



Spring 2011

Namaste from North Shore Yoga team

Inside This Issue

- From North Shore Yoga
- The Lotus Flower
- Pranayama – the Fourth Limb of Yoga
- Some Animal Poses: Gomukhasana
- The Cow in India
- Cook's Corner

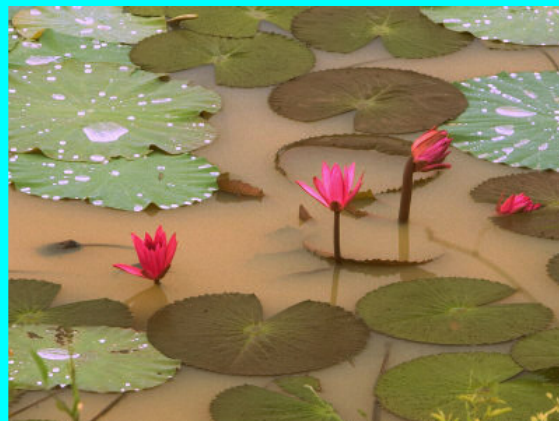
Here, late as usual, is our spring newsletter

Winter is behind us at last; we have said goodbye to the heater and the fan is, once again, gracing the corner by the desk. We have started a studio spring clean, Joy has re-arranged and re-vitalised the teacher's corner and everything is looking spick and span ready for the sunny season.

The Lotus Flower

The lotus flower is one of the oldest symbols. It grows in muddy water and in order to bloom it must rise above the surface. At night the flower closes and sinks under the water, at dawn it rises and opens again. It is untouched by the mud that surrounds it.

The roots of a lotus are in the mud, the stem grows up through the water, and the flower lies above the water, exposed to the warmth of the sun. This pattern of growth symbolises our progress from the mud of suffering, through the waters of experience, to surface free into the bright sunshine of enlightenment. The lotus flower symbolises survival, and that a dark or difficult stage has been overcome.



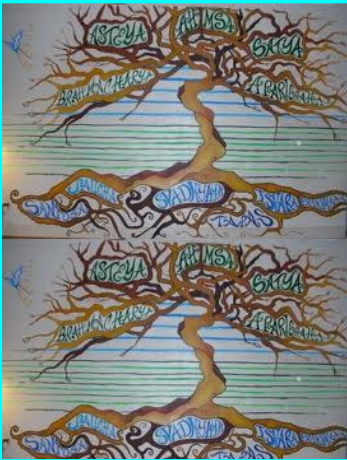
The 8 limbs of yoga

The fourth limb: Pranayama

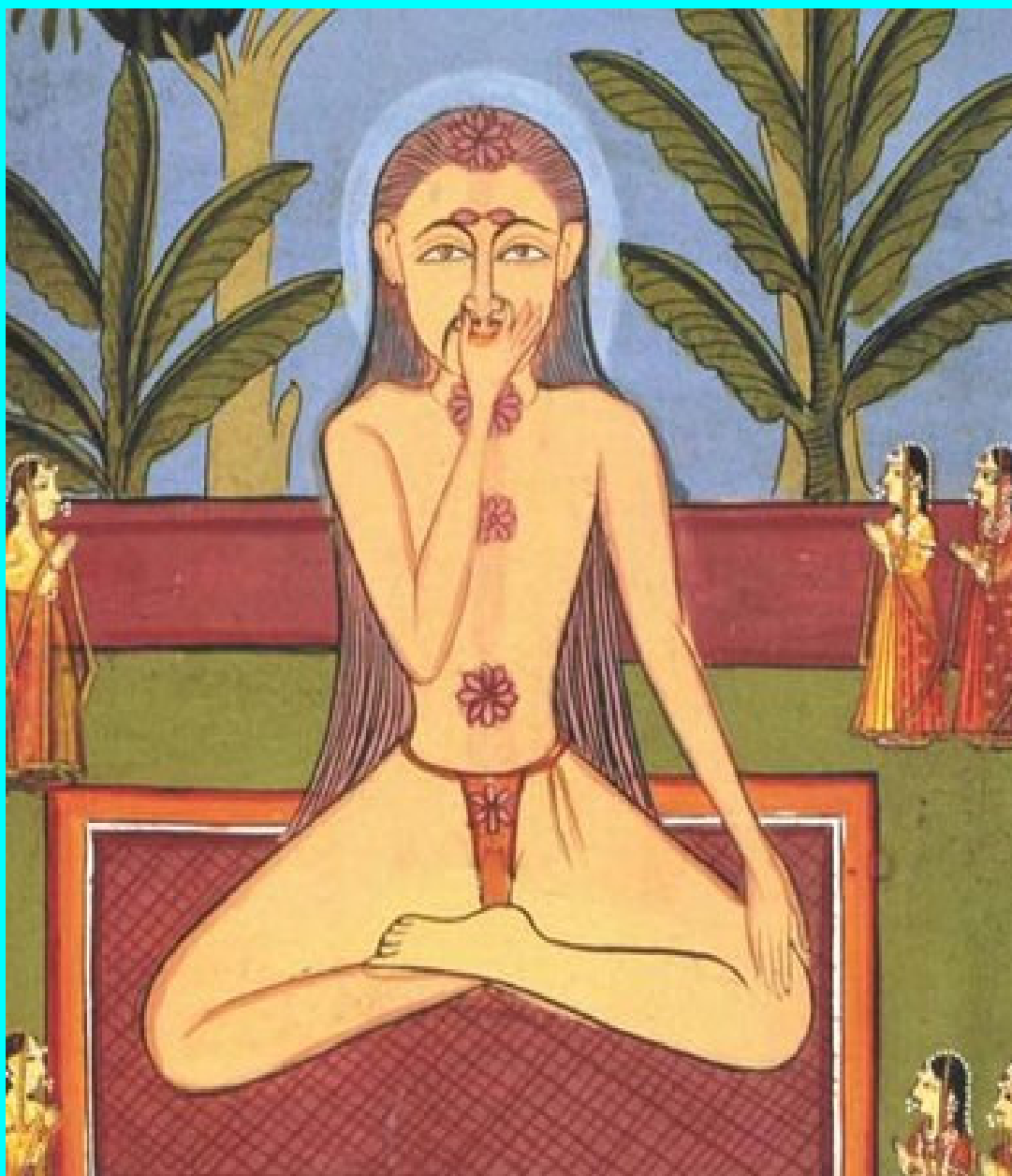
We have looked at the first two limbs of yoga: the Yamas and Niyamas, and we have also looked at the third limb of yoga: Asana.

B.K.S Iyengar talks of the tree of yoga: the Yamas constitute the roots of the tree, the Niyamas make up the trunk, and the branches of the tree are the poses – the Asana. The fourth limb is PRANAYAMA, the breath, or the leaves of the tree. Iyengar says “As the leaves aerate the tree, so Pranayama feeds and aerates the cells.” The bark of the tree is the fifth limb: Pratyahara, or the withdrawal of the senses. The sap of the tree is Dharana, or concentration, and the flower is Dhyana or meditation or contemplation. The 8th limb of yoga is Samadhi or the fruit of the tree. These will be the topic of future newsletters.

Pranayama is control of the breath. Once we have embraced the poses we automatically become aware of the breath. The breath is the key to unlocking the poses and moving deeper into your Asana practice. Iyengar writes that we should go into the poses on an exhalation: “exhalation can help you to do the pose well for a moment because the body is freed of tension.”



Iyengar describes Pranayama in his interpretation of the yoga sutras of Patanjali: “Pranayama is the regulation of the incoming and outgoing flow of breath with retention. It is to be practiced only after perfection of Asana is attained.” (II.49)



“When the breath wanders the mind also is unsteady. But when the breath is calmed the mind too will be still, and the yogi achieves long life. Therefore, one should learn to control the breath.”

Hatha Yoga Pradipika

Learn some Sanskrit names for poses:

Many of the yoga poses are named after things we see in nature around us: mountains, trees, plants, flowers, animals, reptiles, insects and birds. For example -

Gomukasana



The cow faced pose.

The shape of Gomukasana resembles the face of a cow which is sacred in Hindu philosophy. In Gomukasana, the pose itself is said to resemble the cows face with the arms representing two ears and the cross of the legs the lips of the cows face.

THE COW IN INDIA

The cow symbolizes a strong connection to the earth. Traditionally, the cow in Indian culture honoured as a holy animal, it represented nourishment and plentitude and is protected (but not worshipped). Kamadhenu was a divine cow and the mother of all other cows. She could grant all wishes and desires.



Khamadhenu

The cow is still protected among Hindus today and killing cows is banned in India, where most of the population are Hindu where 80% and vegetarian. No true Hindu eats beef. Many families keep a dairy cow which is used for milk and often treated like a member of the family. They are revered within the Hindu religion and are free to wander through the streets at will.

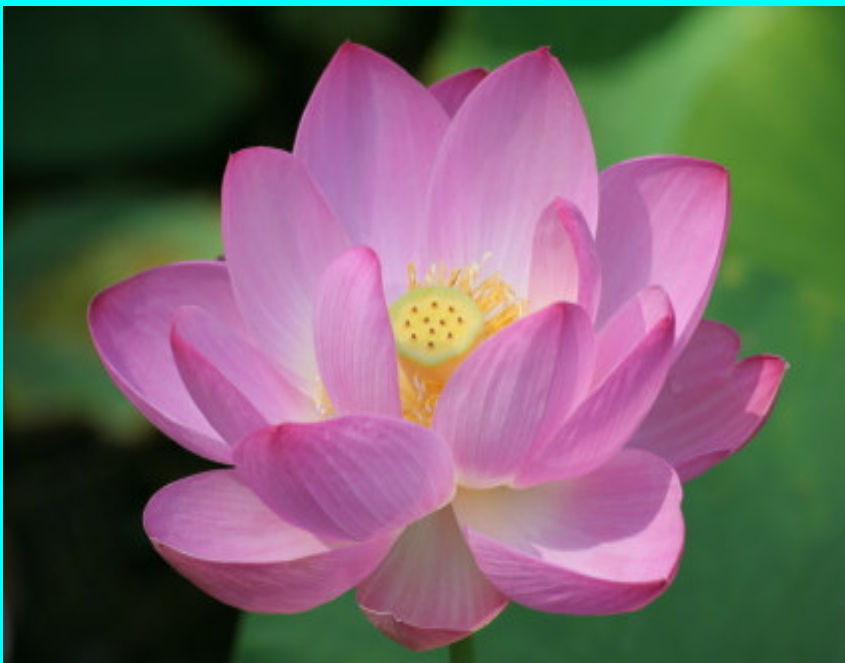
Cooks Corner

I am sure there are better cooks than me amongst you readers, but no-one has sent in a recipe. You can do this anonymously if you don't want to be singled out – just leave it on the desk when you come to class, or you can email me: eira@ihug.co.nz

Pecan and Apple Tea Bread

1 large apple
50grams chopped nuts (pecan or walnut)
100grams soft brown sugar
100 grams raisins (I sometimes use dates)
1 tablespoon honey
175 grams self raising flour
1 teaspoon mixed spice

- Peel, core and chop apple
- Place all ingredients in large bowl
- Beat 2 minutes
- Pour into loaf tin
- Bake for 1 hour at 180C
- Reduce to 160c – bake 15-20 minutes
- Keep for 24 hours – serve buttered.



Until next time

Namaste