

YogAfrica

DECEMBER 2025 • www.bksiyengar.co.za

NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE BKS IYENGAR YOGA INSTITUTE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA



CONTENTS

- 3** Editor's Note
- 4** Mobilising Energies: A Discussion with Firooza Ali Razvi
- 10** Corine Biria: Teachers' Workshop in Wilderness
- 13** In Memory of Trevor Steyn
- 15** Teaching Yoga at Drakenstein Prison
- 17** An Annual Treat in Ixopo with Judy Farah
- 19** Pat Deacon: Standing Tall in Guruji's Light
- 27** Carole Selvan's Transformational Trips to India
- 32** Light on Photography
- 34** News
- 39** Newly Qualified Teachers
- 40** Letter from IYISA Chair
- 41** Notices and Adverts



BKS IYENGAR YOGA
INSTITUTE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

YogAfrica

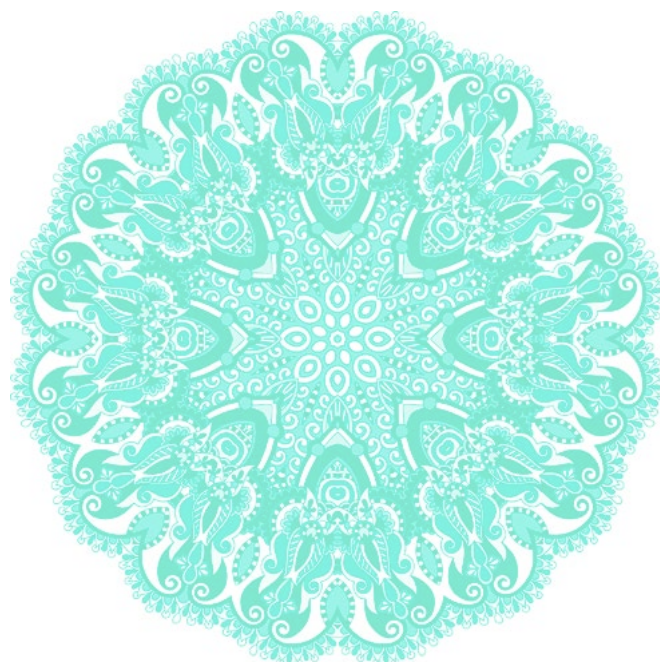
DECEMBER 2025 • www.bksiyengar.co.za

Edited by Ingi Salgado

Design & layout by Lauren Rycroft

Our sincere thanks to all who took the time and made the effort to contribute to the contents of this magazine.

Anyone wishing to contribute ideas, articles, information, photos, or suggestions may contact the editor on 082 922 1829, salgadoingi@gmail.com



EDITOR'S NOTE

In *Light on Life*, BKS Iyengar writes about the energy body and the role of emotions on the yoga path – both negative emotions, which give rise to emotional disturbances that control us, making us slaves to our circumstances, and positive emotions, which when cultivated serve as healing qualities that 'are jewels that bring grace to our consciousness and life'. Among these healing qualities is *karuna*, the cultivation of compassion toward those who are in sorrow. It is not a diffused sense of goodwill or an expression of sympathy but rather the recognition of sameness, oneness with others. It requires action: 'What can I do?' In this edition, Iyengar yoga teacher Tanya Glazer talks to Lawrence Batchelor about what she decided to do seven years ago: teach yoga to prisoners incarcerated at Drakenstein Correctional Centre in the Western Cape. We hear from some of the young men too about how their weekly class has become a sanctuary for them to hold their emotions.

Mumbai-based Iyengar Yoga teacher and philosopher Firooza Ali Razvi, who was in South Africa for workshops earlier this year, also touches on emotions and the pranamayakosha, the energy body, in an interview with Riva Hirschovitz and gives valuable advice on deepening one's search for knowledge about yoga philosophy.

Emotions pop up, again, as senior Iyengar Yoga teacher Carole Selvan recounts her experiences with Guruji. We pay tribute to Carole and a stalwart of our institute, Pat Deacon, with wonderful stories from the past and thanks from their students. We also pay a little tribute to a giant treasure, our Central Committee Treasurer, Stratford Canning.

On a sad note, we heard the news of Trevor Steyn's death in November. He often demonstrated during workshops for Padma (Joyce Stuart) at her studio in Pietermaritzburg. His yoga friends remember being on their mats together.

It's been a busy year for the institute, as Lawrence notes in his letter from the chair, in which he outlines plans for the 2026 anniversary celebrations of 50 Golden Years in Southern Africa of our institute. In October, Corine Biria, our Paris-based teacher of teachers, was here to deepen their training for a week, and Dize Watson writes about it in this edition. Suria Naidoo writes about her annual treat – a July workshop at the Buddhist Retreat Centre with Judy Farah. In November, the final assessments for the rigorous training programme for Iyengar Yoga teachers were held. We are delighted to announce and congratulate the newly qualified teachers.

Finally, we reproduce an article detailing the intricacies of the photography process in *Light on Yoga*. We hope it inspires you to pull out a copy for a closer look.



Mobilising Energies: A Discussion with Firooza Ali Razvi

South Africa was very privileged to host Firooza Ali Razvi for workshops in both Johannesburg and Cape Town earlier this year. During her time in Cape Town, Firooza agreed to be interviewed on yoga philosophy for YogAfrica by Riva Hirschowitz.

ABOUT FIROOZA ALI RAZVI

Firooza Ali Razvi has devoted her life to the profound study and teaching of yoga philosophy. A student of the legendary BKS Iyengar since 1977, and later of Geeta and Prashant Iyengar from 1979, she serves as a senior teacher at The Light on Yoga Research

Trust in Mumbai and teaches internationally. With an MA in Philosophy and 32 years of teaching philosophical thought to university students, she brings unique scholarly depth to her understanding of yoga's philosophical foundations.

Firooza compiled *Yogānjali: Quotes from the Teachings of Prashant S. Iyengar*, drawing from decades of careful study and note-taking during classes with the Iyengar family. Her approach to yoga reflects both rigorous academic training and deep experiential wisdom gained through nearly five decades of dedicated practice and teaching.

Q: Vayus, Koshas and Chakras – is there a point at which these connect?

A: Well, they all connect because they are part of the same science and subject. Panchakosha is about the aspects of the human individual from the gross to the subtle. From the gross body, which is the annamayakosha. Then the pranamayakosha which is the energy body.

Manomayakosha is the subtle body – it's not the mental body but it deals with the mental modifications of your conscious mind. So the modifications of consciousness, the different states that citta or consciousness moves through – that is the manomayakosha. Vijnanamayakosha and anandmayakosha are more subtle. Vijnanamayakosha is what Gururji called the intellectual body, sometimes also called the knowledge sheath. It is that which helps understanding and brings wisdom.

Anandmayakosha being the most internal state of an individual which is said to be the state of bliss. Ananda is joy, basically – so you reach a point where you experience joy, which is not a temporary joy which depends on something but a state of superlative joy which is called bliss. It is the place where the individual self unites with the universal.

According to orthodox Indian philosophies, the final state of realisation or truth is expressed in terms of consciousness and bliss. Sattva–citta–ananda: truth, consciousness and bliss. This is the inner self which everybody wants to reach somewhere because that is the connect with yourself within.

Now we come to the panchapranas. The vayu is basically an element. It is the element of air, also called pavana. Now air exists outside of us, inside of us, everywhere. Within our embodiment we have air. But people think air is about breathing from the nose, filling the lungs and breathing out from the nostrils and the air which goes in your lungs is air. But the fact is that air is in the whole body.

If you look at the human embodiment geographically, then we have the head region, chest region, abdominal region, pelvic region, the arms and the limbs, and then the organs within. So the vayu or the air element is kind of demarcated geographically in our body.

It's just like the traditional example about the waters of the oceans. Water is one water body, but you decide that here is the boundary for Atlantic Ocean, from here starts the Indian Ocean, that is the Arabian Sea, so they are geographical boundaries. Just like the universe, I mean the Earth, planet Earth, it is one piece, but now we have geographical boundaries.

This is Africa, that is India, that is America, different continents, so you name them. So it's identification, basically.

Identification of vayu in different parts of the body make the five vayus, pancha vayus – udana vayu in the head region, prana vayu in the chest region, samana vayu in the abdominal region, apana in the lower regions and vyana vayu is said to be everywhere. So everywhere – it's not just on outer skin but also inner skin, the organs in the body have also got skin – everywhere within, vyana is all-pervasive.

Of the pancha vayus, vyana accompanies the other four. So vyana accompanies udana, vyana accompanies prana, vyana accompanies samana, vyana accompanies apana. That is the demarcation for our understanding of the vayu as a tattva in the body.

Now we will say 'what is the need for demarcation?' But there is a need. What the head does, the chest doesn't do. What the chest does, the abdomen doesn't do. What the abdomen does, the pelvis doesn't do. So each region of our body plays different roles and functions and therefore, it needs a different kind of energy. So vayu in the different regions of the body play different roles – therefore, the demarcation.

And then you asked about the chakras. Chakras are again esoteric centres. As such you can't find them in the body, you can't open the body and say 'okay here is this, here is this, here is that,' but they are subtle energy centres found in our spinal cord or in our nervous system, let us say. Okay, nervous system can be looked at from the physiological point of view but the physiology of the nervous system runs on some energy – like you have a car running on petrol or diesel, you need energy to run it.

So what is the energy that runs the nervous system, not just food, but other forms of energies? As I said, the pancha vayu are five energies; pancha prana are another classification of energies. The chakras are specific points located along the spine but they are esoteric, they are not physical centres and they are said to be energy mobilisers.

They are having the power to mobilise

energy from one point to the next point to the next point to the next point. For higher gratifications and for spiritual progress, one needs to move energies from the lower centres towards the higher centres. When I say lower and higher, it means from the lower part of the spine to the higher part of the spine to the seat of the brain.

Energy within our body is said to be coiled up at the base. And a coil is called a kundala – a coil of a snake, serpent, the coil of hair. So that's where the term comes from. You coil your hair in a bun, so that's a coil or a kundala. Or you have a spring which is coiled. So energy is dormant. Like that a lot of energy within us remains dormant. All of it is not expressed, not realised, but there's a lot of potential.

According to the theory, the energy lies dormant like a sleeping serpent at the base of the spine. Now the activities we perform, physical, mental, emotional, all of that contributes to the release of energy. After all, without energy you can't do anything. Even if I have to lift my hand up, I need some kind of energy. If I am speaking to you, I need energy to speak. All of it is not expressed, not realised, but there's a lot of potential.

So energy gets released from the base of the embodiment and then gets manifested in different ways. Now the yogic science says that through the yogic practices the energies can be released to move higher up and not just expended. You see you can release some energy. It's like I withdraw some amount of money from the bank or the ATM. I spend it. Then I need to withdraw some more and I spend it. But here it's not about just expenditure of the energy.

The energies are harnessed to be liberated and moved up the channel. So this is where the chakras come in. So muladhara chakra is the first, at the base of the spine, which mobilises the energy. When it reaches the svadhisthana in the pelvis, there is further mobilisation to the next at the manipura in the navel and the anahata in the heart and the vishuddha in the throat and ajna in the head and so on.

Theoretically, when the energies are mobilised and reach the higher centres in

a yogi, that takes you to a higher state of consciousness which is called samadhi. Samadhi leading to what is termed as kaivalya or liberation.

So you can understand now that Vayus are forms of energy in the body, wind energy. The chakras are mobilising those energies. Not only vayus but there is also the theory of pancha prana. Prana as energy likewise is in the body in different forms.

Just as you have prana, udana, samana, apana, vyana vayus, the same nomenclature is there for the pancha prana as well. Except that prana is not a tattva, it is not an element like air, but it is much subtler. Prana is energy. So energising of pranas in the body is through the vayus, by means of vayu; breath is mobilising pranic energies and moving it through the chakras. This is the relation among these. That is how the yogic process progresses.

Q: So it's basically just all energetic movements?

A: Not physically energetic movements, but movements – not energetic movements, but movements of energy. The movement of energies in your body. Now the energies can be in the most subtle form. I don't have to be moving it.

You know, a yogi can be just sitting in meditation for many hours, so there's no physical movement, but the ability to mobilise the energy from within is there through the practices of pranayama, dharana, dhyana, like that. This is how the energies can be mobilised. It doesn't have to be a physical action as such.

Breathing actions, chanting of mantras, controlling thought processes – all that can contribute to mobilisation of energies.

Q: Where would a beginner start if they wanted to start reading or learning about the philosophy of yoga?

A: It all depends on how deep the interest is. Otherwise every book on yoga can give you a basic outline of what is Ashtanga Yoga and what are the limbs of yoga, what are asana, what are pranayama, what are the yamas and niyamas. So that is directly going to the subject

of yoga from the practical point of view.

Ashtanga Yoga as is known popularly through the world, consists of the eight aspects, starting with yamas and niyamas, which are moral ethical principles – loosely called moral ethical principles but they are not just moral ethical principles in relation to society and social life – they are in relation to modification of one's own character and self. Normally ethics are related to society, but here ethics are related to yourself. So there's a little difference there.

Anyway, those are the first two and then come asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, samadhi. Now I think today, even if you go to Google, it's going to tell you about the eight aspects. Every book will have some explanation, small or big. So if there is a basic need to know the basic structure, any book will be good enough.

Light on Yoga has a very nice introduction. I must tell you that when I didn't know much, when I was very, very young, raw and beginning, that was my first introduction to the philosophy of yoga through the introduction to *Light on Yoga*. It's very concise, but it is quite encompassing. Most all aspects are taken in and given simply. So it was easy for me to conceptualise and hold in my attention and understanding. And that led me out of curiosity to know more about the different aspects.

Then I went to study. Yoga has a philosophy in the Indian systems of philosophy, what are known as Sat-Darshans, the six systems of Indian philosophy: Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, Vedanta. Yoga is one of the systems and they go in pairs. Nyaya–Vaisheshika is a pair, Sankhya–Yoga is another pair.

Now Sankhya gives the philosophy of Yoga and Yoga talks about how that works. So they go in a pair. But you can start with yoga philosophy, which will then give you more detailed explanation of what is yoga, the Ashtanga Yoga. And Sankhya will give you the theories about – because after all, it is me and this universe. I'm not standing in isolation. So I should know about the universe and its



creation. What is creation? What is death? What is liberation, what is emancipation, so all aspects will come in the picture.

Yoga philosophy is the next thing that you read. Then you add to it Sankhya philosophy, which is explaining the metaphysics behind the yoga philosophy. So that goes as a pair. But again, if you go deeper, then yoga philosophy doesn't stand by itself. It stands in the background of all Indian philosophy as a complete study and the six systems of Indian philosophy have evolved from the ancient Indian texts, which are Vedas, Upanishads, Aranyakas, Samhitas and all those texts.

Normally, traditionally, one would start with the four Vedas and then go on, but we are going the other way around. You start with Patanjali in a mild way. Then you go to have a little deeper study of Patanjali through the systems of Indian philosophy. And then you can have a wider view. That is when you will come to the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.

When you study Patanjali yoga as a philosophy, you don't necessarily need to study all the sutras in depth TO START WITH. You can have a general overview of the subject through any text in any language that is suitable to you. It can be an English translation of Indian philosophical texts. When you have an overview, then you go deeper and study the sutras. So that's where Patanjali's Yoga Sutras come in the picture.

Once you go through that, then you will say, okay, there are other books on yoga. There

is Hatha Yoga Pradipika, which actually gives more information about the practice of yoga in terms of what is asana, what are the different pranayamas, what are the effects they create. Hatha Yoga Pradipika is a wonderful text to study. Then there is Gheranda Samhita. So many texts on yoga. Vyasa's commentary, Yoga Vashishta and there are many more. There are also all the books written by Gururji, Geetaji and Prashant Iyengar.

So what I mean is that there can be different ways of going through. In the ancient, in the olden times, let's say, there would be an oral tradition where the teacher would be teaching one aspect of philosophical thought to the student. So it's not like, 'let's start with this text'. There could be some introduction to certain concepts, certain principles, and then a text will be taken to read formally.

So first comes the reading, the chanting, then the meaning. For us, it's the other way around. Because we read the meaning, the translation, and the original text and the chanting almost never comes anymore, unless you're familiar with the language. For that, you have to study the language. It sounds good. Yeah. Okay. It's lots of work to do.

Well, yeah, but this is the picture, but not everybody needs to go everywhere, right? You can start somewhere and wherever you are, it's good. It's like, you know, anybody who sets out to get educated, you will go somewhere. So education will start from a primary level to a secondary level and so on. And then you may graduate, you may go for postgraduate, PhD, but not everybody goes to the PhD, but you still get educated.

So you can get educated in the subject of yoga without the desire to go to the extreme level of reaching doctorate. So there's something for everyone. Nobody needs to feel very dejected – that this is not for me. There is always something for everyone at a very simple level, a mild level, a more intense level. It all depends on how intensely the student wants to get involved in the subject.

Q: As an association we want to get a lot of new, younger people into the Iyengar yoga

system. But also a lot of our teachers and our contemporaries are getting older. So, obviously our practice needs to change. We can't be as vibrant as we were when we were in our 40s or 30s or 20s. I was just wondering what your view of this is, how to approach it.

A: So, yes, absolutely right, that on one side you want to develop Iyengar yoga and reach it out to more people, on the other side all the teachers who have been teaching for so long are getting older. Well, the simple thing is that the knowledge should be passed on to the next generation and then they will carry on. But even if that is true, what about the existing teacher? That's the second part of the question.

Okay. I have done my duty. Like in any university, you have a lot of new students graduating every year and there's a retirement age. Okay. So whether I feel like I need to retire or not, I have been retired at age 58 and now somebody else is doing my job. So there will always be the next generation to do the job.

But as far as yoga is concerned, it's a subject which is involving itself with wisdom and not just knowledge. There's a difference. Every other subject can be about knowledge. I must know about the biology of a frog or a human being or you must know about the physical geography of the universe or the chemical composition. It's knowledge about something. Here it is knowledge about yourself. So then there is no ... there is no retirement age for that. It's lifelong.

In fact, if there is a retirement age and you feel that you have to do it only up to that time, then that is a profession. You look at it as a profession. You pass on the knowledge to people up to a point and then say, I have done my bit now. I'm not able to pass on the knowledge to others. I'm too old. So let somebody else do it.

Good, but it is not just a knowledge science. So you may stop passing on to others but what about yourself? You cannot stop growing yourself in wisdom. So then two things happen: one is that I may formally – even if I formally decide to stop teaching because I think I'm getting old – but if I continue in my own search in the subject of yoga and continue

to grow ... and if the wisdom grows with that person, that teacher, that individual, there is no way you can hide it.

So it will get carried on to anybody who comes in contact with that individual. So you have some wise people sharing their wisdom formally, informally. So that is what the teachers must do as they get older.

Now the question here, I think you're also pointing at the frustrations that come. Because, when you are young, a lot of focus is on the physical aspect of the practice. And somehow or the other, the world looks at yoga as a sport. Even now it's considered as a sport in the Olympics, I believe. Yes, I saw that. There are competitions.

Now the whole focus is shifting to making it a physical effort, a physical skill, physical excellence and a sport to be excelling in for doing better than others. So competition, winning. Now this shifts the focus from the subject entirely. So this is the problem.

A lot of people take to it as an exercise, form of fitness or a sport. And that is the problem that when you get older then you are not able to indulge in that sport with as much intensity, and teachers feel that they must be teaching the same thing to youngsters but they are unable to do. So what to do? That is where the frustration lies.

So if it is included as a sport, nothing wrong. It is good for the youngsters at school level, university level. You can make it a fitness program. So let's say that's a side limb of yoga. Yoga also makes you fit. And if you want to become more fit, nothing wrong with it. If you want to become more fit than somebody else, also nothing wrong with it. If you want to have a healthy competition between the students, nothing wrong with it.

But at some point, that has to end. Just as you know, you stop playing baby games when you grow older. You play other games. And as an adult, you play some other games. So bring it to the adult level, where the adult understands that the physical activities of what are called exercises are not just exercises, they are positions which the body can take up in order to mobilise the energies for some higher

purposes of receiving wisdom.

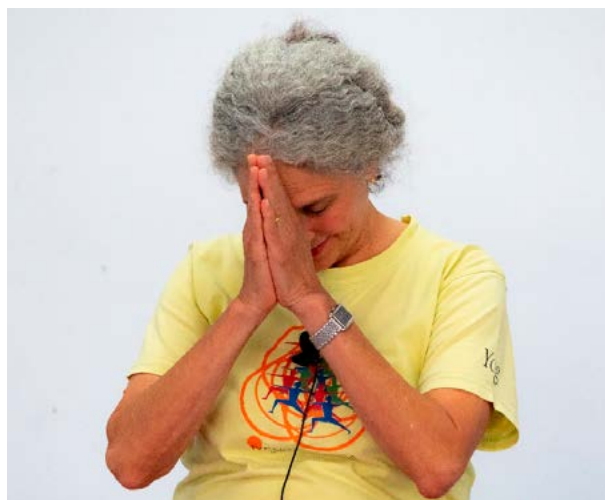
So that is where the philosophy comes in, the understanding of the subject comes in. So teachers need to then indulge a little more if they are so serious that they have reached a ripe age. Then it's time that you indulge in understanding the subject at a little greater depth.

Whatever little philosophy you understand, that becoming philosophical itself will give you the freedom from the bondage of asana practice. You will realise that it's alright if you can't do X, you can do Y. There are hundreds of asanas just there, but if you can do 30, 40, 50, or even 20, that is good enough to continue your search.

So it's a process of exploration and searching. And the truth is that all philosophy is a search for truth, a search for wisdom. Yoga, all Indian philosophy, aims at searching for yourself, because the wisdom lies within and not without.

So that should be the way to go for the senior teachers. And then you leave, you prepare some juniors to carry on with the asanas and the physical aspect. So there has to be a change as you mature.

But what happens for us, is that people start at 40 or 50 and then at 40 or 50 they start in kindergarten. So then they are expected to do what a child of 7 or 10 is expected to do. That's a really big difference. So you need to modify the practice of yoga for them. How to teach seniors, how to teach children, there has to be a different way of teaching. So that has to be considered. ॐ



Corine Biria

Teachers' Workshop in Wilderness

Senior Paris-based teacher Corine Biria offered a week-long intensive course for Iyengar certified teachers at the end of October in Wilderness in the Southern Cape.

By Dize Watson

An opportunity to learn from Corine should be grabbed with both hands. The richness of what we experienced each day cannot begin to be explained in words. The brilliance of the threads – from day to day and from the morning practice to the afternoon therapy sessions – showed us just how organised Corine's mind is. There is nothing haphazard in her teaching. There was a clear and cohesive construction, building upon layers and layers, and not proceeding to the next layer until the preceding level of what she was sharing had been grasped. When questions veered too far off the subject of the moment, Corine would bring us back to the point so that we formed tangible tools to help ourselves and our students.

We learnt to approach therapy in a systematic way; from simple things which level-one teachers should know at a minimum to that which should be understood and what the approach should be of level-three teachers.

Corine offers a pure teaching with an ethic of making sure that her instructions are understood and applied with accuracy. She watches everyone in the room in a way that encourages total participation of body, mind and soul. Along with all her wealth of knowledge and technical expertise, nothing is done for the outer body alone. There is always the understanding of the interconnectedness of all the layers of our being and the outer work is done for its impact on the deeper layers.



Some people may think that Corine is strict, which may be so, but she is not strict for the sake of being strict – rather, to bring out the best in each student; to make us healthy and strong; and very importantly to keep alive the knowledge that BKS Iyengar left us, without distortion or dilution but as purely as possible.

Our morning sessions for the week started at 9 am. This made it possible to enjoy early morning walks on the beautiful Wilderness beach. The morning session was about 3.5 hours and ended with pranayama. We then had a brief lunch break and came back to learn about therapy in the afternoons from 2.30 to about 5 pm.

Dinner was for the participants to arrange for themselves and we were spoiled for choice with the charming Wilderness restaurants.

The weather was perfect for a yoga workshop. It was neither too cold nor too hot. The days were mild and didn't distract from the practice.

On our last evening, we had a lovely gathering to connect and enjoy delicious food.

A big mention must be made to all those who contributed so much to organising the event. Registering on the first morning, we were met by smiles and a beautiful table where Pravina and Jane welcomed us with attention to every detail including co-ordinating the colour of their t-shirts and the decorations of the table. The altar table was beautifully arranged by Connie, with magnificent big



bouquets of flowers, candles, photos and books. Paula brought along nearly every prop in abundance and everything that Corine asked for was quickly at hand. Robyn, kept things running smoothly. Mo diligently took notes for everyone. Gerda took great photos. And, as they say, a picture is worth a thousand words, so we've included some photos from the workshop ... And of course, gratitude to Batch for all the organisation that went into such a successful event and to all the others not mentioned but who contributed in any way big or small.

I know there were various reasons why many teachers were unable to attend, but should we be lucky enough to have Corine back in the future, I would urge you to do everything you can to participate. The cost to attend comes and goes but the knowledge gained is priceless and as long as it's put into practice so it doesn't slip away, it will enrich your practice and teaching for years to come. ॐ





A reunion of our teachers from around the world at Corine's workshop.

Photos by Gerda Genis, Paula Viljoen, and Jane Treffry-Goatley

In Memory of Trevor Steyn

8 May 1973 – 1 November 2025

Dear friends,

Some may not yet have heard the sad news of our friend Trevor's passing.

Many of you knew him well. In life we often make friends through shared experiences. Trevor's and my shared experience was having Padma as our mentor. We attended many classes in Padma's Iyengar Yoga studio in Pietermaritzburg, as did many of you. Although Trevor was not certified, he was a wonderful teacher and most definitely had Padma's blessing to teach. He lived an extraordinarily good and successful life, and will be missed by all who knew him.

– Mandy Crooks

Many of our community will remember Trevor with much fondness. Before he became a high-profile entrepreneur, Trevor was a yogi, one of Padma's most ardent pupils. Some of us used to attend workshops in Pietermaritzburg and Trevor was often her main demonstrator! He was a good friend to me. We shared yoga and



business interests. We used to meet as part of his Unemployables group and always had a good laugh. Trevor led a very full life and was an inspiration to so many. He will be missed by many people. AUM Shanti.

– Michele Higginson

Trevor introduced me to Iyengar yoga on a family holiday and I'll always be grateful for that. He was the best man at my wedding and he, my ex and I started Unemployables – an alternative office party – together. Besides being so accomplished in many things, he was also The Best Dancer. Hard to process the absence of his exuberant vitality.

– Angela Shaw



Trevor with Padma.



Upside down together September 2004, from left, Moira Marshak, Trevor Steyn (grey shirt), Romila Sivsankar, Michele Higginson, Mandy Crooks, and Kantilal Parshotham.

Trevor took Padma's classes after she retired. Then his Esse business became demanding and I took over teaching from him. Like Trevor, I had Padmaji's blessing to teach. He left a mat behind and said I could have it. I still use it. I am blessed to have known him. May he rest in peace.

– Nishi Chutterpaul

I had the privilege of sharing a weekend Yoga Retreat with Trevor at the BRC prior to COVID. He was a stunning guy, very humble and the founder of Esse Skincare. He left a special impression on me. May he rest in peace.

– Gregg Oosthuizen

Such a great loss! He was so wonderful. Leaving behind such a big family, seven children and a wife.

– Kaz Wilson

Trevor was a serious yogi. With humour. Go well, Trevor.

– Hilde Smoor-Samson

I still remember Trevor well. I think I only met him on that one occasion at Padma's ... but I always remembered him. Larger than life and a special soul. I am so sorry for your loss, all of you, and for his family which was a big one if I remember right. Love to you all. In yoga we find ourselves and our refuge from life's trials.

– Mo Marshak

Shocking news. The boy with the tie-dye t-shirts. We were students together at Padma's in the early 90s ... She lit up when he walked into the studio!

– Marion Witte

That is very sad. I remember Trevor doing yoga poses with strength and poise. Padma loved having him in her classes.

– Gail Dixon ॐ

Teaching Yoga at Drakenstein Prison

Iyengar Yoga teacher Tanya Glazer has been teaching at the Drakenstein Correctional Centre between Paarl and Franschhoek for seven years. Lawrence Batchelor accompanied her to a class and spoke to some of the young men she teaches.

Taut hamstrings tremble and stretch. Bent arms strive to straighten. 'Turn your hands out and spread your fingers – straighten your legs!' Tanya Glazer throws out words of encouragement to the students. Adho Mukha Svanasana is a challenging warm-up pose for most of these young sportsmen.

The dining room of the A-section of the Drakenstein prison has just been cleared for this Yoga class. A-section prisoners are generally young men who come from the B and C sections of the prison – and their crimes range from theft to assault to murder. These young men have been moved here for their willingness to turn their lives around, for showing remorse, and there is a school programme and the opportunity to play a range of sports. Most of the students are sportsmen, and they even get to play outside against other prisons.

The donated mats and props are distributed, and the students step out of their shoes and directly onto the mat to avoid the slightly soiled floor. The class begins, and Ashley* opens a small book of inspirational quotes. He has taken custodianship of the book, and he makes sure he brings it to every class. He reads the morning's excerpt in a clear voice, 'Thoughts become things, choose the good ones.' Then the group discusses the quote and what it means to them.

Ashley has been doing Yoga with Tanya for two years, 'I come here to learn, it's a place where I can do introspection with myself, it's a place where I find presence. You don't have to gym, because Yoga can make you fit.'



Tanya is clear about her reasons for being here – 'because I feel we all need to give back, to pay it forward. We have to do good.' She was inspired by her sons' participation in The President's Award, a programme to enable teenagers to become responsible active citizens in their communities, which includes regular community service. She contacted a disadvantaged school, an old age home, and the Drakenstein prison near Paarl to offer yoga classes. The prison was the first to respond – a woman responsible for educational programmes, and she was very excited about the idea of introducing Yoga. So Tanya began teaching Yoga at the prison seven years ago. The Drakenstein prison, previously known as Victor Verster, is famous for having been home to Nelson Mandela during his final years in prison.

Tanya has been teaching in the A section for the past few years, having taught in the other sections before. The C section is maximum security, and the B section is for slightly lesser offences. 'It's similar to teaching in the B and C sections, but maybe these young men are more educated and more inspired, there's more feedback and interaction – it makes it more interesting.'

Tanya and I arrived at the prison 30 minutes before the class. We went through eight security gates to reach the A section dining

room. Along the way, prison employees greeted or waved to her. Half-way through we stopped to talk to the head of the A section, to introduce me and reassure him about my presence at the prison. A serious man in a simple office, he said, 'Tanya and the yoga offers stability to the young men. She is like a mother figure.'

The men were waiting in their sports attire – when we arrived, some fetched the donated props and mats, while others cleared the tables and chairs from the dining room.

Tanya explains what it means to them. 'It's a safe space. You know, there are no guards around. There's nobody judging them.' She adds, 'I feel safe here too. I know they will protect me.'

After Adho Mukha Svanasana, Tanya leads the men through various standing poses, and it's clear that some of them are well practiced students, having been in these classes since before COVID-19. In Vrksasana, she encourages them to focus on a point. I smile to myself at the typical Iyengar yoga student who corrects her when she says left instead of right in Trikonasana. In Setu Bandha Sarvangasana, she exhorts them to 'Open your chest! Why? It's your emotional centre.'

In a similar way to the start of the class with the reading and short discussion, the class ends with sharing things the men are grateful for. 'I appreciate Miss Tanya, we learn from her and she learns from us,' says Ashley. Tanya explains, 'So it is a little emotional support. I think the Yoga opens them up for that. Yoga starts with the physical, but it actually brings the mindful to them.'

Ashley tells me, 'Tanya brings back memories of parents, sisters, family – she doesn't treat us like inmates, she treats us like learners of this class.' He continues, 'For us prisoners, it's not always possible to show your emotions – you must be strong in a place like this, so Yoga is a place for my emotions.'

Jonathan* says, 'Tanya is open – open to learn from us, and we can learn from her. She is a very open-hearted person.'

Bongile* explains his Yoga routine in prison. 'In the morning I do some poses to

kickstart the day. I'm doing a lot of stretch as I'm a sportsman, it helps me to control my breath, like for running, and when meditating it teaches me to focus my mind. My soul finds peace when I'm doing yoga.' He is a football coach and a musician. 'I coach 35 players and we do stretching – and it helps because we play 30 games a season and we don't have hamstringing or muscle injuries. As an individual, Yoga has shaped me to become a different person because I was stressful, out of hand quickly, and I've learnt humbleness and respect, how to control my emotions. With 35 players, they have many problems. Yoga has helped me so now I can help the players with their problems. And I keep learning and when I leave, maybe I can take the Yoga outside because the people in my community need this.'

Tanya tells me, 'It's great for me to see a prison like this that is trying hard to rehabilitate people. The prison gives prisoners awards for their sports and they have invited me to give out the awards, so I try to be involved.'

'There is a very negative connotation with prisoners. People tell me that I am doing good work – but why with prisoners? They're criminals! But I believe that everybody deserves a second chance, and what motivates me is their discipline, how they come to classes, they wash the mats, they are making progress, they are grateful for the practice, they are becoming more verbal, they bring their friends. I see them as people, not as prisoners. Any kind of mental, emotional impact I can have, I'm grateful. It also gives me something. I feel like by going there, I am doing something useful, I am doing something good.' ॐ

**Names have been changed for anonymity*

An Annual Treat in Ixopo with Judy Farah

Every July, in the heart of winter, senior Iyengar teacher Judy Farah travels to the Buddhist Retreat Centre in KwaZulu-Natal to teach an immersive week-long course of yoga offered as part of the centre's ongoing retreat schedule. For Suria Naidoo, the retreat has become a yearly commitment, once shared with her mother, and now with her daughter.

By Suria Naidoo

Nestled in the tranquil hills of the KwaZulu-Natal southern Midlands, the Buddhist Retreat Centre in Ixopo is an annual treat for my soul. It is a place where silence speaks, time slows and the mind finds space to quieten.

The centre was founded in 1979 by the late visionary Lois van Loon, an architect and Buddhist practitioner – not only for the promotion of Buddhist teachings but also to foster the universal values of compassion, mindfulness and environmental care. The centre's ethos is deeply rooted in awareness and sustainability. Water is harvested from rainfall,



ABOVE: Judy Farah, left, and Suria's mom, Molly Naicker. TOP RIGHT: Molly adjusts her daughter Suria in Adho Mukha Svanasana during a 2016 workshop with Judy at the BRC.

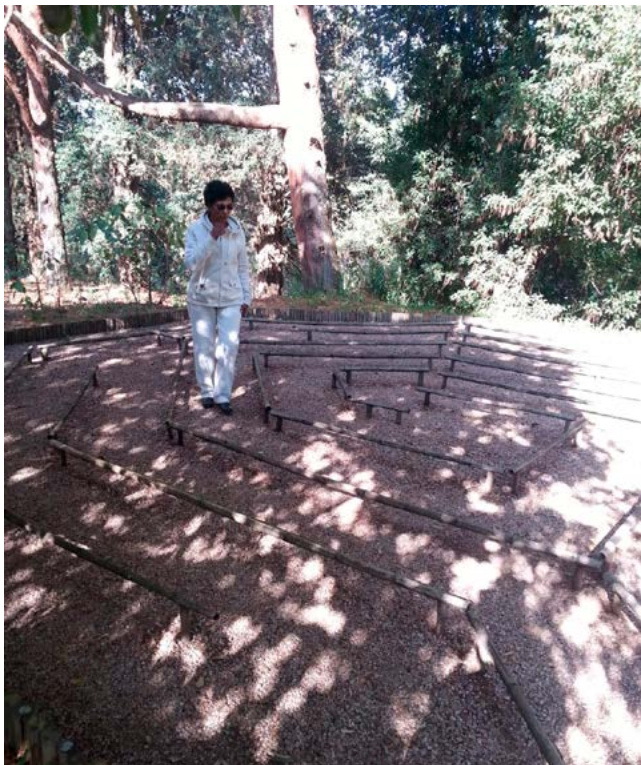


waste is composted or recycled, vegetables are grown organically, and local community initiatives are supported through education and skills development.

The lovely Chrissi, wife of the late Lois, continues to manage the centre in his honour and in accordance with strict values, with trusted long-standing staff and volunteers. Nourishing vegetarian meals are prepared with love based on the centre's best-selling recipe books. Accommodation at the centre includes three meals a day with tea and cookies in between, freshly baked bread and delicious desserts. Resistance is futile ...

Birdlife, flora and other fauna proliferate alongside Zen gardens, a labyrinth, stupa, Buddha Boma, bamboo grove and circles of sound – outdoor spaces in which to practise mindfulness or meditation. There is also a beautiful indoor meditation hall.

The centre offers various retreats throughout the year, and renowned teachers offer their time and teaching as *Seva* (offered in service to others without a desire for personal gain). My journey into Iyengar yoga began with a first seven-day retreat in 2013, taught by Judy Farah. I was mesmerised by the depth of her knowledge in Indian philosophy and anatomy.



LEFT: Molly Naicker on a walking meditation at the labyrinth at the BRC. RIGHT: Suria Naidoo, right, and her daughter Larisse Bird.

Shaped by decades of study with Guruji, the Iyengar family and Vedanta, she effortlessly weaves philosophy into the asanas, referencing the yoga sutras, and many of Guruji's books.

Under Judy's guidance, even the most simple poses reveal new dimensions. Every cue, every adjustment is offered with compassion. Her pranayama sessions are taught with depth and clarity, characteristic of the Iyengar teachings. Filled with imagery, we are nudged into the subtle world of prana, layer by layer, moment by moment, as if tuning the breath with the delicacy of a fine instrument. Judy's voice, calm and grounded, creates a container wherein attention turns to devotion and breath becomes meditation. Judy embraces the Buddhist practices of *Dana* very generously, as she has been offering retreats here for about 15 years or more during July. Many, like me, come back yearly, having been touched by her teachings. It is like an annual reunion to see familiar faces once again ready to imbibe Judy's teachings. I haven't missed a year since 2013, for a few years with my mother, and now with my daughter. It is the best bonding time.

I offer my deep gratitude to the BRC for offering this space and humble pranams to my darling Judy for her guidance and wisdom.

As she says, 'Yoga is not something we do – it is something we become' – words that still echo within me from the loving kindness.

Meditation

May you be happy

May you be safe

May you be healthy

May you live with ease

May all beings be happy

May all beings be safe

May all beings be healthy

May all beings live with ease

Until we meet again ... ॐ

Pat Deacon

Standing Tall in Guruji's Light

Pat Deacon began her journey with Guruji in 1973 at a two-week residential course held in Swaziland, having attended classes in Kimberley with the late Joyce Zouves van Rensburg from 1970. Joyce and Pat were the first South Africans to visit the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in 1975. Since then, Pat has returned to India nineteen times. In *YogAfrica* in 2010, Joyce, a former IYISA Central Committee chair, and our most recent former chair, Ina Gerber, wrote about Pat, herself an active Central Committee member for many years and chair of the Assessment Committee. We reprint their recollections here.

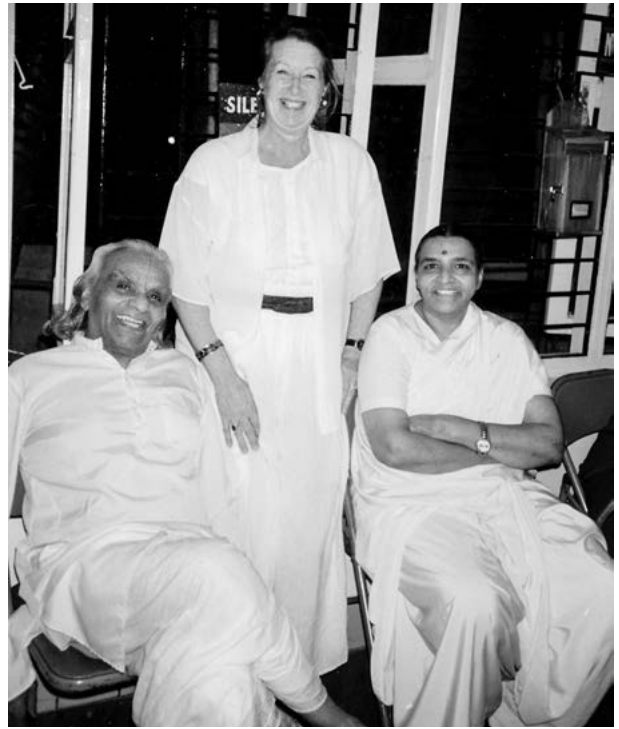
By Joyce Zouves van Rensburg

Pat Deacon and I go back a long way, as far back as 1970. This young Brit ... became one of us, she has always been tall and elegant and beautiful. She is a large girl with a big heart and always ready to help where she is needed. At least she was like that when she was my pupil!

Although she had three young sons when I first met her she never missed a yoga class or course wherever it was being held. She soon became a very valuable member of the Kimberley Iyengar Yoga Centre – always upfront and ready to help and assist wherever possible.

At this time she and Dave had a very busy social life and apart from De Beers commitments with him Pat was very involved with Kimberley Reps producing and acting in many shows and do not forget the after-show parties!! So between a young family, De Beers, reps and yoga they were a busy and sought-after couple.

In 1975 Pat and I visited Pune, and we were the first South African pupils to do so, and we were on the first course shortly after the Institute was opened.¹ We were about ten in the



Pune 1981: Pat, Guruji and Geeta.

class which included Geeta, Pandu, Prashant, and Shah who assisted Guruji with the teaching as well as one student from England and one from Mauritius.

For that visit we had Guruji teaching for three or four hours a day as he put us through our paces which included *bakasana*, repeated again and again, and as he left the room he would turn with a wicked twinkle in his eye and say 'Do six more times and then ENOUGH FOR THE DAY!' How blessed we were to have the Great Man all to ourselves. We had his undivided attention which also included many slaps and kicks for an incorrect movement or for being just plain stupid and overawed by it all. That was how Guruji molded his students in the early days.

Because of the strong rand we stayed at the Blue Diamond Hotel which in those days was one of the best 5-star hotels in the world – very elegant and very posh, we loved it – how times have changed.

The following year, 1976, Pat and I attended the course Guruji ran in Swaziland and it was here that Pat received her first teaching certificate directly from Guruji.

1 They were able to do so on account of holding non-South African passports, the visas for the others in the group having been delayed.



Notwithstanding the treatment we received on our first visit to Pune we persisted and went back to Pune for more in 1981, 1987, 1994. There were other trips which included the 25th Anniversary of the opening of the Institute in 2000 and again in 2008 for Guruji's 90th Birthday celebrations, both memorable occasions.

I recall Pat's capacity to place her head on the pillow, close her eyes and fall asleep regardless of the noise which was and is almost continual [in India] and would only stir very slowly when we got our wake-up call from the hotel desk. I did envy her this capacity for sleep while I wrote myriads of notes that are still being read and used today.

There are many more anecdotes of the fun times between all the sweat and tears – the scary rickshaw rides ... Speeding, swaying and hooting their way through crowded streets but getting us to yoga on time. What a pleasure it was for me to be taken to all the wonderful little restaurants for the spicy Indian food

after all our hard work. We traversed Model Colony from one end to the other shopping, eating and bargaining with the traders and shopkeepers.

In between all these trips Pat set up yoga schools in Lime Acres, Cullinan, Kleinsee, Jwaneng and Gaborone. The first one at Lime Acres was a 320km round trip that she used to do once a week to attend my Friday class. This girl sure loved her yoga and has been one of my most loyal and devoted students over the past 40 years.

Our association goes beyond that of teacher/student and has developed into a strong bond of love, respect and friendship surviving both happy and sad times. Pat has been there for me through thick and thin.

Long may Pat be blessed to teach and continue with her wonderful work for our South African Institute and devotion to IYENGAR YOGA.

By Ina Gerber

The decision to go to India in January 2006 was a very easy one to make, as I knew Pat was going then. This was her tenth (?) visit to Pune and with that came a wealth of information tapped into by us on a regular basis.

We arrived at midnight and did the 180km 'trek' to Pune with my sleeping head at times landing on Pat's shoulder as three of us sat in the back seat of the taxi.

Judy had booked a flat for 5 of us to share at which we arrived at around 4am. With key in hand we went up in the small lift 2 by 2. To our surprise we found the door unlocked with the owner sleeping inside in what was supposed to be one of our beds. He had come back from his office in Saudia Arabia unexpectedly and thought he should share the flat with us during his short stay. The negotiations that followed were not successful and left Eileen and myself sleeping in the first available room, Carole sitting on her bed in deep contemplation about the situation and Pat and Judy walking the streets from about 5am onwards to try and find us accommodation for the month. Lo and behold this they did!!

We were woken from a very deep sleep by Pat's 'stage' voice telling us to wake up and get ready to move. That this formidable lady was still awake was admirable leaving me very ashamed about my contribution to solving our problem.

Once settled into our new abode I became aware of Pat's endless energy. She was up at 5am to re-write notes, then collected water from a '6am-tap' that supplied 'drinking only

after boiling' water. By 7am she was taking notes at Prashant's 2-hour class and by 9am doing her own practice in the Institute. All of this whilst my body type would not move before 8am!

It was also Pat who introduced me to BKS Iyengar on the first Sunday of our arrival at the Institute. Looking at his laughing eyes as he spoke to her and her delightful smile and humble attitude will forever stay with me as one of the most amazing moments in my life.

We had loads of fun around Pune as Pat knew all the hidden treasures and secrets of the trade. Watching her do the 'ten-minute-power-nap-asana' on a narrow wooden bench in the Vrindaban Park made me realize how easily she adapts to any situation.

Choosing the photographs for the collage was difficult as there were so many wonderful moments caught on film. But alas! Her cat walk performance from the bed-room to the lounge with matching towels and ('table cloth' bed linen to match) had us in stitches every Friday as we received our clean linen and towels for the week.

One cannot other than admire this amazing lady who I will always remember at times to be keeping the whole 'Southern African BKS Iyengar yoga ship' afloat with dedication, endless enthusiasm and a deep love for the subject. Her words 'just get on with it dear!' will always inspire me to try and do without fuss.

'You are a wonderful travelling companion Pat and I will pack my suitcases on your request any time.' ॐ



Tributes to Pat

Pat no longer teaches but some of the students she mentored teach at her studio in Paarl, where she waves to those arriving for class from her lounge while recovering from a recent back surgery. Pat's students pay tribute with thanks, remembrances and a poem.

By Tanya Glazer

In stillness and strength, in wisdom and grace
Number 3 Queen Street, our sacred place
With ropes and bricks and students so keen
You taught us truths to feel and be seen
A lifetime stretched in quiet pose
Through breath, balance and asana we chose
For fifty years, your steady light
Burned bright with Guruji's heart and might
A student first, of B.K.S.
You learned, you lived, you gave your best
Each cue, each word, so thoughtfully sown
You planted seeds where strength has grown
Feisty spark with a purple flair
A world of gifts you chose to share
From stitches sewn with loving thread
To meals well made and lines well said
A traveller through both land and soul
With Dave beside you, made you whole
The bush would call, and so you'd roam
Yet yoga's path remained your home
Day in and out, you still remain
In every pose, knowledge to gain
You shaped my path, my journey, my view
I found passion with big thanks to you
Organized, precise, and kind
With wit as sharp as your aligned mind
To call you mentor is my pride
True to yourself a loyal guide
Thank you, Pat, for all you gave
Your fearless heart, so strong and brave
In every class, your spirit stays
A light to guide our sunshine days

By Eileen Weinronk

High on the side of the mountain, overlooking the valley stands a home with the most calm peaceful light jade-coloured walls with the deepest dark rich timber trims and shutters. This is the house, home and heart where I have known Pat as Queen of her kingdom.

So like Pat herself, this home radiates a deep kindness, care and compassion upheld with essential strength, clarity and commitment, fluid, simultaneously solid.

Our early study days were always uplifted by your laughter, personal stories and generosity whether in the studio or around your gracious dining room table, or on the balcony, or in your most beautiful garden and of course occasionally dipping in your pool All of these facets of your life would dissolve the discomfort of my hopeless hapless* and rather horrible attempts to teach this great subject.

My first visit to Pune in the envelope of your confidence, joyfulness and experience was just the very best anyone could dream to ask for. The way you and Judy took to the streets at 2 or 3 or 4 am and resolved our accommodation nightmare will never cease to amaze and impress me, besides bringing tears of laughter and deep embarrassment that all I could do was go to sleep ... and then the note writing in the dark before dawn while the water boiled ... disciplined, determined but not dogmatic ... we had a most wonderful time.

Pat your presence was intrinsic to our Wednesday teachers' class, general workshops, visiting teacher workshops, celebratory jamborees in Kimberley or Joburg, new teacher workshops finding their feet, the 'Stephanie' years at Goudini where the Paarl studios were transported across the mountains to look over yet another valley, and of course traipsing around Southern Africa for assessments and more and more study days. You never missed a thing!

And this in addition to your busy family life, teaching and of course – PRACTICE!

Pat you are and always have been such an inspiration to me. You live fully aware and ready to meet each challenge and find your way. And they come ... And you do find your way!

Thank you to you and to Dave for sharing so much of your lives with us, the highs and lows and in-betweens, for your honesty, your generosity, your devotion and damn fine story telling.

I have this image of Faeq Biria bowing down to the 'Joyces' at our 40th anniversary celebration (I think) 108 times at Goudini ... Time for me to start. Thank you dear woman.

By Laurinda

There is so much I can say about Pat (even though I was always a very on-and-off participant):

- For me, she made yoga about practical awareness and less about the esoteric (I think raising three boys helped in that respect, she was not airy-fairy at all).
- In her classes, she made men (e.g. my husband) feel as comfortable as women or young people.
- She showed that yoga was not necessarily for slender women but also for the more robustly built and that it made you strong. In fact, it was the one place where the way you look never crossed anybody's mind (which was refreshing for the young woman I was when I started).
- She did not let me get stuck struggling with a pose – there was always a flow to another pose rather than perfectionism (which I was prone to) and she brought home that everything should be 'soft', not forced. (Her attitude still comes up in my mind whenever I struggle with a pupil when I give piano lessons.)
- Her studio still has a big impact on my life, even though I am the 'vrottest' of yogis. I am forever grateful to that wonderful, robust, funny, non-judgemental, wise being we call Pat.

By Riva Hirschowitz

You can't give tribute to Pat without giving tribute to Dave. Together they help write our constitution and so many other documents I can't mention them all here. They have both been pillars to our Southern African Iyengar community.

The first time I met Pat was during my teacher training. Pat has a very logical and clear way of explaining what needs to be done. Follow those steps and you are on your way. Misstep, then you find out :)

I so thoroughly enjoyed Pat's teachers' classes on a Wednesday morning. All her meticulously written notes during her time in Pune came through so clearly in the class.

Pat has really provided us with the role model of an Iyengar teacher. I miss her in class and on the mat.

By Marisa Buffone

I am deeply grateful for the profound impact Pat Deacon has had on my life, both on and off the yoga mat. Her wisdom, compassion, and guidance have supported my growth in ways I never thought possible. Through her teachings, I have learned to be aware, to listen, to open and heal my body and breath. I will continue this journey of learning, awareness and openness.

Her dedication to the yoga institute and to her students is truly inspiring. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn from her. Pat's keen observation and her ability to guide students in understanding their own bodies have been transformative for me, awakening in me the desire to teach as well.

Thank you, Pat, for being an extraordinary teacher, mentor, and role model. Your presence has been a blessing, and I aspire to embody the qualities you so beautifully live and teach. I am honoured to call you my teacher and mentor.

By Jacqui Pretorius

I feel very blessed to have had Pat as a teacher and mentor for many years! Her passion, generosity, warmth and discipline have made a big impact on our community and I am very grateful for the beautiful yoga space she has created for us all to enjoy! I value her strength of character, her fierce passion for yoga, her sense of humour and her loyalty to her students and teachers! Thank you!

By Cheryl Hornlein

For so many years, Pat guided us not only in the postures of the body, but in the posture of the heart. Her classes were never just about flexibility or strength – they were about learning how to breathe through life's challenges, to find stillness when the world feels restless and to carry kindness both inward and outward.

Pat often reminded us that yoga is not what happens on the mat, but how we live off it. In her presence, we learned patience and discipline.

Pat, your legacy continues within each of us who had the privilege to learn under your care. The light you shared is not dimmed – it simply shines now through the lives you touched.

With gratitude, love, and respect: thank you, Pat. May your days ahead be filled with the same peace and joy you gave so generously to others.

By Heather Lee Roberts

Back in the late '90s, from my very first class with Pat, I felt I belonged. The asanas and pranayama, all new to me, left me feeling exhilarated and happy. Pat was so exacting, yet kind. We had so many laughs! Some poses eluded me but the joy of her classes has stayed with me and changed me forever. Sending you so much love and eternal gratitude Pat. And fervent hopes and prayers for a good recovery from your recent surgery and next one.

By Micayla

I did not know Pat personally. I would however say that her smile through the window on the way down to the yoga studio in the evenings was always a beautiful welcome.

By Mignon van Wyk

Dear Pat, you are in our hearts every day. We miss you very much. We thank you, for the wonderful team of beloved teachers, provided by you, in your fabulous studio.

By Cecilia Fourie

I was petrified of Pat in the beginning years of my yoga. Love her soooo much now and have for years – just can't remember how many years I have been doing yoga. That is how many years I have known Pat and it will never be enough.

Miss your style of teaching. Miss your assistance in yoga. Miss your voice in yoga. Miss you saying, there is no such word as 'I can't'. Thank you for your smile. Thank you for your patience ... man did you need that with me.

Thank you for allowing me to bring Krummel [Cecilia's bird] in the evening ... Though I didn't do it enough times ... wink wink ... Thank you for the use of your beautiful yoga retreat room and a view to die for.

It hurts to see you not doing well. I know it will get better again and then you two darlings can go galavanting in the Kruger National Park again.

By Jimmy Ferendinos

Pat first inspired me to start on the yoga 'road' 15 years ago, initially to deal with running injuries. Thanks to Pat, yoga has become part of my daily practice and a way of life. Pat is a dear friend, always available to give advice to us. ॐ



Pat and other Central Committee members in the 1990s.

Update from Pat

Thanks to all for the lovely comments. They brought back lovely memories with so many wonderful colleagues who have been my pleasure to have known through Iyengar yoga.

I have now just turned 85 years and I retired from teaching and assessments a few years ago.

The teaching in my studio has been taken over by the five teachers I trained and now they teach regularly. It is wonderful to see the pupils arriving to be taught by these teachers who now keep Iyengar Yoga alive and well in Paarl.

My health has not been so good over the last two years and I have been in hospital for some different situations. I have been checked over by some different surgeons and the last one who worked on the operation on my lumbar spine in September and will be working on my recovery for some months. The surgery involved cleaning out some of the vertebrae in the spine, to release the pinched nerve in my right leg that is now less painful. This is expected to take the rehabilitation for

at least three months to make sure the lumbar spine will be steady. I am finding this process a frustration that I need all my patience to do the right things!! In addition, I am also not allowed to drive for at least six weeks.

David is having to help me many times as I am unable to pick up many things from the floor and other places and still need my crutches.

Merriam, my housekeeper, is working well with me helping with showering and dressing me so that I don't damage my spine. I'm really pleased with such great care.

I am missing my teaching etc., but need to apply all the things learnt from Iyengar and still help with everything for my recovery.

I have had a fantastic life and hope more and more pupils will learn and be rewarded with the 'Iyengar' way.

I now have a bed in the TV room for me to lay flat and enjoy seeing pupils come and go to the class.

Many thanks to all who help to keep everything going and love to all the Iyengar teachers who are doing a really good job. ॐ

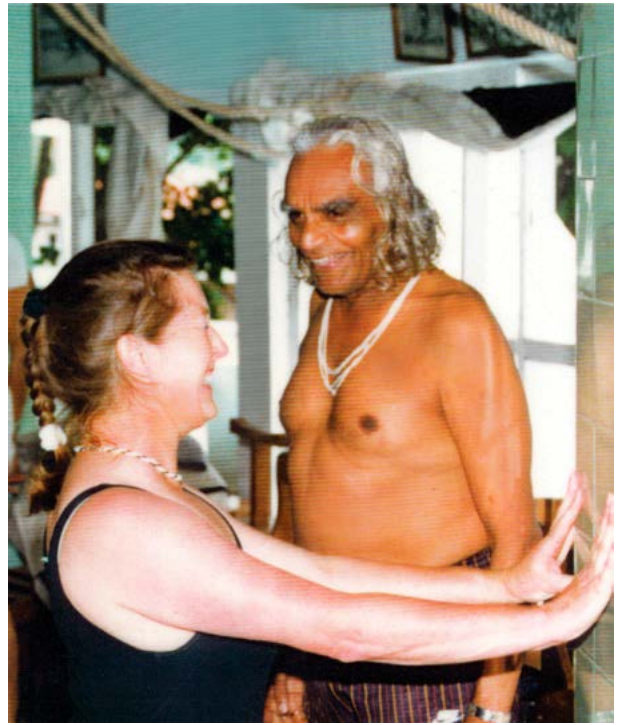
Remembering Guruji, in Pat's words

On leaving class early: 'We were in a class in Pune with Guruji teaching and he was standing beside me as he said "I will hand over to Geetaji to finish the class." I whispered to him "I think I know where you're going sir." He replied "Oh yes – where?" "You're going to watch the cricket on telly!" I answered. This was the source of the big grin and chuckle so obvious in the picture. The World Cup Cricket was in full swing and an India match was in progress at this point. Guruji did so love the game.'

On her first course with Guruji in 1973: 'The weather in Swaziland proved to be so wet that the organisers were always looking for ways to entertain Guruji and the group. One afternoon they decided to play a card game (I think it may have been whist) and decided to teach him how to play so he wasn't left out.'



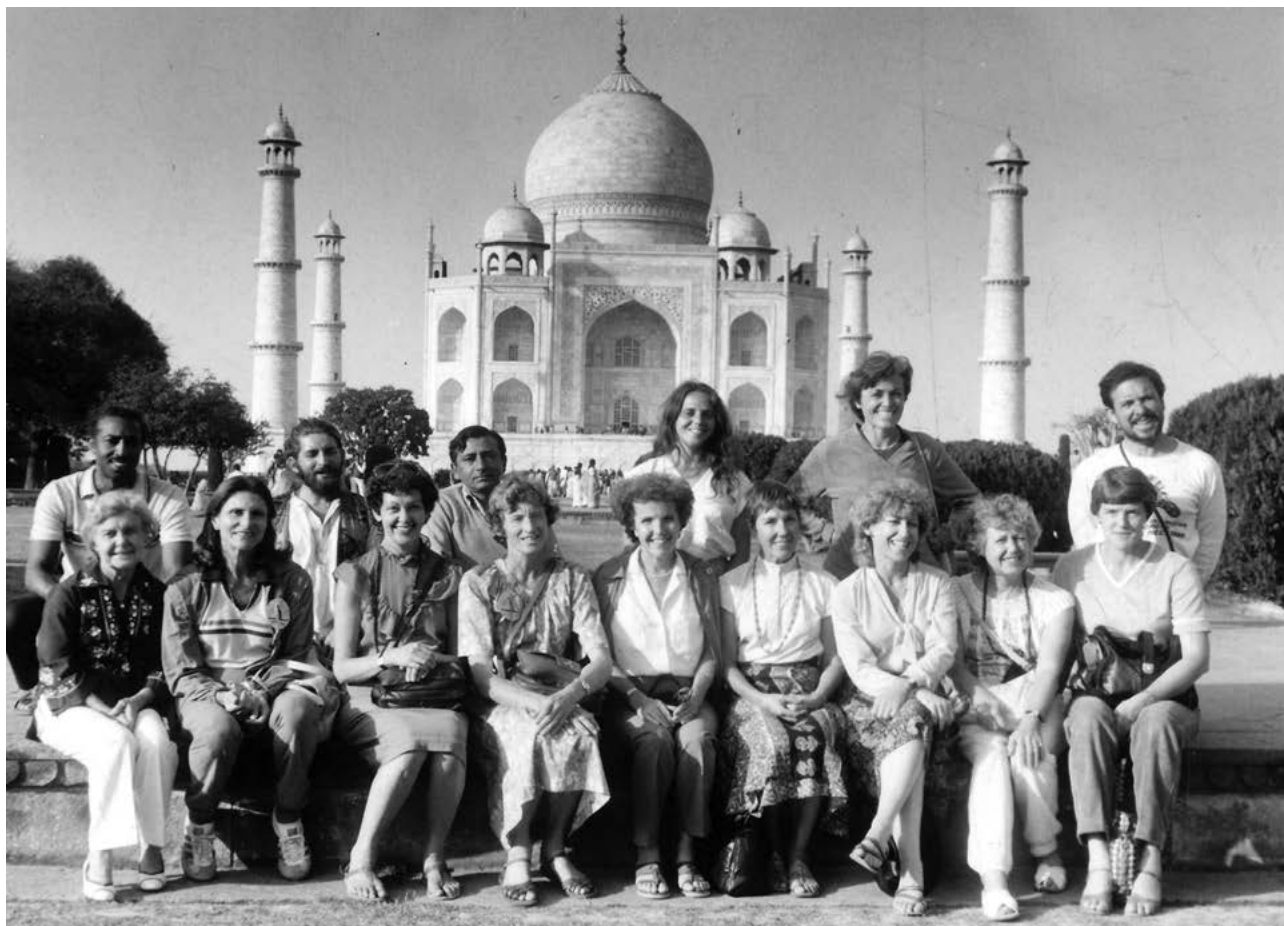
Guruji taught workshops in Swaziland in 1972, 1973, and 1976.



Pune 1990: Pat and Guruji.

Guruji showed that he was a very quick learner and was soon winning time and again. As I am not a card player I was just watching and asked him if he'd verbalise his thoughts and logic for the next hand so that I could understand how he could be so successful. He agreed and showed how his powers of observation that spotted a slight movement at the corners of one player's mouth showed she had a good hand while another whose chest had slumped inwards had a bad hand etc., etc., allowing him to make better decisions when playing his hand and so winning almost every time!

Advice for teachers: 'I think if you want to be or are an Iyengar yoga teacher, that's exactly what you should be. I was blessed to have this amazing man come into my life and be my teacher – I think he had x-ray eyes and could read your mind. Everything he worked with made sense. His descriptions were so fantastic that there was never any need to look elsewhere. I always ask myself, what would the Guru have done? I followed the Guru and that's always been my focus. If you want to be an Iyengar yoga teacher, try to keep it as pure as possible and live up to his very high standards. This is very important ... and give back, share his knowledge with all those who are interested just to perpetuate the brilliant man he was!' ॐ



South African Iyengar Yoga practitioners on a trip to India in 1983.

Carole Selvan's Transformational Trips to India

By Ingi Salgado

Having received a few well-placed kicks in the back from the Master, senior Iyengar yoga teacher Carole Selvan has experienced the harsher side of BKS Iyengar's teaching methods. Yet she kept going back for more yoga workshops at the institute in Pune until her last trip at the age of 71 years in 2009 – twelve times in all, beginning with a visit more than four decades ago.

It was a large contingent of South Africans – fourteen altogether – and they set off in the cool, dry month of January, 1983, to Pune, India for an eye-opening experience that, for many, would lead to a lifetime of dedication to Gururji as well as forge friendships for life.

Among them were Carole Selvan and many of the wonderful friends she made along her yoga journey – including June Cooper, Mabel Higginson, Zena Cohen and Jackie Senik.

The group stayed at the Blue Diamond Hotel, shopping and visiting places of interest in Pune during their month-long workshop at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute (RIMYI), after which they travelled to the Taj Mahal in Agra, and to Delhi, Udaipur and Jaipur. 'It was marvelous ... the food we ate, the people we met, those that opened their homes to us – all through yoga,' Carole recalls.

But that was after the workshop. At first, Carole just wanted to run away – a pattern that followed each of her return trips to RIMYI.

'Every time I went to Pune, on the third or fourth day I'd decide, "I'm leaving. I can't handle this. I can't take any more." And by the end of the course, I'd be signing up for the next one,' Carole says. 'They transformed you every time you came.'

Gururji, his daughter Geeta and the assistants in the medical classes guided

Carole in a specially designed programme of asana for her scoliotic spine, damaged from a genetic condition and spinal fusions that Carole regrets having undergone. She later also had two hip replacements and a shoulder replacement.

'I went to his medical class where he gave me a programme. I needed pulling and pushing. Guruji guided it and then he came and checked periodically but it was mainly his students who helped me,' she says.

The group that visited in 1983 were taught directly by BKS Iyengar before he retired officially the following year. Yet there is no retirement from yoga. 'You'd go for your practice in the morning and then you'd have a class with Geeta,' Carole recalls of the later period. 'When I went to the celebrations we had for Guruji's 80th birthday, he would constantly interrupt her teaching, because that was his way of teaching Geeta. It used to freak me out. But she'd handle it perfectly ... gratefully. She had the ability to synthesise his teachings.'

Carole witnessed BKS Iyengar screaming – 'as only he could do' – when he came across a teacher at an American convention demonstrating a point by lifting a hand while in Adho Mukha Vrksasana, displeased at this way of teaching. 'He could spot if you were doing something wrong. If he found something that wasn't quite right or detrimental to your practice, he would pounce upon you! He could read everything about you. Read your mind, who you were, what you came from.'

Carole herself got to experience being the focus of the Guru's all-seeing gaze. 'Guruji adjusted me plenty of times. Sometimes it was a kick in my back. He'd say that if I wanted an open mind, I'd have to stretch my arms in a certain way. He made me stand in front of everybody and he'd say "*Look at these cheek thighs.*" It's an emotional experience to have



Carole Selvan, left, with Kiran Lalla, Padma and others in 1998.

all this attention on you. When I looked at some of the faces of people there! But he couldn't care a damn about my tears. My feeling was that if I wasn't prepared to accept his criticism, then I shouldn't come to him. I had to just break through. It was mostly emotionally tough.'

'Guruji's point was that I was not getting into the basic understanding of the movements of the muscles in the legs.'

Yet, it would be 'a devastating experience if the Guru ignored me. I would feel unwanted and useless.'

And that is the story of how a 'puny lad from a poor, rural South Indian village'¹ became the Guru of a Jewish girl raised in Harrismith in apartheid South Africa.

Carole found yoga through her mother, who had suffered a nervous breakdown and was advised to try yoga. 'When I went to see her in Durban, she said "look at this pose" – and I, younger than her, couldn't do it. So I decided to try it. It turned my whole life upside down. But for the first ten years, it wasn't Iyengar yoga.'

Carole's friend June Cooper, whom she met at an international yoga seminar held at Bryanston Country Club in 1980, picks up the story: 'Carole and I started our yoga journey together searching and experiencing different

1 Sally Sullivan, 'Remembering BKS Iyengar,' YOGA Magazine, December 2024. Reprinted in YogAfrica in June 2025.

schools of yoga until we found what we were looking for in the Iyengar institute in Pune and our first visit there in 1983.’

Carole says she found Iyengar yoga ‘by accident’. Her first regular Iyengar teacher was Maureen Bascino. Carole, June and other friends attended Maureen’s classes in Hillbrow every Saturday afternoon for about two years. Thereafter, Carole attended classes with Dassa Oppenheimer, who became her mentor. ‘I wanted to teach the way Dassa did. Her knowledge was so immense, so deep. We were most fortunate to have had her. She had a good relationship with the Guru,’ says Carole. She later attended classes with Jenny Morris.

Carole was among the first group of South African teachers to undergo teacher training and certification by the Iyengar Yoga Institute of Southern Africa under the guidance of Jackie Holzen in Pretoria – teachers had received certification directly from RIMYI up to that point. Carole also served for many years as treasurer of the Central Committee and was a member of the Assessment Committee, responsible for training the next generation of Iyengar yoga teachers in Southern Africa.

Now 87, Carole still teaches three times a week, from a small studio at her home in Greenside, Johannesburg, which she shares with her daughter and family. She says the size is an adjustment compared to the large studio at her former home in Cyrildene, but she is finding a way to manage without ropes and all the wooden equipment. ‘I’m lucky to still have students who appreciate my knowledge,’ she says. Carole is frank that it is difficult to accept the changes that old age and multiple surgeries have brought but emphasises that she is fortunate to have her children looking after her and is being supported all round.

June says of her friend of 45 years: ‘We have shared ups and downs throughout our lives not only in yoga interests but our personal lives as well, remaining true and constant friends to this day.’

Carole says that yoga helped her cope after the death of her husband Michael 20 years ago and that she has ‘met the most wonderful people through yoga that I would never have



Carole teaching Neriell.

met before’. She travelled with good friends to India on many occasions – including Jenny Morris and G  drun von Wimmersperg.

Carole is surprised and delighted about the tributes from her students, reproduced below, but steers the topic back to Gururji. ‘What I found so marvelous about him, it didn’t matter about your lifestyle, as long as you did your practice. You could be a meat eater, a murderer, an alcoholic – it didn’t matter. What mattered is that you had to practice. You could get through this through yoga.’

‘I could go on my bended knee three times a day and thank God for the Iyengar yoga experience.’ Her advice for younger yogis is to have the right attitude and keep an open mind.   



Carole and her students two years ago.

Tributes to Carole Selvan

By Wendy Rosenberg

I've had the privilege of being taught yoga by Carole since 1995. Fresh out of school, I was introduced to Carole in Cyrildene. But being young and foolish, I left, until 2003, when I joined for good. I've never looked back. Carole has blessed me with her unrivalled knowledge of Iyengar yoga, her ability to transmit that knowledge, and her wisdom, kindness and patience. Carole has taught three generations of my family: My mom (Elana), me, and my two sons – both in utero and on several occasions since. I will be ever grateful for Carole and for the blessing, healing, health, camaraderie and tranquillity Carole has brought to my life

By Elana Rahamim

My daughter Wendy 'schlepped' me to yoga in 2003, to a lady by the name of Carole Selvan in Cyrildene – and WOW, my life just changed. I've been going to Carole for over 20 years, sometimes three times a week. That's how much I loved it and how good it was for me. I even followed Carole with the whole yoga group when she moved to Westcliff. No one

intended to leave such a mentor who became a dear friend for life.

Carole has never stopped caring for all her students, even when she herself needed care. Carole teaches the poses with much understanding of my needs, standing there, correcting and shaping the pose with great knowledge and experience, with much love and care, such precise teaching. Sometimes I arrived not so well, with a cold, or after an operation. Carole always knew how to heal me with special postures that definitely helped me recover.

The whole yoga group became one big family. We celebrated birthdays at Carole's studio after a yoga class, and many times went out after the class. We even flew overseas together. There is no doubt, Carole is the best teacher for me, but at the same time, a great friend and mentor that has changed my life and my samskara. Thank you Carole for everything. NAMASTE!

By Neri Hurwitz

It was a life-changing, stroke of luck for me to have met Carole and join her Iyengar yoga studio back in 1998. What began as a student-teacher relationship became a close friendship that continues to enrich my life till today. At that time, I was over-worked,

completely immersed in my businesses, which had consumed my life and severely affected my well-being and health. I badly needed to find something that would allow me to step back from the rat race and simply breathe.

A close friend who practiced with Carole recommended I try her studio in Cyrildene. I knew nothing about yoga, but after not finding what I was looking for elsewhere, I decided to give it a shot. And there, at Carole's studio, a new world was revealed to me.

I still remember my first class. During Carole's calm, guiding Savasana, my mind went quiet and clear. For the first time in a very long time, I experienced a real sense of peace and serenity. I was hooked. From that day on I 'religiously' made it my practice to knock-off work earlier twice a week to rush to the sanctuary of Carole's studio, completing my week with an additional Sunday session.

Today, I am proud to be an Iyengar yogi and even more proud to have Carole, not only as my yoga teacher but as my dear close friend. I feel fortunate to have had Carole as the best teacher I could have hoped for and an important and significant person in my life.

By Carla Chait

When I was finishing school in 1999, I told my parents that I wanted to start yoga, and my father said, 'I have just the teacher for you! We're actually related to her through marriage.' And so began my lessons with Carole, my father lifting me to and from night classes at her studio in Cyrildene. I immediately took to Iyengar yoga and Carole's style of teaching. She had just the right amount of discipline, humour and warmth, and her instructions were exacting. When I got my driver's licence, I began attending morning classes too. Carole was truly an inspirational teacher, and I was encouraged to continue and deepen my practice.

I lived elsewhere for several years and returned to Carole's classes in 2019, only to find that her knowledge and wisdom had deepened, her beautiful and humble presence shining as brightly as ever. Carole continues to

share her incredible understanding of Iyengar's method. She is a master at sequencing and pacing classes and nurturing the quietness and stillness within. Her internalisation of the Iyengar methodology and her ability to transmit her knowledge to her students is a real gift. It is an absolute privilege and honour to be taught by Carole. Her sensitivity and insight grow deeper every year. We are so lucky to have her.

By Nella Souris

To Carole, my first teacher, my guru, my friend and my second mother. When I first came to you for yoga, little did I know how my whole life would change or that I would one day become an Iyengar yoga teacher myself.

You showed me that yoga was so much more than just touching my toes or standing on my head. Your dedication and regular visits to Pune brought your students priceless knowledge that transformed and healed us.

Your classes became a lifeline, carrying me through my hardest times, and your encouragement and support brought me to the most fulfilling vocation – to become a yoga teacher myself. I will always be grateful to you for igniting the spark of yoga in my life and owe all thanks to you for the warmth and energy that yoga gives me, and now my students. I cherish the time I had with you in Joburg. I love you and miss you my dear Carole! ॐ

Carole, second left, and her students, including Carla Chait, left, and Nella Souris, third right, who write tributes on this page – surrounded by Carole's collection of yoga t-shirts.



Light on Photography

This article was first published in *Yoga Rahasya* (Volume 23, No. 3, 2016). The *Yoga Rahasya* magazine is published quarterly by the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune and is available by subscription. Invitations to subscribe are sent to members early in the new year. This magazine consistently offers high-quality articles covering many aspects of Iyengar yoga. We thank *Yoga Rahasya*'s editor for permission to reprint the article.

By Leslie Hoggia

Like many students and teachers of Iyengar Yoga, I too often refer to the *Light on Yoga*. I look at the photographs over and over again to check on the proper positioning of the feet, the arms, the head and other body parts in the different *āsanas*. Each time I look at these photos and read the adjacent text, I notice a detail that I had not noticed before. I always observe and learn something new each time.

I got a deeper appreciation of these photographs and the immensity of the task it was to produce them during one of my visits to the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute library. I was shown three giant photo albums containing all the 602 photographs from *Light on Yoga*. Each photograph was a massive 8 by 11 inch in size. It was indeed a treat to see all the plates from *Light on Yoga* at this magnitude.

I was assigned the task of attaching small strips of paper under each photograph with the correct plate number to correspond with. I had to ensure that there were no typographical errors or omissions. My friends from the other countries also volunteered to assist in this task.

This job was a great learning experience as it gave me the opportunity to study and notice some finer details in the *āsanas*, which I had never noticed in the smaller version of the photographs in *Light on Yoga*. Each photograph expressed the art of yoga and the genius of B.K.S. Iyengar. I noticed the consistency in light, in form and in proportion

in each photograph as I shuffled page after page. I could not resist asking Guruji on how long this photography session lasted.

"Three years" was the astounding reply.

In the first two years, he learned how to express each pose for the camera. He had to identify the correct angle from which the *āsana* had to be photographed. The body would look too short or too tall, or display some form of distortion if the angle of the camera was incorrect. Appropriate external lighting was required so that the *āsana* was visible and understandable to the reader. The extent of lighting was crucial so as to have good contrast without any excessive shadows. Any distortions or problems in presentation or lighting had to be identified and rectified with fresh photographs.



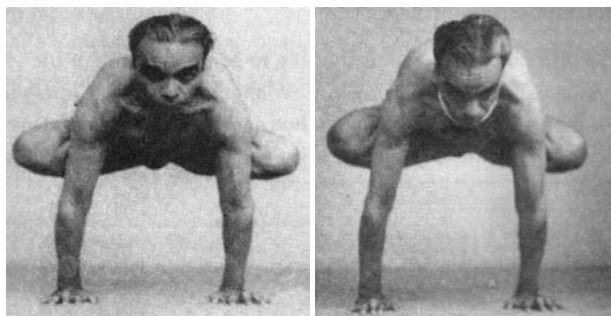
Astāvākṛāsana before (above) and after (below) improving the angle of the camera and the lighting!



Guruji learned a lot about photography in these two years so as to present the *āsanas* in the clearest possible way. He learned, for example, that blue light was more effective than white. These two years were a preparatory phase, like the alchemist preparing the necessary ingredients for the big discovery. During his preparatory years Guruji learned:

- How each *āsana* should be presented in a photograph.
- Which angle of the *āsana* should be preferentially shown since it was not possible to present all the angles.
- Where the photographer should be positioned to minimize shadows.

- How to present the details of the *āsanas*.
- Which part of the body should the photographer focus the camera on.



Kukkutāsana photographed at different angles. The one on the right was selected for *Light on Yoga*.

The final photographs were taken in the third year. The photographs were developed overnight. Guruji would then examine each one in detail for the correct presentation of the *āsana*, the precise amount of lighting and the accurate angle of the camera so that the body would not appear distorted. If any errors were detected then the *āsana* would be photographed again on the next day making amendments to the lighting or the angle. Messrs G. G. Welling are acknowledged as the photographers in the preface of *Light on Yoga*.

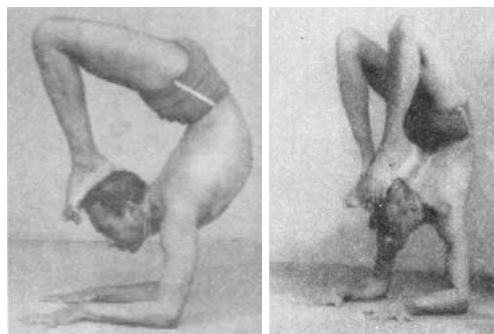
If you have another look at these photographs today, you will notice the clarity of expression of each *āsana*. There is no hardness in the abdomen, no tension in the face or any part of the body, not even in the little toes. The *āsanas* are presented as yoga, not as a projection of Guruji's personality. And this was done in the 1960s when we did not have computers and remarkable photo editing software of the kind available today!

By the time Guruji published the *Light on Prānāyāma* in 1981, he had acquired a lot of understanding and experience on how to photograph *āsanas*. He knew what he wanted to show and how to achieve that. However, he still had great difficulties when he wanted to show the top view of *Śavāsana*. Many hours and rupees were spent getting the photograph from exactly the correct height so that the body was in proportion and no shadows of the photographer were visible.

Guruji also pointed out to us that if we

were to compare some of the views of his back in seated *āsanas* in *Light on Prānāyāma* with that in *Light on Yoga*, then we could see the impact of his two accidents on his back. One can compare the plates 99 and 102 in *Light on Prānāyāma* with plates 85-88 in *Light on Yoga*.

Different editions of *Light on Yoga* have different quality of photographs even though they are from the same negatives. In the first edition published in 1965, the photos are all in the back of the book, as an appendix. The later editions have the photographs adjacent to the text. Some editions do not have the sharp contrast of the original edition which can be credited with the best quality of the photographs.



"Right" angle at which *Vrschikāsana* to be photographed.

Fortunately, the quality of the photographs is much better in the new larger format from Harper Collins published in 2001. The photographs have been rearranged so that there is less text on the pages with photographs. The formatting of this edition is better because the plates have been grouped as per the stages of the *āsanas*; the quality of paper and the photograph is better. Guruji had intended to have the photograph of the final *āsana* presented in much larger size in the new version of the book but this did not happen, as the cost was prohibitive.

Today, take another look at the art expressed in these beautiful photographs irrespective of the edition or editions that you have. There is much to learn from close scrutiny of them. The visual impact and the insight that these photographs give is much more intense than any amount of words. I place my head at your feet Guruji for your unbelievable eye for details! ॐ

News

Stratford Canning, our wonderful, long-standing Central Committee member – currently ‘treasurer of note’ – turned 80 in November

Stratford is retiring from committee work next year. The birthday wishes for Stratford on social media were like a tide rolling in. Mo Marshak wished him many more years to continue standing on his hands. Ina Gerber thanked him for his ‘wide shadow of shielding us’. Gail Dixon wished him ‘good health, happiness and fortune’ from all Zimbabwean students. Eileen Weinronk wished him ‘abundant chances to rest, review and relish’ during his retirement and thanked him for always being ready to ‘help, hold and humour’. Connie Knopp recalls meeting Stratford wearing a red t-shirt in Wilderness recently – ‘a perfect colour for your big heart’. Nadine Hurwitz thanked him for his ‘ongoing commitment to excellence, detail and humility in all that you do’. Marion Witte noted that Stratford is ‘always kind and clear and patient’. IYISA secretary Anna Claude thanked Stratford for setting ‘the highest standards in everything you do, with inimitable grace and patience’.

IYISA chair Lawrence Batchelor summed up Stratford’s immense contribution: ‘It is not just the “what” you have done but even more so the “how” you have done it. You have always shown up with diligence and commitment, with integrity, and always with an attitude of



can do and with humour and good grace. You are a fantastic example to all of us.’

Stratford said he was humbled by all the messages received. ‘I had parents who taught me well and to give of my best and I have tried to live that way. I think my army training instilled a very disciplined approach to life. I need to say thank you again for all the wonderful messages received. The day was special and enjoyed in style as we celebrated the birthdays of Barry, my twin brother, Jenny, his wife who also turned 80 few days ago and me ... A great day to remember.’

Southern Cape region held preliminary assessments in October

Chairperson Jane Treffry-Goatley says the teacher trainees are ‘a dedicated group of mentees’. Three third-year students were recommended to proceed to the final assessments while three second-year students and two first-year students proceed to the next stage of training.



Yoga workshop in Rondebosch

On a drizzly day, 26 yogis came together for a rejuvenating workshop that lifted spirits and soothed souls. Held on April 12 at Rosebank Junior School in Rondebosch, the event featured two Iyengar instructors: Marisa Buffone, who led us through the powerful practice of pranayama, and Anet Ahern, who shared her insights and expertise on asanas.

Anet's recent trip to Pune brought a special dimension to the workshop. She delighted us with stories, pictures and teachings from her journey, while her display of Guruji's photos and her favourite sayings from Pune, taped to the stage, created a beautiful and heartfelt setting. Her guidance encouraged participants to deepen their asana practice, while Marisa's pranayama session brought calm, clarity and focus to the group. To top it all off, we enjoyed delicious treats after the practice – a perfect way to connect with fellow yogis and celebrate the sense of community we foster.

This enriching experience was available for just R100 for members. The organizers prioritized making yoga more accessible, and for that, we are deeply grateful. A huge thank you to the organizing team, instructors,



and participants for making this workshop so special. Your dedication to sharing the benefits of yoga with our community is truly appreciated. A similar event was hosted by the Western Cape region at the end of November in Paarl. – Marisa Buffone



Honorary Life members

Jenny Morris and Hilde Smoor-Samson both received certificates as Honorary Life members of the institute this year from IYISA chair Lawrence Batchelor. Former IYISA chairs Ina Gerber and Carla Rech were with Batch to present the certificate to Jenny in Stellenbosch (left). Judy Farah hosted a lunch for Hilde at her home in Cape Town and Batch presented her certificate (right).

International Day of Yoga celebrations



Cape Town

The International Day of Yoga was celebrated in true spirit, bringing together different yoga disciplines in a day of unity, health and joy. The event was hosted by the Indian Consulate General in Cape Town, which once again ensured the gathering was filled with warmth, generosity and community. The Western Cape Iyengar Yoga region proudly showcased a dynamic sequence of standing and balancing postures. A heartfelt thank you goes to our

dedicated team – Gerda, Jacqui, Nadia, Batch and Marisa – who demonstrated fun yet challenging poses with skill and enthusiasm. Their presentation encouraged the audience to join in and experience the practice first-hand. The celebration was made even more memorable with delicious food served to all, thoughtful gifts for every participant, including yoga mats and shirts. It was a beautiful day that truly reflected the essence of yoga – connection, gratitude and shared well-being. – Marisa Buffone

Mbabane

People across the age spectrum came to celebrate the International Day of Yoga in the heart of Mbabane, at an event organised by the Indian High Commission in Swaziland. It was a beautiful gathering of yogis uniting to honour the ancient practice of yoga and embrace wellness together. Iyengar Yoga teacher Julie Hertslet taught a session.





Durban

Framed by the Indian Ocean, the Amphitheatre along Durban's shoreline burst into a yellow pattern of contorting bodies as over 4,000 participants joined the International Day of Yoga on Saturday, June 21, creating a vibrant tapestry of peace and community. An Iyengar Yoga teacher, Ashika Singh, was among the teachers on the day. The event was organised by the Indian Consulate General in Durban.



Pietermaritzburg

Thank you to everyone who joined us at Aryan Hall in Pietermaritzburg for the International Day of Yoga, hosted by the Midlands Hindu Society and the Indian Consulate General. It was a day filled with connection of our shared passion for yoga. Iyengar Yoga teacher Omesh Somaroo taught a class.



Yoga with Judy Farah in Durban

Senior Iyengar yoga teacher Judy Farah held an inspiring weekend workshop at Eagle's View Yoga Studio in Winston Park, Durban in July. The attendees deepened their practices and embraced the power of community in every asana, as Judy passionately shared her insights into the beautiful sense of community with the Iyengar yoga sangha, reminding us of the power of connection in our practice.

Backbending with Güdrun von Wimmersperg in Gauteng

Güdrun, seen here in Pincha Mayurasana, held a backbend workshop in Gauteng in September this year – a continuation of a longstanding tradition that started at her house in Johannesburg in 1977 with her dear friend Jenny Morris. In a tribute to Jenny in our last edition, Güdrun recalled 'It was mainly a backbend practice, as it was difficult to practice the more difficult poses on one's own ... This practice is still continuing in the hall where I am teaching.' After her September workshop, Güdrun said: 'We need to keep this going. I know how wonderful one feels [after a backbend class]!! I was in my seventies when I did these backbends and came home with such courage that I climbed up the roof and fixed the broken tiles which are still holding!! That is actually why I run these backbend sessions, not for me but for the community.' ॐ



Newly Qualified Teachers in 2025

Congratulations to the following people who successfully completed their mentorship, joining our Institute as fully qualified Iyengar teachers.

LEVEL 1

Gauteng

Beverley Fraser

Heena Morar

Robyn Katz

KwaZulu-Natal

Gregg Oosthuizen

Yvonne Gysman

Southern Cape

Chandre Gould

Vanessa Snyman

Bronwyn Eyre

Western Cape

Megan Jones

Carl van der Lingen



Letter from IYISA Chair

Dear Yogis

2026 is just around the corner, and next year the BKS Iyengar Institute of Southern Africa celebrates the momentous occasion of our 50-year birthday!

Our Southern African Institute has been in existence for 50 years, making it one of the original Iyengar Yoga organisations worldwide. The number of teachers who have been developed, the number of students who have benefitted, and the number of lives that have been touched in those years is a phenomenal achievement. We are extremely proud of this, not just in terms of the numbers, but also in terms of our integrity and loyalty to the teachings of the Iyengar lineage.

So next year is a year of celebration and looking back with pride. As such, we have events planned, culminating in the visit of Abhijata Iyengar in November 2026.

SUNITA IYENGAR, ONLINE WORKSHOP

28 February and 1 March 2026

Updates to follow

ABHIJATA IYENGAR

- **14 November 2026**

Blockbuster Yoga event in KZN for all Yoga practitioners

Venue is to be confirmed

Morning workshop

- **16 to 20 November 2026**

Workshop for Iyengar yoga practitioners

Venue: Cedar Park Conference & Banqueting Hall, Woodmead, Johannesburg

We are very excited and pleased to promote these celebratory events. We are exploring packages to make the events accessible to the entire Southern African Iyengar Yoga community, so please save the dates and start preparing. We would love to see you there.

In addition, look out for community events

in your regions – the regional committees are hard at work putting together interesting celebratory events.

2025 DRAWS TO A CLOSE

As 2025 draws to a close, we look back at another enriching year.

In May, we hosted Firooza Ali Razvi for wonderful workshops in both Johannesburg and Cape town.

In October, Corine Biria put some of our teachers through their paces in a tremendously enlightening course in Wilderness.

We were greatly enriched by both these senior teachers, who are so steeped in the traditions of Guruji's Yoga. It was such a fitting lead in to our Golden Anniversary year in 2026.

OFFICE POSITIONS AVAILABLE

We also have some open office positions for 2026:

Central Committee:

- Treasurer

Contact Lawrence Batchelor,
chair@bksiyengar.co.za

Western Cape:

- Clothing sales co-ordinator

Contact Marisa Bufone,
marisabuffone@gmail.com

AGM OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Lastly, we meet for our **Annual General Meeting on 15 March 2026**. Details to follow.

This Institute would not be in existence without the support of our teachers and members – thank you again for 50 years of support. We rely on all of you to thrive for the next 50 years.

We also request that your **membership fees** are paid promptly for 2026. Fees will increase to R300 for members and R450 for teacher members. We thank you in advance.

With gratitude for an inspiring 2025, and in anticipation of a Golden 2026!

On behalf of the Central Committee
Lawrence Batchelor ॐ

1 9 7 6 - 2 0 2 6

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING



50

GOLDEN YEARS

THE BKS IYENGAR YOGA INSTITUTE
OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR UPCOMING EVENTS
[HTTPS://BKSIIYENGAR.CO.ZA/EVENTS/](https://bksiyengar.co.za/events/)



SAVE THE DATES
28 FEBRUARY - 1 MARCH, 2026

IYENGAR YOGA

50

GOLDEN YEARS
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING
ONLINE WITH
SUNITA
PARTHASARATHY
IYENGAR



THE BKS IYENGAR YOGA INSTITUTE
OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

SAVE THE DATES
FOR THIS ONLINE CONVENTION
[HTTPS://BKSIYENGAR.CO.ZA/EVENTS/](https://bksiyengar.co.za/events/)



SAVE THE DATES
16 - 20 NOVEMBER, 2026

IYENGAR YOGA

50

GOLDEN YEARS
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING
IN PERSON WITH
ABHIJATA
IYENGAR



THE BKS IYENGAR YOGA INSTITUTE
OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

SAVE THE DATES

FOR THIS IN-PERSON CONVENTION
[HTTPS://BKSIIYENGAR.CO.ZA/EVENTS/](https://bksiyengar.co.za/events/)





Yoga READERS

WITH AGI WITTICH

Yoga Readers is a free online reading community for yoga practitioners and teachers, where we study Iyengar teachings together.

We read on our own, meet on Zoom to reflect and discuss (+recordings), and ask how the text can deepen our practice and teaching today. We also have reminders on WhatsApp & discussions on Facebook.

Facilitated by Dr. Agi Wittich
Iyengar yoga teacher & scholar of Indian religions

Next reading: "Light on Pranayama"
in January 2026

Open to yoga practitioners and
teachers worldwide

Scan to join Yoga Readers





BKS Iyengar Yoga Centre Oudsthoorn, South Africa 2026

With David Jacobs

DATES:

January 16-18
February 13-15
March 13-15
April 10-12
May 15-17
June 19-21
July 17-19
August 14-16
September 18-21
October 16-18
November 20-22
December 18-20

COURSE INFO:

- Courses run from Friday to Sunday.
- Two sessions per day:
9.00-12.00 and 14.00-16.00.
- R3000 per person for a three-day course.
- Bring your own mat and drinking water.
- A wide range of private accommodation is available in Schoemanshoek.

**FOR BOOKINGS
CONTACT:**

082 886 7568

Yoga works on each individual for his or her growth and betterment, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. It is meant for the whole of humanity."

-BKS Iyengar

**19th to 23rd January '26
9h00 to 11h00**

- A five day course working through the essential poses to set the direction of your year ahead on the path of yoga to bring health and joy - open to all yoga students

R1100

**40 9th Street Parkmore, Jhb
and Online**

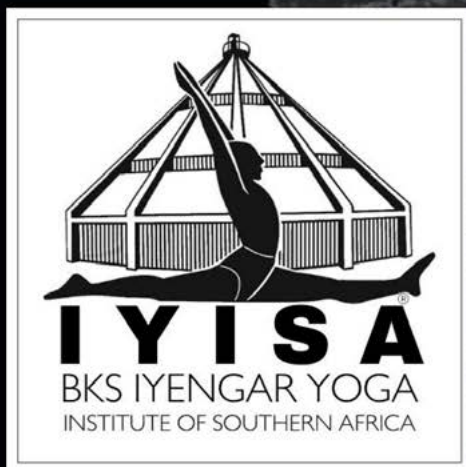
yogawithdize@gmail.com

+27 (0)7 33 11 28 88



Iyengar
Yoga
with Dize





IYENGAR YOGA WITH JUDY FARAH

**BUDDHIST RETREAT CENTRE
IXOPO, KZN**

**ATTEND THE FULL WEEK OR THE WEEKENDS
ONLY**

FRI 3RD JULY TO SUN 5TH JULY

OR

SUN 5TH JULY TO FRI 10TH JULY

OR

THE WHOLE RETREAT: FRI 3RD JULY TO FRI 10TH JULY

Preferred booking method:
bookings@brcixopo.co.za

Iyengar Yoga with Dize

Yoga retreat in Perigord Noir - France

Dates: 5 to 11 July 2026

level: general. 1 year or more of yoga practice

Instruction given in French and English

Registration Now Open!

register on the website www.le-hangar.eu

- Cost - 1200€ - includes;
- yoga course, 2 meals per day, shared accomodation (2 per room*), use of the yoga room and all yoga props



www.yogawithdize.online
yogawithdize@gmail.com



www.le-hangar.eu
anne@le-hangar.eu



Yoga & Mindfulness Retreat

Carla De Gouveia Level 2 Iyengar Yoga Teacher



23rd - 28th
Sept
2026

In Toto
Garden Route
Sedgefield
★★★★



What's included ?

Accommodation and Meals • Daily Yoga Sessions
Morning Asana Practice • Evening Restorative Practice
Mindfulness Exercises • Breathwork and Meditation
Guided Indigenous Forest Walk • Sedgefield's Mosaic Tour

carla@jivana.co.za

roland@intoto.co.za

More Info @ www.jivana.co.za





IYENGAR YOGA: MOVING INTO STILLNESS

WITH RIVA HIRSCHOWITZ

2 – 6 October
Ixopo Buddhist Retreat, KZN

Cost: 2 nights' accommodation+ R450 surcharge

In our fast paced lives, we need the time to find quiet and calm. With this quiet we find the resilience to face the world and all that comes our way. Through asana (posture), pranayama (breath control) and meditation practice, as well as times of Noble silence, we give ourselves this time to uncoil and find space mentally and physically. This space gives breath to our emotional wellbeing. This retreat is suitable to yoga students that would like to experience Iyengar yoga and those that would like to deepen their understanding and practice of Iyengar yoga.

Contact Riva for more information: Whatsapp 082 782 8275



Equipment made to order

Foams (each):

R50 members, R55 non-members

Foam covers:

R85 members, R95 non-members

Blocks (set of 2):

R180 members, R200 non-members

Baby whale:

R600 members, R650 non-members

Benches/whales:

Made to order. Price as per wood cost.

Contact: Ina Gerber

083 303 5477 | inagerber57@gmail.com

For collection: Somerset West



Slanted planks & blocks

Solid pine blocks – R250 per set
Pine slanted planks – R220 each

Contact Benjamin: 082 329 8912
GAUTENG



Yoga props made to order

Handmade wooden and sealed yoga props,
including headstand benches.

Contact Theresa 082 465 7741
CAPE TOWN



**IYENGAR YOGA BOLSTER.
HIGH QUALITY MATERIAL.**

R500

65cmX30cmX10cm

CONTACT NISHI TO ORDER

082 835 0005

**PICK UP FROM 16 RUDLING ROAD
SCOTTSVILLE,
PIETERMARITZBURG**



**Limited
Stock**



YOGA PROP BAG

SUPPORT OUR KZN-ESWATINI FUNDRAISING INITIATIVE



**TO ORDER:
WHATSAPP ASHIKA
SINGH ON
082 562 8066**

**INTRODUCTORY
PRICE**

R350

*BAG ONLY, DOES NOT INCLUDE PROPS



BKS Iyengar Yoga Centre South Africa Oudtshoorn

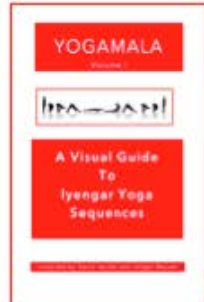
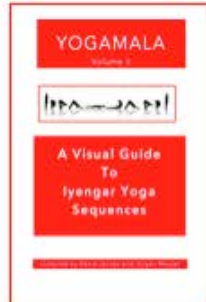
www.iyengaryogawithdavid.com

Practice guides available for iPad, iPhones or other smartphone
mobile devices online - write to us

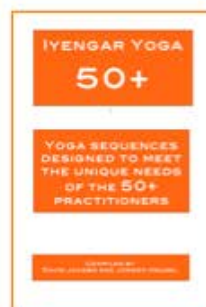
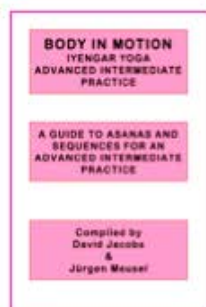
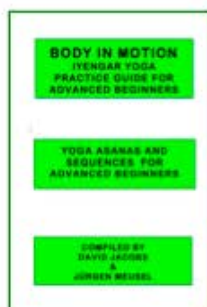
info@iyengaryogawithdavid.com

or visit the online store

www.iyengar-yoga-sequences.com/practice-guides



Our "Body in Motion" series available 2019/20



Online classes

GAUTENG

Pranayama on Zoom

For teachers and mentees

- Mon 3 pm
(contact Carla Rech on 083 300 8277)
- Wed 3 pm
(contact Carla de Gouveia on 082 402 8169)

RIMYI recordings of Geetaji's classes on Zoom

For teachers and students

- First, third, and fifth Thursdays of the month at 10 am – 12 pm
(contact Carla Rech on 083 300 8277)

KWAZULU-NATAL/ESWATINI

For teachers and third-year mentees

Recorded classes of Geetaji's teachings on Zoom

- Every Thurs 11 am – 1 pm
(contact Sascha Türk on 083 251 0153)

WESTERN CAPE

For teachers

Online classes

- Every Wed 9 – 10.30 am
(contact Marisa Buffone on 073 053 9737)

Online/hybrid online Iyengar teachers in South Africa

Carla De Gouveia

General Iyengar classes suitable for beginner and intermediate levels

Morning classes:

- Mon 7:30 – 9 am
- Tues 8 – 9:30 am
- Thurs 7:45 – 9:15 am
- Fri 7:30 – 9 am

Evening classes:

- Mon 6:30 – 8 pm
- Thurs 6:30 – 8 pm

Contact:

082 402 8169

carla@jivana.co.za

www.jivana.co.za

Dize Watson

- Subscription classes: short and focused classes, live online with recordings to fit your schedule, 8–9 classes/month of 35–45 minutes
- Classic classes: traditional classes, in studio or online, 75–105 minutes
- See website for the full schedule

Subscription: R750/month

Classic classes: varied rates

Contact:

073 311 2888

www.yogawithdize.online

yogawithdize@gmail.com

Esmé de Wet

Online classes

- Thurs 9 – 10:30 am

Contact:

esmedewet@gmail.com

Ina Gerber

Online classes

- Mon 5 – 6:30 pm

Contact:

083 303 5477

Michele Higginson

Hybrid online classes

General level:

- Wed 6 – 7.30 am
- Fri 9 – 10.30 am

Intermediate level:

- Tues 12 – 2 pm

Bookings on Octiv app for Asha Yoga Studio or contact Michele 0828912839

Riva Hirschowitz

Online classes

- Tues and Thurs 5:30 – 7 pm

Contact:

082 782 8275

Yvonne de Bruin

Online classes for general level

- Mon and Fri 9 – 10:30 am (in person and Zoom)
- Tues 6 – 8 pm (in person and Zoom)
- Thurs 5 – 6:30 pm (Zoom only)

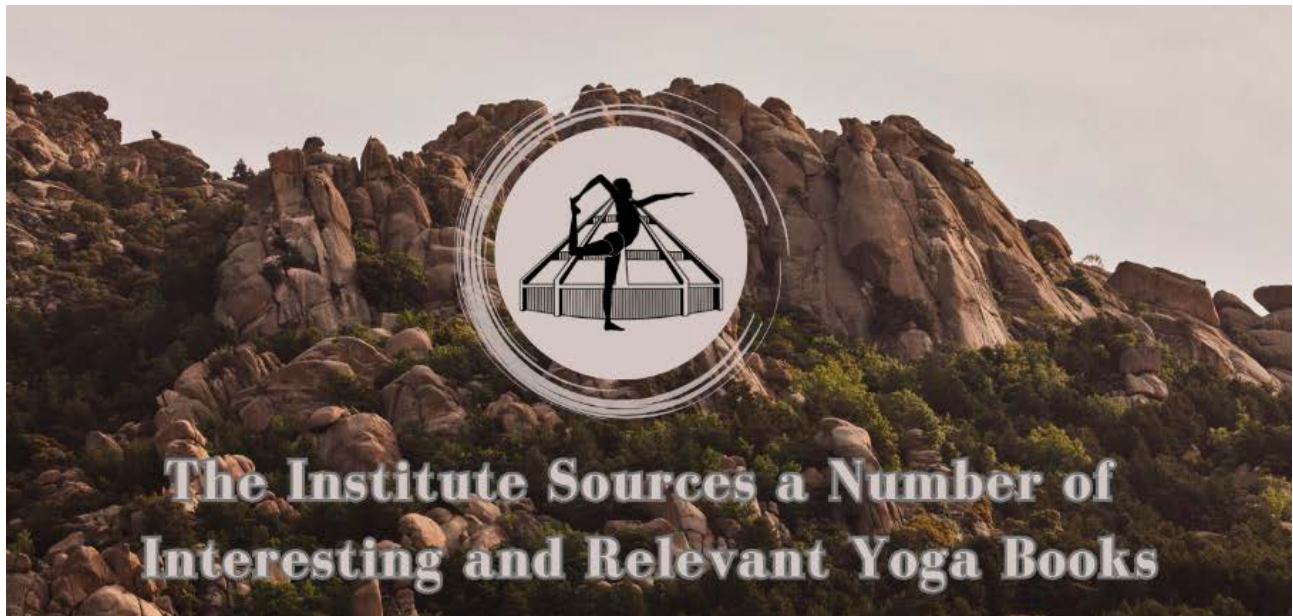
R500 per month unlimited

Contact:

082 883 7607

debruin@global.co.za





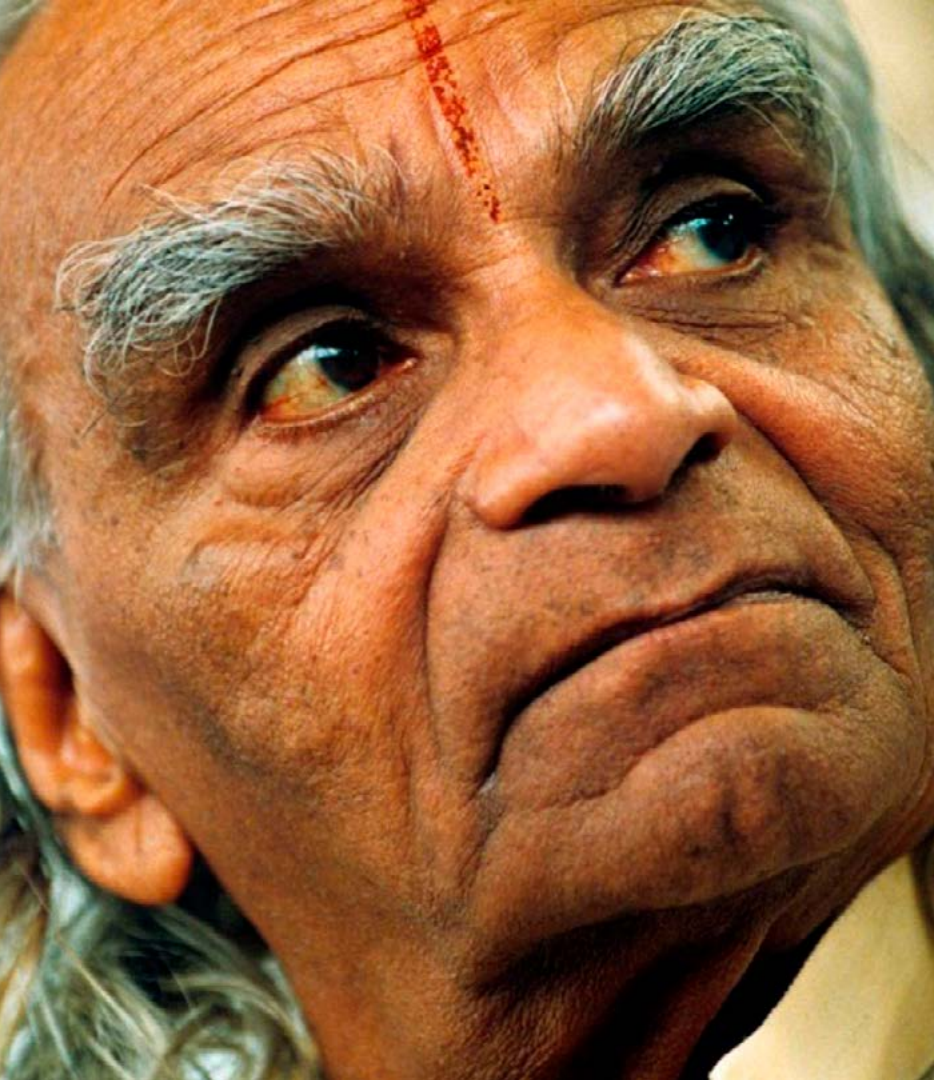
Books for Sale from the Institute are:

- 70 Glorious years of Yogacharya
- Arogya Yoga
- Alpha & Omega of Trikonasana
- Astadala Yogamala Volumes 1 - 8
- Imagine If by Rajvi Mehta
- Patanjala Yoga Sutra Paricaya
- Pranayama
- Preliminaries of Pranayama
- The Art of Yoga
- Tuesdays with Prashant
- Yaugika Manas
- Yoga - A Gem for Woman
- Yoga in Action: Intermediate Course I
- Yoga in Action: Preliminary Course
- Yoga Rahasya Therapy
- Yogadhara
- Yoganjali
- Yoga Rahasya Volumes A - D
- Yogashastra Tome 1 - 5
- Mobility in Stability
- Beloved Gururji
- Yoga for Children



If you wish to purchase books
please contact Esmé De Wet:
esmedewet@gmail.com
(first check availability)





"Emotions are part of the
physiological interface between
body and mind ...

Yoga... teaches us how to
control our emotions so they
do not control us."

– GURUJI B.K.S. IYENGAR



BKS IYENGAR YOGA

INSTITUTE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

info@bksiyengar.co.za

 [BKSlyengarZA](https://www.facebook.com/BKSlyengarZA)

 [iyengar.yoga.south.africa](https://www.instagram.com/iyengar.yoga.south.africa)

www.bksiyengar.co.za