



SVADHYAYA

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A Newsletter from The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Hong Kong
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September

The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Hong Kong

Over the course of the next few months “The Celestial Wishing Tree Studio” will change its name to become “The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Hong Kong”. We have the permission of Guruji B.K.S. Iyengar, and we have the business license. Now the new brochure and business cards need to be designed and printed and the website needs revising. As we get closer to completion, there will be an inauguration event to mark the change. You’ll all be invited. The new name will mean that we’ll be listed on all the Iyengar websites around the world, and we’ll be easy to find if someone is looking for Iyengar Yoga classes in this city.



Linda Shevloff with Guruji
B.K.S.Iyengar in Pune, India June
2004

Iyengar Yoga Journeys, 2004

Linda Shevloff

This has been a summer of yoga for me, having spent the month of June in Pune, India, studying with the Iyengars and then traveling to France in August to attend a two week workshop with Faeq Biria, a well known senior Iyengar teacher.

Leaving the studio in Hong Kong for an extended period was not easy, but we were fortunate to be able to bring Ty Chandler here from Canada to run the studio while I was away in India. Jesse Tong and George Dovas were able to run a core schedule of classes in August. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all three of them for their excellent work, taking care of the studio and teaching great classes over the summer.

Although interruptions to the regular class schedule might not always be good for business, they are necessary if we are going to stay connected with the source of the teaching in India. Without these studies, the quality of classes here would deteriorate. Iyengar yoga is known for its high standards in teaching and practice, but to attain and maintain these standards we need input and instruction too.

Now back in Hong Kong, I feel invigorated and rejuvenated from the intensity of the practice, and I hope to bring this fresh charge of energy into our classes in the upcoming autumn season.

In India, I had the honour of being present when Guruji B.K.S. Iyengar signed my new teaching certificate for Junior Intermediate III level, because in January of this year I passed that assessment. This new certificate was required for us to become “The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Hong Kong”. The certificate is also a prerequisite for me if I wish to be trained as an assessor of teachers who would like to be certified Iyengar teachers.

In June, Kathy Cook, Leslie Corcos and Jesse

Tong traveled to Canada to be assessed, and happily, they all passed the Introductory II Assessment and thus completed their three year teacher training program here. Kathy and Jesse will now be teaching at the studio as certified Iyengar teachers. We are the first and only yoga studio in Hong Kong with a team of certified Iyengar teachers.

Mr. Iyengar is very clear about teacher training and he asks that teachers do not use his name without his consent. There are many teachers who now call themselves “Iyengar style” teachers because they have taken some Iyengar yoga classes but they haven’t done the training, and there are some who claim they are teaching “Iyengar yoga” combined with various other types of yoga. In fact, Iyengar yoga is never a blend of styles. An authentic Iyengar teacher has a certificate signed by Mr. Iyengar to confirm the training.

To become “The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Hong Kong” we are mandated to represent the work and the teachings of B.K.S. Iyengar in this city to the best of our ability. As happened recently, from time to time classes here will be interrupted in order for our teachers to travel abroad for training. Sometimes the schedule will be altered because we are bringing in senior teachers to train us here. The change in the studio name is a reminder to us of our responsibility to keep teaching standards high in order to build a healthy community of students and teachers practicing this art.

Soon, in place of the current Celestial Wishing Tree logo, the studio will use the Iyengar Certification Mark to identify it. This mark is a registered trade mark that can only be used with legal permission. It is a mark that is recognized by students from around the world when they are looking for an authentic Iyengar teacher.



The Certification Mark

Yoga in France with Faeq Biria



“The body invariably wears away like an unbaked earthen jar immersed into water. Bake it hard in the fire of yoga in order to strengthen and purify it.”

A number of quotations were posted on the walls of the room at Chateau Blacons in France where I was attending an intensive workshop with teacher Faeq Biria in August. I was doing weeks three and four of the six week yoga program that he offers each summer there. The workshop is designed to bring a lot of intensity into the practice. This year the theme of the workshop was about the “fire” of the practice, and as can be imagined we were taken to our limits.

There were 120 students from 37 different countries. It felt like the Yoga United Nations. From Hong Kong, Kathy Cook, Frederique Deleage and I attended. Sandrine LaBorde, who recently moved from Hong Kong to France, was there too. Ty Chandler, from Canada, who taught at our studio earlier this summer, was there for a full six weeks. Instruction was in French with English translation.

The schedule was rigorous. Each day we’d get to the yoga room between 6:00 and 7:00am to set up mats and warm up. I liked getting a spot near the shrine where Faeq would begin

with a ritual of lighting oil lamps and incense and saying traditional prayers. We then sat in meditation and did a series of chants including the familiar Patanjali Invocation. By 7:30 we were well immersed in the morning yoga asana session that lasted about three hours. Faeq Biria is a master at opening the body and preparing students to penetrate the poses more and more deeply. By 10:30 when we had a break for tea or coffee, everyone was fully alive and alert. After tea break we went back to the yoga room for a long, quiet pranayama practice. The lunch which followed at 1:00pm was the first food of the day, and everyone appreciated every morsel of it. Between lunch and late afternoon classes there were two to three hours free, when we were silent and rested. Then, at 4:30 the afternoon session began, and it would be more vigorous than the morning session, and we’d benefit from the morning’s body openings to go into yet more challenging places. The class ended between 8:00 and 8:30 each night, followed by a much appreciated dinner. We ate outside under the trees, and could watch the stars in the clear skies over the French countryside with the Alps rising on the horizon. It was like heaven to be there.

Time seemed to stop, for in the intensity of the sessions there was nothing to think about but the moment at hand. We went from moment to moment. When two weeks was done I couldn’t feel whether the time had been long or short – It seems I hadn’t been thinking about the past or the future. I know I laughed more than I have laughed for a long time, and sometimes I cried. I recognized forgotten strengths in myself and also saw my foolishness, my pettiness, and my protected ego. My awareness shifted.

The quotations posted on the walls in the asana room provided a focus. Some were by Mr. Iyengar, and some were from other sources. **“Don’t try it. Do it”** said one. **“It is the time to live the life you have imagined for yourself,”** said another. There was a strong message here about acting right now in the moment rather than postponing what needs to be done for some indefinite future time that inevitably never comes. Cont’d. page 4

Yoga in France Cont'd

“Have humility in action,” was written in large letters. How easy it is to become trapped by our own pride and self-importance. In yoga we are taught to act without attachment to results, to do our best and be grateful for our abilities. We are not the source of our bodies and minds; we are not the source of life. Our strengths and weaknesses are the building blocks that can manifest in greater awareness if used well, and this is exactly what yoga is about. The final, glorious stage in the evolution of a yogi is that state where an enlightened soul comes to see himself and all things with clear, perfect awareness and understanding.

“Learning can be acquired, but wisdom must be earned.” We can immerse ourselves in study, but the process will never be anything but academic unless the learning is applied to our lives. This is more than just practicing your yoga poses to get them right. What do we learn about ourselves when we practice? How can we use the lessons on the yoga mat in the totality of our lives?

“It (yoga) is easy to attain, but difficult to maintain.” I have been considering this one now that I am back in Hong Kong, putting together the fall schedule of classes. I need to leave time in the day for my own practice, and there needs to be ample opportunity for students to really develop and be challenged. The fire of yoga can strengthen and purify us by our efforts. I hope that the inspiration of Blacons will charge us all with energy in the upcoming year.



The Shrine in the Yoga Room



**Chateau
Blacons**



About 120 Headstands, from 37 Countries



Linda, Sandrine, Kathy, Ty, & Frederique

IYENGAR CERTIFIED

By Jesse Tong

When I started with the teacher training program my objective was to learn rather than to obtain a certificate. In fact, honestly speaking, I'd wondered why I should bother flying all the way to Canada to get stressed out. In this town, one can teach yoga without a certificate or get certified in definitely a much shorter time than three years and one has students. But yes, I truly was interested in studying Iyengar yoga.

Well, I achieved my objective; I learnt a lot from the training. There were a couple of stops and starts and the fact that I finally did go through with the assessment is largely thanks to encouragement from Linda, Leslie, Kathy and a few special yoga friends and students – many thanks! You've come so far they said - it'd be a waste not to go all the way.

So after more than three years, during which we had to go back to being a Level 1 and 2 student, observe, practice teach, teach under observation, peer teach and be critiqued, have our own practice and poses assessed, write assignments, study philosophy and anatomy, open our hearts, laugh, have our egos bruised, cry...the three of us found ourselves in Edmonton, ready or not, to go through the final hoop, the assessment, the culmination of the three years.

There were four assessors and one assessor in training. On the first day, the candidates, eight of us, had to do a 2-hour timed practice. Our poses and practice were to be assessed. The poses were called out one after another and we moved accordingly amidst the scratching of pencil on paper from all five assessors walking round watching. It took a



Jesse and Kathy with some candidates and assessors at Assessment in Edmonton



**Congratulations to the New Teachers
Jesse Tong, Leslie Corcos, Kathy Cook**

little while until I got into the practice and the nervousness of being watched wore off and I actually enjoyed the practice. It certainly helped dispense some nervous energy!

On the second day, we had to teach 3 poses in 20 minutes in the morning and then 3 inversions in 20 minutes in the afternoon. We drew lots for order. Everybody was nervous and there was a lot of running to the bathroom! The candidates were situated in another room away from the studio but we could still hear through the wall. Each candidate would get her/his poses 20 minutes before her/his turn to prepare. When it was my turn, the training and actual teaching experience held me in good stead. I was too busy instructing and adjusting students to worry about being watched. Nevertheless, I was relieved when it was over.

We were blessed to have extremely nice assessors who went out of their way to put us at ease. And they were kind enough to give us our results that same night (those of us who hadn't left yet). The letter apart from the obvious informing us of whether we passed, also acknowledged what the assessors saw of our efforts, informed us of our strengths and weaknesses and how to work with them both in our practice and teaching. I was amazed at all that they saw and knew. They weren't senior teachers for nothing! It was, somehow, immensely gratifying.

Back to the present and in Hong Kong, I don't know if students see me any differently now that I am certified. But still, I am glad I went through the assessment. You know why? I learnt a lot from it!

A Yoga Intensive with Shirley Daventry French November 20 - 26

Shirley Daventry French, senior teacher and long time student of B.K.S. Iyengar, will be returning to Hong Kong in November. Her annual visits here have been a source of inspiration to many. You might recall the great interview with Shirley in the *South China Morning Post* last November when she motivated so many readers with her words. (Nov.24,2003)



“The limits we put on ourselves are very much in our minds.”

“In yoga absolutely no attention is given to excuses. It is about what are you going to do now.”



Shirley is a Certified Senior Level Iyengar teacher who has been teaching yoga for over thirty five years both nationally and internationally. She has dedicated much of her life to the work of BKS Iyengar, through her writing, and her yoga practice. She is an exemplary person who is a role model for many yoga teachers and students around the world.



Shirley will be offering another powerful series of yoga workshops. This year we are calling it an “intensive”, because those who choose to do daily classes with her will have a deepened experience of the practice of yoga. As requested, Shirley will include a philosophy session about the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* to help students understand the timelessness and meaning of the great aphorisms that are the foundation for the study of Iyengar yoga. At over 70 years of age she is a font of wisdom and experience.

The workshop is open to all students. Sessions will be available for different levels of experience. Contact Linda Shevloff at 2541 0401, or Linda@yoga-hongkong.com or check the website www.yoga-hongkong.com for details.

Register Early to Guarantee a Space.

Special Needs: Yoga for Medical and Therapeutic Reason

People often take up yoga in order to develop a healthy, balanced lifestyle. Some begin their practice because they wish to learn the self control required to still their busy minds. There are many reasons for starting a yoga practice, and there are numerous benefits.

Yoga can play a role in helping those who are sick or injured to recover from injuries and illnesses and to relieve pain. It is a curative practice as well as a preventative one. In fact, in India, at The Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Institute, there is a large, well-established program of Medical Classes. This program was created by Mr. Iyengar who over the course of his lifetime has encountered many kinds of problems in his students. With his deep understanding of the body and the mind, he was able to create individual programs for students with special needs in order to help them.

In Pune, Mr Iyengar and his daughter Geeta run the medical classes. Once accepted into the medical class, students are put on their own program. In these busy classes, there are many teachers available to provide assistance.

When I go to study in Pune, I attend these classes. There are strict rules about who can come to these classes as observers or as helpers. They are generally off limits to new teachers, until the Iyengars see enough maturity of understanding in the teachers to permit them to come and even watch the proceedings.

This year I was given the opportunity to work in the medical class. Each day I was assigned to a different student and I was given the list of individual poses, the manner of doing the poses and the timings for each pose. Guruji,

Geeta and some of the senior Indian teachers would circulate in the room and observe and advise those of us who were helping. What an opportunity to learn from them!

Students I assisted had a wide range of problems: cervical injuries, diabetes, kidney problems, heart disease, displaced uterus, scoliosis, deafness, pregnancy with a history of miscarriage, frozen shoulder, and these were just a few of the cases in the class. The use of props became very exact as a slight modification to the support under the body changes the way the body opens and how fluids and energy circulate. Sometimes props are used to balance the bone structure or to provide pain relief for those recovering from injuries. There are specific ways of quieting those whose nervous systems are out of balance. Mr. Iyengar's tremendous depth of knowledge becomes obvious in this class.

By getting teachers to help in the medical class, he gives us confidence to work with those who have special needs. I felt I was being encouraged to take my own teaching a little farther. My certification level allows me to take on some of this work here in Hong Kong, but up to now I have not taken this step.

This autumn I would like to begin a small program using yoga as therapy. A class for a limited number of students will open in October. In September, interested applicants will have to apply in writing, because before proceeding I may need to contact the Iyengar Institute in India to discuss their specific situation. If you know of someone with special needs who would like to work with yoga, you could pass this article on to them.

Linda

New Class Schedule for Autumn 2004

The Iyengar Yoga Centre of Hong Kong
 2/F Winsome House, 73 Wyndham Street, Central
 Studio Tel: 2541 0401,
 email: linda@yoga-hongkong.com
 WWW.YOGA-HONGKONG.COM

We offer Quality Instruction & Personal Attention

Monday	Level I	12:00 – 1:30pm	Krissey
	Pregnancy	6:00 – 7:15pm	Linda
	Level II	7:30 – 9:00pm	Linda
Tuesday	Level I/II	7:30 – 9:00am	Kathy
	Level I	9:30 – 11:00am	Kathy
	Pregnancy	11:15am – 12:30pm	Linda
	Level II	12:45 – 2:15pm	Linda
	Level III	6:15 – 7:45pm	Linda
Wednesday	Level I	8:00- 9:30pm	Linda
	Pranayama (4 week sessions –beginning Oct. 6)	7:30 –9:00am	Linda
	Level IV	10:15 –12:15pm	Linda
	Level II	12:45 – 2:15pm	Linda
Thursday	Level II	7:00 –8:30pm	Kathy
	Sun Salutations & Timed Practices	7:30-9:00am	Linda/Kathy
	Special Needs Program (begins Oct. 7)	10:00am – 12:00pm	Linda
	Restorative	12:30 – 2:00pm	Linda
	Pregnancy	6:00-7:15pm	Linda
Friday	Level I/II	7:45 –9:15pm	Jesse
	Level I	12:30 –2:00pm	Randa
Saturday	Timed Practice (begins Oct.8)	5:30-7:00pm	Ursula
	Level I/II	10:00 – 11:30am	Linda
	Level III	12:00 – 1:30pm	Linda
	Level I	3:00 – 4:30pm	George
Sunday	Level II	5:00 – 6:30pm	Linda
	Level I/II	11:15am – 12:45pm	Jesse

- **Yoga Asana Classes:** are taught by Iyengar certified instructors and teachers in training for certification. Asanas are traditional yoga body positions or poses. (Level I classes teach preliminaries; Level II classes build upon beginner's training and are more varied, Level III and IV classes require progressively greater knowledge of the poses and the capacity to maintain them.)
- **Yoga For Pregnant Women:** Special classes with poses to benefit women during pregnancy. Supported postures, gentle stretching, and relaxation.
- **Pranayama:** Basic yoga breathing techniques, for students with at least two years of Iyengar yoga experience. Participants should sign up for four week course.
- **Special Needs:** an individual program designed for those with injuries or conditions that prevent them from doing a regular yoga class. One private consultation will be followed by four classes in small group sessions. No single classes available.
- **Restorative:** supported poses, long holdings to create a quiet state
- **Sun Salutations:** a traditional series of poses, generally done in the morning, to energize the body and begin the day
- **Timed Practice:** do a full series of timed poses with the instructor
- **Prices:**
 - **Pregnancy classes:** \$140 each, \$500 for 4, \$930 for 8
 - **One and a half hour classes:** \$160 each, \$560 for 4, \$1040 for 8
 - **Two hour classes (Level III/IV):** \$200 each, \$700 for 4, \$1300 for 8
 - **Pranayama:** \$560 for 4 only, no drop ins
 - **Special Needs:** initial 1 hour private \$600, following four week small group session \$1200
 - **Monthly Pass:** \$1400 for unlimited monthly classes
- **Registration:** Please phone, e mail or register on line. No same day changes to class bookings.