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Yoga and Resilience



Healing Secrets of Jala Neti

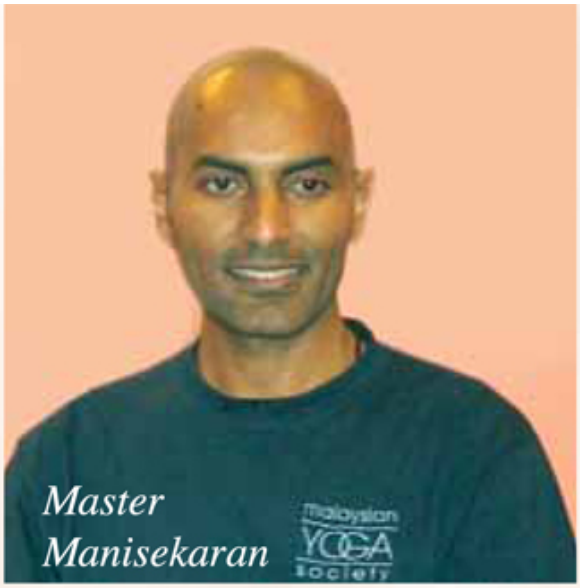
Yoga Therapy for Lymphatic & Immune Systems Resilience

Malaysian Association of YOGA Instructors

Message from Master Mani

"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."

-- Nelson Mandela



Life presents its ultimatums whether we want it or not. Bereavement, losses, natural disasters, wars, illnesses, failures of every kind come without our bidding. We don't have control over most of them but we can control our responses and reactions to such situations and circumstances... this is called resilience.

I greatly admire this quality. It is a form of toughness that is both a training for mental fitness as well as creating an extraordinary level of bouncing back to mental stability ... quickly!

It builds strong and admirable qualities in a person.

It built me by repeatedly giving me enduring lessons. Adversities have plagued life to the extent that I learnt to become very resilient by choice. It gave me the gift of fortitude that put me in a comfortable level of existence mentally when facing such circumstances.

Tests and adversities come not to tramp one down in life but sharpen one's skills further, build one's character, make one stronger and magnify one's inner strength.

Like a sculptor's tool artfully hits, scraps, chisels and shapes, life shapes each and every individual. With tests and adversities come choices to overcome — there's not a dull moment in life. It's up to us whether we're going to fight back and win or be defeated.

If nature has not been kind enough to train us in this quality, then yoga can be the system of training that can give us that golden opportunity...have a blessed and a resilient new year!



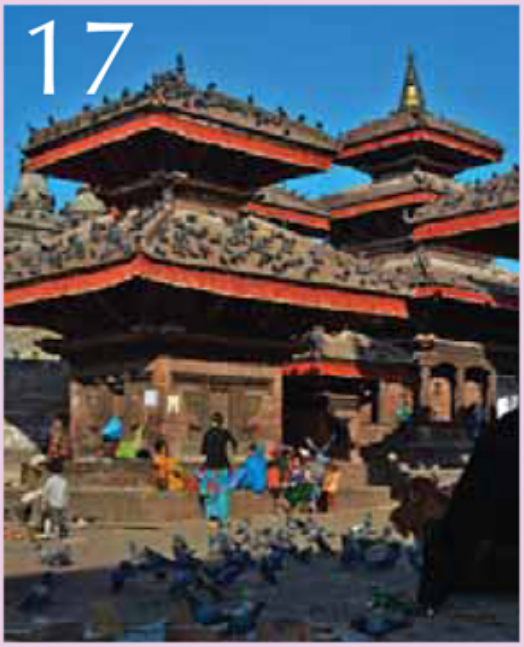
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Yoga and Resilience

by Chandra Nanthakumar

Yoga is a holistic system of mind-body practices for mental and physical health. The practice of yoga incorporates multiple techniques such as asanas or simply known as physical postures that develop strength and flexibility, pranayama (breathing exercises), deep relaxation, and meditation (mindfulness techniques). The practice of asanas and meditation techniques have shown to not only reduce stress but also improve mood (Granath, Ingvarsson, von Thiele, & Lundenberg, 2006).

On the other hand, Hirakawa (n.d.) defines yoga as "an enormously multi-dimensional, multi-faceted discipline built upon thousands of years of experiential knowledge." For many of us, the most accessible form of yoga is hatha yoga. For those who are ignorant, the practice of hatha yoga, amongst other things, incorporates breath with every movement in the asana. For starters, this is a perfect catalyst to help us overcome our self-defeating tendencies and renew ourselves mentally, emotionally and physically.

Nevertheless, the question now is whether there exists a connection between yoga and one's resilience. Yoga practitioners will definitely concur with me that the answer is in the affirmative. Before we go any further, let us take a look at the definition of 'resilience'. This lexical item is defined as the ability to recover easily and quickly from unpleasant or damaging events (Collins Cobuild Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2006).

For those of you who relish reading, you would know how resilience made the famous writer, Frank McCourt, transform pain of a difficult childhood into a compassionate memoir (McCourt, 1996). Resilience also brought freedom-fighter Nelson Mandela, the former anti-apartheid icon, to greater heights of courage and compassion even though he was imprisoned for 27 years, and the list goes on. McCourt and Mandela may not have practiced yoga in the true sense of the word, but these two great people were extremely focused and one with themselves. Both of them had immeasurable sense of awareness, and they went all out to achieve their dreams.

Unfortunately, many of us are not equipped with these innate qualities. However, from my personal experience, through the practice of yoga, resilience can be developed. I have become more patient, tolerant and tranquil. It has molded me into a composed character. Resilience is a vital tool for self-development; without a basic supply of it, it would be rather challenging to survive accumulated losses, exigent transitions, or heartbreaks that thread their way through even the most privileged human life.

Research has also proven that yoga not only enhances emotional well-being, but also resilience. A randomized controlled study conducted at a British university found that employees who attended one-hour yoga sessions per week over six weeks showed discernible improvements in the POMS-Bi (Profile of Mood States – Bipolar) and IPPA (Inventory of Positive Psychological Attitudes) scores (Hartfiel et al., 2011). Amongst other things, the subjects showed marked improvements in feelings of clear-mindedness, composure, elation, energy and confidence. In addition, the subjects testified to an increase in life purpose, satisfaction and feelings of self-confidence during stressful or challenging situations. These results show that even a short programme of yoga is effective in enhancing emotional well-being and resilience in the workplace.
Another study conducted amongst secondary school students showed similar positive results.

Students were randomly assigned to either regular physical education classes or to 11 weeks of yoga sessions over a single semester (Khalsa, Hickey-Schultz, Cohen, Steiner & Cope, 2011). These participants were asked to complete baseline and end-program self-report measures of mood, anxiety, perceived stress, resilience, and other mental health variables. The outcome of the study was as expected - the independent evaluation of individual outcome measures revealed that yoga participants showed statistically significant differences over

time relative to the control group. These results suggest that implementation of yoga is definitely feasible in a secondary school setting and it has the potential of playing a preventive role in maintaining mental health (Khalsa, Hickey-Schultz, Cohen, Steiner & Cope, 2011).

Hence, the benefits one can obtain through the practice of yoga are beyond measure. Yoga not only makes one become more resilient, but it also helps one improve holistically. Increasing evidence supports the view that yoga is a practice which addresses multiple mental, emotional and physical facets of the individual. By practicing yoga over a prolonged period, one gets to purify the murky mind, and discover how to work with everything that happens to them. Eventually, struggles in life become their teachers, and pain and loss become occasions for profound and positive transformation. Because the practice of asanas offers basic training in tapas (disciplined practice), one is emotionally strengthened each time they make an effort to stay in a pose. In addition, the practice of meditation and mindfulness in yoga teaches us to sit through mental restlessness, ennui and emotional cataclysms. In fact, Swami Muktananda once said that a yoga practitioner is someone who can turn every circumstance to his advantage.

What are we waiting for? Yoga has been tried and tested through time, and science has proven the benefits of this ancient art. If you have not started practicing yoga, you ought to give some serious thought to it. **YM**

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Healing Secrets of Jala Neti

by Priya

A cleansing technique for healthier life and special detoxification - hygienic practice that anyone can do!

At a glance, the neti pot looks like a magic lamp. Which indeed is one if you understand the many 'magical' benefits this small pot can give — no, not by rubbing it, but by using it correctly and diligently on a daily basis.

The pot is a modern version of containers yogis have used for thousands of years to clean their nasal passage. Jala Neti, or the cleansing process (also known as nasal irrigation), is a very important part of their practices. It is one of the shatkarmas, or the six cleansing techniques. It's not only important for yoga practitioners, it's equally suitable for the 'common' man for treating sinus infections, sinus pressure, cold, flu, allergies, headaches and even stress.

The pot is as important for daily cleansing practices as a toothbrush is for cleaning the teeth.

The word neti, which means 'to guide', refers to the water that is guided through the nasal passage. This helps open it up and facilitates deep breathing.

Today, millions of people suffer from sinus infections of some sort. While many of them are becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics, this simple practice of Jala Neti becomes very useful.

Impact of Nasal Allergies

Although most nasal allergies are not considered life threatening, they can nonetheless affect the quality of our life. Those who are suffering from allergy symptoms often do not 'feel like themselves' and would find themselves shying away from social interactions and avoiding outdoor activities. Needless to say, it also takes a toll on the quality of our sleep, work productivity and our ability to perform daily activities.



Contributing Factors of Nasal Allergies

The Poor Quality of Air

The nose is perhaps the most actively used organ in the body. It has direct contact with external environment with many potential toxins and irritants. It filters dust, pollen and other pollutants that come through the air. There is probably no other organ in the body that has to adjust so quickly to so many different influences.

Weakened sinuses often result in pain, particularly in the form of headaches, which can greatly reduce the quality and comfort of our lives. Sinus weakness, or blockage, can cause great discomfort and hinder us from moving around happily.

Mucus-forming Food

Besides external sources, there are equally important internal causes for sinus and lung problems. The main one is our modern diet, which contains large amounts of mucus-forming food. One of the primary places for excessive mucus to accumulate is in the head. Excessive mucus can block the sinus passage and impair our breathing process just as badly as any external pollutant. If we add the combined effects of both a mucus-forming diet and an exposure to polluted air, this problem will be multiplied.

Examples of a mucus-forming diet is:
Dairy products, breads, pastries, sweets, fried food of all types
Foods that are too greasy, sweet or salty
Junk food or fast food

Other Factors

Overeating
Bad food combinations like too much sweet and protein.
Beverages - soft drinks. Milk and fruit juices, plus excessive use of cold or ice water also has this effect.
Sedentary lifestyles
Poor circulation due to lack of exercise
Too much time spent sitting or lying on the sofa
Psychological stress and anxiety

Jala Neti to the Rescue

Cleaning the nasal passages helps remove excessive mucus produced by wrong diet or poor lifestyle habits. The cleansing process is relevant for anyone seeking to improve their health and sharpen their mental and sensory acuity. It also increases their breathing capacity and strengthens the internal organs. On a general note, it helps to relieve colds and sinusitis along with disorders of the ears, eyes and throat, and has a cooling and soothing influence on the brain and mind.

It helps to raise the levels of both physical and mental energy, promotes the flow of positive energy through the mind, senses and heart, and through the entire respiratory, circulatory and nervous systems. Doing Jala Neti daily, first thing in the morning, is better than a cup of coffee or hot tea to wake us up, stimulate the mind and help us get going on our daily routine. Although Jala Neti is often credited to the cleansing of the nasal tract, it is also widely noted for its contributions to the clearing of the eye ducts and improving visions, and also removing tensions and depressions, to give clarity of mind.

Jala Neti for Detoxification

Mucus-reducing and circulation-promoting actions. It can be as important as, and is easier to do than colonics or liver flushes. It can also be done along with such detox therapies in order to improve their effects.

Jala Neti for Weight Reduction

If our sinuses are blocked or impaired, our entire energy, circulation and digestion can become sluggish. This can result in the accumulation of excess weight or toxins in the body.

Jala Neti for Rejuvenation

It removes psychological blockages.
Rectifies emotional disturbances.
Promotes psychological well-being.

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to sharpen your senses
to have healthy lungs
to remove migraine
to remove facial paralysis
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EVENTS Graduation 2013: A day full of fun and revelry *by Vijaya*

Nirmell Sattiyasilan, one of the 100 over students who received their certificates on the 23rd of November 2013, said that he would recommend the "Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course" to all men.

"Every woman too should know the art of effective massaging," said Nirmell, who is also MYS's official photographer.

"It's a very useful skill and a great way to create bonding between the spouses," he added.

Nirmell's face was alight with pride as he held the neatly and elegantly covered certificate he had just received from Master Manisekaran, our yoga guru.

"It's not only for husbands and wives though," he said smilingly, adding that he has already started doing the "therapeutic" Ayurveda massage on his mother and could see how helpful it is in easing the horrible pain in her limbs.

These were some of the exchanges heard at MAYI Yoga Academy's Graduation Day 2013 held at the Bangsar studio. Some 100 students proudly received their certificates in various courses like Kundalini Kriya Yoga (Self Mastery) Course, Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course and International Yoga Instructor Course, etc.

It was a day to reward achievements and the achievers beamed with joy, felt satisfied, appreciated and motivated to continue their pursuit to gain more knowledge in yoga. MAYI not only gives the opportunities but also encourages and provides the platform for ardent practitioners to progress step by step in the field.

Yoko Yamada, Pellyshire and Janet gave a stunning group yoga performance which all of us, some 100 plus visitors, watched with our mouths agape — thoroughly enjoying every intricate, artistic move done with great skill — changing from one advanced asana to another while very delicately balancing on each other. What a work of stunt!!

With everyone tucking away at the delicious meals provided by MAYI and watching the many performances, which included kids' yoga performance and sweet "sangeetham", or Indian classical singing, from Renuka teacher and students, the atmosphere was merry, full of fun and revelry.

On a more serious note, newcomers may wonder what is the value of these certificates and how are they useful to a yoga instructor?

To date, many MAYI graduates are teaching overseas. In the US, for example, where yoga is taught in schools, and so many other institutions, instructors need valid certificates to prove their credentials. These certificates are very useful to them. And as MAYI Yoga Academy is registered with Malaysia's Ministry of Education, they are the more valuable.

These certificates are also very useful in Malaysia for the purpose of teaching yoga and MAYI is ready to authenticate it for anyone who needs it. **YM**



EVENTS National Yoga Camp 2013: Building a stronger community

By Vijaya

Teenagers cope with more serious issues these days than they ever did before. It's not just stress over studies, tense family relationships, peer pressure or puppy loves anymore, but teenage pregnancies, substance abuse, sexual abuse, gangsterism and prostitution involving innocent girls.

Issues they dare not openly discuss with anyone.

Added to all that is insufficient parental guidance, control and management. In fact, more teenagers now have ended up in homes than ever before and hundreds are loitering aimlessly in the streets.

In its second year now, due to overwhelming response from parents, the Malaysian Yoga Society (MYS), the official organiser of National Yoga Camp (NYC) 2013 and "Learn to Teach, Teach to Learn" (LTTL) instructor course, had to come up with a contingency plan to allow more students to take part in Malaysia's first ever Yoga Camping project for school students. Altogether more than 280 students, from 10 years old to 18 years old, took part in the programme which was held in 3 batches from the 8th of December to the 19th of December. Last year, around 170 students took part.

Master Manisekaran, the founder and president of MYS, conducted most of the classes with the help of more than 50 volunteers.

"You may read many books, know and understand your topics clearly and be an expert at them. But that doesn't mean they have any impact on the body system. But one asana or yoga posture you do, or a single breathing exercise you do, will have a direct, positive and immediate impact on the central nervous system," he said.

Throughout the 2 weeks, he taught the excited teens simple breathing practices like Kapalabhati (active exhalation) and Brahmari (humming bee); beginners-level postures as well as challenging ones like bhujangasana (cobra pose), chakrasana (wheel pose) and bakasana (crane pose); and a daily complete yogic relaxation technique called Yoga Nidra, which was introduced to the world by Swami Satyananda Saraswathy, the founder of



theestablished and well-known Bihar School of Yoga in India.

The NYC 2013 syllabus covered 40 over basic and intermediate yoga postures; the Yama, Niyama values (which consist of ethical codes and rules that help regulate disturbances in the body and mind and help practitioners regain balance in life); the shatkarmas, or six cleansing techniques; fun yoga-based games; right and left brain training; Trataka, or concentration practice; and indoor as well as outdoor sports.

The Yama, Niyama topics included Santosha (happiness) Satya (truth), Ahimsa (non-violence), Swadyaya (self-study), Aparigraha (non-possessiveness) and Tapas (austerity). Each topic was delivered by MAYI Yoga Academy students who were part of the volunteers' team headed by Iswari Vengadaraman, who is a full-time trainer.

The highlight of the programme was the students' presentation based on their understanding of each topic. They rocked the stage with their enthusiastic show of cooperation, teamwork, extraordinary talent and showmanship.

Young Pavithra, who hailed from Banting, Selangor, preferred to keep to herself and didn't mingle much for the first few days, like did many other students, but by the third day, in all three camps, we could see better interaction between the students, and many became great friends by the end of their camping week. This incuded those from other races like Venchy, Zeus, Sai Chong and Kar Mun.

After enjoying a full-blown, power-packed, energetic and enjoyable yoga training session, which lasted one week for each batch, the students went home rejuvenated, refreshed and pretty toned to an extent! Especially the LTTL students who learned 'how to teach' yoga with Master Mani and Priya Tee.

In seven days, they learnt that a healthy body is a prerequisite to having a healthy heart and mind, and that a stress-free mind encourages maximum growth in an individual as it enhances thinking capacity, improves intuition and allows creativity to flow.

Along the way, they freely shared their feelings about the issues facing the teenage world, their concern about the future, their newly-found deep interest in yoga and their deep gratitude to Master Mani and all the volunteers who doubled up as their as teachers, security guards, mentors and caretakers. Each volunteer religiously took turns to teach the students, guide them, serve them and spent sleepless nights listening to their concerns or sharing their knowledge and wisdom regarding any subject under the sun.

With mountainous resolve to embark on a healthy yoga-based-journey, the children each poured their hearts and minds out unreservedly during their stay at the camp.

"I feel wonderful and more flexible after the camp", said Venchy Tay Wengqi. "I enjoyed the camp very much and feel that I have improved a lot in doing the asanas."

Ramu and 39 of his friends who came all the way from Skudai, Johor, with their Taekwondo master Mr Kalaimannan for the first batch of the camping project, said that he's used to sitting slightly slouched and was very surprised he could sit up straight in the seven days. Master Mani clarified that sitting straight means sitting in a comfortable position with the back straight yet allowing for the natural curvature of the spine to remain intact. In fact, it's part of the Easterners' culture to sit cross-legged on the ground in simple Sukhasana (easy pose), especially when they are having their meals. This posture gives a gentle massage to the lower abdominal area and makes sure that the spine is as straight as possible.

"This is an entirely new experience for me," said Thaneswary Jhagarajan from Petaling Jaya, Selangor. "I feel stronger and understand that there's more energy and ability in me. I just need to tap it," said the girl of 14 with a gleam in her eyes.

One marked progress we could openly see in all the camps was the teenagers' willingness to speak out, even regarding personal and serious issues, share their thoughts and willingness to help each other out.

"The teenagers displayed so much of compassion, kindness and acceptance towards each other. We adults should learn to find goodness in them instead of always labelling them. If we acknowledge their positive attitudes and attributes, they will grow up healthier with good self-esteem. That is something I learnt as a facilitator in this camp," said Saandhi.

On the last day, it was heart rending to see many of them, even boys, in tears, as they left the vicinity of the Sg Buloh Saraswathy Tamil School where the NYC 2013 and LTTL programmes were held.

The most touching part was the parents' unrestrained outpouring of gratitude and hope for the programme. In these deeply troubled times, which parent would not be grateful if a responsible non-profit, non-sectarian organisation like MYS, takes the initiative to seed healthy, profitable and progressive habits in their children? A few parents sponsored meals for the kids and good samaritans like Kavi Vithya and Ng Kar Wee spent time baking vegetarian muffins and cakes for the children.

"The children of today are the citizens of tomorrow, so let us all contribute to a better world and towards their holistic development rather than only emphasising on material gains," said Master Mani.

To ensure the kids stay on course, MYS is offering them free classes every week at its centres in Selayang and Bangsar. They were also given teenage membership cards that would allow them the opportunity to join many other projects run by MYS like the annual International Yoga Competition and other community outreach programmes. **YM**

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& ANTI - AGING *(Reproductive Health)*

Urdhva Retas Yoga is an ancient technique of enhancing sexual health, which can also be an effective means of birth control. It gives a heightened experience of sexual fulfilment and is anti-aging in nature. Practitioners who have mastered the art, are known to experience a fulfilled and meaningful relationship with their partners, with increased sexual pleasure, vigour and awareness.

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Featured Asana

Paschimottanasana (Back Stretching Pose)





Step by Step:

1. Starting position: Sit on the floor with the legs outstretched, feet together and hands on the knees.
2. Relax the whole body.
3. Slowly bend forward from the hips, sliding the hands down the legs. Try to grasp the big toes with the fingers and thumbs. If this feels challenging, hold the heels, ankles or any part of the legs that can be reached comfortably. Move slowly without forcing or jerking.
4. Hold the position for a few seconds. Relax the back and leg muscles, allowing them to gently stretch.
5. Keeping the legs straight and utilizing the arm muscles, not the back muscles, begin to bend the elbows and gently bring the trunk down towards the legs, maintaining a firm grip on the toes, feet or legs.

Benefits:

- This asana stretched the hamstring muscles and increases flexibility in the hip joints.
- Stretches and lengthens the entire spine.
- It tones and massages the entire abdominal and pelvic region, including the liver, pancreas, spleen, uro-genital system, kidneys and adrenal glands.
- It helps to remove excess weight in this area and stimulates circulation to the nerves and muscles of the spine.
- Helps to relief the symptoms of menstrual discomfort and menopause

Contra-indications:

People who suffer from slipped disc, sciatica or hernia should not practise paschimottanasana.

Articles by Practitioners

Fiat Lux: Let there be light

by Vijaya

In getting up, one learns to walk.

Having fallen, the gravest mistake man can make is to give up and remain listless on the ground. Not overcoming that state is death ... is defeat.

In resilience one discovers the source of strength, prosperity and abundance. The state within that produces a tremendous flow of creativity and energy... ceaselessly.

And that is the most wondrous, blessed state to exist in. The state where a person discovers that the untainted, truest, strongest hero does not come from tales, myths, legends and texts, sacred or otherwise, but from the centre within.

Now we know why trials, tests and thorns exist. How else to discover that the most blessed part of the self is inside? How else to realise oneself? How else to know ... Hey, I am that (blessing)!

I had an interesting encounter today. Interesting not because it's new. Interesting because it's something I've been seeing and fighting all my life.

My aunt is sick. She has an admirable way of narrating her pains, trials and tribulations ... which can be interpreted as "nagging worries and deep-rooted fears" actually ... in a humorous manner. She said she fell sick while in Terengganu. Chest cold, horrible pain in the limbs, low blood pressure and a daughter-in-law who was panicky over the phone describing my aunt's worsening condition to her husband who was far away in Singapore. Panicky statements like, "Oh my God, she's vomiting badly! Oh no, she looks too pale!" etc, was going all the way from Terengganu to Singapore and my aunt laughingly said how she felt so sorry for the very caring daughter-in-law.

My aunt said how in her moment of weakness she had thought death was approaching, and kept groaning...
"Oh Saro... I'm not sure if I'm going to live,
I can't breathe, I can't walk....!"

I listened to her compassionately. I could feel her pain. My aunt is a bit on the heavy side and is always complaining of throbbing pain in the knees and severe aches at the shoulders, muscles and limbs. My mother cut in and suggested I do "Manipuraka" (yogic healing) to help her heal.

But my concern was in making my aunt feel strong enough to fight the pain off by herself and not be too dependent on medicines, herbs or even me ... the great healer that I am. (smile)

Liken the situation to a tree. I don't believe a disease can be treated by chopping off the leaves or branches. I believe in going to the roots and uprooting the very cause of the disease. That, in my opinion, is more effective than painkillers, prescription drugs or the mother of all pills ... the panadol!



(Headache? Panadol... Gastric? Panadol... Cold? Panadol ...)

At the centre of that believe is Master Mani. I just read, in Facebook, of how he developed severe rashes all over the body but didn't take the medicines Janeve, his little daughter, was giving him. A few years ago, while playing with Janeve, her nail had accidentally poked one of his eyes and he got a deep cut in it. I remember prescribing some ayurveda/homeopathy medicines which he didn't pay any attention to. In a few days' time he was back in class completely healed.

I don't believe much in taking medicines either, or in external stimuli of any kind.

Long ago, after being discharged from the hospital due to a major road accident, my mother, aunty and grandmother used to give me half-boiled eggs, fish oil and a specially made porridge (all of which I hate to this day) that secretly went into the drains.. shh!



I believe in the resilience of the human mechanism against dis'eases' or disharmonies in the body. I believe the body has an innate intelligence, a sort of "security" system that helps fight off harmful substances or diseases.

So do many scientists and quantum physicists now.

The moral of the story is, I find it difficult to understand how not to be resilient, especially against diseases.

About 2 years ago, I started developing continuous excruciating pain at all the joints — at the knees, ankles, neck and hip area — and especially in the bones and at the fingers, arms and legs. Over a few days, the pain slowly accelerated to a very high degree and my initial reaction was, "Gone! I've acquired bone cancer, I'm going to die!"

But as a Yoga and Kriya practitioner, the wiser part of me took over. I decided to face the issue and see what I could do about it. The good doctor at the clinic checked me, asked my age and said it's "Osteoarthritis (OA)". I have always feared the word arthritis and that felt like he had placed a killer time bomb on my head. He was very kind though. He checked me very patiently, explained all I needed to know about OA and gave me painkillers, muscle relaxants, and some other strong medicines. He also gave me the ultimate sentencing,... "OA cannot be cured! You have to manage it all your life. You may need to make some changes to the way you live your life." My immediate thought was, "What! I cannot run up the stairs anymore!" And that was another blow landing on my already shattered head.

(I may have to spend lots of money in the treatment, therapy and probably many operations in life, and oh gosh! What a bright future ahead.)

I didn't take the painkiller, but the muscle relaxant (sorry, forgot the name) the doctor gave was a little soothing and I remember being very thankful to him.

My friend Deepa Maniam, who had taken Yoga Therapy and was working at the Bangsar centre at the time, advised me to change my shoes to a flatter one, take ginger water daily, turmeric, etc, and showed some asanas, or yoga postures, that could help ease the pain.

No one in my family knew about it and I suffered silently for about one month.

Then came time for resilience to stick its head up.

Malaysian Yoga Society's "Learn to Teach, Teach to Learn" (LTTL) programme was going on at the Batu Arang Chap Kuan Chinese school at that time, and I happened to participate in it. I went as a facilitator, but brought my notes along and started doing all the asanas as Master Mani was teaching them. That was equivalent to IYIC (International Yoga Instructor Course) Level 1 and involved detailed study of the joint exercises and many basic asanas.

I realised something very crucial at the end of the day. The more I did the asanas, the lesser the pain became. That was like pouring amrit (nectar) into my system. I remember very well Master's message to the participants in one of his speeches — yoga is the answer to many ill conditions that may arise in the body, mind or emotions. That was the year my friend Ratha shared her experience of having a cyst the size

of an ostrich's egg disappear from her ovary just by changing her diet and doing intensive yoga. She went all the way to India to discover that.

I did it just by surrendering the issue to Master. His initial reaction was as always ...

"Huh, what?"

"I told you yesterday, it's Osteoarthritis, Master. Please advise how to overcome. I'll do any amount of asanas and I'll go fully on a yogic diet. I'll do anything.." I was almost crying as I said that.

"Oh that..." His reaction was subdued as always. (smile)

He didn't say anything and he didn't have to say anything that he had not already said before.

Then, in the next few days, for the first time in my life I started understanding the importance of actually doing the asanas, and not just meditating or making transcendental journey to other planets, or such things...

I did the asanas, took ginger water on alternate days, did Kriya, did Kunjal, did full Shankapraksalana once, did Manipuraka and Prana Vidya daily ... and Hey Presto! ... all pains were gone forever. What OA?

Diseases have got nothing to do with age. It's not how old you are or how great you feel about your body ... It's how resilient you are that matters. Not only against diseases but against any trials in life. Then you're a sure winner. All the money, riches and wealth in the world are not sufficient to the one who has not discovered his tremendous inner strength or the sufficiency of the self. In that self sufficiency lies an abundance of health, wealth or whatever is it you want...

It's not that I don't share my thoughts, experiences or advises with my family members. I do all the time. Sometimes I even shout them out loudly.

In a while, both my mother and aunt went into details about the accident that my father and I were involved in. They both shared their deep fears, anxiety and anguish at that time.

I noticed that they do it all the time. My mum, aunties or friends, when they get together, there's so much of pain, anguish and heart aches to share, especially about the past. And the future is always bleak for some of their children (who are married and have their own offsprings) who are not wise about raising children or living in debt or are too comfortable....

Later, I helplessly watched as they continued their inner journey by being intensely involved in the drama serials on TV. And Tamil movies that are specialised in putting one's emotions continuously on a roller-coaster ride.

Fiat Lux: Let there be light! **YM**



Articles by Practitioners

Kathmandu Valley: Of Buddha's Eye and Culturally Rich Buildings

by Jivanti M



I can't decide if Nepal should be "Never Ending Peace and Love" or "Never Ending Portrait and Landscape"

Definitely both.

Such is the beauty of this country's people and places.

Perhaps it was the silent wish many years ago that brought me here though it was made nonchalantly. "Someday I'll trek the mountains in Nepal". At that time, I never knew where Nepal was. I had only heard that it was beautiful.
A grand preview of Nepal peeked its way through the flight's pigeon holed window, the Everest and its other astounding neighbours, the great Himalayan range. I gaped in awe.

Touching down at Tribuvan International Airport, the chill air welcomed us. I looked around and instantly liked what I saw. The airport was built from red bricks and intentionally left that way, creating a rather rustic look. Working our way through the immigration counters, interesting signages like "We like to take our time in Nepal, relax" and "8 of the world's highest mountain is in Nepal" caught my eye.

Pasupathinath Shiva Temple, Kathmandu

My first immersion into Nepal's rich cultural heritage was at the Pasupathinath Temple in the Kathmandu Valley. It is one of the 275 Lord Shiva's holy abode. This temple which dates back to the 8th century is highly preserved and eccentric.

Looking at cadavers burning in the cremation area, I was transported back in memories to one of most favourite places in India: Varanasi. The set up was much like India's Holy City except that the Baghvati River was dry and wasn't as abundant as Mother Ganga. Still the ambience was the same with the ghats along the river bank, buffaloes and cows strolling by, monkeys swinging from the many bells arches found around the temple and safron clad sadhus inviting you for a blessing in hopes of receiving some alms.



The temple itself is huge with the main shrine and some other 20-30 odd periphery deities. Entry into the temple's main shrine is not permitted for non Hindus, which I found hard to accept (for in my view it distorts the receptive view of Hinduism) but I guess most times, it always began from the human themselves. God as usual has nothing to do with it. Perhaps one sour incident hundreds of years ago between a Western traveller and the temple priest, banned white skinned people from the temple. And the tradition was continued. Just perhaps…

Local Nepalis drenched with spiritual ecstasy were singing with their eyes closed and a faint blissful smile on their face. Even with so many people in the temple, I could feel the massive vibration coming from the Sanskrit sung Bhajans. Walking further into the temple, I reached the miniature Shiva Lingas, 125 of them arranged in a maze. The lingas are tiny and are placed at knee level, hence you can touch it as you walk. It is such that there's an entrance where you walk into, and follow the maze of lingas till you reach the exit. Nepali kids circle around the maze chanting "Om Namah Shivaya" while their mothers worship the lingas with reverence. Since photography is not allowed inside the temple complex, I couldn't take any shots but the miniature lingas to my opinion is the best feature of the temple.

Baudanth Stuppa, Kathmandu

The sun was already setting when we reached the Baudha but at a height of 125ft, the Buddha's Eyes gazing out to the world from the stupa's golden dome was a reminder that we are constantly looked after. This Tibetan Buddhist temple like others had in its wall cavity, prayers wheels resembling small vertical drums which were engraved with the Sanskrit mantra "Om Mani Padme Hum" (Glory to the Jewel in the Lotus). A mantra so famous in the thousands of mandalas found everywhere in Nepal. Hundreds of locals and curious tourists were circumambulating the periphery of the temple sliding their fingers to spin the knobs at the bottom of the wheels. It is believed that by spinning the wheel, one receives the same grace as if one recites the mantra. We couldn't get a chance to spin the wheels for long as it was already dark but the rustling wind was definitely whispering goodbye prayers through the mantra inscribed flags as we were leaving the temple.

Swayambhunath Monkey Temple, Kathmandu

The second day in Kathmandu, the cultural trail was continued with us visiting the Swayambhunath Temple. Another Tibetan Buddhist temple on a hilltop filled with monkeys much revered after the Baudha. Even if you're not culturally inclined and buildings don't quite interest you, this temple is a must visit. It's just so peaceful and rich. Everywhere you lay your eyes, you're bound to see something beautiful. The pair of giant Buddha eyes greeted me again wisely after climbing a few hundreds steps. I can recall the scene quite vividly: Nepali women garbed in bright red sitting at the temple veranda preparing prayer materials against the backdrop of the beautiful Kathmandu Valley. Such a breath taking contrast.

Darbar Square, Kathmandu

From here we continued on to another traditional architectural wonder. This massive monument zone is home to a collection of 43 different palaces, temples, museums and courtyards. It is here that kings of Nepal are crowned and their coronations solemnized. At every nook and corner, highly intricate works of art are apparent. Currently, besides a place of worship with many Hindu and Buddhist temples, (most notably the Hanuman and the black stoned Bairav), this is a plaza where the locals come to hang out. You can spend a whole day here if you're really into history and architecture. Even if you're not into those things, it's a perfect place to let your mind wander and just watch the world go by.

Perhaps the only thing that most of us didn't quite like was the fact that Kathmandu is really dry and dusty. Road conditions are horrible and the traffic is unrelenting. Plants are often unidentifiable due to the mud and dust covering them. After 2 days in Kathmandu, all of us couldn't wait to escape to the higher altitudes of Pokhara, the gateway to the Annapurna region, Nepal's own natural Shangri-La.

YM



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Yogic Wisdom For Daily Living

I.21 tivrasamveganam asannah *by Jamie Spatafore*

The goal is near for those who are supremely vigorous and intense in practice.

Firstly, what is this goal mentioned in the Yoga Sutras? Is it to gain fame, wealth and power? Without a doubt, the Yoga Sutras doesn't care about material things. The goal is to obtain Yoga or Union. Perhaps we never thought of that? Perhaps we think Yoga is just a class we attend to do some stretching or close our eyes and experience some relaxation. The goal of the entire Yoga Sutras is Yoga. Yet Yoga is what we practice to achieve the goal of Yoga? It all seems so confusing.

Let us start from the beginning. It is said that to become an "expert" in anything, you need 10,000 hours of experience. Think about that for a moment. For example, let's assume we want to become a star football player. If we can devote 8 hours/day, we would need 1,250 days or 3.4 years to become an expert or highly proficient in that field. That is if we can devote 8 hours/day without fail. Right now we devote only 2 to 3 hours per week to our spiritual growth. Here is some homework for you: how long will it take to become proficient in your practice? And this is just on the material realm. Because we are dealing with thought patterns and habits that have been developed over millennia, perhaps it could take even longer?

Now that thought might start us getting depressed. We always want to actualize an idea we think of immediately. We think "I want Union" and then like some sort of magic "Union" is supposed to happen. Perhaps it does for 1 in 1,000,000 but it surely won't be happening to me or anyone else reading this article just like that. We have to face reality. We have to practice.

I can already hear the excuses: "But, but I don't have time"... "But, but I have to put food on the table". And here is where the door opens up for us. What practice is Sri Patanjali speaking of in the Yoga Sutras? Is he speaking of the physical or mental aspect of Yoga? Does it matter? If you are reading this then you are well aware that the physical aspect is only a small portion and even considered a preparatory practice for the deeper aspects of Yoga. These do not rely on time or the place because they are with us all the time and everywhere. They are our thoughts and mental fluctuations.

Actually we can practice at all times and if you look at the great ones, that is exactly what they did and/or are doing right now. They are practicing even while giving a speech. They are practicing even while driving a car full of children. At every moment of every day they are practicing Yoga. Even in sleep, they are practicing.

Now what kind of attitude allows one to keep up with that kind of intensity? It is the attitude of someone who has had a glimpse of peace and wants more. It is the attitude of someone addicted to a drug and that drug is called peace. If you are addicted to something, you cannot stop until you possess it completely and totally. It has been said that you have to have the same longing as a man who is drowning and needs air. It has to be of that intensity.

This is not going to be easy is it? Can you see the difficulty? But it has to be started. We will falter. We may slow down but we must always move forward. Practice is life and life is practice. Therefore, just like life, there is the ebb and the flow. There are whirlpools we get caught in and it has to happen. But the being who yearns for it and keeps his eye on the goal will eventually reach it. It is a natural law.

If Sri Patanjali were here right now, I'd imagine he'd say the following: "Whatever your practice, keep going until the goal is reached. There is only one mountain top but there are many paths to get there. The only requirement is not to stop on the path for the path is a means to an end. It is not the end itself".

Peace. **YM**

At Your Fingertips: Oh my Scalp!

by Lee Yan

One of the most obvious and important part of us that has been neglected is the health of our scalp. It is becoming common for people to have hair or scalp problems. The usual symptoms of an imbalanced or weak scalp are hair thinning or breaking off, and slow growth. Scalp skin sensitivity conditions such as dandruff, itching or peeling scalp or scalp allergies are also commonly seen. Such hair and scalp conditions not only cause discomfort but they can also be upsetting. Some conditions are easily avoidable if not improved with a little knowledge.

So what is considered a healthy scalp? According to research, a healthy scalp is has good skin elasticity which is stimulated and flexible without any clogged pores and has production of healthy hair. A healthy scalp also has a healthy network of connective tissue and nutritional blood vessels that allow plenty of circulation. Many believed piling on chemical products helps to provide nutrients and nourish the scalp but unfortunately it can create further dryness and increase the production of sebum. This can throw off the scalp balance by not allowing the skin to respire or perspire.

Beautiful hair which many of us desire, doesn't come in a separate package…it comes along with a healthy scalp. Many have tried various products to care for their precious hair. Those who are adventurous may have tried just about everything in the book, from slathering the hair with mayonnaise and eggs to paying an arm and a leg for expensive products that claim to increase hair growth and lustre, but still see little result. The lack of result is because of too much focus on getting their hair to look better and no attention to their scalp.

Think of your hair as trees, grass or plants and your scalp as the soil. If the soil isn't cared for, their growth cannot flourish. If you don't take time to ensure that your scalp is healthy and well nourished, how can we expect to have healthy hair? If you look after your scalp well, you have a guarantee that you will have beautiful hair.

For some, they may find that overall their hair looks and feels ok, but just seem to be lacking lustre. In this case, the first place you should look out for clues is your scalp. Is it dry? Greasy? Flaky? Any of these can be a sign that you may a need a change in your hair regimen, an improvement in your nutrition intake or a scalp treatment.



Common scalp condition:

Dry Scalp

A dry, flaky scalp accompanied by dry hair can be your body's way of telling you that it is in dire need of nutrients.

Dry scalp and Oily hair

Having a dry scalp, but oily hair is an unusual, but not uncommon occurrence. The most common cause is an allergic reaction/ sensitivity to chemical shampoo. If this problem isn't a common issue to you, it could signify that your scalp has a pH imbalance.

Oily scalp

Oily scalp and oily hair signifies an overproduction of oils and can lead to build up if left untreated. Remedying this issue, however, is simpler than the others.

Oily scalp and dry hair

Like dry scalp and oily hair, this issue is just as unusual but not at all uncommon. Oily scalp and dry hair can be a sign of clogged pores or a hormonal imbalance.

Clogged Pores

Clogged pores could be caused by a lack of washing or a lack of washing properly. Hair product that is not properly washed away, builds up on the scalp and prevent oils and nutrients from being transported to the hair strands leaving the hair dull and brittle.



The solutions:

In order to combat the conditions above, it is recommended that you start to pay more attention to your scalp. Your skin is the last to receive any nutrients, but the first to show signs of deficiency. Getting to the source and improving the health of your scalp is the first step in solving the problems.

Eat & hydrate well

Eat well to maintain your scalp and hair health. Your hair is the last in queue when receiving nourishment, so if you don't eat well, your hair won't get anything at the end of the day. Crash and fad dieting can destroy your hair, so don't resort to such drastic measures. Rather have plenty of water and eat plenty of fresh fruits and veggies, especially those brimming with Vitamin B such as nuts, whole grains or even peas.

Zinc

Zinc is required for the growth and repair of tissues throughout the body so a healthy amount will do wonders for your scalp, but a lack of it could be detrimental to your health and show up on your scalp and hair. Whole grains and nuts are rich in Zinc and are highly recommended if you need a nutrient boost.

Iron

Iron's role in the body is to help in the transportation of oxygen from the lungs to the cells. Because the scalp and skin are highly dependent on oxygen, this nutrient is vital in promoting and maintaining healthy skin. Foods high in iron are green vegetables, fruit, beans and grains.



Omega 3 Fatty Acids

Omega 3 fatty acids aid in moisturizing your skin from the inside. A good source of vegetable based oil that is high in omega 3 is flaxseed oil.

Vitamin A

Vitamin A aids in the synthesis of protein. Because hair is mostly made up of protein (roughly 97%), a lack of Vitamin A could mean a decrease in the production of the protein needed for growing hair.

Gentle & herbs based hair cleanser

Use gentle hair products which don't contain ingredients like ammonium and sodium lauryl sulfate and opt for natural and herb based moisturizing as well as a balanced pH hair cleanser. If you are a swimmer, make sure to rinse your hair well to remove all traces of chlorine from your hair. Those who exercise and sweat a lot should wash off the scalp with cold water to get rid of drying salt deposits on the scalp.

Wind Dry

Keep away from blow-dryers since they can reduce the moisture content of your scalp and actually dehydrate it! Don't blow-dry your scalp directly. This causes the cuticles to roughen up.

General rule of thumb, keeping the scalp free of any chemicals, let it breathe easily and some gentle stimulation through massages will enable your scalp to remain healthy with strong and beautiful hair.



NSR Centre provides various therapies from Organic Hair Colouring, Hair Fall treatment to Ayurveda Head Massage treatments by trained therapist, herbs and pure oil products for the scalp and hair. Short courses on Natural Self Care are available too for individuals who are interested to pick up some practical and effective skills to benefit the health of their family members especially kids and elderly. For more information, please login to www.nsrcentre.com or if you would like to speak to us, reach us at **03-77241072**.

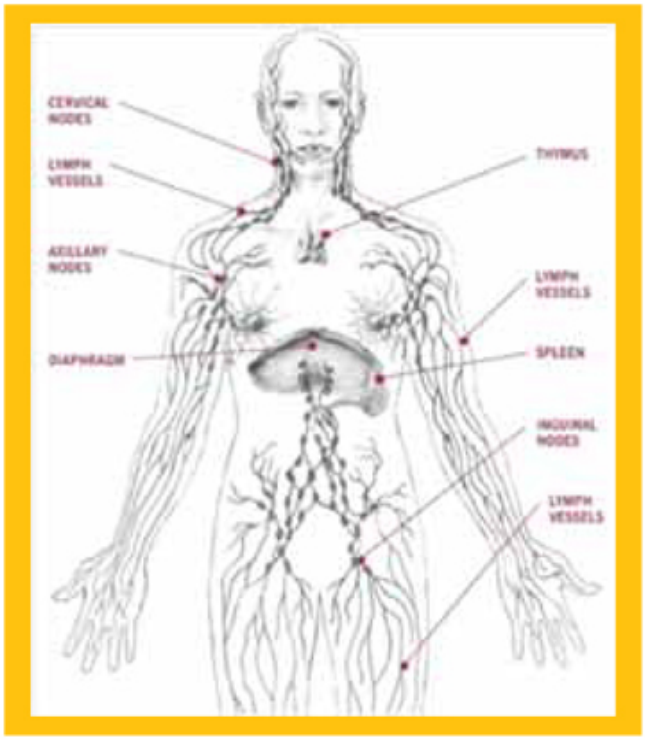
Yoga Therapy for Lymphatic & Immune Systems Resilience

by Surya Tay

Within the body's lymphatic system is also the immune system which defends against infectious viruses, bacteria, and fungi as well as parasitic organisms. After fighting infection, the destroyed foreign bodies and dead tissue are remove through its extensive drainage network of vessels that carry lymph — a clear, watery fluid that contains protein molecules, salts, glucose, urea, and other substances — throughout the body. This helps keep bodily fluid levels in balance, nourishing and removing the waste products from cells.

There are several hundred lymph nodes found mostly throughout the thorax and abdomen of the body with the highest concentrations in the armpit and groin regions. The tonsils, adenoids, spleen, and thymus are all part of the lymph system.

Since the lymphatic system has no "pump" (unlike the circulatory system has the heart), yoga practice which involves bodily movement and breathing function can help to move liquid lymph through the vessels and filters of the lymph nodes.



Yoga Asanas:

Kurmasana for thymus and cervical nodes



Dhyana bakasana (2stages) for axillary (armpits) nodes



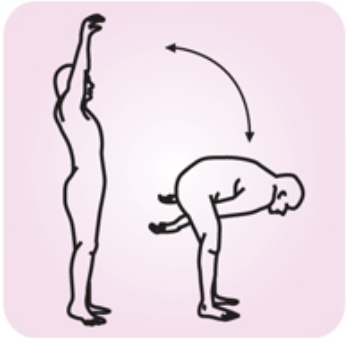
Hamsasana for Spleen



Garudasana for (inguinal) groin and axillary (underarms) nodes



Swinging while standing pose for overall lymphatic circulation



Pranayama (Breathing techniques):
Diaphragmatic breathing, Bellows breath

Shatkarma (Cleansing Techniques):
Jala Neti (nasal), Kunjal (stomach), Laghoo Shankaprakshalana (intestinal)

Simple Meditation to remove mental toxins as the immune system is also affected by the state of mind and emotions:

Visualise any negative thoughts flowing out from the mind and towards the sun. The sun then sears and dissolves these unhelpful thoughts.

All yoga techniques can be modified to suit the individual depending on their fitness level and overall condition. Do consult an experienced yoga therapist for guidance.

For a free yoga therapy first consultation please call:
03-22605322 (Brickfields/Bangsar);
03-77276682 (Damansara Utama)

Eco's Echoes: Consumerism
– How conscious are we about the environment?

by Suresh Paunrajan

It is actually a strange coincidence, when we study the behavior of a virus, how it affects a living being and causes it sickness. Firstly, the virus gains mastery over the organism's protection mechanism and then it depletes the organism of all its resources. Eventually when the organism or cell dies, it moves on to another organism and then it repeats the same process.

Strangely yet bizarrely, we humans seem to be displaying similar characteristics with our environment. First we (human race) gain mastery over nature, then we consume all the resources, we make the rivers dry, make the forests disappear, cut down the trees. And eventually once it is not suitable to live, we move on. And we repeat the process.

It intrigued my mind for a while, why the human race shows such a character? Why we are not able to create a mutual living environment? While nature continues to evolve, why don't we also continue to evolve? Are we a virus to the environment? Are we a disease to this planet?

Our city lifestyle seems to be promoting more of this behavior as well. There are more and more shopping malls being built everywhere. Shopping malls are becoming the hangout places for people, even a person who is just passing by tends to buy at least something, as it increases the consuming tendency. But most of us not aware of all this, and we have made shopping malls the place to be and our "picnic spots". The more crowded the shopping malls become also reflect on how fast we are consuming all the resources of our planet.

As consuming rate rises, higher wastage also happens naturally. There are lots of expired products being disposed of as garbage on a daily basis. Even in restaurants a lot of food is being wasted. Our behavior of consumerism leads to over purchasing, over cooking or over producing. In this world when everything is measured based on money, the true value of things are lost. Even when we throw away food, we calculate how much money is being wasted rather than the true value of it.

This is a behaviour I always observe even while driving. Why do people drive their cars out, even when they know there will be traffic jam? We know very well that getting stuck in traffic just wastes fuel. I often wonder how many litres of petrol are being wasted like this daily. Drivers are speeding up on the road and braking suddenly, even though all of us know that every single pressing of the brake leads to fuel wastage. Why does this not go into our consciousness? While there are people fighting for fuel on the other side of the planet, we continue to adopt such virus-like behaviour.

On my personal journey through the path of yoga, as I was starting to be more and more aware of the world around me, it pained me first to understand how we humans display such virus-like behaviour. Then I realised that it is a personal choice. As humans we can always choose, whether we want to be a disease to the planet, or we want to evolve together with nature. And so began also my awareness of the purchases I am making. Now I buy only the items of real need, rather than an artificially created need, like something attractive which is displayed in some mall. Then I realised that most groceries can be purchased from places like the pasar malam, where it is always fresher. Buying from here gives more business to small vendors at the same time. Gradually, my need to go to shopping malls subsided. Although it was hard at first, I have slowly changed myself to be more conscious of my purchasing behaviour.

Even when it comes to driving, I am now always conscious and keep looking out for a possibility that I may need to stop along my drive. The instant I realise this, I would slow down much earlier to avoid jamming the brakes suddenly. There are times when I have driven through minimum traffic conditions, absolutely without stepping on the brakes, by navigating smoothly with awareness. I completely avoid going out in the traffic jam by managing my working times and meetings well.

Great power comes with great responsibility. The purchasing power we have today has to be exercised cautiously. The change we seek always starts from within. **YM**

Inner Insights:
Strengthened Through Yoga



by Petra Gimbad

I discovered MAYI's International Yoga Instructor Course a few years ago through my job as a social worker and child protection officer. As a translator, I accompanied three refugee teenagers who were provided full scholarships by the Malaysian Yoga Society to attend the International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course. As they were unable to attend Malaysian government schools, this was an opportunity for them to attain a certificate of some sort to allow them to earn sustainable incomes in future.

MAYI ended up sponsoring my International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course as well, for which I am eternally grateful. It was an opportunity to grow: prior to the course, most of my experience in yoga came from learning yoga at gym centres and from books. It complemented the work I was doing, as I was working with the police and various welfare departments back then. I was particularly affected by a few cases of child sexual abuse that I was handling and would not have coped without my yoga practice. The calming effects of the practice helped me manage the emotional and mental turmoil that was my professional life, which impacted my personal life too.

I never planned to teach yoga. However, I ended up teaching yoga to physically and sexually abused children, human rights workers and sex workers. Back then, with a martial arts instructor, we ran a programme to teach yoga and Capoeira to sexually abused teenage girls from lower-income backgrounds. This evolved into a programme that combined yoga with dance and energy healing for sex workers in Indonesia a couple of years later. There was and still is the need to establish a programme to help girls and women process complex emotions that result from abuse, and to get in touch with their bodies positively. It was empowering to observe how yoga can create safe spaces for sexual abuse survivors, to feel good in their bodies and in a manner that did not involve boys or men.

Culling on my previous work as a human rights worker, I ran a programme as part of my master's degree, also in Indonesia, combining yoga and energy healing, with a friend who is now doing her master's in art therapy. Another friend supported us by taking time from her corporate job to teach dance for the programme. It was fulfilling to teach other human rights workers the very same practices that helped me when I was working on the field. It was an honour to journey with the workers as they evolved and developed the practice according to their needs and personalities. Yoga and meditation planted seeds of consciousness, for the workers to observe what worked and did not work for them. The lessons learnt on the mat had a way of seeping into their lives and the way in which they worked with clients and communities.

This past year, I was injured during a sexual assault and later again when I broke my foot and had to use a wheelchair. These incidents aggravated past injuries as well. After a partial recovery, I returned to MAYI to attend the level 3 yoga instructor training. It was very frustrating to attend the first class and find myself limping for days afterwards. There were advanced postures in the syllabus that I later found were unsuited to my state at that point. However, my temporary physical disabilities also proved to be a lesson in yoga.

Discovering yoga at the beginning was like meeting young love for the first time: it was fresh, exciting and passionate. With the injuries, my practice had to evolve. Where in the past the focus was on complex progressions in asanas, I now found that my progression lay in accepting that regressions were needed to get into the asanas. Accepting my physical limits now was harder than performing the difficult asanas in the past. However I am sure that this has made me a better teacher, especially now that MAYI has provided me opportunities to teach students of more advanced age, who may require a different practice to what I was used to practicing and teaching in my 20's.

What surprised me during this period was how the years of practicing yoga really did bear fruit. I could not practice asana for months, including folding my legs into cross-legged positions to meditate because of the injuries. However, the time spent on reading, practicing yoga, meditation and reflecting on life, provided me the maturity I needed to just let things be and to let certain things go. I was surprised to observe that I was a more patient person despite my frustration, and that I was able to make better decisions than I would have otherwise. It was as if years of asana and meditation had taken root in my body and transformed my mind, to provide me exactly what it was that I needed to get through the crucial points of this year.

The practice provided courage to bring my perpetrator to court and the compassion and wisdom to pray that he will only be punished as far as is necessary, and no more. Prison is a cruel place, and I used to pray that he will be given an appropriate sentence – enough to teach him a lesson, but no longer. Yoga and meditation allowed me to observe my desire for revenge, and to differentiate that desire from the need for justice so that he will not harm again. A couple of weeks ago, I received news that he was convicted for being a sex offender, with a fine and a relatively short jail sentence.

Yoga is a journey, which is frustrating when we come up against our imperfections continuously. However, comfort can be found in the knowledge that we are always students and that with practice, we will inevitably improve. Looking back, I remember what my life was before yoga and see now how I am better able to handle frustration and work with my limits, to transcend current realities. The practice has made a difference by transforming my relationships with the communities and human rights workers I worked with in a special way. I am grateful for the experience and hope that I will continue to evolve in a manner that continues to benefit myself and the persons around me. **YM**

Inner Insights: Revealing My Inner Self through Yoga

by Imelda Mandeli

It all started when I was experiencing some pain on my right leg (which occurred since I was little) and my fellow Chiropractors and mentors suggested for me to take up yoga asana practices. I was a Chiropractic Assistant by profession. My response was a nonchalant smile and a knowing nod, brushing aside their advice lightly. The day came that I could no longer bear the sharp pain anymore. Thus I took the first step to a yoga class at a fitness centre in Surabaya. Just after a month of practise, I could slowly feel the pain withering away. This first encounter with yoga practices did more than reducing the pain in my leg - it opened my eyes to a whole new world. Ever since then, I started to practice more often and the love for Yoga grew. That was eight years ago.

I continued attending classes and I began to wonder about the role I play in this society – am I a follower? Am I an observer? Am I an ignorant being? Or am I one who is able to lend a hand to those in need? The strings of questions were endless, yet the answers were nowhere in sight. I decided to stop pondering for it's time to take charge and be proactive in pursuing something more meaningful. I decided to learn to apply Yoga as a form of therapy. My then Yoga Instructor, Shankar from Malaysia, did the most wonderful thing by recommending me to his teacher, Master Manisekaran. In 2012, I found myself travelling to Malaysia to attend the Yoga Therapist Certification Course and International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course offered by Malaysian Association of Yoga Instructors (MAYI).



The courses have given me a bird's eye view of the vast benefits and potential that Yoga holds in the wellbeing industry. Not only did it focus on the physical wellbeing of a person but it also stresses on the importance of techniques which can nourish a person's psyche. This is one aspect that I have yet to come across thus far. As I embark further on the practices, I realise that teaching Yoga is not about leading a class and earning money, as it has helped me tremendously in managing my own life. The revelations are amazing – I began to gain more understanding and empathy to others, and became less judgmental. My actions and reactions to my surroundings are more subtle. I am able to handle life issues more gracefully and with a clear mind. I no longer feel frustrated by the desperate need to find solutions. Even negative thoughts and actions began to fade.

Although I may not have full comprehension of how it happened but I do know that regular Yoga practices have allowed me to find peace within myself and with that, I am able to accept and love myself as the person that I am – strength and weaknesses inclusive. This self-acceptance has also enabled me to accept others as they are.

After eight years of learning and practicing Yoga, I feel blessed that I've finally found the organisation which could show me the true meaning of Yoga. I feel happy that MAYI did more than welcome me. Everyone took me in as part of their big family and I'm given the opportunity to explore deeper into this amazing practice. I have since travelled to Malaysia to complete MAYI's Kundalini Kriya Yoga Course and Ayurvedic Massage Therapist Course, and to attend the Manipuraka and Urdhva Retas workshops. I believe that the law of attraction is demonstrated here. My genuine intent to seek knowledge has led me to this whole new world of discoveries, and I am slowly harvesting the seeds I sowed. It has been an amazing experience and I am looking forward to more of such discoveries! **YM**



ROARING WITH RESILIENCE

Kids are inquisitive and are always pondering about how things worked. Parents and teachers sometimes shy away from these kids because they can no longer provide satisfying answers after their umpteenth whys. Looking for answers from their trusted parents and teachers are children's mechanism to find out how things work, and their endless strings of whys shows the sure sign that they are not giving up just yet (and isn't this trait commendable?). Providing answers or assistance to their questions and quests are important for the child to learn about problem solving, about trust and team work, and mostly about striving to accomplish their goals.

Everyone (and every child) has the capacity to become resilient. Parents sometimes rush to pick up their children when they stumble and fall. As an alternative, wouldn't it be better is we could allow an opportunity for them to pick themselves up, dust themselves off and move on? (Of course, it depends on the intensity of the situation). At times, we notice that some children are particularly 'fragile' when their parents are around and watching. Ironically, the same group of children can be strong and independent when they are left to work things out by themselves.

Building resilience in children is important. Resilience helps children to learn to be accountable to achieve their goals and not to give up easily. Had all great inventors given up the first time they failed, we would not have been able to benefit from their many magnificent inventions. As Thomas Edison puts it, 'I haven't failed. I've identified 10,000 ways this doesn't work'. Resilience is essential because it demonstrates our capacity to face and overcome adversities, and with that, we are rewarded with the revelation of our innate potentials and inner strength. Providing guidance to children to cope with changes and adversities helps in setting a positive perspective for them to understand that change is constant and that with a positive outlook and practical adaptation, everyone can move forward in a positive way.

Establishing resiliency is a continuous process. Many learning opportunities were dressed up as hard work and often mislabelled as nuisances or road blocks of life. For most children, the practice of resiliency has much to do with coping with change. Change can appear to be a challenge to some kids – the change to a new school or a move to a new residential area entails them to learn to cope with new surroundings where they are deprived of the support of their close friends. Other instances may be something as regular as building a science project or overcoming social issues.



Adults can use these opportunities to demonstrate resilience, not providing instant solutions to them, but allowing them the space and nurturing their creativity in finding solutions. Adults' encouragement fuels their motivation to strive. Remember, resilience applies not only to people as individuals but also as a unit, particularly a family unit!

1. TUNRTIGS : _____
2. OROGUACUES : _____
3. SIPVOTIE : _____
4. CEFHLURE : _____
5. CRAGNI : _____
6. ROSTGN : _____
7. ACEVIRTE : _____
8. ENSPRILOSBE : _____
9. TISMOPICIT : _____
10. LENIGDIT : _____

Answers:
(1)Trusting, (2)Courageous, (3)Positive, (4)Cheerful, (5)Caring, (6)Strong, (7)Creative, (8)Responsible, (9)Optimistic, (10)Diligent

Unscramble the letters to discover the qualities of a resilient child that you are! (Parents, discuss with your children why these qualities are important!)

When in need of an extra boost, perform the Roaring Lion Pose – open your mouth, stick out your tongue and roar like a ferocious lion!



SYK classes include: Yoga Kids Class, Teens Yoga Class, Family Yoga Class and Pregnancy Yoga Class. For more information about Super Yoga Kids, log on to www.superyogakids.com or find us at Facebook: SYK Superyogakids

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Chef Yogi's Food Notes!

Ribollita Soup (Serves: 4)



Ingredients

- 500g dried white beans eg cannellini
- Sea salt
- 1/8 cup good olive oil
- 3 stalks spring onions - chopped
- 2 carrots - chopped
- 3 stalks celery- chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- 4-5 large ripe tomatoes - chopped
- 2 cups coarsely chopped or shredded cabbage, optional
- 2 cups coarsely chopped kale/spinach
- A handful of fresh basil leaves - chopped
- 3 cups vegetable stock, preferably homemade
- 1 cup bread cubes, crusts removed
- Freshly grated Parmesan cheese, for serving

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, cover the beans with cold water and cover with plastic wrap. Allow to soak overnight in the refrigerator.

2. Drain the beans and place them in a large pot. Cover with water, and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer uncovered for 45 minutes. Add 1/2 teaspoon of salt and continue to simmer for about 15 minutes, until the beans are tender. Set the beans aside to cool in their liquid.

3. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large stockpot. Add the spring onions and cook over medium-low heat for 7 to 10 minutes, until the onions are translucent. Add the carrots, celery, salt, the pepper, and red pepper flakes. Cook over medium-low heat for 7 to 10 minutes, until the vegetables are tender. Add the tomatoes with their juices, the cabbage, if using, the kale/spinach, and basil and cook over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, for another 7 to 10 minutes.

4. Drain the beans, reserving their cooking liquid. In the bowl of a food processor fitted with a steel blade, puree half of the beans with a little of their liquid. Add to the stockpot, along with the remaining whole beans. Pour the bean cooking liquid into a large measuring cup and add enough vegetable stock to make 4 cups. Add to the soup and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer over low heat for 20 minutes.

5. Add the bread to the soup and simmer for 10 more minutes. Taste for seasoning and serve hot in large bowls sprinkled with Parmesan and drizzled with olive oil.

Schedule of Courses: Jan - Apr 2014

JANUARY 2014

17/1/2014	DU	Full Intestinal Cleansing Practical Session
19/1/2014	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
27&29/1/2014		Partner Yoga Instructor Course

FEBRUARY 2014

15/2/2014	DU	Jala Neti Workshop
21/2/2014	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
21-23/2/2014	BSR	Pregnancy Instructor Course
23/2/2014	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Advance

MARCH 2014

2/3/2014	BFS	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
2/3/2014	BSR	MAYI Yoga Academy: Yoga Sharing Open Day
4 - 7/3/2014	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
9/3/2014	BFS	Precision & Alignment: Level 1 Practitioner Workshop 1
15/3/2014	BSR	Kundalini Kriya Yoga (Self Mastery)
15-17/3/2014		Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course
16/3/2014	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
16/3/2014	BFS	Precision & Alignment: Level 1 Practitioner Workshop 2
16/3/2014	DU	MAYI Yoga Academy: Yoga Sharing Open Day
20-23/3/2014	Indonesia	Incredible Lake Toba (4 days/3 nights)
23/3/2014	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
23/3/2014	BFS	Precision & Alignment: Level 1 Practitioner Workshop 3
24-28/3/2014	BFS	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
30/3/2014	BFS	Precision & Alignment: Level 1 Practitioner Workshop 4
30/3/2014	BSR	Manipuraka Workshop
30/3/2014	BSR	Urdhva Retas Workshop

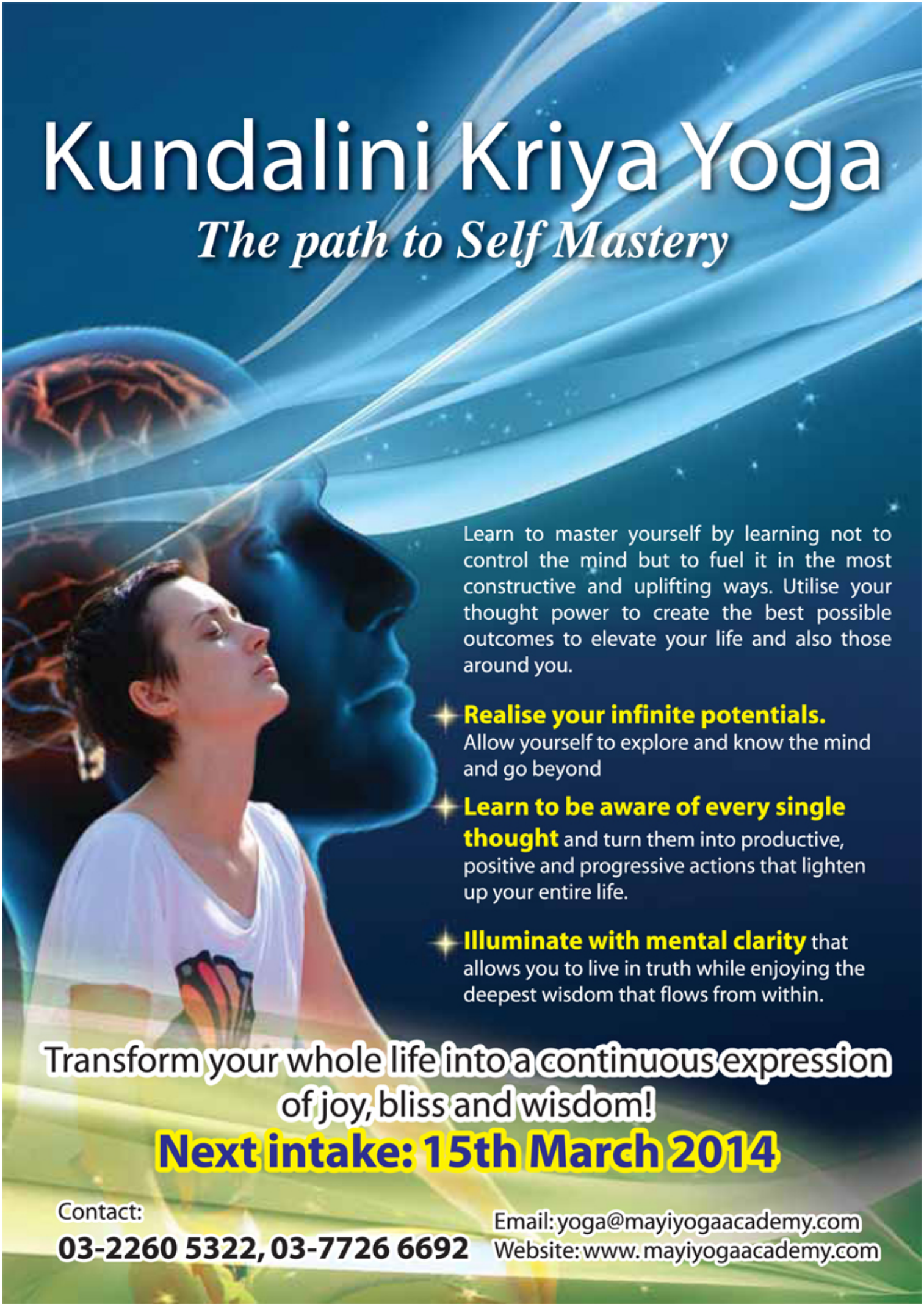
APRIL 2014

2/4/2014	DU	Self Mastery / Kundalini Kriya Yoga
4/4/2014	DU/BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
6/4/2014	BFS	Yoga Therapist Certification Course
20/4/2014	BSR	Anti-Aging Workshop

BFS: Brickfields; BSR: Bangsar; DU: D'sara Uptown
**Subject to change without prior notice*

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Next intake: 15th March 2014

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