms and recreational centers to which I was accustomed. It was conducive to much smaller classes and helped people feel more comfortable sharing with each other. My interests in baking, cooking, and sitting down for tea naturally led me to offer these at the end of some of my classes and more sharing would happen. A few teachers have asked if it was standard for me to serve tea and munchies after a class or workshop. "Well," I replied, "yes and no."

People come to the studio for Yoga, and I share some time with them to get to know them, share what I have to offer, or

just talk about things other than what poses can heal an aching back.

As I bring kirtan to the studio or a guest speaker to talk on meditation, I find that the people who come initially for Hatha Yoga are pleasantly surprised to learn about the other aspects of Yoga and bring them into their own lives. Then, they share it with others. A student of mine recently decided to throw a Yoga birthday party at the studio for herself and her friends, most of who are new to Yoga.

Thus, the sangha grows. I am blessed to be able to provide a gathering place for people to share Yoga!

Though I didn't embark on a sangha-creating crusade when I set up the studio, nothing is ever created from nothing. So if nothing is ever created, it follows that what we think we are looking for already exists within us.

Hah! What a concept! Does that mean we don't have to look for it? That's the thing—we somehow lose it in the layers upon layers of mind stuff. What it is we are searching for is already within us, within our Community, within our Sangha.

Sandra Supriya Lupton, RYT, guides Yoga With A Twist, a cozy Yoga studio in San Mateo, California.

SANGHA INDIA TOUR!

Integral Yoga Institute of Coimbatore offers tours of South India (Jan 17–Feb 1, 2006) plus a Basic Level Teacher Training (Feb 2–28, 2006). Details are available at www.integralyogaindia.org.

SPECIAL OFFER: Integral Yoga teachers who send two of their students to this TT are entitled to a free tour! Bring benefit to others and bring benefit to yourself!



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Saints and Sages

Lives of Luminaries

Swami Sivananda

Seeing pictures of him, you might wonder who he is. He appears one time in a Muslim cap—another, with a tennis racket in his hand. He was everything: Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Jew—doctor, playmate.

He accepted everything and everyone. That is the secret of why everybody felt at home with him, and by his miraculous touch, he was able to lift people up. Though a perfected saint and master, he was a scientist in his acumen, an American in his efficiency, and when his Universal Love was added to these, he became the instrument of Grace that relieved pain and gave a new value and promise to tired lives.

When he founded the Divine Life Society in Rishikesh, Himalayas, he chose a universal name because to him Divine Life meant leading a healthy, happy, peaceful and spiritually prosperous life—something sought by all people, no matter what their beliefs.

His teachings were likewise universal, modern, dynamic, and simple: “God grasps without hands, walks without feet, sees without eyes, hears without ears. He is a mysterious being. He is one without a second. He has a plan, and His wisdom is supreme. Don’t you dare to question it. Wake up, my child! Resolve this very moment to resort to Him only. Call on Him, He will run to you. Praise His glory. Invoke His mercy. Be bold, be courageous. Realize Him and be free!”



From left to right: Swami Venkatesananda, Swami Krishnananda, Sri Swami Sivanananda Maharaj, Swami Chidananda, Swami Satchidananda (not Sri Swami Satchidananda Maharaj)

“Arise! Awake! Stop not til the goal is reached!” Such words are the hallmark of SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA, a spiritual giant who lived from 8 September 1887 to 14 July 1963. Today he is known around the world through 400 branches of the D.L.S. and through the 300 books he wrote. Following his worthy example, many of his disciples have attained spiritual greatness and have become teachers themselves.

A saint is really a King of Kings—a great hero—who has annihilated all desires, aversion and anger. A saint is one who is ever peaceful, who radiates joy and peace, who has inner and outer control, who moves about in the world to enlighten the ignorant, and who beholds God everywhere. May you lead a saintly life.

—Swami Sivananda

reflected by easefulness and joy. The more unconditionally you surrender yourself in the supporting hands of your partner when practicing the different Yoga postures, the more confidence you can gain in yourself, in your partner, and in life itself.

Partner Yoga is also splendidly suited for couples. People in long-term relationships often feel that they coexist out of habit, having lost their joyful interaction, sometimes even drifting apart. By lovingly joining with your partner during a Yoga experience, you can create a new, caring and mindful bond. This will improve the quality of your own life as well as the quality of your relationship. You will benefit from it on many levels and will realize that Partner Yoga is life enriching.

To tune into the Partner Yoga session, it may be useful to prepare both externally and internally. A relaxed and lovingly created atmosphere (using the right light, temperature, scent, sound) will help you completely surrender to the postures. View both—the preparations and the practice itself—as something very special, as a gift you give to yourself and to your Yoga partner. Celebrate this meeting as if it were a feast.

Create a joint space for this purpose, which allows you to be in touch with yourself and your partner in an open, non-judgmental and unconditional way. Be aware of the responsibility you share for your partner who offers him/

herself trustfully into your hands. Each one should be willing to practice surrender within the postures while being in touch with one’s own capacity of stretching physically as well as emotionally. We can sense the other person, but we are not in “their skin,” so we have to openly respond with honest feedback about the depth we can bear in a posture and the degree of closeness we feel comfortable with our Yoga partner.

Partner Yoga offers you the possibility to give yourself and your partner loving care and attention. Briefly attuning yourself will help you to prepare for the postures, so that you can then be present with your full attention focused on yourself, your partner and the asanas. Remind yourself of your own and the other person’s divinity, and approach each other accordingly.

See pages 10-11 for general guidelines for a balanced Partner Yoga session from Heike Mayer!

The IYTA announces a new Partnership with the International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT)!

Integral Yoga has a rich and deep history using Yoga as a therapeutic model for healing.

Members of the IAYT receive the following benefits:

Yoga Therapy in Practice A new print newsletter is full of practical articles for Yoga professionals.

The International Journal of Yoga Therapy. The forthcoming issue includes a seminal article by Kausthub Desikachar on the foundational principles of Yoga therapy, an inside look at running the first NIH-funded study on Yoga for low back pain, a series of articles on financial support for Yoga therapy, and many more articles to inspire and support your work. The journal will be sent to all active members in mid-October.

IAYT membership also now includes:

Your own *in-depth* professional profile in our new searchable online directory of Yoga professionals.

Easy online access to IAYT’s extensive set of Yoga and Health Bibliographies, as well as all back issues of *Yoga Studies*.

Your membership in the IAYT supports the mission to establish Yoga as a recognized and respected therapy in the Western world.

To join, visit www.iayt.org or simply call the IAYT at 928-541-0004. Members of the Integral Yoga Teachers Association (IYTA) will receive a 20% discount on IAYT memberships activated in 2005.



These stories of the Saints and Sages whose photos are displayed at Sivananda Hall, Yogaville, are taken from the Integral Yoga Publication, *Lives of Luminaries*, which is available through Integral Yoga Distribution. IYTA members receive a 40% discount.

PARTNER YOGA

General Guidelines for a Balanced Partner Yoga Class

by Heike Mayer

The tuning into your partner's needs is essential. This is where you set the base for a spiritual, as well as physical, experience.

After careful preparation, start by sitting back-to-back in a meditative posture, eyes closed. Feel yourself, then your partner, synchronizing your breath, and enjoying the feeling of warmth, support and unity. Visualize the two spines joining as one radiant light column.

Turn around to face each other, and place your left palm up on your own left knee, and the right palm on top of your partner's palm. Close your eyes and visualize the pranic flow, receiving it through the left palm, giving it through the right palm. Then, ask yourself which inner attitude you would wish your partner to have in order to create the best possible setting for this Partner Yoga session, making it an agreeable, enriching experience. And then ask yourself what you are willing to give or what you would like to transmit to your partner. Consider aspects such as openness, surrender, wholeheartedness, mindfulness, and freedom from value judgments. They are the optimum foundation for the shared experience of Partner Yoga on all levels of being.

Open your eyes and let them speak to your partner's, radiating the message through the expression of the eyes only. You'll see how deep that goes.

Then put together a balanced combination of standing postures, forward bends, backward bends, inverted postures and a twist. Also include all the elements of an Integral Hatha Session, i.e. Yoga Nidra, Pranayama, and Meditation.

The Partner Yoga postures can be **parallel** (both practice the same posture at the same time; i.e. Spinal Twist), **combined** (where both practice a different asana that compliments each other; i.e. Child with Fish), or **assisted** (where one partner is in the posture, receiving support and assistance; i.e. Paschimotanaasana, as described below). By massaging the partner into the posture you will see how instant the body reacts to a loving touch, melting into the posture. The perfect posture for that is—as mentioned—the Full Forward Bend.

The ending should be meditative—reflecting and sharing the experience.

A Suggested Partner Yoga Session

by Heike Mayer

Standing postures

- Pull one another up to a standing position for three rounds of *Surya Namaskaaram* as a warm up. Stand right shoulder to right shoulder, facing opposite directions.
- For gaining a better sense of balance, lean back or forward in the *Chalice* (#1) or the *Heart* (#2).
- Continue with *Virabhadraasana* (#3), *Prasarita Padottanaasana* (#4) and *Adho Mukha Svanaasana* (#5).
- Then take turns for the last two postures.

Backward Bends

- *Bhujangaasana*: Partner A (practicing partner) is lying on the abdomen, forehead on the floor, arms reaching back, clasping the arms of Partner B (assisting partner), who is in a squatting position with their feet standing at calf height, and effortlessly lean back, using their body weight, until sitting on the Partner B's feet. Arms of both partners straight, with the height determined by the flexibility of Partner A.
- *Salabaasana* (#6)
- *Advaasana-Savaasana* (#7)
- *Balaasana* (optional with a gentle back massage)
- Then, switch roles: Partner A (practicing partner) becomes Partner B (the assisting partner) and vice-versa.



PARTNER YOGA

Forward Bend

- *Paschimotanaasana*: Partner A (practicing partner) sits in the preparatory position, with their arms overhead. Partner B (assisting partner) stands behind, supporting Partner A's sacrum with the instep of one foot and the thoracic spine with the knee, holding the wrists of their partner and stretching them up and forward to help them elongate their entire spine. After releasing Partner A's hand on the feet or legs, Partner B kneels behind Partner A, hands on the lower rib cage, arms straight and pushing the partner with each exhalation (by only using their bodyweight) deeper and deeper into the Full Forward Bend. A little alternate thumb kneading along the spine softens the erector muscles of the spine, allowing Partner A to reach a deeper bend. Coming up, reverse the assistance.

Inverted Posture with the counter pose

- *Sarvangaasana* (#8) or
- *Sethu Bandhaasana* (#9), followed by
- *Matsyaasana-Balaasana* (#10) and switch partner roles.

Twist

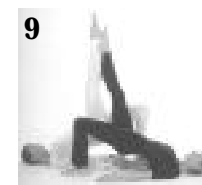
- *Arddha Matsyendraasana* (#11)

Mudra

- *Yoga Mudra* (#12) coming up, enjoy the warmth and support of the partner's back and remain a moment in silent gratitude.

Yoga Nidra

- Lie down on the back, facing opposite directions, with right hands touching.



Pranayama

- *Deergha Swaasam* is a nice way to practice the breathing exercises together. Partner A (practicing partner) is sitting in front of Partner B (assisting partner), and placing their hands on Partner B's rib cage. Press gently with the rhythm of the exhalations and releasing the pressure with the expansion of the inhalations. Synchronizing the breath helps tune you in even more beautifully, remembering God's loving presence. Receive life at the fullest with every inhalation and practice our life lesson of letting go with every exhalation.
- Switch partner roles.

Closing ritual with a reflection

- Turn around to face each other, as in the beginning. Place the left palm up on your own left knee, and the right palm on top of your partner's palm. Close your eyes and visualize again the pranic flow, receiving it through the left palm, giving it through the right palm.
- Sing the closing chants and allow some silence. Reflect upon your experience, feelings and reaction on a physical, mental-emotional and spiritual level, while as a giving and as a receiving partner.
- Open your eyes and allow gratitude and warmest wishes to flow right into the eyes of your partner's, allowing your two souls to touch.
- Finish with a loving *Hug-Asana*.

I sincerely hope that Partner Yoga can be a true asset to your Yoga experience, and one that you will enjoy sharing with other fellow yogis and yoginis. Allow your own intuition to create new Partner Yoga postures.