



Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute (RIMYI) and Light on Yoga Research Trust, India

*Doot in Sanskrit means a messenger and therefore **Yogadoot** is the messenger of Yoga. Its intent is not just to serve as a news letter; its intent is not just to serve as a source of information. One of the yoga sutra states that "lack of true knowledge is the cause of all pains and sorrows". True knowledge can only be attained by proper understanding and experience and not by mere accumulation of information. Therefore, the intent of **Yogadoot** IS to provide information which inspires; information which a reader can study, apply, experience and understand; information which stimulates thought; information through which a reader gains knowledge which leads to wisdom worthy of human existence. And, we hope that this DOOT slowly but gradually clears confusion, doubts and brings clarity in our thought for knowledge and wisdom to enlighten us.*

Celebration Time: Guru Purnima

Gu in Sanskrit means darkness while Ru means removes. Guru means the one who removes darkness and brings light into our lives. Traditionally, in India, Guru purnima is the day on which the students (*sishtyas*) pay their respects and obeisance to their Guru. Guru Purnima is the birth anniversary of Sage Veda Vyasa, who is considered as the foremost of all Gurus because he organized the Vedas. The Vedas are the oldest

source of knowledge and as Sage Vyasa organized these, his birth anniversary is observed as the day on which the students pay their respects and seek the blessings of their respective Gurus. This year Guru purnima will be celebrated on July 13. As has been for the last several decades hundreds of students will be at RIMYI to express their gratitude to our Revered Guruji.

RIMYI

Renovation work started at RIMYI in the middle of April. Major structural changes have been made, expanding and extending the two Halls. Now about 200 people will be able to practice at one time in these Halls while nearly 1200 people will be able to listen to the talks during the functions.

Till the middle of May, all those who saw the quantum of work pending were doubtful whether the Institute would restart in June. Only one person had the confidence and that is Guruji who actually supervised the work. And, classes at the Institute started as scheduled. The aesthetic work is still going on but that should also be over soon making RIMYI a site which tourists may be inclined to visit even if they have no interest in Yoga.



Overseeing the cleaning of the renovated Hall



Geetaji in the Southern Hemisphere

Geetaji returned after about 4 weeks teaching, lecturing, answering questions and bringing relief to patients in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. The response, as expected, was overwhelming. The conventions were attended by hundreds of teachers and students in each country; some who possibly visit the Institute every year and some who have never ever seen any of the Iyengars. For the latter, it was "an inspirational first exposure to the real thing" as an Australian student put it. Although Geetaji had visited Australia and New Zealand in the past, this was her first visit to South Africa. She was introduced to the South African public by none other than the Indian High Commissioner accompanied by the Indian Counsel General when she gave a talk on the eight aspects of Astanga Yoga. Geetaji has left behind lots for the students to work on and the students fervently are looking forward to her return.

Then & Now

Guruji came to Pune as a young man of 18 with a few rupees in his pocket, no home, not much of formal education, not the best of health and no regular source of income. He struggled in his early days for even a square meal and there were days when he satiated his hunger with tap water. This was a time when yoga was a little known subject amongst the common man. To earn a

livelihood teaching yoga was unimaginable. The way he intensely practiced, got people to comment that he was a "mad man".

Now, when he is 84, yoga has become a household name, millions are practicing "Iyengar Yoga" either through trained teachers or by following his books and CD-ROMs. He is one of the famous personalities in

the world and yoga teaching a very respectable profession. There are thousands of teachers earning a living through yoga.

But, Guruji has not forgotten his humble beginnings and continues to serve the underprivileged through donations and charities - a trait which we sure can imbibe.

Practical Hint from Guruji

When one side of the body is doing better than the other, the other has to become the Guru of the first

Quotable Quote

Humility is required to learn.

-- BKS Iyengar

Why Sanskrit?

With Sanskrit not being a "common language", many students of yoga wonder as to why they should learn the Sanskrit names of the *asanas* and *pranayamas*? After all a rose is a rose is a rose irrespective of which language you speak in! Why not use the English "equivalents" such as shoulder stand for *Sarvangasana* or hand stand for *Adho Mukha Vrikshasana*? Language is just a means of communication and some students and teachers feel that some names of the *asanas* are more difficult than the *asanas* themselves!!

The Sanskrit names of the *asanas* are not difficult, as many assume it to be, if we take an effort to learn them while understanding their meaning. If we can make an effort to learn the *asanas* then why not an effort to learn the names? The names convey the attribute of the *asana* and what can be expected out of it. For example,

a shoulder stand conveys that it is an exercise where one attempts to balance on one's shoulders. While *Sarvangasana* conveys what the *asana* really does. *Sarva* means all *anga* means body which means that practice of *Sarvangasana* brings about an effect on the entire being. In *Adho Mukha Vrikshasana*, we not only

balance on our hands but we need to have the stability and firmness of a tree when doing this *asana*.

Thus, if we make an attempt to understand the meaning of the Sanskrit name of an *asana* then learning the names will not seem so difficult and will improve our performance of the *asanas*.