

INTERNATIONAL YOGA CENTRE



The challenge of discipline - the joy of learning

The first demand then, the first challenge is to observe what is, which is to know yourself as you really are, not as you should be, that is a childish game, an immature struggle that has no meaning—but to look at violence and observe it. Can one look and how does one look? This is an extraordinarily difficult problem because there are certain factors which we must understand very clearly. Firstly, we must observe without identification, without the word, without the space between the observer and the thing observed; we must look without any image, without the thought, so that we are seeing things as they actually are. This is very important, because if we do not know how to look, how to observe what we are, then we will inevitably create conflict between what we see and the entity who sees. - Krishnamurti

Yoga is the science and art of clear perception. Patanjali begins his treatise on yoga with '**Atha yoga anushasanam**' I-1. It is translated as 'Now, the discipline of yoga'. Why is discipline necessary? What does it truly mean? Discipline is derived from the Latin, *disciplina* 'instruction, knowledge' and *discipulus* 'learner' but the word has perhaps evolved away from its original intended meaning when we use it in the sense of forced control.

Recognizing why discipline is indispensable would ease the need for outer enforcement. Rather than feel compelled, the discipline comes naturally when I realize that what I do is for my own learning, to refine the energies within. When I experience the benefits of yoga, the discipline becomes a joy. I gradually realize that even if what is needed to be done is less than pleasant, the practice is to still go through it with as much equanimity as possible.

The Yoga sutras state that discipline is vital and that the journey of understanding the self begins with the discipline of '**yoga chitta vritti nirodha**' I-2. What is that discipline? To allow the agitation from continual movement of the mind to resolve into the stillness and vastness that is my nature.



When that happens, when the chaotic turbulence subsides, '**tada drashtuh svarupe avasthanam**' I-3. Then the Seer, the energy that perceives, can do so clearly without distortion. That inherent light of wholly seeing and understanding, begins to awaken and radiate without obstruction. I see only 'what is'. Perception is not coloured by what I think it should be or by guilt, blame and regret. The clarity to see 'what is', comes effortlessly when the discipline of staying in stillness is established.

The way the soul is with the senses and the intellect is like a creek. When desire weeds grow thick, intelligence can't flow, and soul creatures stay hidden.

But sometimes the reasonable clarity runs so strong it sweeps the clogged stream open.

No longer weeping and frustrated, your being grows as powerful as your wantings were before, more so.

Laughing and satisfied, the masterful flow lets creatures of the soul appear. You look down, and it's lucid dreaming.

The gates made of light swing open.

You see in.

- Rumi

Awareness through Presence and Stillness

It is in the living, the threading through of relationships in work and in play that the essence of life is distilled. The discipline is to stay clear, with as much awareness as possible. Yet, it is precisely in the living that I get caught up in and that is where I usually remain mired in. Feeling a need to occupy myself I hop onto the exercise wheel. I then find it very hard to stop and get off. I want to rest and find peace, yet inwardly I fear the getting off, the sudden quietness of non-movement after years on the treadmill. Perhaps it is also a fear of the unknown, however, the vague desire within to search for something meaningful becomes more persistent. Tired of playing games, I am ready for change. I want to find wholeness.

Yoga affords insight into the exquisiteness of stillness. The clarity experienced when I stay present, to face 'what is' without escaping, is deeply satisfying. Trust, courage, patience, accommodation, perseverance and compassion gradually become more apparent. These are personal, intrinsic qualities of the Intelligence working through the body and are present in each of us. Yoga means union. When I glimpse into any one of these windows to fullness, I long to reconnect to Source. When the hunger for understanding is there, discipline for the practice becomes spontaneous.

The practice tills and prepares the soil, removing obstructions to the flourishing of love and intelligence. Without discipline, ignorance rules, I am rough and out of tune with others. The discipline or learning begins with myself. There must first be balance in body and mind, before stillness and clarity can arise. The discipline continues with relationships. Can I learn through every interaction? Each person becomes a teacher and each situation enriches me. Thus, the learning is continuous, the opportunities for practice, boundless. The harmony within each individual extends outwards, to form one beautiful, unified whole, life's orchestra.

Everyone can see how they have polished the mirror of the self, which is done with the longings we're given.

Not everyone wants to be king! There are different roles and many choices within each.

Troubles come. One person packs up and leaves. Another stays and deepens in a love for being human.

In battle, one runs fearing for his life. Another, just as scared, turns and fights more fiercely.

- Rumi

What's New! Mark your calendars!!

Upcoming workshops!

January 2009 New Year's resolution incentive - \$200 for a block of 10 classes offered January only! Classes valid for 3 months from the date of first class.

January 13 Mei will start a new on-going Yoga basics class for beginners at 7:30pm on Tuesdays.

January 16 - 18 / February 20 - 22 / March 20 - 22

Yoga Asana Intensives focusing on the principles of yogic movement, alignment in asana and the thread of connection between body and mind; the breath. Fri 6:30-8:30pm, Sat 8-11am, Sun 7-10am. \$150 for the weekend intensive or \$40 Fri, \$60 Sat & \$60 Sun.

January 26 & 27 Chinese New Year - on-going classes cancelled.

January 27 Special CNY class Tuesday 10:30am - 12:30pm with Joan - Inner spaciousness through the breath with **BALAKRAMA** full practice format, including *asanas*, one stamp or \$35 drop-in, sign up please.

February 6 - 8 / April 10 - 12 Shadow Yoga Prelude Intensives with Joan Both forms *Chaya Sanchalanam* & *Karttikeya Mandalam* will be covered. Excellent work to clear obstructions and to prepare the foundation! Fri 6:30-8:30pm, Sat 8-11am, Sun 7-10am. \$150 for the weekend intensive or \$40 for Fri, \$60 Sat, no drop-ins Sun.

February 24 to Mar 23, 2009 Ken Harakuma of Ashtanga Japan / IYC Tokyo in Singapore! He will conduct early morning Mysore classes plus *pranayama* and meditation classes daily!!

February 24 to March 13 inclusive. Limited schedule for all ongoing classes with Ken Harakuma of the International Yoga Centre, Tokyo!! Ken will substitute classes on a limited schedule for two weeks. Daphne, Joan, Mei and Sam will be away then. Please check www.iyc.sg for updates. Classes recommence as usual March 14, Sat.



All photos courtesy of www.linchih.com