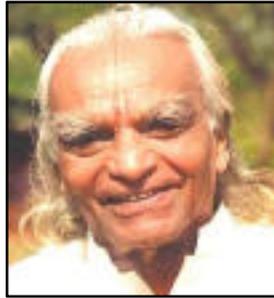


THREE SEASONS AYURVEDA



BKS Iyengar 1918-2014

As many of you already know, BKS Iyengar passed away on August 20th, 2014 at the age of 95. Mr. Iyengar was one of the most influential teachers and students of yoga during his lifetime and has been a huge influence on my life by helping me to understand and transform my spiritual direction.

I have been fortunate to have studied at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute (RIMYI) in Pune, India on three occasions. During my studies there Mr. Iyengar would practice in the asana room during what is called the Pune practice, a 3 hour time each day where everyone gathers and practices the specific syllabus of poses they are working on for their individual levels of certification. As a young teacher, it was always so inspiring to watch Iyengar go thru his practice, holding his poses for up to 30 minutes at a time. During my last trip there in November, he taught the Wednesday classes with his granddaughter, Abhijata. These classes were the most informative and challenging classes I have attended, but his skill and preciseness of direction brought incredible insight, improvement and exactness to my practices.

On his last trip to California, I was also fortunate to have supplied the food for an event honoring him and his book *Light on Life* at UCLA in Westwood. I was especially honored when Manouso Manos brought Iyengar into our kitchen area and introduced him to me.

Mr. Iyengar was born in Bellur, India in 1918. His mother gave birth to him during an influenza epidemic leaving him sickly and weak. During his younger years, he had many serious illnesses including malaria, tuberculosis and typhoid. At the age of nine his father died, and he went to live with his brother in Bangalore.

At the age of 15 Mr. Iyengar moved to Mysore, India to live with his sister and her husband, the scholar and yogi, Sri T. Krishnamacharya. Krishnamacharya ran a yoga school in the Mysore palace, and Iyengar received basic instruction in asana practice to help him improve his health.

In 1937, Iyengar was asked by his Guru to go to Pune to teach yoga. Life was difficult as he was a stranger there with weak language skills, speaking only a little English and the local language Marathi. He struggled to make a living in yoga but dedicated many hours to his practice surviving for days on only water and some bread or rice. In time, the number of his students also began to increase, though financially times were still incredibly hard as yoga was not greatly respected or understood, even in India.

In 1943, his brothers arranged his marriage to Ramamani. Mr. Iyengar had avoided marriage for some time as he felt he could not support a family, but on meeting her he consented. Initially, life continued to be very hard for them, but bit-by-bit they worked their way out of poverty.

Gradually Iyengar's recognition as a yoga teacher grew. However, it was a meeting with the violinist, Yehudi Menuhin, in 1952 that brought changes. Mr. Menuhin became his student, and this new relationship led to a more international recognition and exposure of this style of yoga as Mr. Iyengar began teaching abroad.

Events continued to develop (I'm not sure which events continued to develop.) leading up to the publication of *Light on Yoga* in 1966. This book became an international best seller and succeeded in making Yoga truly universal. He continued to publish books covering Pranayama and various aspects of Yoga philosophy.

In 1975 Iyengar opened the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, in memory of his recently departed wife, where he resided and taught until this week. In 1984, Iyengar officially retired from teaching, handing the reigns over to his daughter, Geeta, and son, Prashant, to oversee the institute. During the past few years, Mr. Iyengar continued to practice daily and regularly attended and taught the institute's medical classes.

His spirit will be greatly missed but will continue to live through all of the teachers and students he has influenced during his life.