



# IYASE : Iyengar Yoga Association Southeast

## FUTURE ARTICLES

If you have information that you would like included in future newsletters, please send an E-mail to Newsletter Chair, [newsletter@iyase.org](mailto:newsletter@iyase.org).

## RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN IYASE AND IYNAUS

We encourage all members – teachers and general members – to renew at [IYNAUS.org](http://IYNAUS.org). If you have questions contact [Membership@IYASE.org](mailto:Membership@IYASE.org).

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Chris O'Brien (left) and Jann Boyer, Co-Presidents

Dear Members,

Summer maintains its quiet, warm presence in the South East, while brisk fall approaches. Soon we'll feel the touch of a cooler morning in the air. A quiet hour on the porch, or an early morning practice or walk, looks more inviting.

Summer and fall provide many opportunities for workshops and retreats—some as short as an afternoon; others, for a long weekend. Take a look at the Workshops Calendar on [www.IYASE.org](http://www.IYASE.org)—it is updated frequently with new offerings. If you are sponsoring a workshop, this is also the place to submit information so it can be posted. Click on Workshops, and Submit.

Many took advantage of the online registration and scholarship application processes for the Introductory Teacher Training workshop with Suzie Muchnick at the end of May. Our Continuing Education Chair, Lisa Waas, made online registration a reality, a first for IYASE, and the feedback tells us it was a welcome change.

Following up on a good thing... online registration and scholarship application is available now for the Intermediate Junior I, II, III training with John Schumacher on December 4-6. Check it out!

Here's another change: Did you know that IYNAUS has converted to a new method of selecting representatives for its Board of Directors? Formerly, representatives were elected nationally. Over the past few years, as Board members reached the end of their four-year terms, IYNAUS asked regions to provide a representative—either by appointment or regional election—rather than holding national elections. Alex Cleveland, of Louisville, KY, was the first person appointed by IYASE to join the IYNAUS Board in this manner. We now have a second: Diana Martinez, from Prince George, VA, who will join the IYNAUS Board effective November 2015. We are fortunate to have such capable and energetic representatives, and are grateful to both Alex and Diana for their willingness to serve the community of Iyengar yoga practitioners.

We owe a special thanks to Phyllis Rollins, whose elected term on the IYNAUS Board ended this year. Her leadership and commitment sparked the first-ever nationwide mem-

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**Chris O'Brien**, *Introductory II*, Decatur, GA

**Jann Boyer**, *Introductory II*, Hilton Head Island, SC

# asana column



## *Towards Padmasana:* The Lotus Pose

by Susan Marcus, Ph.D.  
and Tricia Amheiser

The goal of this month's article is Padmasana, lotus pose, which is deeply symbolic in Eastern philosophy.

Edifices like the Buddhist

temple, Borobudur, in Java, which resembles the lotus flower in its design, guide pilgrims toward enlightenment. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika details the pose, calling it

the destroyer of all diseases (Ch1, verses 45-49). The flower itself is rooted in mud; its leaves float gently on water and it opens skyward with a dazzling color display.

The word asana literally means, "seat." And padmasana, lotus pose, is the ultimate seated posture to which practitioners aspire for pranayama and meditation practice. The work of bringing padmasana into daily practice corresponds to the threefold quest. In *Bahiranga Sadhana* (the external quest), one explores and experiences the limbs, extremities, trunk and spine, from the tailbone through the crown of the head. Cultivating moral and physical discipline, one can sit with steadiness and ease and begin *Antaranga Sadhana* (the inner quest).

To paraphrase Guruji, an asana without meditation becomes an exercise. Guruji's words: "I teach asana in such a way that each mental part and each cell of the body becomes the object of concentration." Withdrawal of the senses and concentration moves one further inward to the *Antaratma* (the spiritual quest), where meditation in *padmasana* becomes the gateway to absorption, unity, and universal consciousness.

### **Swastikasana** (Simple Crossed Legs Pose)

For the beginner, sitting in swastikasana may be the first time in a long while that one has sat on the floor. The pose

can challenge the feet, ankles, knees, groins, and the hips, as well as the spine and the neck. *Sthira sukham asanam* (II.46, posture should be steady and comfortable) is cultivated with persistence and practice.

- Begin with sitting on blankets. Adjust the upper thighs inward if needed, and release the buttocks flesh down towards the support.
- Make sure the groins are soft, and the inner thighs lengthen to the inner knees.
- Ascend and open the chest by externally rotating the upper arms.



**Variation:** *Parvatasana* in *Swastikasana*. To get more lift in the sides of the chest, interlace the fingers, turn the palms out and extend the arms upward into *Parvatasana*. Bring the chin into the clavicular notch and observe:

- As you lift the thumb side of the palms and roll the upper arms out, the chest opens and the shoulder blades descend.
- Draw the upper arm bones into the shoulder sockets as you let the thoracic spine move in. Resist the propensity of the lower front ribcage to move forward. Rather, from the front draw the lower ribs in and spread the diaphragm. From the back, spread the lower ribs and descend the buttocks toward the floor.

Learning the leverage of the arms and the movement of the thoracic spine in when doing the *urdhva baddhanguliyasana* portion of *Parvatasana*, is instructional for understanding how to create length and lift of the entire spine in seated poses.

### **Baddha Konasana** (Bound Angle Pose)

This seated pose builds on the intelligence gained in *Swastikasana* and initiates more effort (*tapas*) in the legs. As inner thighs lengthen to the knees, the knees lower toward

the floor the shins rotate downward. This is the first time this action is explored in a seated pose (although one may have experienced it already in standing poses like *Vrksasana*) and it is an essential action in *Padmasana*.

- As the heels press into one another the shins rotate down toward the floor.
- The inner groins open and inner thighs stretch to the inner knees.
- As the outer buttocks move downward and lower back spreads (like in *Parvatasana* in *Swastikasana*), the sides and front of the chest lift and expand.

**Variation:** Coming Forward in *Baddha Konasana*

- Open the soles of the feet like leaves of a book so the little toe sides of the feet are cemented together and rest on the floor.
- Hold onto the ankles or shins and use the forearms to spread the skin of the inner thighs toward the knees and move the knees farther apart; extend the trunk forward and down.
- Notice that when you move the shoulder blades onto the back body the sternum lifts up and you come more forward. Mirror the spread of the inner thighs with the spread the collarbones. Drop the head, so the crown of the head points towards the floor. The stretch on the back of the neck is like in *Parvatasana*.
- From the action of the outer buttocks descending, move the abdomen back and up, spread the lower back ribs, keeping the buttocks down and the sacrum forward. Aim to bring the head to the floor.
- Notice that the intensity of the inner groin stretch increases as the head comes closer to the feet.

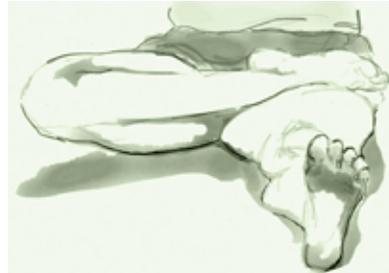


***Ardha Baddha Padma Paschimottanasana***  
(Half Bound Lotus in a Seated Forward Extension)

This is not the first time *Padmasana* actions are explored in the syllabus (e.g., *Bharadvajasana II*), so many of these actions will be familiar.

**With the left leg in *Dandasana*;**

- Bring the right hand deep into the back of the knee and take the knee out low and wide as you bring the left hand under the right foot to hold the top of the foot and draw the foot in close, similar to *Janu Sirsasana*; then straighten that leg out again.
- Repeat this action over and over to “oil” the hip, allowing the body to turn toward the moving leg as you bend the knee. Make these actions fluid and rhythmic.
- After the above has been repeated several times, the shin and the metatarsals should be in a line like *Vi-*



*rasana*. Observe that the heel is close to the bent leg thigh; the shin is turning towards the floor, and the sole of the foot facing upward toward the ceiling.

- As you bring your hands under the foot and the ankle (with the fingers pointing away from the body), lean forward.
- With the left palm on the arch of the right foot, wrap the fingers around to the sole at the big toe mound and rotate the sole of the foot toward the ceiling. Use the right hand under ankle to rotate shin more toward the floor. Use the right forearm to roll the right thigh out and extend the inner thigh to knee as you did in *Baddha Konasana*.
- Keep the calf and the hamstring sandwiched together, to protect the integrity of the knee. Keep the knee low and the foot high as you slide that “sandwiched” unit in an arc towards the straight leg. Then slide the outer foot up the *Dandasana* thigh, until the blade of the right foot comes to the left side of the navel, into the crease at the junction of the thigh and the abdomen.
- Don’t fret if the *Padmasana* knee is off the floor; it will come closer to the floor as you extend forward.
- Extend forward, lengthening the sternum toward the *Dandasana* leg. Use the press of the *Padmasana* foot into the upper thigh / groin area to soften the abdomen and lower back. Take the hands around the left foot, lifting the elbows to broaden and open the chest.
- Come out of the pose with the same care and attention

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# philosophy corner



## *Selling Accountability*

By Aretha McKinney Blevins

During a recent workshop in Nashville, Manouso said, “You know why Iyengar’s method isn’t popular? Because it ultimately makes you responsible for you.” In a culture that offers a pill for every symptom and a way to outsource even the most menial task, it is not hard to see why

Mr. Iyengar’s method of teaching and practicing yoga only holds mediocre popularity. Mr. Iyengar did not sell an atmosphere or a kitschy six-week plan to get in shape. His method of practice demands hard work, discipline and personal accountability. As a studio owner and teacher, I have thought about this many times. We do not sell something that is easy or even attractive to buy. I can see the tagline, “Come join us for classes. You’ll have to work really hard, suffer setbacks and disappointments, but I promise you, it will be worth it!” Doesn’t really sound like the best pitch does it? I have thought of my own struggles with practice and injury. So many times I almost quit in frustration. I welcome beginner students and I wonder (to myself), “Who will stick it out?” For those inclined to penetrate deeper into their practice, they can find Iyengar yoga humbling, disappointing, and profoundly frustrating at times. But behind all of the work, the struggles, and the setbacks, there is an unmistakable taste of joy, the kind of joy that one takes in a glass of water after a hard day’s work in the sun. Progress when it comes is earned.

Being responsible and accountable for your health and well being is profoundly empowering. The effect of this and the joy inherent in this should never be underestimated. Personal responsibility has the taste of that cool glass of water. It is deeply satisfying. It is what makes students who are attracted to the practice of Iyengar yoga lifelong students. Sutra 2.41 hints at this joy when Patanjali says that when

the body is cleansed and the mind purified, one attains a joyful awareness needed to perceive one’s innermost self.

During the December intensive with Geeta in Pune she said, “You have to get to know you. Learn to understand how much you need to do in an action.” This is at the heart of Guruji’s method: Inspiring students to learn to listen to, honor, respect, and nurture their body. In Guruji’s own words, we are to do this by unifying the intelligence of the mind with the wisdom of the heart. The mind measures and the heart assimilates: We learn with the mind to understand with the heart. My teacher Patricia says that “one of the things that makes Guruji’s teaching different from other methods is his emphasis on reflection after action. The process of reflection, tracing an action and seeing where it leads, cultivates a meditative mind that leads to absorption.” Learning to endure and persist in this approach through every success, disappointment or setback is what moves us forward in our practice and establishes an abiding strength. A good teacher can hold a lantern, but the work is ours.

As Patanjali relates in Sutra 2.41, when through hard work we elevate the guna of sattva, we invite the taste of joyful awareness needed for you to get to know you, to use Geeta’s words. Or, as Patricia notes, through sustained, alert practice steeped in reflection we move toward a meditative mind. While this may not be the most popular approach, it is far and away the most transformative and meaningful approach. As Geeta noted in December, teaching yoga is a big responsibility and practicing and teaching in a way that honors Guruji’s light and legacy is an even greater responsibility. He still holds a lantern to illuminate our way and, while time allows, the journey is ours to partake.

**Aretha McKinney Blevins**  
**Intermediate Junior 3**  
**Owner/Director, 12 South Yoga**  
**Nashville, TN**

# community spotlight



## *True Communication is Not Spoken*

by Rosa Santana

“Where are you from?” is a simple question for most, but a complicated answer for me. After many years, I have understood the question in a philosophical way, but most people are seeking geographical information. I have come up with the precise answer to this loaded question: “I was made in Brazil with Mexican ingredients.” It’s the truth. And it has spawned wonderful conversations. If I am amongst Brazilians, I answer “Rio.” If I am amongst Mexicans, “Mexico.” And it gets more complicated. You see, I left Brazil at the age of 6, and I never truly lived in Mexico, except for on summer vacations.

My father was a medical doctor with the World Health Organization, and travelled extensively. We lived in Brazil, Costa Rica, Panama, and Washington, D.C. I arrived in the U.S. when I was 14 years old. It is here where I made my home. I realize now what a privileged upbringing I had. I also realize how my nomadic life was priming me for my ultimate destiny.

I learned at a young age that everything is temporary. The practice of *aparigraha* (non-attachment) became clear to me as I learned to detach from material possessions simply because it was too hard to move to another country with extra toys. I experienced the pain of being ripped away from the familiarity of friends and my bedroom. I also learned to be flexible. I watched as my parents would explore and learn the history of a new city with children in tow, and discover wonderful people and food. I watched them make friends, and stay in contact with them even from afar. I wrote letters to my family and friends regularly to keep in touch. And I learned to be independent and courageous each time I was, again, “the new kid in school.” I learned to observe people in a profound way, and picked up three languages along the way.

I now realize this was part of a greater plan. In 1995, I moved with my husband from Washington, D.C., to Miami, FL. I wondered if this was the right decision as I looked into the eyes of my girls, then 4 years old, 2 years old, and 6 months old. I cried on the plane as I experienced another “Here we go again into new territory. I’m leaving my friends again” self talk. To my delight, however, I was greeted by a beautiful rainbow upon landing in Miami. Somehow, that rainbow settled my endless chatter of attachment, and gave me some comfort. Feeling the humidity, the warmth of the Florida sunshine, and the ocean breeze gave me a sense of familiarity. I had arrived at sea level, and I knew I was home.

*I learned at a young age that everything is temporary.*

This rainbow turned out to be a symbol of the many different kinds of people I would meet in my new home. I don’t think there is another place on this planet where there are so many different communities per square mile that have each maintained their heritage, customs, and food. I love to brag

to visitors that in South Florida you can be transported to Cuba without leaving American soil. You can buy Brazilian food by the weight (just like in Brazil), or get a homemade *empada de palmito* (heart of palm pie). If you crave Israeli food, there are kosher Mediterranean restaurants, while Russians can savor a traditional Russian *Borscht* (beet soup). You can immerse yourself into a myriad of cultures and languages in restaurants and festivals, and share in the common interest of food.

I have lived here for twenty years and raised my three daughters in this multicultural hub. Making friends is very easy with three girls in tow, including lots of people who

bership drive, the addition of new member benefits such as access to lower cost insurance for teachers, and livelier and more frequent communications with members. Prior to her work with IYNAUS, Phyllis served two terms as the South East region President. She initiated region-hosted social receptions at conferences and conventions, something which has been picked up as a national norm. Phyllis was also on the organizing committee for the MAITRI conference.

Last, a big change that we think will benefit all our members: Effective with the 2016 member year, all membership registrations will go through IYNAUS. Our teachers have always been required to join/renew through the national organization; now there will be a consistent path to membership for both teachers and “general” members. We are taking this step because (1) your registration will be processed in minutes, rather than weeks; and (2) it will simplify the membership process and ease the work load for our volunteers. It’s a good thing!

From a member standpoint, it means less confusion about how to join or renew, since there is only one path. You will also benefit from becoming more familiar with the IYNAUS website, [www.IYNAUS.org](http://www.IYNAUS.org). Each member has a personal account (“My Page”) on IYNAUS.org, where you can login and check the status of membership and purchases. The key to My Page is knowing your IYNAUS Member ID, which stays with you through thick and thin, whether your membership is current or not. If you do not know your IYNAUS Member ID, contact [membership@iyase.org](mailto:membership@iyase.org). Our Membership Chair, Tay Strauss, can help.

There are good changes in the air. What doesn’t change is our dedication to our mission: **to build community and facilitate the learning and teaching of yoga based on the teachings and philosophy of B.K.S. Iyengar.**

Namaste,

Chris and Jann

also have complicated answers to “Where are you from?” I have finally laid down my roots. And those roots were more than just in my family life. This includes a yoga community where everyone is welcome, where it doesn’t matter where you come from.

Knowing what it’s like to be the new kid in town, I empathize with the courageous soul who walks into my yoga studio for the first time and says, “I just moved here.” Many students don’t speak English, so I joke with them that they can learn yoga, English, and Sanskrit in one place. And when I observe that they do not comprehend my words, I speak in their language. And then they understand. We have had students translating instructions into French and Russian, and I have learned some Yiddish words which come in handy when some of my stiffer students want to kvetch about how things feel!

As a community, although we all come from very different worlds, we are all very much the same. We all have pains in the body which come and go. We all have stressors in our lives. We can all use some silence and peace of mind. And yoga, yuj, union, has brought us together. Like the spokes of a wheel, we are all yoked together through those sturdy eight limbs.

I believe the reason many students come back to class is because I speak to them, YOGA speaks to them, beyond words. I tell students of all ages and backgrounds that all you have to do is open up your heart, and you will understand everything. At that point, language is just another tool. We are all really from the same place. The colors and languages are just for our entertainment. We can all understand each other if we are just willing to pay attention.

 **Rosa Santana**  
**Intermediate Junior 2**  
**YogaRosa**  
**Hallendale, FL**



as you came in. Use both hands to slide the bent leg back to the *Janu Sirsasana* position. Bring your right arm to the outer knee and bring the bent leg up, foot on the floor. Use your hands behind the knee to extend the leg to *Dandasana*. These deliberate actions will protect the health of the knee joint.

To extend the body forward, use the actions of extending forward as described above to get the extension and opening of the top of the chest. Keen memory (smrti) of other forward extensions (Triangmukhaikapada Paschimottanasana, Janu Sirsasana) will help you come into the full pose. Perform each side several times, to lubricate the hips and focus one's concentration on the actions and experience.

### **Padmasana:** Lotus Pose



Geeta Iyengar's *Yoga in Action Intermediate Course-I* provides detailed instructions and a sequence of seated poses to further prepare the physical and mental body for moving into this pose (e.g., variations of *Kamalasana* and *Urdhva Padmasana*). Here we focus on coming into the final pose.

- From *Dandasana*, bring the right leg into *Padmasana* as per the instructions above.
- Adjust the buttocks flesh so you sit evenly on both buttock bones.
- Place the hands behind the line of the hips and rock back; bend the left knee and bring the left foot under the right thigh. Rock forward and sit tall, extending the front sides and back chest.
- You are now in *Ardha Padmasana*. Pause, observe.
- Using the same intelligent actions, slide the left leg slightly forward on the floor. Rock forward, and slide both hands under the ankle and foot to gently grasp and turn the sole of the foot toward the ceiling, shinbone to the floor—as you did the right leg. Rock back and bring the foot towards the navel and rest the outer foot on the right thigh.
- Sit tall, and rest the backs of the hands on the knees.

Descend the buttocks flesh and lift the chest.

- Interlace the fingers and raise the arms up in *Parvatasana*, as described in *Swastikasana*. Let the chin come down into *jalandhara bhandha*, and observe the senses recede, and direct the mind towards the core.



**Tricia Amheiser**  
**Intermediate Junior 1**  
**St. Petersburg, FL**



**Susan Marcus**  
**Intermediate Junior 1**  
**Sarasota, FL**

## **SCHOLARSHIP**

### **for Study at the Ramamani Iyengar Yoga Memorial Institute**

IYASE will award one \$1500.00 scholarship annually to one of its members in order to support and to ease the expense of travel to India and study at RIMYI.

The requirements are as follows:

- current member in good standing of IYASE
- certified at Teacher in Training or higher level of Iyengar Yoga certification
- confirmation letter indicating acceptance to study at RIMYI for year applying
- financial need
- dedication to the practice of Iyengar yoga
- not a current board member or relative/spouse of IYASE Board member
- letter of recommendation from an Iyengar certified teacher

The deadline for applications is October 15 of the year prior to the applicant's travel to RIMYI.

## WORKSHOPS 2015

**Oct 9–11**     **Weekend Workshop  
with Bobbi Goldin**  
Simply Yoga, Princeton, NJ  
(609) 924-7751  
nagisa@simplyyogakingston.com  
www.simplyyogakingston.com

**Oct 9–11**     **Weekend Workshop  
with Manouso Manos**  
Crescent Hill Yoga  
Louisville, KY  
(502) 468-9170  
crescenthillyoga@yahoo.com  
www.crescenthillyoga.com

**Oct 16–18**    **Workshop with Mary  
Obendorfer & Eddy Marks**  
One Center Yoga, Asheville, NC  
(828) 225-1904  
info@onecenteryoga.com  
www.onecenteryoga.com

**Oct 23–25**   **Workshop with Mary  
Obendorfer & Eddy Marks**  
12South Yoga, Nashville, TN  
(615) 385-3600  
info@12southyoga.com  
www.12southyoga.com

**Nov 6–8**     **Intensive Study & Teacher  
Training with Dean Lerner**  
Miami Beach Iyengar  
Yoga Center, Miami, FL  
(305) 484-0656  
mbiyengar@gmail.com  
www.mbiyengar.com

**Nov 13–15**   **Weekend Workshop  
with Cindy Dollar**  
Sunrise Yoga Studio  
Clemmons, NC  
(336) 778-1233  
info@sunriseyoga.net  
www.sunriseyoga.net

**Nov 20–22**   **Workshop with Roger Cole**  
One Center Yoga, Asheville, NC  
(828) 225-1904  
info@onecenteryoga.com  
www.onecenteryoga.com

**Dec 4–6**

### **Intermediate Junior I, II, III IYASE Sponsored Teacher Training**

With John Schumacher

Unity Woods Yoga Center, Bethesda, MD

Friday 5-8pm, Saturday 9am-12pm and 2pm-5pm,  
Sunday 9am-12pm

COST: \$309 for IYASE members / \$335 for non-  
members

*Early Bird registration by Nov. 4:* \$283 for  
members / \$319 for non-members

The workshop will cover asana (poses) from the Intermediate Junior syllabi from the current IYNAUS certification manual. Information from asana and pranayama will be covered. The workshop is designed for Certified Iyengar Yoga teachers who are interested in developing their teaching skills for the Intermediate Junior syllabus and deepening their personal practice. John Schumacher is the founder/Director of Unity Woods Yoga Center, serving Washington DC metro area since 1979. John is a certified Junior Advanced I teacher.

IYASE will be accepting scholarship applications for this training. Applications can be found at [www.iyase.org](http://www.iyase.org). To apply, send applications to the scholarship chair email at [scholarship@iyase.org](mailto:scholarship@iyase.org) by October 4, 2015. Applicants will be applying for the early bird price.

*If you have workshops that you  
would like included in IYASE  
newsletters, please submit them  
through [www.iyase.org](http://www.iyase.org).*