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Dear Members

Welcome to the second issue of the Institute Newsletter.

The Newsletter was created in response to feedback from our 2003 members survey, which indicated a need for us to provide some communication in addition to the existing Dipika magazine. Dipika will continue to be published annually with the next issue due in May 2005, while the Newsletter will be issued quarterly. If there is anything you would like to see in either Dipika or the Newsletter please contact the office. The previous Newsletter was our first attempt at an electronic mail-out, so if you experienced any problems with the email link please let us know. In addition the Newsletters have a permanent link on our website and printed copies are available at the Institute.

In December 2004 we held a special celebration in honour of Geeta Iyengar's 60th birthday. Ursula Schoonraad, a longstanding member of the Institute and an experienced teacher based in South London, presented a workshop inspired by the Preliminary Course: Yoga in Action written by Geeta Iyengar in 2000 (If you have not already read this book we would strongly recommend it for students of all levels!). A full review of the event will appear in the next issue of Dipika.

Geeta's birthday and the Institute's 20th Anniversary celebration (in May 2004) together raised £500, which was subsequently presented to B K S Iyengar in Pune by the Institute's co-chair, Penny Chaplin. This donation will be added to the Bellur fund, set up by Mr Iyengar in 2002 to support work in his home village of Bellur in Karnataka. European students have long contributed to work in the village, including the construction of a school there in the 1960's. With ongoing contributions Mr Iyengar has been able to provide a yoga studio for pupils at the school. Geeta's particular wish is to provide a school for the girls in the village where they can continue their education including yoga instruction.

This year in May the Institute will be celebrating its 21st Anniversary (see forthcoming events).

I welcome any comments regarding the building, timetable or any other concerns you may have. I am in the office during working hours and can also be contacted on emma@iyi.org.uk.

Emma Craig  
Institute Manager



# Patanjali

Have you ever wondered who the figure staring out at you from the statue in studio one might be? The figure is Patanjali, the father of yoga about whom BKS Iyengar has written in his 'Light on Yoga Sutras of Patanjali'. Below are some quotes giving background to Patanjali:

*Who was Patanjali?* 'Historically Patanjali may have lived some time between 500 and 200 B.C., but much of what we know of the master of yoga is drawn from legends. He is referred to as a svayambhu, an evolved soul incarnated of his own will to help humanity. He assumed human form, experienced our sorrows and joys, and learned to transcend them.' As well as being a celebrated author of the Yoga Sutras, he also wrote treatises on ayurveda and grammar.

*What did he teach?* 'In the Yoga Sutras he described the ways of overcoming the afflictions of the body and the fluctuations of the mind: the obstacles to spiritual development. '

'Patanjali's 196 aphorisms or sutras cover all aspects of life, beginning with a prescribed code of conduct and ending with man's vision of his true Self.'

'Like pearls on a thread, the Yoga Sutras form a precious necklace, a diadem of illuminative wisdom. To comprehend their message and put it into practice is to transform oneself into a highly cultured and civilized person, a rare and worthy being.'

Quotes from 'Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali', BKS Iyengar, Thorsons, 2002. Copies of these and other books by BKS Iyengar are for sale at the Institute.

Want to know more about yoga philosophy? The Sutra Set is a study group which next meets on Friday April 8th at 2.30 pm, when 'Hatha Yoga Pradipika' will be discussed. Contact Barbara Norvell via the Institute for further information.

In each issue of the newsletter, we will be introducing a philosophical aspect of Yoga. If you have any area of interest, please contact us at [office@iyi.org.uk](mailto:office@iyi.org.uk).



# Desert Island Asana

Text by Roy Dietz

The 'Desert Island Asana' feature began in the first edition of this newsletter, with an article by Korinna Pilafidis-Williams on the shoulder stand (Sarvangasana). Mere students have a trickier task in choosing a pose, since our knowledge is more limited, but we can begin only from where we are. I'm going to plump for Virabhadrasana 3, for the reasons below.

First, let's think about the challenges and constraints of the desert island. There's going to be no splendid, heated wooden floor. No ropes, no blocks, no pads, no blankets and no mats. Only a lot of sand and palm trees. Sand on which the prospect of sitting poses and downward-facing backbends might be unattractive – not least because of voracious tropical insects. Yoga classes in Europe that venture outside in the open air have the right idea. They tend to save the floor poses for indoors. So, a standing pose it has to be!

How to choose the desert island standing pose? It should clearly be something challenging, so that I could work on improvements over the years before my rescue. But it should not be as far beyond my reach as some of the balancing poses demonstrated by BKS Iyengar in the photographs around the Institute. (I sometimes think that they are there to frighten foundation students). No, the ideal is a pose at which I can now just make some sort of feeble stab on a good day. My choice narrows to Parivrtta Parsvakonasana or Virabhadrasana 3. I'm sure that a few years' practice with either would do me no end of good, but Virabhadrasana 3 wins for the reason that it's two poses for the price of one, since the classical way into the pose is through Virabhadrasana 1. Moreover, the Virabhadrasanas (warrior poses) are dedicated to Virabhadra, a powerful hero of Hindu mythology, created by the god Siva from his matted hair. Virabhadra's vigour and success in battle provide a very good model for any desert island castaway.



Remembering that the uses of adversity are sweet, I could draw the shape of a mat in the sand. It could have a carefully positioned centre line as a reminder about alignment and a clear end on which to focus the eye when it's helpful. Maybe the footprints left on the sand after the pose would be instructive about weight distribution and centering. And the virtual mat would not need to be rolled up at the end of my practice. I could practice Virabhadrasana 1 with my rear heel pressed against a palm tree. I could practice Virabhadrasana 3 with arms stretched horizontally and grasping a palm tree with my hips parallel to the ground and one leg stretching back. Who knows, I might even get to the full, free-standing pose without the outstretched leg waving around like a weathervane in a storm.

Light on Yoga teaches us that practising Virabhadrasana 3 leads to harmony, balance, poise and power. It helps to contract and tone the abdominal muscles and makes for more shapely and sturdy leg muscles. It is recommended for runners, as it gives vigour and agility, and helps one to stand firmly on the soles of the feet. Is an extract from Light on Yoga provided for castaways, along with the traditional Bible and Shakespeare? Without it, I should have to rely on remembered instructions. All students of Iyengar yoga must be familiar with the way our understanding of a teacher's instructions develop and deepen with practice – from 'what does that mean?' through 'I can see what that means but I can't do it' and eventually to 'yes, that develops the pose!' Doing without teaching would be one of the great sadnesses of the castaway's life.

The most famous castaway is undoubtedly Robinson Crusoe, whose adventures were related in 1719 by Daniel Defoe. Early in the novel, Crusoe's father gives him some advice about:

the 'middle station of life' in which way men are not embarrassed with the labours of the hands or of the head, but rather slide gently through the world and sensibly taste the sweets of living, feeling that they are happy and learning by every day's experience to know it more sensibly.

Now how yogic is that?

*Roy Dietz has been a student at the Institute since 2000 and has just finished his three years tenure as a trustee.*

# Role of the chair in a yogi's life



Text by Penny Chaplin

The use of the chair in Virabhadrasana I and II helps you understand the right angle of the bent leg.



## Virabhadrasana I

-Work the back leg from the inner ankle bone to the outer knee, from the inner knee to the outer thigh.

-Be strong with your back leg to move the corresponding hip forwards. In this way, using the chair can help you align your hips.

-Place the hands on the back of the chair, stretch the arms away from the hand and keep the shoulders down.

-Keeping your bent leg buttock bone on the seat, lift the spine and the sides of the trunk evenly.

## Virabhadrasana II

-For the bent leg, check that you have your inner ankle bone in line with the inner knee and your shin bone perpendicular.

-The use of the chair will help you open the pelvis and control the back leg, keeping the outer edge of the back foot firmly on the floor.



-Lift the spine and the sides of the trunk and stretch your arms evenly, keeping the shoulders down and the shoulder blades moving away from one another.

*Images are from a series of photographs taken at the Pune Institute collectively titled 'Role of the chair in a yogi's life'.*

# Institute news/notices

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## **Introductory Teacher Training Course 2005**

Application deadline for the Introductory Teacher Training Course starting this September is 4th April. If you are interested in applying for this 2 year course at the Institute, contact the reception.

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## **Membership cards**

Can all members please help reception staff by bringing in their membership cards, as we are moving over to a number recording system. This is being introduced in order to improve our accounting and reporting systems. At first this may slow down the receptionists, so please be patient whilst we introduce this new system. Your support in this will be greatly appreciated.

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## **21st Anniversary**

The Institute is celebrating its 21st Anniversary in 2005. Plans are being made to celebrate this special occasion which will be held in mid-May. More details of events will be provided in Dipika and the notice board. If any members have photos of the Institute buildings or memories they would like to share please send them to Emma Craig at the Institute, where they can be used to form a display.

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## **Security**

To improve security we are having a digital lock installed in the front gate. This will be closed after the last class each evening to avoid unwanted late night visitors. We do our utmost to keep the institute a safe and secure environment, but in the past there have been occasional break ins and intruders, so please do remember always to take any valuables into the studio with you.

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## **Trustees**

We would like to thank Roy Dietz, Tony Morris, Patsy Sparksman and Lorna Walker who have recently completed their three year tenure as trustees.

We welcome Joy Besse, Grace Billington, Angela Byrne, Eric Clause and Barbara Norvell as new trustees.

New trustees required. We are looking for new trustees to join the board who have skills or experience in the following field: Marketing, Legal, Human Resources, IT and Facilities Management. For further information, please ask at the office or contact Emma on 020 7624 3080 or emma@iyi.org.uk

## Class news

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**Pranayama Course with Silvia Prescott:** 7 - 9pm, Friday, 22nd April, 6th and 20th May.

**Pranayama Classes with Johanna Heckmann-Mohan:** 6.30pm - 8.30pm, Friday, 1st, 8th and 15th April.

**Foundation Course:** new start dates: 8.00pm - 9.15pm on Tuesday 19th April; 8.15pm - 9.30pm on Wednesday 30th March; 2.00pm - 3.15pm on Sunday 17th April.

**Free taster classes:** for complete beginners on Thursday 31st March (8.00pm - 9.00pm) and Sunday 24th April (3.30pm - 4.30pm). Booking essential.

## Forthcoming yoga events

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### March

28 (Bank Holiday Mon) General Judy Lynn (10 - 1)

### April

3 (Sun) Beginners Rosemary da Silva (10 - 1)

30 (Sat) *Intermediate* *Stephanie Quirk (day)*

### May

1 (Sun) *Teachers* *Stephanie Quirk (day)*

2 (Mon) General Maitreyavira (am)

13 (Fri) *Talk* *Rajvi Mehta (pm)*

14/15 (Sat/Sun) *General* *Rajvi Mehta (w/end)*

27 (Fri) *Teachers* *Christian Pisano (pm)*

28/29 (Sat/Sun) *Deepening of Practice* *Christian Pisano (w/end)*

### June

3 (Fri) *Philosophy Talk* *Swati & Rajiv Chanchani (pm)*

4/5 (Sat/Sun) *General* *Swati & Rajiv Chanchani (w/end)*

Visiting international teachers in italics

More dates may be arranged for the above period

Please contact us or check on our website for more details and up to date information