

namaskar

A VOICE FOR THE YOGA COMMUNITY OF ASIA

January 2013

URBAN YOGA

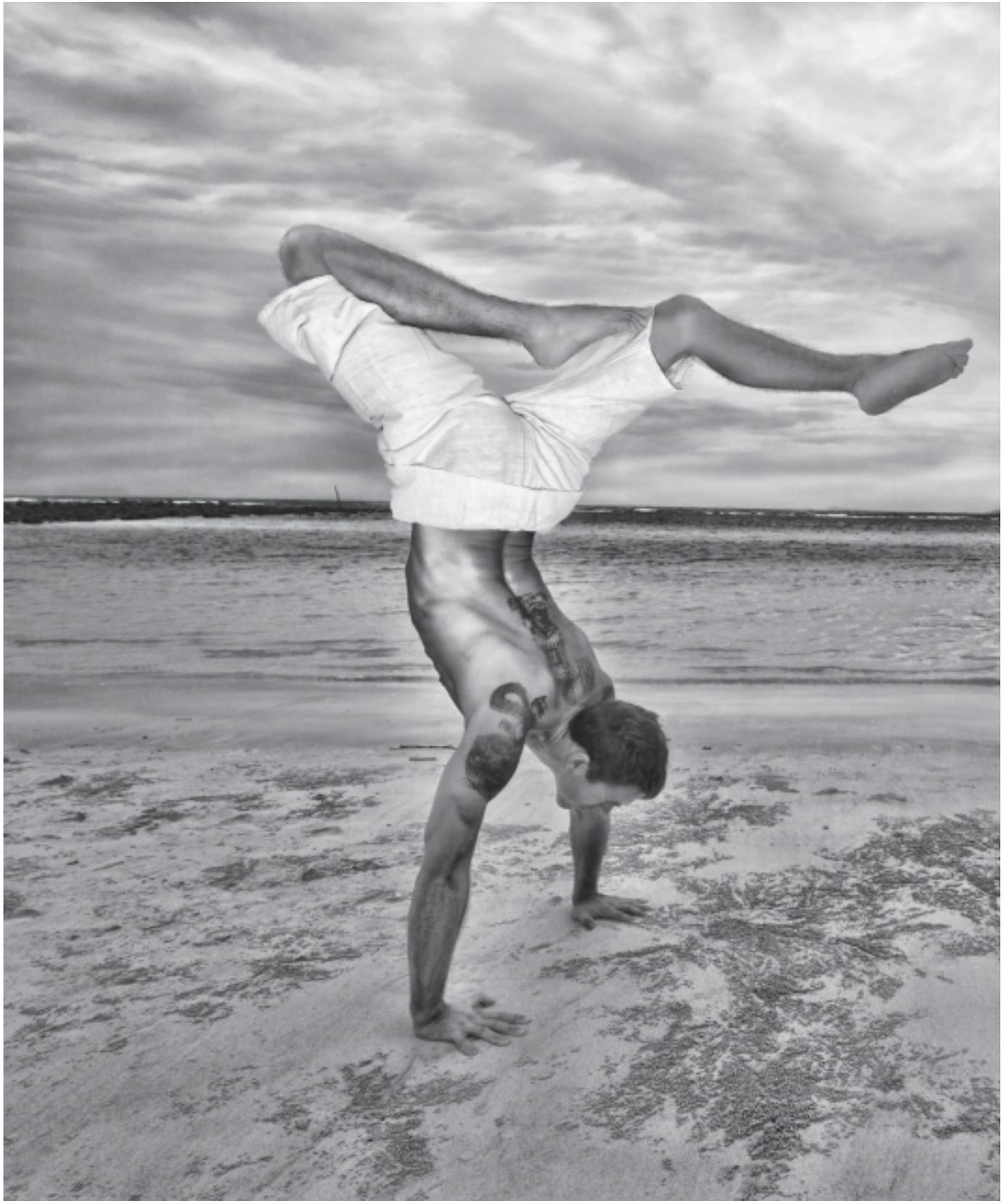
Portraits of global citizens striking a pose in the urban landscapes of London and Shanghai.....p14

FOUNDATION FOR A NEW LIFE

Recovery centre in Thailand puts mindfulness and yoga at the centre of its treatmentp26

QUESTIONING THE BODY BEAUTIFUL

Is it yogic to perpetuate stereotypes of beauty and the perfect yoga body?.....p32



What are you missing in Hong Kong?

2013 Master Teachers Series

SPACE Yoga in Taipei has established a reputation as the premier studio for presenting Yoga in its deep and authentic form. We continue to host inspirational teachers from around the world who share our vision, and SPACE is honored to serve as their Asian base for trainings and workshops.



Richard Freeman

The Essentials Course, 5-day immersion and weekend workshop

Mar. 4 - 10, 2013

Don't miss this truly rare opportunity to learn all the essentials from a transformational teacher in one week what many students spend years seeking. This is the ONE comprehensive course that covers all the vital and relevant themes of yoga and it will bridge the gap between the great variety of techniques and philosophies.

Basia Going

200-hour Yoga Teacher Training

LIVING LAB: Experiencing the Body, Mind, and Heart of Yoga

May 4 - 26, 2013

The practice of yoga is the practice of getting real! In this training, we will use our body, mind, and other tools to realize and come into the heart of who we really are. While a cross-section of required knowledge such as pranayama, meditation, major yogic texts, philosophy and psychology of teaching is covered, our focus will be on making the theory real and relevant to our growth. Do not miss this chance to transform your practice, your teaching, and your life.

Opening Body, Mind and Heart, a 4-day Integrative Yoga Intensive

May. 29 - Jun. 1, 2013

Join Basia for this unique integrative intensive. Not only will you learn to safely condition the body to hold an open space through intelligent back-bending and interactive functional anatomy, you'll also deepen your openness energetically by letting go of emotional baggage and gain insight through philosophical understanding.



Sarah Powers

Insight Yoga 3-day Intensive - The Four Jewels of an Enduring Practice:
Asana, Pranayama, Insight Meditation, Compassion Meditation

Dec. 6 - 8, 2013

Develop a balanced daily practice with Sarah, founder of Insight Yoga. Each day we will highlight the four themes of enduring practice individually, including both Yin and Yang asana sequence, so that we might braid them together as a holistic mandala (or sanctuary of practice) where we can find renewed inspiration and insight.



SPACE
YOGA

Need help with travel and accommodations in Taipei?

SPACE would be happy to assist you.

email teachertraining@withinspace.com or visit www.withinspace.com

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

New Year, New Look

Happy 2013 and hope you enjoy our newly-designed magazine.

Thank you so much to Danielle Huthart and her design studio, Whitespace. Incidentally it was Danielle who, 10 years ago and newly-arrived in Hong Kong, designed the previous format, which served us so well for so long. Please feel free to let me know what works and doesn't work for you.

The *dristi* here is beauty. Frank starts us off by Questioning the Body Beautiful. Andrew, Inge, Michaiela and Rebecca then share their different perspectives. Our contributors really took the *dristi* to heart - the Ayurveda articles from Sudha and Vinod are beauty-related, as is the mythology article and crossword puzzle both by Tia and the asana article from Andrew.

In our Teacher Feature, we introduce Theresa Shan from Singapore. In addition to teaching, she is serving the community with a new online yoga, Pilates and health magazine www.intheLoop.com.sg, with whom Namaskar shares some archival content.

Also doing something very worthwhile is long-time contributor Kim Roberts. She is now based in Chiang Rai and introduces us to her new home at New Life Foundation. This non-profit recovery centre uses yoga and mindfulness to help rehabilitate drug users and others looking to start over.

When you look through this issue you will see photos feature more heavily. To sustain this, we need nice photos. And as we don't have the budget to commission photo shoots every time, the other option is to buy stock photos. However I think we'll build a better community together by using reader photos. So if you have some you'd like to share, please email them to me as high resolution 300 dpi files.

Another thing I really love about this new design is the contributors are shown together on the next pages. This is of our kula, our community. We're using Kula as a section name to replace News. I hope you agree it's a more accurate description of this section as a service to our community, rather than a place to read breaking industry news.

We are looking for a volunteer for circulation and distribution. This would include: cleaning up our current distribution list; introducing Namaskar to new studios and; maintaining up-to-date distribution lists. If you are interested, and can commit for a minimum of one year, please email me on fgairns@netvigator.com

Finally I would like to share a story from my Christmas. Our two children wrote to tell Santa Claus how they'd behaved last year, what they planned to improve on for the coming year and most importantly, what they'd like for Christmas. They mailed their letters to him at the North Pole. I thought that was the end of it. But the next week, they each received a Christmas card with a picture of Santa on the front and personalized, hand-written messages inside - Have a nice year, be good. While our kids were thrilled and convinced Santa had written back, I was puzzled. My only clue to where they came from was the Hongkong Post logo on the back. So next time I saw our postman, I asked him about this mystery. "When we get letters addressed to Santa Claus at the North Pole, we don't actually send them there," he clarified, "so on Santa's behalf our post office staff reply to the children." Mystery solved and heart-warmed enough for a whole year!



Frances Gairns, Editor & Publisher



Cover photo of Konstantin Miachin by John Fallon Hiestand III

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Namaskar provides a voice for the yoga community in Asia and around the world. The publication is an opportunity for practitioners on a yogic path to selflessly offer their knowledge, learnings and experiences with others.

We welcome unsolicited submissions, therefore the opinions expressed within these pages are not necessarily those of Namaskar or its volunteers.

Articles and photographs in Namaskar are contributed at no charge. Advertising income covers production, distribution, administrative costs and discretionary contributions to selected charities and causes.

Namaskar, is published quarterly in January, April, June (coinciding with Asia Yoga Conference) and October. We print almost 5,000 copies per issue (1,000 more in June for AYC) and distribute for free to yoga studios, teachers, fitness centres, retail outlets, restaurants & cafes and other yoga-friendly outlets. Most readers are in Hong Kong, and about 1,500 copies are mailed to 25 other countries.

CONTRIBUTORS



avidyā kṣetram uttaraṣāṁ prasupta
tanu vicchinna udārāṇām

School of Iyengar Yoga

II.4 "Lack of true knowledge is the
source of all pains and sorrows
whether dormant, attenuated,
interrupted
or fully active."

Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

[Translation: BKS Iyengar]

iyengaryogahongkong.com



The Iyengar Yoga Centre
of Hong Kong



ANDREW WILLNER

Andy is an enthusiastic yoga practitioner, and now teacher, with a background in aerobics and martial arts. As a student of Tantric philosophy, he looks to incorporate the tantric roots of yoga into the asana practice to give context to the postures. AWillner@nmg.ws



CAROL ADAMS

Carol takes care of Namaskar administration and invoicing. As well she holds the accounts of a few multinational companies at her home office which gives her the freedom to be a stay at home soccer mom of a 6 1/2 year old boy. She also teaches yoga on a regular basis. carol@caroladams.hk



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FELA ADEBIYI

Raised in East London, Fela is a freelance photographer and yoga teacher. He picked up his first camera aged 11 at secondary school where he became a member of the photographic club to keep him occupied from schoolyard brawling. Fela received his yoga teaching certificate through The Yoga Arts School. He relocated to Shanghai where he has been teaching since 2006. www.felayoga.com



FRANK JUDE BOCCIO

Poep Sa Frank Jude Boccio is a Yoga Teacher, and Zen Buddhist Dharma Teacher ordained by Korean Zen Master, Samu Sunim. His book, Mindfulness Yoga: The Awakened Union of Breath, Body, and Mind is the first to apply the Buddha's Mindfulness Meditation teachings to yogasana practice. He travels worldwide, leading workshops and retreats. www.mindfulness-yoga.blogspot.com , www.zennaturalism.blogspot.com, www.mindfulnessyoga.net



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TIA SINHA

Tia teaches Buddhist techniques of meditation, yoga philosophy and yoga asanas and escapes to Dongyu Gatsal Ling nunnery in India for solitary retreat and to teach yoga to the nuns there. onlytiaz@yahoo.co.in



YOGANAATH DILEEP

Born into a family of yogis in India, Dileep was initiated to Yoga and Tantra from an early age. Later he received training at Shivananda Ashram and Vivekananda Yoga University. As he grew older, he traveled extensively to find answers to his spiritual quest, which took him to the great masters of Himalayas from the yogic lineages of Aghori, Naga and Kapalika. He presently share and practice the joy of yoga in Hong Kong through Myoga & California Fitness. dileeptirur@yahoo.com



KIM ROBERTS

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Rebecca strongly believes in the healing abilities of kundalini yoga. She is an IKYTA certified teacher, and shares kundalini yoga technology at Sol Wellness in Hong Kong. satanama11@gmail.com



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ZOE HO

Zoe loves the magic of empowerment and community through yoga. Her boutique studio in Singapore Republic of Yoga welcomes all shapes, sizes and ages to explore and develop their yoga practice. zoe@republicofyoga.org or <http://www.republicofyoga.org>



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WAI-LING TSE

A yoga teacher based in Hong Kong, Wai-Ling compiles and edits our section of Kula news, retreats, workshops and teacher trainings. Wailing.tse@gmail.com

KULA Updates

HONG KONG

Mindfulness Practition at Plum Village

Sunday Day of Mindfulness Practice (DOM) at Plum Village. The Plum Village Foundation – Hong Kong (PVFHK) promotes the teachings and practice of Buddhism in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh (Thay) and Plum Village, France. This DOM is held every Sunday at AIAB – Asian Institute of Applied Buddhism, Lotus Pond Temple, Ngong Ping, Lantau Island.

The DOM is a day for you to leave behind your work and worries, just to enjoy the presence of each other under the boundless sky and the scenic hillside. You can experience the happiness of the present moment simply by doing a series of mindfulness activities.

The DOM is free-of-charge and welcomes all.

For more information www.pvfhk.org; aiab@pvfhk.org

New location for Shakti Healing Circle

Shakti Healing Circle has moved to a new and enlarged space at 1 Glenealy in Central. They now have 4 healing rooms and an expanded Yoga room for classes and workshops as well as shower facilities. Yoga room and one healing room available for hire.

For more information www.shaktihealingcircle.com; info@shaktihealingcircle.com

Green Frog Yoga for Kids & Families

New classes beginning in January: Mummy and Baby Yoga for age 3-12 months; Kids Yoga for age 2-3; and age 4 and up; Family Yoga as well as Adult Yoga. Held at various locations and times.

For more information www.facebook.com/greenfrogyoga; laura@greenfrog.com.hk; +852 9229 7785

New Teacher at The Yoga Room

Janet Lau has recently joined The Yoga Room team. Janet has a vast knowledge of Yoga anatomy, technicalities, sequencing, meditation, and most importantly,

mindfulness. She is the first certified Baptiste Power Vinyasa Yoga teacher and the only certified Mindfulness Yoga teacher in Southeast Asia.

For more information www.yogaroomhk.com

Flexpress in Central

Flex Studio opens Flexpress in Central starting in January. New Yoga classes have been developed for Flexpress, taught by some of Hong Kong's most popular and experienced instructors. Claudia Whitney will teach a new Core Flow class, a strong practice with an emphasis on strengthening from the inside out, for a transformative and balancing effect. Claudia will also teach her popular Detox Flow class



Claudia will be teaching at Flexpress

here. New to Flex, Nealy Fischer will offer Yoga Fusion – Yoga and Bar unite in this upbeat and dynamic class that combines traditional Hatha Yoga poses with specific body toning exercises. Nealy has also adapted this new class format for her popular prenatal classes, incorporating strengthening and



Founding members of the new Iyengar Yoga Association of Hong Kong

lengthening benefits. Flexpress is located at Lansing House 8th Floor, 41-47 Queen's Road Central (entrance on Li Yuen St East).

For more information
info@flexhk.com; 2813-2212;
www.flexhk.com

New Iyengar Association

The brand new Iyengar Yoga Association of Hong Kong (IYAHK) was established in October 2012. IYAHK is committed to communicating the art, science and philosophy of Yoga as taught by Yogacharya BKS Iyengar. The Association has been established in accordance with the wishes of Mr Iyengar, who has requested that Iyengar Yoga practitioners in East and South East Asian countries form national associations.

A meeting was held to establish the organisation, and Icy Lee (of Yogasala) was elected Chair, and George Dovas (of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Hong Kong) was elected Vice-Chair.

For more information
www.facebook.com/
IyengarYogaAssociationOfHongKong

New Classes at Yoga Central

On Saturdays 8-9:45am there will be a L2/3 led class for experienced

Iyengar Yoga students and teachers only; cost of HK\$70.

The L1 Yoga Basics class will now be changed to 11am-12:15pm.

And new on Tuesday evenings, there is an Introduction to Iyengar Yoga class from 8:30-9:45pm by Sindy Siu in Cantonese.

Students who join classes with prepaid packages during January will receive a free HK\$50 class coupon valid till 31 March; one per student and only while stocks last.

For more information
yogacentralhk@gmail.com;
www.yogacentral.com.hk

Longest-Held Human Chair

Yogaraj CP, holder of two Guinness World Records Holder in Yoga, and head of Yofi Hong Kong Yoga Studio, has recently set an Assist World Record as the "Longest Human Chair".

Yogaraj performed the longest held human chair on 2 December 2012 by lifting his partner Josephine, Chan Chi Yan on his shoulder while remaining in hand stand posture continuously for 40 seconds.

For more information
www.assistworldrecords.com

Yofi Yoga Studio Special Promotion

Yofi Hong Kong Yoga Studio in Tsim Sha Tsui is offering a special HK\$100 for 3 classes promotion.

They offer Rhythmic Yoga, Artistic Yoga, Partner Yoga, Yin Yoga, Yin Yang, Prenatal Yoga, Advanced Yoga, Hot Yoga and much more. For more information +852 2736 2294; www.pranayogam.com

Seeking Instructors

INSPIRE YOGA
Looking for instructors specialising in private Yoga and therapeutics. Fluent English is essential, Mandarin, Cantonese proficiency is an advantage.

For more information info@inspire-yoga.com; www.inspire-yoga.com.

YOGA PRIVATES
Yoga Privates is an exclusive provider of private Yoga and Pilates sessions across Asia since 2008. Seeking Yoga/Pilates instructors based in Hong Kong, Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore and Tokyo.

For more information info@yoga-privates.com, www.yoga-privates.com

INDONESIA AntiGravity Yoga Classes

New Antigravity Yoga classes offered alongside with Kids Yoga, Vinyasa and Kundalini Yoga at Yogasana Studio in Jakarta.

For more information
www.asanastudio.net

Yoga@42 Bikram Yoga Expands

Yoga@42 in Jakarta has newly renovated their space to provide more showers and spacious changing rooms.

For more information
www.bikramyogajakarta.com

Sixth BaliSpirit Festival

20-24 March
Featuring top international Yoga and dance instructors by day and exciting world musicians after dark, the BaliSpirit Festival is a spiritually charged event that celebrates Yoga, dance and music and merges East with West cultures through the arts.

For more information
www.balispiritfestival.com

MEXICO Naam Yoga Superclass

Possibly the biggest yoga class ever recorded, the Naam Yoga Superclass in Mexico on 25 November had over 15,000 attendees practicing at the Monument of the Revolution in Mexico City. The crowd of seasoned yogis or first-timers were all dedicated to practicing Yoga with the intention to open their hearts, rejoice in the power of the breath, heal the planet and send prayers to the Earth.

Naam Yoga is a practice founded by Dr. Joseph Michael Levy that works with sound, movement, and breath that aims to restore the flow of energy throughout the body by allowing the body to start self-regulating all its vital systems.

For more information
www.naamyoga.com

UNITED KINGDOM SoulCentre Opens in London

From January SoulCentre Academy and SoulKids Academy will be bringing their transformational wisdom to the United Kingdom. SoulCentre is a personal development centre for meditation, Reiki and self-improvement courses.

For more information
www.soulcentre.org



Yogaraj and Josephine perform their human chair record

KULA Workshops



Sarah Powers will be teaching in various locations around the region

AUSTRALIA Insight Yoga with Sarah Powers

Jivamukti Yoga - Sydney, Australia -
16-20 January

For more information
mindfullifeyoga.com.au/insight-yoga-workshop-with-sarah-powers/

HONG KONG White Lotus Centre Workshops

BodyTalk Fundamentals Course
(Module 1&2), 12-13 & 19-20
January

Practical Energy Management by
Sandra Sweetman, 7, 14, 21 & 28
February

Reiki introduction talk by Anna
Simms, 15 February

Reiki Level 1 course by Anna Simms,
16-17 February

Personal Power Workshop Free

Introduction with Linda Fancy, 18
February
Mindscape introduction talk, 20
February
Reiki Reflection workshop by Anna
Simms, 21 February
Reiki Level 2 course by Anna Simms,
23-24 February
Creating an Abundant Life, 1 March
Personal Power workshop by Linda
Fancy, 9 & 23 March
Mindscape Seminar, 9 March
CranioSacral Reflexology course by
Martine Faure-Alderson, 28-31
March & December 2013

For more
information info@whitelotuscentre.com
www.whitelotuscentre.com

Insight Yoga with Sarah Powers

Pure Yoga
26-27 January

For more information www.pure-yoga.com;
events@pure-yoga.com

Art of Living, Part 1

15-18 January
Taught by Swami Soumyatej visiting
from the ashram, this course will be
kept small and exclusive so
participants may enjoy quality time
and interaction with him. Limited to
30 participants. Course Fee:
HK\$2,000.

For more information Neelam +852
9641 5749;
neelamdswani@gmail.com,
www.artofliving.org.hk

A Genuine Taste of Sun Salutation with Amarjit Kumar

Ananda Yoga
19-20 January
Surya Namaskara is the core of the
Yoga practice in the revitalization of
the body and psychic energy. This
workshop will focus on awareness,
knowledge and experience to bring
out the essence, the science and the
practical application of Surya
Namaskara. Includes mantra
chanting with Sun Salutation which
uses the power of sound vibration to
release energy.

For more information
www.anandayoga.hk; +852-
35639371;
adm.anandayoga.hk@gmail.com

Charming the Snake: Astrology, Past Lifetimes & Soul Mates with Gahl Eden Sasson

Pure Yoga
22-24 February
Gahl speaks about the mytho-
historical implications of the war in
Iraq, as well as the conflicts in a
marriage – and is sure to make you
laugh, think, feel, imagine, and most
importantly strive to meet your
greatest potential.

For more information www.pure-yoga.com;
events@pure-yoga.com

Jivamukti Workshops with Cat Alip-Douglas

Pure Yoga
19-20 March
Jivamukti Yoga offers physical and
intellectually stimulating Yoga
classes. These workshops will have
the essential ingredients of a
vigorous Jivamukti Yoga practice,
where the experience of an
individual physical practice is
integrated with an introspective
exploration of all relationships that
define who we 'think' we are.

For more information www.pure-yoga.com;
events@pure-yoga.com

Full Moon Kundalini Yoga

Shakti Healing Circle
26 January - Full Moon in Leo: Yoga
for Strength and Radiance
23 February - Full Moon in Virgo:
Yoga for Cleansing and Purification
23 March - Full Moon in Libra: Yoga
for the Heart
Each workshop costs HK\$500 from
2-6pm.

For more information
www.shaktihealingcircle.com;
info@shaktihealingcircle.com

Weekend Intensive with Marla Apt

Yoga Central
26-28 April
For more information
yogacentralhk@gmail.com;
www.yogacentral.com.hk

Celebrate with Peter Scott

Yoga Central
15 June

Join popular Iyengar teacher Peter Scott as he celebrates 10 years teaching Iyengar Yoga in Hong Kong.

For more information
yogacentralhk@gmail.com;
www.yogacentral.com.hk

INDONESIA

Iyengar Workshop & Advanced Class with James Murphy

Iyengar Yoga Centre
22-26 March Workshop
25-26 March Advanced class
James Murphy pursued a ten-year career in dance touring worldwide with the Nikolais Dance Theater when he became interested in Iyengar Yoga.

For more information:
www.iyengaryogaindonesia.com;
info@iyengaryogaindonesia.com

PHILIPPINES

Yin For Women's Health with Dona Tumacder-Esteban

Yoga + at the Fort
12 January, 9 February, 9 March
Beyond Yoga
16-17 March
Templa Wellness
Feb 9 (for teens) & 23 March
Dona will facilitate an open discussion on the phases of a women's cycle based on Traditional Chinese Medicine and lead participants in a Yin Yoga sequence that can harmonize and balance the body and mind during your cycle's different phases.

For more information
dtesteban@yahoo.com

Insight Yoga with Sarah Powers

Beyond Yoga
22-24 February

For more information
www.igobeyondyoga.com

SINGAPORE

9-Day Journey into Power with Tryphena Chia

Pure Yoga
19-27 January
A simple detox to help you reset. Embark on a journey to tap into your own power. Experience what it means to have a holistic practice and feel complete when you step off your mat.

For more information www.pure-yoga.com; events@pure-yoga.com

Iyengar Workshop on Scoliosis with Elise

Iyengar Yoga Centre Singapore
2-3 February
Suitable for anyone with scoliosis whether or not he/she is currently practicing Yoga. With having scoliosis herself, Elise has firsthand knowledge of this condition. Each participant's scoliosis will be identified and Elise will show how to optimize your practice to be more symmetric and balanced.

For more information
www.iyengaryogasingapore.com;
info@iyengaryogasingapore.com

Charming the Snake with Gahl Eden Sasson

Pure Yoga
8-9 March
Gahl speaks about the mytho-historical implications of the war in Iraq, as well as the conflicts in a marriage – and is sure to make you laugh, think, feel, imagine, and most importantly strive to meet your greatest potential.

For more information www.pure-yoga.com; events@pure-yoga.com

Iyengar Workshop & Advanced Class with James Murphy

Iyengar Yoga Centre
28-31 March

James Murphy pursued a ten-year career in dance touring worldwide with the Nikolais Dance Theater when he became interested in Iyengar Yoga.

For more information:
www.iyengaryogasingapore.com;
info@iyengaryogasingapore.com

TAIWAN

The Essentials with Richard Freeman

Space Yoga, Taipei
4-8 March
A rare opportunity to learn all the essentials from a transformational teacher in one week. This course covers all the vital and relevant themes of yoga and it will bridge the gap between the great variety of techniques and philosophies.

For more information
www.withinspace.com

Meditation in Motion: Ashtanga Yoga with Richard Freeman

Space Yoga, Taipei
9-10 March
Learn to awaken the core of the body and the central axis of the body through the Vinyasa system. Experience how to practice and teach meditatively, in and from the present moment.

For more information
www.withinspace.com

Opening Body, Mind and Heart with Basia Going

Space Yoga, Taipei
29 May-1 June
You will learn to safely condition the body to hold an open space through intelligent back-bending and interactive functional anatomy, as well as deepen your openness energetically by letting go of emotional baggage and gain insight through philosophical understanding.

For more information
www.withinspace.com

THAILAND

Agama Yoga Workshops

Koh Phangan
Tantra 2, 28 January-1 February/13-17 May/9-13 September
Vira Training - 25 February-1 March
Complete Femininity - 25 February-1 March
Mystical Dance - 1, 4-9 March
Art of Dying - 25-29 March
Tantra 1, 22-26 April
Nidra Yoga/Lucid Dreaming - 17-21 June
Intro to Tantric Rituals - 18-22 June

For more information
www.agamayoga.com;
info@agamayoga.com;
+66 892 330 217

Yoga & Personality Profiling

Vikasa Yoga, Koh Samui
22-29 April
A week of yogic fun with Rommie Hope and Donna Buchanan; and personality profiling workshops with Jason Hope. Workshops helping you understand your own personality. Ever wondered why you think the way you do? Learn about yourself, understand why you make the decisions you make, why you react to situations the way you do and understand why your partner thinks a certain way. This all helps you to better relate and communicate with others whether it's your partner, friends, family or work colleagues.

For more information
www.evolutionofyoga.com/
peacock2013/

KULA Retreats

CAMBODIA

Cambodian Yoga Retreat with Ann Da Silva

29 March-1 April

Join this magical journey to Angkor Wat at Easter, and experience enchanting Yoga practices in the great outdoors of Siem Reap, home of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, The Angkor Archaeological Park. A small intimate retreat that will bring together the healing benefits of Yoga, good food, great laughs, as well as cultural sightseeing with equal doses of group and personal free time. Cost based on double occupancy: HK\$6,500 (excludes airfare). Limited to 14 people.

For more information +852 2544 8398; info@yogaroomhk.com; www.yogaroomhk.com

INDONESIA

Blissology Yoga, Ecology, Surf Retreat with Eoin Finn

Desa Seni, Bali, Indonesia
25-31 March

Join yogi, surfer and blissologist Eoin Finn for a transformational and fun week. Enjoy flowing and therapeutic Blissology Yoga, prana-filled food, surf, hammock time and connect with a community of people from around the planet. Feel your yoga getting deeper as your heart gets lighter.

For more information
www.blissology.com

Bali Yoga Retreat

14-21 June

Join Adri Kyser and Dr. Sudha Kailas for an experience of a lifetime. This Retreat is located amongst lush gardens, tropical forest with spaces for Yoga, meditation, spa, gourmet dining, trekking, fitness and much more. Reserve your spot before 14 February to save US\$300; or US\$2,190 thereafter.

For more information
adri@innerbeautyoga.com;
innerbeautyoga.com

NEPAL

Everest Base Camp Yoga Adventure with Natalie Macam

17 April-1 May

This adventure combines Eastern and Western philosophies of Yoga, meditation and pranayama with the physical endurance of two weeks of trekking and exploration in the highest mountain range in the world. Join other like-minded individuals with a spirit of adventure for a once-in-a-lifetime experience as you hike through beautiful landscapes, visit historical and spiritual monuments, and get to know the rich culture of the people who call this land home.

For more information
www.nepalsocialtreks.com;
info@nepalsocialtreks.com

PORTUGAL

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Daily Vidyaa Vinyasa Yoga, optional surf classes, Tibetan Bowl sound therapy, half day Thai massage training, horseback riding, excursions to surrounding cities and 3 meals per day. Cost: shared room Euro1,300; Private room Euro1,700.

For more information
www.vidyaayogaparis.com

THAILAND

Agama Yoga Retreats

Koh Phangan

Kashmiri Shaivism Retreat - 16-20

January; 10-17 February

A Silent Meditation retreat using the techniques from the Kashmiri Shaivism workshop, which is prerequisite for this retreat.

Crown Chakra Retreat - 10-17

March; 5-12 April

A Silent Meditation retreat that explores Sahasrara, the Crown Chakra.

Third Eye Retreat - 5-12 May; 2-9

June

A Silent Meditation retreat that explores Ajna Chakra, the Third Eye.

For more information
www.agamayoga.com;
info@agamayoga.com; +66 892 330 217

Ashtanga Yoga: Sama Vinyasa Breath Roots Core

Samahita Yoga, Koh Samui
19-26 January

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For more information www.yoga-thailand.com

Classical Pranayama and Asana: Renewal of Peace through Practice with Elonne Stockton

Samahita Yoga, Koh Samui

'26 January-2 February

You will be given specific tools to work with and will leave with a clear direction, with a personal practice to keep up and grow with. You will develop your self-practice of yoga asana, pranayama, chanting and philosophy.

For more information www.yoga-thailand.com

Moving Deeper with the 8 Limbs with Sara Granström- Thorsson

Samahita Yoga, Koh Samui

2-9 February

Through the daily practice of asana (the practice of body exercises) and pranayama (the practice of breathing exercises) combined with inspiring afternoon sessions including philosophy, chanting, meditation and Q&A, the aim is to embrace a fascinating tradition in order to experience life and peace to the fullest!

For more information www.yoga-thailand.com

Finding the Softness in Your Practice with Sara Granström-Thorsson

Samahita Yoga, Koh Samui
9-16 February

Through daily practice of asana and pranayama combined with the philosophy of Yoga Sutras, you will explore how yoga can be soft and stable at the same time. Patanjali called this "Sthirasukhamasanam" meaning to be in the posture with full support, feeling centred and without stress.

Detoxify Body & Mind with Ivana Jelincic & Rachel Grey

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Take your wellbeing to a new level. The program will lead you through a transformative process both on a physical and mental level to leave you feeling light, energetic and uplifted. Helping you to normalize your weight, balance your eating habits and transition into a healthful way of living.

For more information www.yoga-thailand.com



Kim will be guiding students to being present

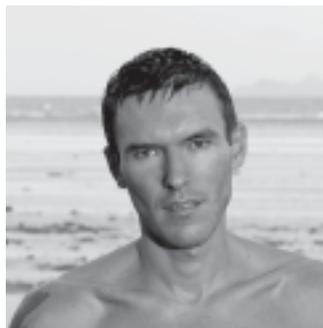
Change your Mind, Change your World with Kim Roberts

New Life Foundation, Chiang Rai
13-17 February

Being fully present is the key to manifesting transformation, and in this retreat, you will learn practices that train you to do just that. In addition to a daily yoga and sitting meditation practice, you will learn to

identify what prevents you from manifesting the life that you want. Writing practice will be incorporated, as well as interactive exercises, in order to call by name influences that undermine your ability to listen deeply. When you can really listen, then you stop struggling, because you can finally hear where your life truly wants to take you.

For more information
www.newlifethaifoundation.com;
kim@newlifethaifoundation.com



Kosta leads a yoga and raw food workshops at Vikasa Yoga in Koh Samui

Yoga & Raw Food with Boris Lauser & Konstantin Miachin

Vikasa Yoga, Koh Samui
17 February

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For more information
www.evolutionofyoga.com/raw2013/

KULA Teacher Trainings

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Universal Yoga with Andrey Lappa & Will Lau

Pure Yoga

20-31 January

This is the second 100 hours (Part 2) of the full 200-hour RYS Universal® Yoga Teacher Training Programme. It will focus on different sub-styles with practices that challenge experienced students and are accessible to all levels of practitioners.

For more information www.pure-yoga.com, teachertraining@pure-yoga.com

200-hours Hatha Yoga

Anahata Yoga

5 March-8 June

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For more information
www.anahatayoga.com.hk;
enquiry@anahatayoga.com.hk; +852 2905 1822

To Teach & Inspire with Samrat Dasgupta

29 March-28 April

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For more information www.pure-yoga.com, teachertraining@pure-yoga.com

INDONESIA

Insight Yoga Yin/Yang Intensive with Sarah Powers

Jakarta Do Yoga
13-17 February

For more information
www.jakartadoyoga.com

Blissology Yoga 240-hour with Eoin Finn

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This transformational, deep journey is hands on and intimate, with a maximum of 25 students. The course is certified at the 200-hour Yoga Alliance TT level and the additional 40 hours can be applied to the Blissology Yoga 500-hour YTT program. Blissology is the art of tuning into the still place inside, to find the wisdom that allows you to balance your personal desires and their impact on the web of life. By connecting to this place of awe, joy and love you can be a powerful,

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For more information
www.blissology.com

SINGAPORE

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14 January-21 April

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For more information www.pure-yoga.com, teachertraining@pure-yoga.com

100-hours Ashtanga Yoga with Chuck Miller

True Yoga

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Cost: S\$2,295

For more information
www.trueyoga.com.sg;
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For more information
teachertraining@trueyoga.com.sg;
www.trueyoga.com.sg

TAIWAN

Anusara Yoga Part 3 with Patrick Creelman

Pure Yoga

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Includes monthly written homework assignments, quizzes and readings from assigned texts, as well as the chance to practise teaching skills. Students come away with a strong foundation in the philosophy of Yoga, skill in seeing and adjusting poses, an ability to articulate pose instructions clearly and succinctly, and language skills to inspire students to express their poses from the inside-out.

For more information www.pure-yoga.com, teachertraining@pure-yoga.com

Rainbow Kids Yoga

SPACE Yoga, Taipei

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A comprehensive, intensive and practical certification course, perfect for anyone who loves working with kids, and Yoga, providing you with immediate tangible knowledge and tons of fabulous ideas to create original, captivating and fun Yoga experiences for kids of all ages. You do not need to be a yoga teacher to take the course.

For more information
www.withinspace.com

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4-26 May

Living Lab: Experiencing the Body, Mind, and Heart of Yoga is the practice of getting real! In this training, you use your body, mind, and other tools to realize and come into the heart of who we really are.

While a cross-section of required knowledge such as pranayama, meditation, major yogic texts, philosophy and psychology of teaching is covered, the focus will be on making the theory real and relevant to your growth. Do not miss this chance to transform your practice, your teaching, and your life.

For more information
www.withinspace.com

THAILAND

The Yoga Academy Yin & Yang Yoga & Study Intensive with Simon Low

16 February-16 March

Established and led by Simon Low, one of Europe's most renowned Yoga teachers.

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For more information
www.centeredyoga.com

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24 March-21 April

Vikasa Yoga is the only open-air and sea view Yoga studio and school in Koh Samui. The course price without accommodation is US\$3,300, this includes tuition, all meals, airport transfers and all course materials. Different accommodation options are available.

For more information
www.evolutionofyoga.com/ttc/

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Koh Phangan

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PHOTO ESSAY

URBAN YOGA

Portraits of global citizens from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds practicing yoga in urban spaces.

BY FELA ADEBIYI

The diversity of the city collides with the ancient shapes of asana. Practitioners of every level, with bodies of all sizes, form shapes amongst the supermarkets, trains, underground stations, and street corners of London and Shanghai providing a remarkable juxtaposition of this ancient system of physical and spiritual exploration within the vestures and intensity of practical modern life.

The asana represent the physical expression of a state of mind one can constantly return to when encountering the daily challenges of living. It provides a pathway of return to a moment of boundlessness whilst negotiating a route through a difficult and urbanized world. You see, the various postures were never meant to be the end goal, but rather a means to self-discovery. Yoga on the mat is a practice for yoga off the mat – for taking strength, flexibility, synchronicity, calmness and courage onto the streets. To be able to walk through the chaos and craziness of life with an innate core sense of equanimity no matter what challenges we pass through. To be open to new perspectives, visions and comprehension; supporting common understanding reducing conflict, war, hatred and greed. This is the real practice of Yoga.



*Facing page: Patricia in London
This page clockwise from top left: Pablo in Shanghai, CiCi in Shanghai, Susan in London, Sam in London, Kelly in Shanghai*



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*Excludes accommodation and meals.

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Aug 18 - Sep 1

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Sep 1 - Sep 8

An Education in Healthy Eating and Lifestyle for Effective Weight Management with Claudia Jones

Sep 8 - Sep 15

Yoga & Your Authentic Nature with Rachel Grey and Dorien Israel

Sep 15 - Sep 22

Yoga: The Joy of Practice with Elonne Stockton

Sep 22 - Sep 29

Yoga Practice & Cooking for Life with Tiana Harilela-Vicente & Shivam Vicente

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as featured by



THE BEAUTY OF ANATOMY

There are few poses more exquisite to behold than *Natarajasana*

BY ANDREW WILLNER

Given the focus of this issue on beauty, I thought an article on anatomy and physiology should attempt to keep with the theme....and there are few, if any, yoga poses more exquisite to behold than *Natarajasana* (Dancer's Pose).

So let's take a closer look at this pose. This truly is a divine pose as *Nataraja* (*Nata*-dance; *Raja*-king) is in fact one of the names ascribed to Shiva in his form as the Cosmic dancer. It symbolizes the process of destruction and creation, death and rebirth (*samsara*). In his Himalayan abode on Mt. Kailasa, Siva dances sometimes with gentleness, sometimes with ferocity..." as in the Tandava, the cosmic dance of destruction, in which Siva, full of fury at his father-in-law Daksa for killing his beloved spouse Sati, surrounded by his attendants (*ganas*), beats out a wild rhythm, destroys Daksa and threatens the world." (Light on Yoga: B.K.S. Iyengar).

Apart from its aesthetic grace and beauty when executed correctly, it is an excellent pose for developing strength in the legs and spine, as well as opening the shoulders and chest to enhance lung capacity.

So what muscles are working to maintain this challenging balancing pose (note that only the more important muscles for this pose will be highlighted in order not to cover virtually every muscle in the body):

If we start with the standing leg, the gluteus maximus (or 'bottom' if your less anatomically inclined) and the psoas at the front of the thigh balance each other as the former encourages lengthening of the thigh whilst the latter encourages flexion of the thigh. In order to keep the standing leg's knee straight the quadriceps (those chunky muscles on the front of your upper leg) have also to engage. In the lower leg the calves, the peroneus longus and brevis and tibialis anterior all work to stabilize the foot.

Turning to the raised leg, the gluteus maximus presses the hip forward and tilts the pelvis downward extending the thigh bone



Beauties in motion - Mony, Chu Chu, Devie & Daniela demonstrate some variations of Natarajasana

(you may recall hearing your yoga teacher telling you to scoop your tailbone...well this is what he/she is talking about). In order to keep the back hip from externally rotating the gluteus medius and tensor fascia latae (TFL) help rotate the hip inward... without this 'squaring' of the hips it would be virtually impossible to grab the rear foot with the opposite hand. Finally the hamstrings (those pesky muscles at the back of your thighs that you need to stretch in *uttanasana* to reach the floor with your hands) come into play to bend the knee and assist in extending the hip. For those practitioners who can attain the full pose, the calf of the raised leg is also actively engaged to point the foot in order to grab the toes....or top of the foot if you really want to show off!

Now let's finish with the trunk of the body and the arms. The erector spinae that run along the length of your spine contract to extend the torso whilst the rectus abdominus (yes, your six pack...or maybe more of a beer keg) balances this action to protect the lower spine from excessive flexion. Whilst the lower part of the trapezius muscle (a large diamond shaped muscle on your back) draws the shoulder blades down and away from the neck at the same time the middle part of the trapezius and the rhomboids are squeezing

the shoulder blades together to open the chest more. Finally there's the tricep muscles (the ones on the back of the upper arms sometimes unkindly referred to as bingo wings when not well toned, in reference to the loose skin that flaps back and forth when someone wins at tuesday night bingo and starts wildly waving their bingo card above their head...but I digress...). So the triceps contract to extend the elbows which results in further opening of the chest as the pectoralis major (the large chest muscle that guys in the gym like to develop) is stretched by this action.

And voila! If you do all of that then this pose should be a walk in the park. However for those of us 'blessed' with stiffness in the back and shoulders (and I proudly belong to that camp), you may find that a yoga strap strategically placed around the raised foot will come in handy until the day arrives that your hands can grab a toe! There are actually several modifications to the full pose, so don't feel despondent if the gap between your hands and raised foot is wide enough to drive a truck through...it's a journey, or at least that's what all the people like to say who can actually do the full pose!

So keep on dancing...and smiling!

Yoga In The Maldives

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Jo Phee (E-RYT 500)

One of first certified Yin Yoga Teachers in Asia, Jo has been instrumental in popularizing Yin Yoga amongst hundreds of students and teachers over the years. She teaches in the style of Paul Grilley and Sarah Powers and leads teacher trainings, retreats and workshops.



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To register or request for info pack: info@yinspiration.org or www.radiantlyalive.com



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UNTYING PSYCHIC KNOTS

Three granthis are the key to awakening *kundalini* energy

BY YOGANAATH DILEEP

All schools of yoga discuss awakening *kundalini shakti* and the related psychic powers. As a result, *kundalini sadhana* has been fascinating for serious yogis since ancient times. *Tantra*, *kundalini* and *kriya* yoga are the most powerful yogic paths to awaken this dormant energy. The last path *kriya* became popular after Paramahansa Yogananda, published his renowned book "An Autobiography of a Yogi" in 1946. He popularized this system by simplifying the complex nature of this ancient yogic path.

In our modern world, yoga has become popular and commercialized. As a result many of the ancient teachings have been changed into something else and deviate from the original path. In this article I hope to bring some light to *kundalini shakti*.

KUNDALINI AND THE GRANTHIS

To deal with *kundalini*, we need a systematic and practical method. Many modern yogic courses failed to explain the right path for the *kundalini* awakening. They directly deal with *chakras* to raise the dormant energy. But they completely ignore the basic and fundamental level of preparation. Before reaching the *chakra*, a *sadhaka* (practitioner) has to purify the *nadis* to let the *prana* flow freely through these *nadis*. Once the *Ida* (left channel) and *Pingala nadis* (right channel) are opened, the *prana* will start moving through the *sushumna nadi* (central channel).

Then we have to open the three psychic knots called *granthis*. This seems to be the commonly missed part of modern *kundalini yoga sadhana*. By ignoring the three *granthis* and directly dealing with the *chakras*, the practitioner fails to reach the final stage.

In order to have perfect awareness or *dharana* on *chakras*, one has to open the *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Rudra granthis*. The word *granthis* literally means nerves and they exist mostly in the *pranamaya kosha* (sheath or layer). From the Ayurvedic perspective, there are five layers of human existence (listed from outer to inner):

1. *Annamaya Kosha* - physical body
2. *Manomaya Kosha* - mental layer

3. *Pranamaya Kosha* - pranic layer
4. *Vijnanamaya Kosha* - psychic body
5. *Anandamaya Kosha* - transcendental body

BRAHMA GRANTHI

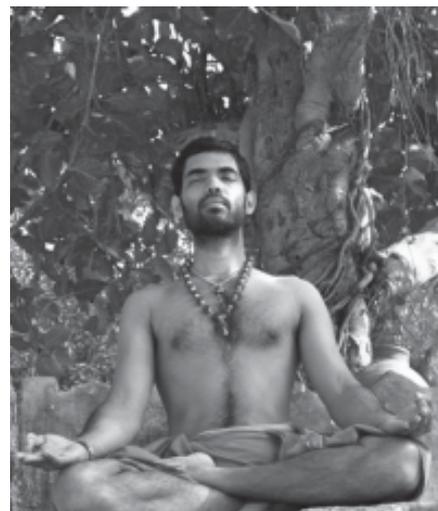
This is the first major *granthis* which a *sadhaka* has to unblock. A *sadhaka* who fails unblock *brahma granthis* will be consumed by material pleasures, selfishness and ego. These negative qualities are called *maya*, or illusions.

Brahma granthis functions in *Mooladhara chakra*, and is related to all three lower *chakras* - *Mooladhara*, *Swadhishtana* and *Manipura*. Once this *granthis* is open we will have perfect control over the three *chakras* and will make the *chakra sadhana* very easy.

Tantra describes different *sadhanas* to open the *brahma granthis*. It's not possible to teach this practice in an article, the best way is direct learning from a master.

Asana, *pranayama* (tantric way) *dharana* (awareness) and *mantra dhyana* are widely used tantric methods to unblock and open this *granthis*. *Brahma granthis* is the gateway to the great path of spiritual development. Without unlocking this psychic knot one can't proceed to the higher level. However, once it's opened, all the accumulated negative energies will be removed and the *sadhaka* will reach a pure state of consciousness.

Although I started yoga *sadhana* at 7, I was more interested in learning advanced *asana* than untying *granthis*. I was well into my adult years and deep into *tantric sadhana* before I experienced the opening of the first *granthis*. When it happened I during my daily *sadhana* did not understand what was happening to me. My whole body was shaking and I felt a tingling sensation on *mooladhara chakra*. Happiness spread throughout my body from the base. At first I was scared and wanted to move my body but I couldn't. That feeling lasted for sometime. I thought I'd done something wrong, so I sought my master's advice. He happily explained my first psychic knot had opened. He advised me to continue the *sadhana* and find different masters for future practice.



A lot of *pranayama*, meditation & an open mind are required to open the *granthis*

VISHNU GRANTHI

This *granthis* causes attachments and emotional bondages and will lead to a complex state of mind. *Vishnu granthis* functions in *anahata chakra* (heart). This *granthis* will really test the caliber of a *sadhaka*. If he does not have enough will power, he will fail to open the *granthis*. When we work on this *granthis*, it may lead us to the state of supra ego. This is a powerful state of mind and the *sadhaka* may experience inner psychic visions. As a result he may be attached to the achievements from the *sadhana* and cease future progress.

Tantra suggests various *kriyas*, *mantra dhyana* and *bhakti* - through which the *sadhaka* can really overcome the emotional bondages. All the attachments will vanish and *sadhaka* will have perfect control over the *anahata chakra*. Thus the *Anahata* shines and when the emotions are purified, *sadhaka* will feel a true state of detachment.

After opening the first *granthis*, I traveled extensively seeking masters from different tantric lineages such as *Aghori*, *Naga* and *Kapalika*. From them I learned techniques to open the second psychic knot. It was very hard for me to deal with this *granthis*. The moment I started the *sadhana* I felt my

I couldn't focus my mind during the *sadhana* and I became angry for no reason. I completely lost my confidence.

character was changing. I felt much attachment to my home and mother. But as I went deeper into the practice this feeling has changed. The second and hardest obstacle I faced here was my ego, and my practice was really stuck for a long time. I couldn't focus my mind during the *sadhana* and sometimes I became angry for no reason. At one point I even thought of stopping the *sadhana* because I completely lost my confidence. So I went back to my master for advice and he told me to practice *Bhakti Marga* (the path of complete surrender). After I started *bhakti marga*, I could feel the change in my character. My ego lessened and finally I could focus on my *sadhana* and could open *Vishnu granthi*.

RUDRA GRANTHI

This *granthi* functions in *ajna chakra* and will keep the *sadhaka* under illusion of psychic power and materialism. Unlike the first two *granthis*, *rudra granthi* can't be opened on our own. Only a Guru has the right key to open it and this is the most difficult *granthi* to open. However once opened it channels all the other lower chakras and connects with *Ajna chakra*. Thus the *sadhaka* becomes detached from the *maya* and ascends to a highest state of existence where he is no longer tied to worldly pleasures or psychic powers.

Rudra granthi is the main blockage which stops the *sadhaka* from reaching the *sahasrara* where the dormant *kundalini* has to unite with *shiva* – the cosmic self. *Tantra* suggests reading scriptures as well as

practicing *tantric kriyas* to get the true knowledge which will help the *sadhaka* overcome the illusions of psychic powers. Once this is cleared the practitioner will reach the higher level of human consciousness.

After opening the first two *granthis*, I waited a long time to find a Guru to start on the third and last psychic knot. I searched through out India for the right master and finally met him in 2010 at Kumbh Mela in Haridwar, the largest religious and spiritual festival in the world where millions of people for worship and purification. I received the *Rudra diksha*, the initiation to partially open *rudra granthi*. Now I am on the path to go deeper to untying the final part of this knot.

WHO CAN PRACTICE GRANTHI SADHANA?

Anyone with at least one year of hatha yoga practice can start this *sadhana*. Flexibility of the body doesn't matter, you need a very flexible mind. If you are interested to learn more about this subject, drop me an email dileeptirur@yahoo.com

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2013 Yoga Calendar

In 2013 Agama Yoga School offers again a great variety of retreats and workshops. They will be offered in a continuous flow throughout the year in addition to our Teacher Training Courses and daily Yoga classes.

WORKSHOPS:

Tantra 1, 17-21 Dec 2012, 22-26 Apr, 12-16 Aug, 16-20 Dec

Tantra 2, 28 Jan-1 Feb, 13-17 May, 9-13 Sep

Kashmiri Shaivism with Swami Vivekananda, 11-15 Jan

Vira Training with Swami Vivekananda, 25 Feb-1 Mar

Complete Femininity with Dr. Mihaiela Pentiu, 25 Feb-1 Mar

Mystical Dance 1 with Monika Nataraj, 4-9 Mar

Art of Dying with Swami Vivekananda, 25-29 Mar

Nidra Yoga/Lucid Dreaming/Tantric Visualization with Swami Vivekananda, 17-21 Jun

Ritual Temple Dancer with Monika Nataraj, 15-19 Jul

Sacred Indian Dance, with Gwenda Van der Steene, 2-7 Dec

RETREATS:

New Year's 10-Day Silent Meditation Retreat with Swami Vivekananda, 23 Dec 2012- 1 Jan 2013 and 23 Dec 2013- 1 Jan 2014

Kashmiri Shaivism Retreat with Swami Vivekananda, 16-20 Jan

Kashmiri Shaivism Retreat with Swami Vivekananda, 10-17 Feb

Crown Chakra Retreat with Manu, 10-17 Mar / with Heidrun 5-12 Apr

Third Eye Retreat with Heidrun, 5-12 May, 2-9 Jun

Serpent Power Intensive with Michael, 30 Jun-7 Jul

Yoga of the Purpose with Dana, 28 Jul-4 Aug

Agama - Awakening the Spirit Retreat with Swami Vivekananda Saraswati, 25-28 Aug

Retreats during the retreat season (Sep-Nov) will be announced in 2013!

TEACHER TRAINING COURSES (TTCs):

Agama TTC January, 07 Jan-30 Mar

Mystical Dance TTC, 04 Mar-13 Apr

Tantra Training ATIT, 22 Apr-25 May

Agama TTC May, 27 May-17 Aug

Training for

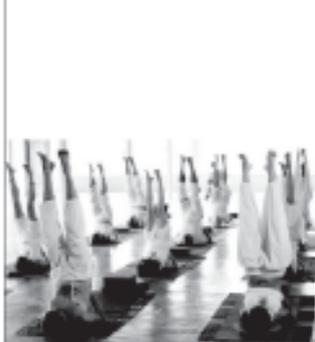
Yoga Therapists TYT, 16 Sep-9 Nov

All retreats, workshops and TTCs will be held at Agama Yoga School, Srithanu, Koh Phangan.

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FOUNDATION FOR A NEW LIFE

Non-profit recovery centre uses mindfulness & yoga

BY KIM ROBERTS

I'm walking down a lazy dirt lane in the late afternoon heat of Northern Thailand. A gaggle of ducks waddle by to a large pond for their afternoon dip. Rice paddy extends to low hills in the distance and as I approach the hall where I am to lead the afternoon meditation, the canopy of teak forest provides welcome relief from the sun.

Chiang Rai (not to be confused with Chiang Mai, her more *farang* inhabited big sister) is the frontier of northern Thailand's hill tribes. The surrounding area is also one of the world's most thriving opium and methamphetamine producing regions in the world. Which perhaps explains why a mindfulness-based recovery center located itself here.

HISTORY

The New Life Foundation was founded by a Belgian entrepreneur in 2010, as a place for people to come rest, recover, and learn about the healing powers of mindfulness practice. His own personal struggle found relief here and at the Thamkrabok Monastery Detox program, and his wish was to offer something in return, by creating a place where other struggling addicts could mend their lives through the miracle of mindfulness at an affordable, nonprofit organization.

People come from all over the globe to become residents here, to establish new patterns and heal from a variety of issues: addictions, burnout, relationship issues, stress, mid-life transition, illness. Or they come to volunteer, sharing their skills as yoga instructors, life coaches, meditation guides, sustainable building engineers, or organic farmers. On weekends, residents and volunteers can participate in excursions to cultural attractions, hike to and swim in waterfalls, go trekking or kayaking, visit orphanages, or play football with the local villagers.

The facilities are located on 63 acres of land near the golden triangle in Chiang Rai province, which boasts plentiful natural beauty: lakes, mountains and hills, rice fields, forests, rivers, hot springs, waterfalls. On the land are two meditation halls, a swimming pool, organic farm, communal hall where

three daily meals are served (with produce from the garden), consultation rooms for life coaching sessions, and around 50 single *en suite* guest rooms. Some of the communal buildings are built in traditional style, with teak leaf roofing and mud walls.

A NEW LIFE THROUGH MINDFULNESS

Though the word mindfulness has turned into a buzzword recently, there is a powerful message behind the buzz. The ability to steady the mind and bring it back to the present moment—which is another way of saying back to the breath, as we practice in yoga—is an important aid to healing. When you are able to stay with whatever is arising, whether or not you like it, then you train yourself to withstand the turmoil that life can sometimes dish out. With this strength and stability, you are able to sort through the muck and look for the hidden gems that have been covered up. Simply being in the present moment is a healing practice. By being more aware of body, thoughts and emotions you will receive signals about what's out of balance. Mindfulness teaches you to respect these signals and welcome them instead of pushing them away.

Over the past decades researchers and mental health professionals have been discovering that mindfulness practices such as yoga can alleviate almost every psychological suffering. The increased awareness that results from mindfulness helps you to see what lies at the root of your behavior patterns. Once you can see the patterns, you then have the power to make choices, and eventually transform negative habits that perpetuate suffering.

While the mindfulness element is based on Buddhist principles, there is no religious affiliation taught here.

The foundation offers a unique learning environment based on mindfulness and sustainable living, where residents can learn to nurture and maintain their recovery—from substance addiction, grief, crisis or burnout. With support from the community and guidance from the staff, each individual develops their own action plan that enables them to discover their potential and develop a



Traditional style building at New Life Foundation

new healthy lifestyle based on mindfulness, personal responsibility and respect.

The approach is a combination of practice and coaching to help residents discover their potential, regain a sense of self-value and find happiness in a new approach to life. Everyone experiences obstacles and suffering at some point in life, but these experiences can serve as a foundation to gain understanding of ourselves and life in general. The most effective way to transcend suffering is through love, understanding, respect and trust, which are plentiful here.

The foundation's mission is to cultivate a lifestyle that fosters inner growth and helps people find meaning and purpose in life again. The most important tools on that journey are yoga, meditation and awareness practices. According to Buddhist philosophy, each of us has a seed of wisdom and goodness inside—everything it takes to create a peaceful, equitable and sustainable existence. All we have to do is renew our relationship to ourselves through awareness practice to let that seed grow.

The foundation sometimes needs volunteer yoga instructors. If you are interested, contact: info@newlifethaifoundation.com

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BEAUTIFUL TEETH, RADIANT SMILE

An all-natural approach to beauty

BY VINOD SHARMA

According to Ayurveda, broadly there are two aspects of beauty i.e. individual beauty and universal (environmental) beauty. Individual beauty is further divided into two aspects - our external beauty (physical appearance) and inner beauty (state of mind, intellectual development and spiritual evolution).

Our external beauty is mainly expressed by the texture of our skin, eyes, teeth, hair, nails etc. Here I will focus on teeth.

A smile is often one of the first things we notice about someone, so having clean and shiny teeth as well as a fresh smelling breath is essential for a beautiful smile.

In Ayurveda, health is based upon the three main pillars called *tri dosha* (three humors) in Ayurveda, namely *Vata* (Air + Ether), *Pitta* (Fire + Air + Water) & *Kapha* (Water + Earth). Dental diseases are mainly caused by an imbalance of the *kapha dosha* located in the mouth. Therefore, it is imperative to maintain balance of *kapha dosha* in the mouth to ensure good dental health. Some of the dental diseases one may contract if there is an imbalance in the *kapha dosha*, are bad breath, toothache, tooth decay, bleeding gums and stained or discoloured teeth.

Some of the reasons for these problems are growth of bacterial infection such as tartar and halitosis, food particles in the mouth particularly between the teeth, poor oral hygiene, damage in the jaw-bone, excessive caffeine and acidic substances such as soft drinks, concentrated citric juices, tea, coffee.

Fortunately, Ayurveda has many herbal remedies to help good dental hygiene and treat any dental problems that may occur.

AYURVEDIC PRACTICES FOR STRONG, BEAUTIFUL TEETH AND HEALTHY GUMS

1. It is important to brush teeth at least twice a day, after the two main meals.

2. In addition, one can use homemade mouthwashes made from herbal plants (instead of chemical based mouthwashes,

which generally contain alcohol and can further damage the teeth). Mix ½ teaspoon *neem* powder with ½ teaspoon alum powder in a glass of warm water and use this water as a mouthwash to rinse your mouth.

3. Applying oil from herbs like cinnamon, sesame and clove on the teeth and gums will help prevent tooth decay and tooth ache.

4. For overall quality of teeth, chew mint or parsley leaves or coriander seeds.

5. Garlic can relieve toothache and strengthen the teeth – place the garlic clove on the affected tooth for a few minutes until the pain subsides. If you find the taste too strong, wrap the garlic in some cotton before placing on the affected tooth.

6. Turmeric can also help heal toothache – mix ¼ teaspoon of turmeric powder with a little mustard oil and apply the solution to treat gum problems as well as tooth decay and toothaches.

7. *Neem* can be used as a whitening agent for teeth – rubbing some neem powder on the teeth will achieve this effect. The twigs from the *neem* tree can be used as toothbrushes, *neem* oil can be used as facial washes and the sap has antiseptic properties that can help kill microorganisms that may cause bacterial infection on the teeth.

8. Cloves can help deal with dental problems because of its anti bacterial properties. The oil from the clove when applied to an infected tooth can also ease the pain caused by toothache.

9. Chewing fennel seeds and cardamom seeds can help deal with the problem of bad breath.

10. For discoloured teeth, sprinkle some sea salt on a piece of lime & rub that on your teeth. This can help remove stains and whiten discoloured teeth.

11. Take 2 teaspoons of coriander seeds and 2 – 3 whole black pepper corns, soak overnight

in water. The next morning chew the seeds together with black pepper corns before breakfast. This combination will not only help to strengthen teeth and gums but also is very effective to improve memory. Regular intake of this combination can even help to prevent serious memory related problems, common in elderly people nowadays.

12. Practice “*Gandush Kriya*” at least twice a week. Gently rub a mixture of ½ teaspoon ground sea salt and 1 tablespoon pure mustard oil, on your teeth and gums. Leave in your mouth for 10 – 15 minutes. As the saliva is produced in your mouth, use the same saliva to rinse your mouth (keeping this mixture inside the mouth). After 10 – 15 minutes, spit out this mixture. For another 10 – 15 minutes, keep spitting out your saliva, and then rinse your mouth with some warm water. This helps strengthen the gums so the teeth can remain firmly fixed. It also has a whitening effect on our teeth. Last but not least, it can help to prevent any tooth/gum infection (and by adding some tumeric powder can help to get rid of any existing infection).

YOGIC TECHNIQUES FOR ORAL CARE

1. *Simhasana* – Very useful to strengthen our teeth and gums.

2. *Kalabhairavasana* – This posture is useful for strengthening teeth and gums and also can be useful to boost self confidence as well as resolve stammering problems caused by nervousness /timidity.

3. Pranayama for dental/oral care :

a) Stand straight on a mat keeping both feet together and arms on the sides.

b) Exhale completely after an inhalation.

c) Close both the nostrils with your thumbs while keeping the tips of fingers touching each other.

d) Take a deep and forceful breath through your mouth while keeping the tongue in the shape of the beak of a crow.

e) Hold the breath in your lungs and inside your mouth while blowing your cheeks out for 10 – 12 seconds.

- f) Apply chin lock (*jalandhar bandha*) after bending the neck forward and keep eyes closed.
- g) Make sure nostrils are completely closed and the cheeks are blown out to the fullest extent.
- h) Straighten your neck, relax cheeks, open your eyes and exhale through your nose after releasing your thumbs from the nostrils.
- i) Repeat steps (b) to (h) above, 5 times to begin with.

Precaution: Wait at least 3.5 hours between eating any solid food and doing this pranayama. However, *Vata* oriented people should drink a glass of warm water (about 200 ml) ½ hour before doing this pranayama to prevent any dizziness which may be caused due to imbalance of *Udana Vayu*.

This simple pranayama can help remove germs from between the cavity of teeth, strengthen the gums, also can help balance the *Kapha dosha* in the mouth by regulating the activity of glands underneath the tongue which produce saliva.

It is mentioned in the ancient yogic texts that for one who practices this pranayama regularly, his teeth and gums can remain healthy even in old age. Not to mention that his cheeks will be wrinkle-free.

These are just some dental care tips mentioned in Ayurveda for strong, healthy and beautiful white teeth. Keep in mind that taking care of your dental health is a daily practice if you are to have teeth which will last your lifetime.

AYURVEDA

CARING FOR BEAUTIFUL SKIN

Ayurvedic skin care depends on your *dosha*.

BY SUDHA NAIR

In Ayurveda, body-mind balance is achieved by balancing *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*; the seven *dhatu*s or body tissues, which form the nutrient plasma, blood, muscles, fat, bones, bone marrow and reproductive fluid; *agni* or our body-fire, which helps to digest food; and the body's waste products, such as perspiration and urine. The balancing of these systems, together with a generally peaceful and happy life, leads to good health and vitality.

WHAT CAUSES IMBALANCES?

The hectic pace of modern life can throw us

off balance - whether you are working too late, missing out on sleep, grabbing food on the go, putting yourself in stressful situations, suffering from heart problems, depression, failed relationships or broken homes.

All these situations disconnect us from nature and our own natural state. Our skin reflects the imbalance by drying out, becoming rough and wrinkled. Anger or embarrassment can turn your face red and make it more sensitive.

KNOW YOUR AYURVEDIC SKIN TYPE

The first step in the holistic Ayurvedic approach to skin care is finding out your ayurvedic skin type:

Vata skin is generally dry, thin, delicate and cool to the touch. It is easily dehydrated, and very vulnerable to dry, windy weather. *Vata* skin may age faster, and tends to be dry, rough and flaky when out of balance.

Pitta skin tends to be fair, sensitive, soft, warm, and of medium thickness. They tend to be more prone to freckles and moles. When out of balance, *Pitta* skin can flare up in rashes, rosacea, acne, or sunspots.

Kapha skin tends to have all the qualities of water and earth — oily, thick, pale, soft, cool and more tolerant of the sun. They tend to age slower with fewer wrinkles than the others.

Kapha skin may struggle with dull complexion, enlarged pores, excessive oil, blackheads, pimples, moist eczema and water retention.

Combination skin can be *Vata-Pitta* skin that is both dry and sensitive, *Kapha-Pitta* skin is oily and sensitive, or *Vata-Kapha* skin that is generally dry with some oily zones.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VATA SKIN

Vata skin types should eat more warm, unctuous foods and favour sweet, sour and salty tastes to balance the dry, rough, moving *Vata dosha*. Provide added nourishment to your skin by including organic milk, whole grains and green leafy vegetables in your diet. Drink lots of lukewarm water everyday for internal hydration along with having healthy oils in your diet for added lubrication. Skin can be kept supple by oil massage and moisture-balancing cleanser. Get plenty of rest so your mind as well as your body has the opportunity to recharge.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PITTA SKIN

If you have a *Pitta* skin type you will thrive on sweet, bitter and astringent tastes, as found in sweet juicy fruits, rose petal preserve, and cooked greens. Avoid hot, spicy foods deep-fried foods; they add heat to an already fiery constitution. Stay away from harsh, synthetic cosmetics; they can damage your sensitive skin and cause breakouts. Use cooling oil, such as coconut oil, for the daily massage. Cook with cooling spices such as fennel and liquorice. Take extra care to protect your skin when you go out in the sun. Avoid tanning

treatments and therapies that expose your delicate, sensitive skin to steam for extended periods of time.

SUGGESTIONS FOR KAPHA SKIN

The oiliness of *Kapha* type skin calls for a diet that is warmer, lighter, less oily, and free of heavy, hard to digest foods. Eating more bitter, astringent and pungent tastes help stimulate digestion and balance *Kapha* skin. Avoid too many sweet foods or deep-fried foods, they add to the oiliness in the skin. Exercise everyday to improve circulation. A daily warm oil massage can also help circulation. Eat plenty of organic vegetables and fruits to help cleanse the body from within. Cleanse your skin twice a day; exfoliate with a mud-mask at least once a week. Cook with warming spices such as ginger and black pepper to stoke the digestive fire and inhibit the accumulation of *ama* inside the body.

Besides following the diet for your skin type, following foods are terrific skin-enhancers: leafy green vegetables; easily digested proteins such as milk, tofu, sunflower seeds; foods high in zinc such as quinoa; and beta-carotene-rich foods such as carrots and sweet cherries. Almonds and walnuts support the skin with their protein and lubricating fat content. Some skin-friendly spices include turmeric to nourish the first four layers of the skin; cumin to rid the body of *ama*; black pepper to cleanse the channels, and fennel to balance the transformational ability of the skin. All antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables, such as pomegranate, apple, pear, and bitter, green leafy vegetables are also excellent for the skin.

SUGGESTIONS FOR COMBINATION SKIN

The ayurvedic approach includes environmental and seasonal factors. For example, a person with *Vata-Pitta* skin would follow the recommendations for *Pitta* skin in summer and *Vata* skin in winter. The *Kapha-Pitta* type would follow *Pitta* recommendations in summer and *Kapha* recommendations in winter. The *Vata-Kapha* type would be best served by generally following *Vata* guidelines, with extra cleansing of oily zones.

Ayurveda teaches us the secret to true beauty is the balancing and blending of our inner and outer self. It is essential that you work to regulate your lifestyle before you begin to seek beauty. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is critical. This includes eating right foods at the right time, adjusting to seasonal changes, having a bedtime regime, practicing daily meditation, exercise, and maintaining purity of mind and soul.

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QUESTIONING THE BODY BEAUTIFUL

My response to the unquestioned assumptions of those who perpetuate the stereotypical imagery of the mainstream media to sell the physical practice of yoga-asana and the “yoga body.”

BY POEP SA FRANK JUDE BOCCIO

IS BEAUTY IN THE ‘PHI’ OF THE BEHOLDER?

Can we define beauty in the context of humanity?p35

STOPPING THE MIND WITH BEAUTY, FINDING SAMADHI IN SPLENDOUR

All it takes is recognition to seize the moment and enjoy.....p38

AWAKENING SPIRITUAL BEAUTY

Taking ideas from different modalities.....p39

INNER RADIANCE IS THE REAL DEAL

What kind of beauty are you cultivating?.....p41



Cassandra Kish in Urdhva Dhanurasana

Is reinforcing the epidemic desire to conform to standards of beautiful compatible with yoga?

The various yoga traditions agree the major cause of *dukkha* (suffering, discontent, unease) is *avidya*, often translated as “ignorance.” This implies a lack of knowledge but neglects the idea of “ignore-ance” or “denial,” concepts that come closer to the literal translation of *avidya* as “not-seeing.” Understood thus, *avidya* means to willfully deny or ignore issues, questions, or ambiguities that present uncomfortable implications for our actions, beliefs, and practices. We see only what makes us feel comfortable, and refuse to contemplate what does not.

Avidya is pervasive in contemporary yoga culture precisely because of its overly body-centric orientation. Contemporary yoga culture is marked by a widespread refusal to see troubling issues generated by its insistent celebration of bodies considered “beautiful” by dominant cultural standards: thin, toned, light-skinned, conventionally pretty young women with gymnastic-like skills in particular.

The media’s emphasis on women’s appearance and sexual desirability locates the value of a woman in her appearance. This message is not lost on boys who grow up to be men who only value women for their bodies – if they look like the images the media has presented. Given such toxic cultural bombardment, is it any wonder an overwhelming percentage of women report disliking their bodies?

To not see the significance of such powerful cultural realities constitutes *avidya*. This remains true regardless of our intentions. We may sincerely believe if advertisements featuring culturally iconic images of “beautiful bodies” are associated with yoga, they will have only a positive effect. Such commitments beg the question of whether reinforcing the already epidemic desire to conform to media-anointed standards of the “body beautiful” is truly compatible with

yoga. I believe this seemingly positive celebration of the body is merely a specific cultural manifestation of the shadow-side of *hatha-yoga* and its historical tendency to fixate on the body.

As early as the 10th century, the *Garuda-Purana* warned: “the techniques of posture do not promote yoga. Though called essentials, they all retard one’s progress.” This is an ancient assertion that a fixation on the physical, as we see in much contemporary *hatha-yoga* culture, rather than being a mere distraction or diversion, can be a total and complete obstacle to liberation! Today’s contemporary sell-out glorification of the body seems to prove this. Many practitioners of popular yoga have little, if any idea of the *dukkha* this “feel-good” celebration actually perpetuates and encapsulates.

Yoga aims to break our identification with body or mind as “self.” The physically oriented approach to *hatha-yoga* prevalent today often strengthens practitioners’ identification with the body – what it looks like, and what one can or cannot do with it. There is a strong focus on attaining idealized, ever more “challenging” or “advanced” postures. When ego is invested in what the body does, injuries are often the result. There is also the discouragement many feel when they realize they cannot do a posture. And there is the reality that whether from age, injury, or illness (not to mention death) one day you will not be able to practice the postures you may have taken pride in.

When we unthinkingly accept the cultural valuation of “the body beautiful” that permeates contemporary yoga, we stop looking deeper. We stop at the surface of appearance and paradoxically lose intimacy with the body as body. Yoga opens the door to true intimacy by questioning our unconscious assumptions. It asks, “Is the body beautiful?”

Yoga asks us to look deeper.

The Buddha points out such concepts as “beauty” are conditioned and empty of any inherent nature. For those who argue contemporary yoga is empowering by celebrating the body; that ads featuring nearly or completely nude women are beautiful because they portray “the beauty of the human body,” it may be enlightening to ask: “Whose body?” Why not a 64-year-old man with a bit of a belly roll? Would this image qualify as an expression of “the beauty of the human body?” It’s highly unlikely! Our ideals of beauty are culturally and biologically conditioned. We use abstract concepts, get caught in them, and then fail to see all that is under erasure. This is what psychoanalyst Jeffrey Rubin calls “the blindness of the seeing I.”

I am not arguing the body is not beautiful. I suggest we need to also remember (the word *sati*, translated as “mindfulness” means “to remember”) that it isn’t only beautiful. Depending on circumstances, the body can often be perceived as much less than beautiful, even gross at times. This “body” that contemporary yoga celebrates takes quite a bit of maintenance. Go a few weeks or so without bathing, and tell me how beautiful you think the body is.

When we see a “beautiful” woman, with long lustrous locks, we may think, “She has such lovely hair.” Yet, what might your reaction be if you found just one of her hairs in your soup? Would you find that hair beautiful? How beautiful do you find her hair caught in your shower drain?

Yoga offers us a clearer, more complete understanding of reality: *samprajanya*, clear comprehension and *viveka*, discernment. There are specific cultural norms that condition our ideas of beauty. Unfortunately,



most images of beauty presented by mainstream media are light-skinned, thin, and female. This cultural conditioning is generally ignored (not-seen). That's the reason the slogan, "Black is beautiful," struck such a provocative tone in the 1960s.

But the great yogis point out the body is inherently neither beautiful nor disgusting. The *Heart of the Prajnaparamita Sutra* says reality, is "Neither produced nor destroyed; neither pure nor impure; neither increasing nor decreasing." Beauty arises with the coming together of many causes and conditions that create what we think of as "beauty." A woman's "beautiful" hair is not inherently beautiful; it's beautiful because the conditions (it's on her head, it's clean, the rest of her face is harmonious, and we've been culturally conditioned to see long, wavy hair positively) are all present. The "beauty" is a construct, interdependently created.

When you next catch yourself thinking someone has beautiful eyes, contemplate briefly if the beauty is really inherent in their eyes. Would you think them beautiful if s/he plucked them out and handed them to you? Or is beauty conditioned because the eyes are in their "proper" place: they are balanced and relatively symmetrical, and the rest of the face is pleasing. All phenomena arise interdependently. This insight is necessary if we are ever to become free of the grasping and clinging, as well as the aversion that causes so much suffering.

We can perform a similar investigation on the concept of "the body." While it seems unitary, independent, autonomous, and persistent, a little mindfulness meditation on the body (the Buddha's "First Foundation of Mindfulness") will reveal that it is more accurate to think of the body as a collective. There are so many non-human organisms living on and in the body that their DNA makes up 90 percent

of our body. Yet, without them, we could not live! So, what really defines your body?

The body is not unitary. It isn't independent (try not breathing) and certainly not autonomous. It takes just a moment to look at your baby photos to see it doesn't persist unchangingly. The body is not "self," yet when we fixate on the body, "self" is just what we take it to be.

If we merely stop and proclaim the beauty of the human body, we fail to go deeper. We fail to see reality and get caught in grasping and clinging. Freedom – the purpose of yoga practice – is to go beyond such conditioning. This does not mean we stop appreciating the human form. What is changed is the quality of our relationship to the body, and to all beings. Going beyond the surface, we reach a much deeper intimacy.

Excerpted from my contribution to the recently published 21st Century Yoga: Culture, Politics and Practice, edited by Carol Horton and Roseanne Harvey. I invite you to read the full essay and 11 other thought-provoking essays. <http://21centuryyoga.com/>

DRISTI

IS BEAUTY IN THE 'PHI' OF THE BEHOLDER

Can we define beauty in the context of humanity?

BY ANDREW WILLNER

Can we define beauty in the context of humanity? Is there a true objective measure or is beauty a completely subjective phenomenon?

In order to address these questions we have first to agree on a definition of beauty. The Oxford Dictionaries defines it as "a combination of qualities such as shape, colour or form that pleases the aesthetic senses, especially the sight". As yogis we might feel this definition is somewhat limiting...when we talk of someone having a beautiful heart, we are not typically referring to the dimensions or colour of the organ in question and cannot see it with our eyes! We are obviously referring to a less tangible quality yet every bit as real as a beautiful face that can be observed visually.

So is there an objective measure of beauty?

Initially I should like to be unashamedly shallow and focus on physical beauty and then consider the other components that might be incorporated into a broader definition of beauty.

The Greeks were pretty (no pun intended) obsessed with the idea of beauty within the manifest world including that of humans (just consider the pages devoted to discussion over the beauty of Helen of Troy, who was credited with instigating the Trojan Wars, and who was played by the not unattractive Diane Kruger in the Hollywood movie "Troy"). Greek philosophers and mathematicians carefully investigated the subject and in particular Euclid and Pythagoras identified certain proportions were particularly pleasing to the eye. Euclid went on in his Elements to define these proportions as a ratio that later became known as the Golden Ratio and is symbolized by the Greek letter '*phi*' (*insert greek symbol here*) and equates approximately to 1.618:1. In essence those eagle-eyed (and rather brainy) Greeks determined the closer various elements within nature including the human body corresponded to this ratio, the more aesthetically pleasing it appeared to be. For example, let's consider our teeth: the closer the ratio of the height to the width of one's front incisors is to *phi*, and the closer the ratio of the width of the first tooth to the second tooth from the center is to *phi*, the more aesthetically pleasing it is. Indeed Dr Stephen R. Marquardt, a maxillofacial surgeon, developed a face mask using *phi* to create the 'ideal' proportions of a human face. His experiments proved that the closer your facial image adhered to the proportions of the mask when laid on top, the more beautiful you would be considered to be. This applied across all ethnic groups and across differing age groups of observers. Several experiments have been conducted using adults to rank facial pictures from the most to least attractive and there has been a remarkably high correlation in the results confirming that certain proportions, and most importantly symmetrically, is the key determinant in assessing physical beauty.

Even infants when shown pictures of faces spend significantly longer looking at those that happen to be more symmetrical. The reason for this probably relates to our biological make up...evolutionary psychologists would argue better symmetry and proportion indicates stronger genes as there is less risk of parasite related defects etc., hence one is deemed a better mating partner. Conversely 'asymmetry' would indicate subconsciously that the individual is less fertile. Additionally fuller lips are also universally considered more 'beautiful', firstly because they indicate youth given that our lips get thinner as we age, and secondly, without getting too graphic, fuller lips have more blood in them which results in more colour, which also occurs in all individuals

during moments of passion! Large eyes and smooth skin are also beneficial attributes. This might well explain why make up, which has been used for over 4,000 years to advertise fertility, youth and health, seeks to minimize discoloration and allows attention to be drawn to the eyes and lips by making them respectively bigger and brighter. Some people of course decide to go one step further in the pursuit of these beauty traits...to quote Groucho Marx: "she got her looks from her Dad...he's a plastic surgeon". One final piece of trivia on this topic of symmetry that I should like to share is that people with more symmetrical ears have greater athleticism too (please feel free to read J.T.Manning's study in the Int. Journal of Sports Medicine 1998 for more on this fascinating topic).

So we can confidently state that science has empirically proven there is a highly significant objective component in the assessment of physical beauty that crosses nationalities, ethnicities and cultural idiosyncrasies, albeit this process lies deep within our subconscious minds. But we should now consider what other components beyond pure genetic physical beauty constitute overall beauty for it is worth remembering that this very limited definition of physical "beauty is a visa not a passport... as it expires"!

For both yogis and non yogis alike there are certain character traits that rank highly in our assessments of beauty. Kindness/compassion, intelligence, wisdom (not the same as intelligence but that is a whole other article in itself) and integrity would be obvious examples of highly-valued traits, not just in a possible partner but in our friendships too. Spiritual awareness can also be a highly attractive feature, which draws others to an individual possessing this gift. Within the yogic texts there are numerous references to principles and attitudes of living that assist the yoga practitioner in their pursuit of ultimate freedom, but which also as a by-product make a person seem more 'beautiful' to others.

For example, if we turn to the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, he refers to four attitudes we should cultivate: "Consciousness settles as one radiates friendliness (*maitri*), compassion (*karuna*), delight (*mudita*) and equanimity (*upeksha*) toward all things..." Ch1 v.33. These are also key elements within Buddhist texts and are known as the *Brahmaviharas* or Four Immeasurables (*Apramana* in *sanskrit*). They are considered to be sublime attitudes, cultivation of which will give the practitioner the power to be reborn into a Brahma realm. Most of us have met people whom we considered beautiful and who had a significant impact on our own evolution. If you were to take a moment to consider what drew you to that individual, then I should like to propose they most likely possessed some or all of those qualities mentioned above in

abundance.

So can yoga make us more beautiful in our own eyes and in the eyes of others? Once again I should like to turn to the Yoga Sutras as Patanjali makes reference there to beauty and its attainment. He advises us that mastery of the elements leads to great powers and the body attaining perfection: "This perfection includes beauty, grace, strength and the firmness of a diamond" Ch3 v.47. The elements also play an important role in Ayurveda, in which imbalances in the five *Mahabhutas* (earth, water, fire, air and space) lead to imbalances in our *doshas*, which are the way the elements manifest in each person, resulting in both physical problems such as acne and mental issues such as anxiety/panic attacks.

Any yogi who has had the opportunity to read Light on Yoga by B.K.S.Iyengar will be aware of the emphasis he places on the health benefits of various asanas, and it is probably a reasonable extrapolation to argue that increased spiritual, mental and physical health results in enhanced beauty.

Indeed the classic work on Hatha Yoga, written by Svatamarama in the 15th century C.E. and called the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, highlights the indicators of success in Hatha as "leanness of body, clearness of face, distinctness of *nada* (clarity of the voice), very clear eyes, health, victory over *bindu* (cleanliness of the nerves), lighting of the digestive fire, and purity of the *nadis* (energy channels)". In essence, the beauty one perceives in committed yoga practitioners is a certain 'inner glow' or luminosity (*tejase* in *sanskrit*) somewhat akin to that often ascribed to pregnant women. Combined with this radiance comes a vitality and vigour (referred to as *ojas* in ayurvedic studies), which is palpable to a casual observer and an attractive quality to possess.

In conclusion, I suggest that whilst there seems to be strong empirical evidence to support the thesis that pure physical beauty can to some extent be objectively measured, despite cultural and ethnic differences, true beauty really goes beyond skin deep and regular yoga practice with right intention can act as an effective tool in the enhancement of one's physical, mental and spiritual beauty. On that note, I shall now head off for my Botox injections, eyebrow plucking and body waxing followed by a spot of liposuction!



Cassandra Kish in Wild Thing

Your beauty is the seed of the path, this path intertwine our life...
The nature of your essence is kindness,
nothing else than surrender is reasonable.
Looking at you I see grace and purity beyond suffering and sorrow,
beyond old age and death.
Your simplicity embody reality, in this spirit we place our heart,
I found composure holding your hand.
Just walking by your side with sincerity will lead to inner peace,
Like a gem waiting to be discovered, polished and
ready to beam beautifully...
My life partner, my better half, my Yogini, my Daikini..

SEBASTIAN PUCELLE, SANGAM YOGA INDONESIA

January 2013



Cassandra Kish in Eka Pada Rajakapotasana

DRISTI

STOPPING THE MIND WITH BEAUTY, FINDING SAMADHI IN SPLENDOUR

All it takes is recognition to seize the moment and enjoy.

DR. MIHAIELA PENTIUC

One day recently while on the way to teach a yoga class, my mind was busy with the details of a lecture I had to give. It had been a day of heavy rain, the greys and coldness of the monsoon penetrating clothes, skin and thoughts in a heavy fog. This short drive I knew by heart and nothing seemed unusual until I rounded a bend in the road on my scooter and the view opened to the horizon, unfolding into sunset. The sky had ceased its pouring rain and in little peeks between the still-crowded field of clouds above the sea, the sun snuck out in the most brilliant colours I had seen in months. My breath stopped, my mind stopped, and I was absorbed in the silent beauty of a “normal” sunset.

Had I not seen other amazing sunsets? Had I not learned to appreciate nature on this paradise island I currently call home? Of course I had. Nevertheless, my mind stood still, spellbound by beauty, in “aesthetic arrest” – a term coined by James Joyce in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

“The esthetic emotion [...] is therefore static. The mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing.”

So much like meditation and the altered states of consciousness yogis speak about! We close our eyes, calming the inner whirls of mental agitation and stepping into the stillness of no-mind. We open our eyes, letting this constantly surprising world shine its mind-blowing splendour upon us, and it does just that – in a mind-blowing, mind-stopping swoosh which again evokes the stillness of no-mind. All it takes is recognition, a prepared

observer ready to seize the moment and enjoy as doing turns into non-doing.

At the age of 6, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the great Bengali saint of the 19th century, experienced his first state of spiritual ecstasy while walking along the paddy fields. A flock of white cranes flying against a backdrop of dark thunder clouds captured his attention and he became so absorbed by the beauty of this vision that he lost outward consciousness and became overwhelmed by inner joy.

What is the difference between the usual observer of natural beauty and a Ramakrishna? How is it that one “goes into *samadhi*” and another takes a photo and shrugs his shoulders? Oh, let’s be serious: first we need to park the motorbike, then there is that lecture to give, people waiting for us, life to live.... The mind resumes its normal patterns without prompting. After an occasion of “aesthetic arrest,” with its short pause and access to the enchantment of beauty, thoughts quickly bubble up again. Pausing into oneness is forgotten.

In Sanskrit, the word for beauty is *saundariya*, from the adjective *sundar* – literally, to be well soaked or pleasantly soaked into one’s heart. *Sundar* describes primarily the spontaneous emotional response to a beautiful object whereas *saundariya* already crosses into what this initial reaction becomes when processed intellectually. (Harsha V. Dehejia, 2003) The sunset is *sundar* but what happens after *sundar* could become internalised *saundariya*. The cranes and clouds made Ramakrishna’s God-intoxicated mind rest and let go into

pure joy. How many sunsets, clouds and splendours miss a Ramakrishna?

Abhinavagupta, the very accomplished yogi, musician, poet, and enlightened scholar of the 10th century, speaks about the *sahridaya* – the sensitive or responsive spectator to an artistic performance, the one able to let imagination take him beyond the actual act. Despite his renown so many centuries ago,

Abhinavagupta remains the greatest Kashmiri Shaivist master of all time. His works on philosophy, metaphysics, aesthetics and art are regarded with widespread respect and wonder. From the *Samkhya* tradition of the Vedic times, a *sahridaya* was described as the opposite of a simple art aficionado, thus as a person able to rise above the lower self absorbed in the world of the senses, a prisoner of passion's tyranny. A *sahridaya* is a connoisseur of beauty and art – and of *himself* – who uses aesthetic arrest as a trampoline to reach the idealised world of concepts, collective wisdom and the melting into universal being.

Abhinavagupta was an embodiment of this extraordinary concept: the open-hearted, sensitive, prepared receptor for beauty. To him, tasting of *rasa* – aesthetic beauty – was similar to tasting *Brahman*, the Ultimate reality. He was not the first or only one to know this connection. The Upanishads of the Vedic tradition, Bharata – the author of *Natyashastra*, the most important work of Indian aesthetics – and the great guru Shankaracharya all concurred that the emotion derived from authentic art and beauty is similar to that of spiritual ecstasy. All believed that art was not a goal in itself but one path towards individual emancipation – so beautiful and so practical...

The spiritual masters of India and great yogis of yore, as well as artists and neuroscientists of more recent times, all attest to the amazing power of beauty to bring the observer above the restrictions of individual existence inside a space and time frame – then to pause the mind and give access to the realm of Absolute Consciousness. However, Abhinavagupta claims this is only possible if one meets certain requirements: an open heart (*sahridaya*), the “willful suspension of disbelief” and the ability to rise above worldly connections and concerns. Let's not forget: these are the recommendations of not only one of India's greatest logicians and intellectuals, but also one of its most talented artists and poets.

This century, which struggles to reconcile the mind and heart, obsesses on the so-called conflict between the left, rational brain and the right, artistic brain. It is a real inspiration to recognize these two (oversimplified) poles of our human-ness, well woven into the personalities of great figures such as Abhinavagupta, Einstein, Leonardo Da Vinci or Hildegard von Bingen.

There is no conflict within an open heart or wise spirit. Beauty takes us beyond if we allow it work its wonders in the most natural ways: a sunset or poem, meditation or music, butterfly wings or mathematical equations. Why is it so? What is beauty? What is its purpose? The answer is in the mind that ceases its trail into the quiet heart that only is.

“When all objects turned towards (consciousness) unite and merge together, then the mind dissolves along with all its limitations because it has been absorbed in fullness with Shiva (the supreme consciousness).” – Abhinavagupta, from *Tantraloka*

We can start with our simple yoga practice, steady repetition of a daily routine. Then the discreet bonding of perseverance and detachment – *abhyasa* and *vayragya* – guides us from better flexibility to strength and balance, from sturdy breathing to a rounded perception of ourselves, and from deep alignment to the quieted mind that is able to host beauty and follow its essence into *samadhi*...

DRISTI

AWAKENING SPIRITUAL BEAUTY

Taking ideas from different modalities.

BY INGE SANTOSO

What is spiritual beauty: An inner light radiating happiness, wisdom and loving kindness to all around or; a balance of yin and yang. Whatever your view, here are my tips from my soon to be released book “Awakening Spiritual Beauty” for awakening this light within you:

1. Breathe and Smile. Breathing deeply from the belly brings new oxygen and energy into the blood while removing CO₂. It also serves to balance the five elements in the body. As you breathe mindfully, practice smiling from the heart.

2. Yoga Asanas. Find a practice to suit your body type, personality, age and physical ability. Try the rigorous Bikram, Ashtanga, Vinyasa styles, or gentler Kundalini, Iyengar, Yin.

During heart opening asana such as cobra, focus on the energy emanating outwards from Anahata chakra.

3. Tai Chi and Chi Gong. These practices awaken and balance the Yin and Yang energies. Focus on *Ajna* (third eye) chakra and the breath as you feel each flow of each movement. They are designed to draw fresh chi from the earth into our body and send stale energy from us back to Mother Earth.

4. Sitting Meditation. Sit cross legged in *Sukhasana* or *Padmasana* with straight spine and relaxed shoulders and body. Align spine to neck and head, as if your head supports the sky. A stable pose for sitting meditation helps bring a stable mind.

In this position breathe mindfully in and out from the belly. Exhaling completely is very important. Cultivate the intention that all beings find peace and happiness.

5. Walking Meditation. Walking meditation is good when you feel agitated. Practice walking and simply being aware of simply walking. Feel the sole of the feet touching and massaging the Earth with slow steps. Walking meditation will help calm you in 20 minutes or so.

6. Food. Eat with respect for the life energy it gives us. Generally more greens and fruits and avoid sugar and chemicals, but to be more precise, consult an Ayurvedic doctors for the specific foods for your dosha.

7. Herbs. Since ancient time, herbs have played important role in healing. Consider a qualified herbalist, whether Chinese, Indian or Western to support your healing regime.

8. Acupuncture & Acupressure. For opening blockages in the meridians/nadis to heal specific issues, or to finetune overall health.



Mony Surianny, Chuchu Liu, Devie Nye serve up Uttitha Hasta Padagustasana

The most beautiful person I know doesn't speak the same language as me yet we communicate beautifully.

The first time he caught my eyes was his smile through his thick beard. He smiles with his heart, his eyes and his body language. His gentle touches to living and non-living things are filled with love. This beautiful friend of mine is from Brussels, Belgium.

I owe Benoit a big thank you for letting me see how beautiful a person's heart could be.

JUNE CHAN, HOM YOGA, SINGAPORE

INNER RADIANCE IS THE REAL DEAL

What kind of beauty are you cultivating?

BY REBECCA LOMBARDI

Kundalini Yoga (as taught by Yogi Bhajan) teaches you are not your body, mind, or soul, but the light of your soul. Man or woman, beauty is inner radiance. Sounds great, even profound. But as householder yogis living in a world of societal norms and holding jobs often require a modicum of social conformity in our attire and appearance, the cultivation of our internal radiance can quickly be waylaid into amending what we perceive as, or think others judge us on; our external self. All too often our beauty is measured by billboards, and our radiance by a shade of blush or the shape of our body. How does one relocate an authentic sense of beauty?

Though Kundalini yoga is secular, it draws on the Sikh religious tradition, and many of its spiritual tenets are woven into its teachings. In September a picture of a young Sikh woman named Balpreet Kaur- turbaned and with facial hair- was posted in the “funny” section of the social media website Reddit. Many demeaning comments were made about her appearance, and plenty of waxing and shaving admonishments were given. Yet Balpreet Kaur inspired her tormentors with a response showing a beauty and grace beyond what any moustache wax or makeup could give her: “When I die, no one is going to remember what I looked like...However, my impact and legacy will remain: and, by not focusing on the physical beauty, I have time to cultivate those inner virtues and hopefully, focus my life on creating change and progress for this world in any way I can.” Her faith in her creator, and herself, wowed readers: she does not cut her hair because of *kesh*, the Sikh discipline of allowing the hair to grow naturally as you are God’s perfect creation. The young man who originally posted the photo deeply apologized, and accolades for her grace and inner beauty poured in from around the globe.

Living in Hong Kong, encouraging focus on inner instead of outer beauty feels almost radical. There are endless ads in the MTR for beast-enhancement packages, weight loss pills, waist slimming machines and acne clearing soaps- men and women are bombarded from morning until night with the bodies and faces they could and should have. Many people here have full-time careers being beautiful, and those who don’t may

spend hours pretending we could. What if those hours were dedicated to something else? Cliché or not, what if we retrained our eyes to look for the radiance of another’s, or even our own, inner being, as well as clear skin or muscle definition. It might feel like a tall order, but it’s worth considering.

There’s nothing wrong with making an effort to be externally beautiful- the radiance of our soul shines brightest through a healthy physical body, and Yogi Bhajan gave many yoga sets and dietary guidelines for physical beauty. Kundalini yogis are even encouraged to “dress to impress” when doing yoga or otherwise because it strengthens the radiant body- the expansive energetic field that surrounds our physical body- and informs others of how one would like to be treated; with the same grace and care as that with which you dress.

There are *kriyas* with names like “avoid aging and gray hair,” “to be young and beautiful,” and “for enchanting beauty” to name a few. As householders and community members, we want our mates to fancy us and our friends to flatter us, but these yoga sets are more than superficial cosmetic fixes. Each set contains postures to stimulate eliminative organs, activate chakras, or target glands to improve glandular function and communication.

Still, I was initially put-off by a tagline I read - Ong meditation for power, beauty, and youth. It sounded very anti-yogi, more like some of the far-flung promises on MTR advertisements. However, my perspective changed after closer evaluation. The method of chanting stimulates the thyroid, a key gland to our metabolism and perhaps our youth and vitality. “Ong” is the sound of infinity: the practitioner is powerfully tapping into their own infinity, and in doing so connecting with the infinite source. Mantra and chanting establishes a vibration that allows us to drop false/limited frequencies and accept our unlimited potential, to access and activate our innate inner radiance. When we melt into the infinite, there is no greater power, youth or beauty. If one can melt into source, embody the infinite beauty that is shared by all, and still maintain a physical body, what greater beauty is there? That’s a kind of beauty truly worth cultivating. The question is - when am I going to see that on a billboard?



Balpreet Kaur’s beauty shone through as she gracefully explained her beliefs in the face of demeaning public criticism of her facial hair

THERESA SHAN

Yoga is now a means of expression, release and my way of life.

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF BEAUTY?

Beauty should be holistic, both on the inside and outside. You can't have one without the other or it will be contrived and it will not last.

WHO IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PERSON YOU KNOW AND WHY?

My mother in law, because she is a beautiful person on the inside and out. She is kind, gentle and loving, which shows through and through. She radiates beauty because her beauty originates from within, so it is genuine and will last forever.

WHICH IS YOUR MOST BEAUTIFUL YOGA ASANA?

Eka Pada Kondinyasana 1 or 2. I love the dynamic lines and energy of this pose. It exudes beauty and strength in perfect harmony.

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED BY SOCIETAL STEREOTYPES OF BEAUTY?

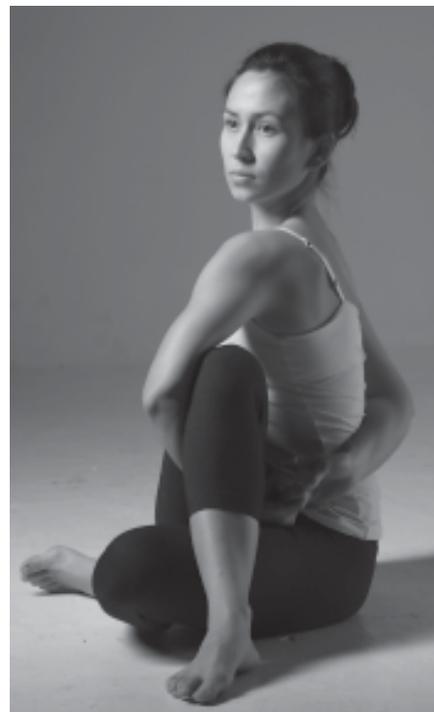
Being of mixed ethnicity (half Caucasian half Chinese) people tend to fit me into a box of what they feel I should be like, especially being a woman. Because of this from a young age I had already decided I wanted to make sure I was known to be a smart, independent woman first and beautiful second.

ABOUT THERESA

From a young age Theresa has been passionate about physical activities that enable expression such as dance. In adulthood she reunited with her passion for dance as well as other activities such as martial arts, diving, triathlons and yoga.

In 2008 her interest in yoga grew to new heights, and she decided to take on a yoga instructor course, receiving a Yoga Instructor Certificate from the Swami Vivekananda yoga Anusandhana Samsthana (sVyasa) Yoga University of Bangalore, India.

After spending 6 years in film and media she decided to leave the industry to teach yoga



full-time. She then went on to develop her own brand of yoga products called Madana Yoga. And recently launched a new online lifestyle magazine for Yoga.Pilates.Health in Singapore. Studio directories, instructor profiles, events listings, interesting articles and an online shop, all under one roof...www.intheLoop.com.sg

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"I was so energetic every day particularly after Sadhana (morning practice). Even if you don't plan to teach right now, I recommend this course since I believe that kundalini yoga helps you open new doors!" Terumi Hoki

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- Yogi Bhajan*



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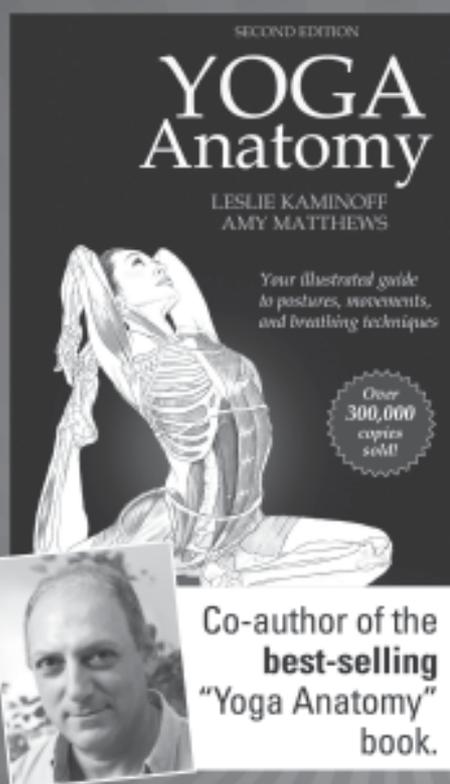
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DATE	TIME	TOPIC
17 May 2013 (Friday)	7pm - 9pm	Exploring the Breathing Body in Yoga
18 May 2013 (Saturday)	10am - 12pm	The Warrior Series
	2pm - 4pm	Demystifying the Bandhas
19 May 2013 (Sunday)	10am - 12pm	Better Backbends Through Breathing
	2pm - 4pm	The Yoga of Walking - Foot Anatomy, Gait Analysis and Re-Patterning

Early Bird Price: S\$400
(Before 17 February 2013)

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*Listed prices are subject to 7% government tax (GST), TRUE members are entitled to a 10% discount.

For more details, please visit www.trueyoga.com.sg or email teachertraining@trueyoga.com.sg

MY ANTI-GRAVITY EXPERIENCE

Cocooned in a silk hammock for poses & Shavasana.

BY CRISTINA RODENBECK

My first contact with yoga was in 1997, when living in India. The institute treated yoga as a therapy, so early on I learned yoga was for health and wellness and was hooked for life.



All poses are done in hammocks

Although not a hard core yogi, I have a weekly practice mostly of Kundalini yoga and Meditation which serves my body, mind and soul needs.

At the beginning of this year I learned of my hip tear and wear issue that makes some poses painful. So when I heard about Anti-Gravity Yoga (AGY), I was curious to learn more. Would it ease my pain? Would I be able to do what I'd done before? I loved the idea of being upside down, as I'd heard of its benefits.

So I joined a one-day workshop in Anti-Gravity Yoga organized by Bodywize Yoga in Hong Kong.

Developed some 20 years ago by gymnast and dancer, Christopher Harrison, AntiGravity® Aerial Yoga is a fusion technique that aims to relieve compressed joints and align the body. The AntiGravity® Hammock acts as a soft trapeze, supporting the practitioner as they master simple inversions and progress to more advanced poses.

Christopher greeted all the participants, memorizing our names, and introduced the technique and day's agenda.

His inspiration for AGY was the pain he'd experienced in his careers in gymnastics and

dance. His goal was to find something active he could still do and enjoy, which would decompress his spine and be friendly to his joints. Inspired by the Brazilian hammock culture, he developed what he calls a 'fusion technique', which combines fitness and traditional yoga modalities.

At the workshop we experienced 'The Fundamental' and 'The Flying Fitness' with our beautiful red silk hammocks.

We used the hammock for all poses including downward dog, sun salutations and we had our own version of *Shavasana*. The most exciting ones were the ones where we were hanging like bats, flying like birds or cocooning. For sure all were very intense and we did have one participant fall from the hammock and one faint, but Christopher helped them very well. He is extremely careful and rigorous with safety and explanations.

For me, the most amazing experience was relaxing and cocooning in my hammock. I had only felt like this when swimming and floating in water. Extremely relaxing and pleasant, even more than traditional *Shavasana*!

Overall, a great experience, and I did feel some poses were more gentle on my joints and hips, but at the same time more demanding on my overall fitness and back strength, which are areas I certainly need to develop more. Mostly, it is a new way of seeing things and doing things - yoga with a different lens. AGY may not be everyone's cup of tea, but it's definitely worth a try.

And to complete my experience, I learned that Christopher has been to my home Brazil more than 20 times and knows Portuguese. So I wrapped up the workshop with even greater warmth than I started; speaking with Christopher in my mother tongue.

In Brazil we say 'it all ends in Samba and Carnival'... well doesn't it?

CONFERENCE

OJAI YOGA CRIB 2012

An intimate alternative to the big conferences.

BY ZOE HO

Ojai Valley, nestled in beautiful California amongst orange groves and avocado trees is for free spirits. 45 minutes away from LA, this little town has decided to keep out big box stores to celebrate local flavours. The community is a haven to spiritual seekers,



Dharma talk with PaPa Erich Schiffman

especially during the Ojai Yoga Crib weekend (25-28 October 2012), with spaces of diverse beliefs opening doors to host visiting yogis. Instead of typical yoga conferences held in a hotel or building, Crib locations are spread out over town and you make small pilgrimages by foot or carpool to the teacher you choose.

With 17 amazing teachers on the roster (Erich Schiffmann, Patricia Sullivan, Saul David Raye, Uma Goswami, Cyndi Lee, Laura Tyree, Jason Crandell, Scott Blossom, Elena Brower, Dana Flynn, Noah Mazé, Ravi Ravindra, Chandra Easton, Sean Johnson, John Hickey, and Kira Ryder), the toughest part was deciding on a schedule. We began with a full day immersion practicing Freedom Style Yoga with Erich Schiffman (one of the original founders of the Crib and hence 'Papa') at the Meditation Mount. To bathe in his 45 years of experience moving beyond the surface was bliss, as was meditating amongst birdsong and the pink sunset.

My husband is new to yoga while I teach, and we both felt deeply nourished and inspired – Ravi Ravindra's delightful and deep sutra teachings, Jason Crandell's reminding us of Hatha yoga being a physical practice, and his grounding and precise sequencing, and two beautiful live music and yoga experiences. Sean Johnson and the Wild Lotus Band were deeply moving with their virtuoso blending of storytelling, chanting, asana, stripping away of inhibitions and healing, while Saul David Raye opened yet another window to expressing Bhakti, freeing our voices and bodies through movement and music. In every session, due to the intimacy of the location and group sizes, we were able to connect with the teachers and other students. It is such a difference to crowded yoga conferences where the teacher is up on a stage, using a microphone! There are also special nights where the entire crib gathers to sing, dance and talk.

The Ojai yoga crib feels like family after just four days. The crib staff's caring can be seen in every last detail, from the warm hugs, lodging arrangements, free flowing chai, extra hair ties and band-aids in every bathroom. Sangha and deep joy was everywhere.

This was the Crib's 10th anniversary. It is striking that the internationally renowned yoga teachers at the Crib, pick this as their favourite gathering. "It's not about the money," I heard Crib co-founder Kira Ryder say. The priority is to let yoga happen: to meet, hold tenderly and shamelessly, to allow a blossoming of intimacy in mind, body and spirit.

BOOK

BUDDHA AT BEDTIME

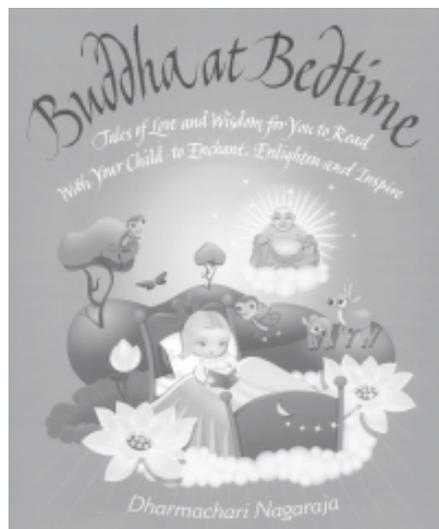
A lovely children's book by Dharmachari Nagaraja

REVIEWED BY TIA SINHA

Buddha at Bedtime brings 20 stories culled from the Jataka Tales and adapted beautifully to our times. The Jatakas are stories of the Buddha's previous lives, lives in which he often took birth as a kind animal or bird.

The naming of characters in the stories, many of whom are animals, makes this adaptation of the Jatakas stand apart from other narrations. Dinos the Stag, Princess Cygnetta the swan and Delightful the big black bull entertain with their antics as well as their contemporary western names. The illustrations are superb – bright, detailed, delightful.

These stories extol qualities of character that are useful to develop for one's own happiness. These include generosity, concern for others,



Filled with beautifully-illustrated stories with a message for young and old.

modesty, perseverance, forgiveness, kindness and empathy. The stories also show us how unwholesome traits like selfishness, arrogance, vanity, greed, stinginess and cunning bring us much unhappiness. Every story, though never preachy, has a moral in the end that one could ponder over with one's child.

What a wonderful gift for one's child and for oneself before turning in for the night!

This book also brings us a brief account of the Buddha's life, a simple explanation of his main teachings and relaxation and meditation techniques like metta, breathing and rainbow.

Dharmachari's Nagaraja's Buddha at Bedtime is a boon for children as well as adults, for Buddhists and non-Buddhists.

MYTHOLOGY

NARCISSUS

In love with his own image

BY TIA SINHA

Narcissus, named after a flower, was a Greek hunter of exceptional physical beauty. He was very proud of his beauty. He was the heart throb of many a forest nymph inhabiting the sylvan glades where he dwelt. But Narcissus was also a heart breaker. He refused to return the affection of a single nymph, including the lovely Echo, a mountain nymph who openly pined for him. In fact, Narcissus was scornful of those who loved him.

Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned! To teach him the pain of unrequited love, Nemesis, the vengeful goddess cast a spell on him, leading him to a pool and making him fall in love with his own reflection. He was unable to recognize the person in the water as just an image, a being, that, try as he might, he could not even hold. Narcissus pined away. Realizing he could never possess the object of his desire, he soon lost his beauty and vigour and faded away. And the Narcissus flowering plant or daffodil sprang from where he died.

In love with his own image, Narcissus epitomizes vanity and the unhealthy aspect of self love. Narcissism, in psychology, refers to self-absorption, a fixation or fascination with oneself.

Narcissus has inspired several famous literary characters including Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray in The Picture of Dorian Gray, and Lucius Malfoy's mother, Narcissa in the Harry Potter series.



CROSSWORD

BEAUTY PUZZLE

BY TIA SINHA

ACROSS

- 3. Roman goddess of love and beauty and a popular subject of Renaissance art. (5)
- 6. See 11 ACROSS
- 7. Jumble 'Ah Thor!' to give an Egyptian goddess of beauty. (6)
- 8. 'She walks in beauty, like the
- 9. Canaanite goddess of beauty adopted into the Egyptian pantheon, she is called Mistress of All the Gods and Lady of the Stars of Heaven. (6)
- 11 and 6 ACROSS. Celtic god of beauty who lived at Newgrange by the River Boyne, Ireland. (5, 2)
- 12. Helen of, the face that launched a thousand ships. (4)
- 13. Shall I compare thee to a summer's? From a Shakespearean sonnet. (3)
- 16. Greek goddess of love and beauty who arose from the foam of the sea. She is also known as Cytherea, Cypris, Cerigo and Acidalia. (9)
- 18. 'Ah! My beauty, past compare! These jewels bright I wear!' Popular refrain of soprano Bianca ... (10)

DOWN

- 1. Flower Feathers, the ever young Aztec goddess of flowers, love and beauty. (12)
- 2. Celtic goddess of love and beauty whose name mean white raven. (7)
- 4. An epitome of vanity, he fell in love with his own image. (9)
- 5. Irish goddess of love and beauty after whom a tide has been named. (8)
- 10. ... Beauty, Anna Sewell's autobiography of a horse of the same name. (5)
- 14. 'A thing of beauty is a ... forever.' Keats poem (3)
- 15. 'Beauty is a that generates love and a mind that is open, a mind that is pure.' From a Plum Village song. (5)
- 17. 'Beauty lies in the of the beholder.' A proverb. (4)



RECIPE

QUINOA RISOTTO WITH CAULIFLOWER & MUSHROOM

Creamy quinoa, crunchy cauliflower and meaty mushrooms make the perfect winter meal.

BY MOOSA AL-ISSA

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups Organic quinoa, cooked
- 1 1/2 cup Vegetable stock
- 1/2 cup Soy milk
- 2 cups Cauliflower, thinly sliced in bite size pieces
- 2 cup Mushrooms, thinly sliced
- Small yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup Parmesan Reggiano, finely grated
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 Garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon Fresh thyme, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Sea Salt and fresh ground Pepper to taste

METHOD

Bring a frying pan to medium high heat then add one tablespoon olive oil and the cauliflower. Add a bit of salt and a grinding of pepper and fry for 3-4 minutes till the cauliflower is lightly browned remove from pan and reserve.

Bring a frying pan to high heat, add one tablespoon olive oil and then add the mushrooms and onions with salt and pepper to taste and fry till the mixture is lightly browned and dry.

Add the garlic, lemon juice and thyme and cook for 2 minutes more, remove from heat and reserve.

Heat the stock in a medium saucepan till its at a low boil, then add the quinoa and cook for 2-3 minutes stirring occasionally.

Add the soy milk, mushroom and cauliflower and cook the mixture for 2 minutes more.

Remove from the heat and stir in two thirds of the Parmesan into the risotto. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Portion into two bowls and sprinkle the remaining Parmesan on top of each serving of risotto.

Serve with a simple salad of mixed greens dressed with balsamic vinegar and olive oil.

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Crossword Solution

ACROSS

3. Venus, 6. Og, 7. Hathor, 8.
Night, 9. Qetesh, 11. Angus, 12.
Troy, 13. Day, 16. Aphrodite, 18.
Castafiore

DOWN

1. Xochiquetzal, 2. Branwen, 4.
Narcissus, 5. Cliodhna, 10. Black,
14. Joy, 15. Heart, 17. Eyes

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NOTES

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INFORMATION

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YIN & YANG YOGA

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200-hour Yoga Alliance certification
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Samahita Retreat, Koh Samui, Thailand
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
www.yinyangyogatraining.com
Eija Tervonen: eija@theyogaacademy.org

the
yoga academy



Samahita Retreat
YOGA THAILAND - WELLNESS THAILAND

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room

*Additional studio
(6/F) opened!*

*Love Yourself
Love Yoga*



The Yoga Room

Tel: 2544 8398

www.yogaroomhk.com

info@yogaroomhk.com

Studio: 3/F, 4/F & 6/F Office: 15/F, Xiu Ping Commercial Building, 104 Jervois Street, Sheung Wan, HK.

UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS 2013

SARAH POWERS

Insight Yoga: A Yoga and Meditation
Weekend Intensive
Hong Kong, 26 & 27 January
Shanghai, 1-3 November

GAHL EDEN SASSON

Charming the Snake: Astrology,
Past Lifetimes and Soul Mates
Hong Kong, 22-24 February
Singapore, 8 & 9 March

CAT ALIP-DOUGLAS

Jivamukti Yoga
Hong Kong, 19 & 20 March

SIMON PARK

Surfing the Vinyasa Flow
Singapore, 5-7 April

DAVID SWENSON

Ashtanga Workshops & Teacher Training
Hong Kong, 19-28 April

KATHRYN BUDIG

Weekend Workshop
Hong Kong, 3-5 June

PETER SCOTT

Weekend Workshop
Shanghai, 12-14 July

BRIOHNY SMYTH & DICE

Weekend Workshop
Taipei, Hong Kong, Singapore,
Shanghai - August

PETE GUINOSSO

Weekend Workshop
Singapore, Taipei, Hong Kong - August

DESIREE RUMBAUGH

Weekend Workshop
Hong Kong, 23-25 August
Shanghai, 27 & 28 August

ANA FORREST

Forrest Yoga Foundation
Teacher Training
20 September - 17 October

ELLEN HEED

Functional Anatomy
Shanghai, 27-29 September
Forrest Yoga Anatomy
Hong Kong, 1-3 October
Cranio Sacral 2
Hong Kong, 4-6 October

TODD NORIAN

Weekend Workshop
Taipei, 15-17 October
Hong Kong, 18-20 October

DAVE FARMAR

Weekend Workshop
Singapore, 2 & 3 November
Hong Kong, 9 & 10 November

TIFFANY CRUIKSHANK

Yoga Workshop
Singapore, 11-14 November
Hong Kong, 15-17 November

FOR DETAILS, PLEASE VISIT
WWW.PURE-YOGA.COM

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