Namaste. Welcome to the spring edition of The Lotus quarterly newsletter. Much has transpired since the release of the winter edition. Many areas of New Zealand experienced record lows during the month of August and some even succumbed to unexpected snow falls!

The Lotus Yoga Centre was no exception. On the eve of Monday 15th August and the following day, the grounds surrounding the old homestead were laden ankle deep in snow!

Sadly, there is no photo to show. The camera happened to be in the warmer climate of South India, where I had the privilege of attending a ten-day intensive yoga sadhana retreat held at Ananda Ashram, Pondicherry, with five other New Zealanders and six Australians.

The experience was truly amazing. I have returned home rejuvenated and inspired. The spiritual, mental and physical nourishment received from the ‘guru-kula’ setting of the Ashram has given me the strength to fulfil my dharma, or call in life.

This edition of the newsletter comes complete with an extra edition devoted to the retreat. It also features an article entitled ‘Celebrating Seventy-Five’ written by Eric Doornekamp.

Eric has made wonderful progress since his ‘shattering’ fall in May. The range of movement in his arm has improved greatly. He is able to perform taichi using both arms and has returned to teaching classes. He is also seeing clients for massage and back therapy again.

Eric and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Diane Smiley and Ralph Wallace for stepping forth from their busy lives in the nature of karma yoga to take the yoga classes while I was away. We have received lots of positive feedback from class participants.

In addition we’d like to thank Virginia Moth for laundering the yoga sheets, Bruce McKnight for cleaning the Centre and Paula Eady for helping out with administration related duties.

The home-made meals prepared with loving care by Jan Davies, Barbara Archer, Chik Hogg, Jean Marending, Brenda Davies and Paula Eady, were immensely appreciated by Eric.

Shona Watson from Home Instead deserves special mention. She went out of her way to look after Eric with such expert care.

Others helped in a myriad of ways. All these acts of kindness contributed to the smooth running of events during my absence. It is truly heart warming to have such support.
Shaucha

“Through purity the yogin gains distance towards his own limbs and also the desire for non-contamination by others.”

Yoga Sutra 2.40

Editor's Note – Shaucha is the first of the five niyamas or personal observances.

The niyamas form the second limb of the eight limbs of yoga, as codified by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras.

An overview of the niyamas and the eight limbs of yoga can be found in the article entitled ‘The Yamas and Niyamas' published in the March 2010 edition of The Lotus newsletter.

Shaucha can be defined as cleanliness or purity.

It stems from the verb root shuch, meaning to “purify, shine, illuminate, brighten”

Shaucha denotes cleanliness on all levels, both internally and externally. How then do we attain purity of the body, mind and emotions?

The physical aspect of shaucha is relatively straightforward to put into practice, while the mental aspect of shaucha is of a deeper nature and much harder to grasp.

Asanas, pranayama, and kriyas are all forms of internal cleansing. Asanas rid the body of toxins. Pranayama burns up impurities in the lungs, enriching the blood with oxygen. The oxygenated blood nourishes the cells and tissues within the organs.

The kriyas include a variety of cleansing techniques ranging from methods that balance the energetic body to methods that address physical hygiene.

The shatkarmas form a group of six practices involving purification of the body.

**Shatkarmas**

Neti, nasal cleaning

Dhauti, cleaning of the digestive tract

Nauli, abdominal massage

Basti, colon cleansing

Kapalabhati, purification and vitalisation of the frontal lobes

Trataka, blinkless gazing

When our physical body is clean we feel more relaxed and are more readily able to focus on the path of yoga. Disease and discomfort are less likely to present themselves. Illness and pain distract the mind.

Eating sattvic, pure and simple food is of relevance. “We are what we eat”. Food above all else, is meant to nourish and sustain the body so that we may develop spiritually. Finding the 'middle-way' is of importance, as both over-appreciation and over-avoidance of food can create imbalances that may have a negative impact on our spiritual development.

To understand the mental aspects of shaucha we must relate it to the larger picture.

Swami Krishnananda says in chapter 11 of his book *Yoga as a Universal Science* that “Any entanglement of consciousness in things or circumstances which have no constructive relationship with the goal of Yoga is to be regarded as an impurity. This is the essential meaning behind the term Shaucha”.

Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* 2.41 says “When the body is cleansed, the mind purified and the senses controlled, joyful awareness needed to realize the inner self, also comes”.

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By creating a purity that is close to Divinity (cleanliness is next to Godliness) one transcends the body.” Ref: Dr. Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani, Understanding the Yoga Darshan.

Dr. Ananda also says in his book Understanding the Yoga Darshan that “The heat of tapa, intense disciplined self-effort, destroys all impurities resulting in the mastery as well as the perfection of the physical body (kaya) and the sensory apparatus ensconced within”.

He goes on to say that “Tapa is one of the three aspects of Kriya Yoga. Tapa is vital for purification, reducing the power of the pancha klesha (see below) and aids the aspirant to attain samadhi”.

Patanjali lays great emphasis on Kriya Yoga, as a form of purifying the mind.

In Yoga Sutra 2.1 he says that tapas, self-discipline, swadhyaya, self-study and ishwara pranidhana, devotion constitute Kriya Yoga.

Dr. Ananda describes the kleshas as “the psychological afflictions, the coloured filters through which we perceive reality”. He says “these impurities or klesha distort our perceptions”. Ref: Understanding the Yoga Darshan.

The pancha kleshas are five in total: avidhya, asmita, raga, dwesha and abhinivesha.

Avidhya is ignorance or the inability to perceive the real nature of things.

Asmita is the ego, the false sense of Me, Mine and I.

Raga is the attraction to pursue pleasure.

Dwesha is the desire to avoid pain (aversion).

Abhinivesha can be described as clinging to life, the instinct for self preservation, the deeply rooted survival instinct, to survive at all costs.

According to Patanjali, the root of all evil is ignorance. He refers to avidya or ignorance, as the Mother Klesha, the driving force behind the other klesha’s.

Yoga Sutra 2.5 says “Ignorance is confusing the impermanent to be permanent, the unclean to be clean, the painful to be pleasurable and the non-self to be the true Self”.

The practice of purity in thought, word and deed is an important aspect of shaucha. It requires ongoing awareness and self-introspection, swadhyaya to implement.

In a recent satsangha session with Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani at Ananda Ashram, she said “We must cultivate observation and watch our thoughts without condemnation, justification and identification”.

Dr. Ananda also spoke of this, saying that “We must be objective. The moment we become subjective we loose objectivity”.

An advantage of being in a ‘guru-kula’ setting is receiving ongoing guidance and support through the many stages of mental purification.

Editor’s Note – Shaucha is the first in a series of five articles to be published on each of the niyamas or personal observances.

The schedule for publication of the remaining four niyamas is:

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Celebrating Seventy-five

By Eric Doornekamp

“Where has the time gone?” I often ask myself. It only seems like yesterday that I celebrated my 70th birthday. Well, time must be an illusion. We live longer, so the statisticians tell us. That's not an advantage necessarily. If one is healthy there are many reasons to be thankful, and regard the senior years as an extension of time to accomplish our goals. An accident or a serious illness may limit our ability to achieve what we set out to do.

Whatever, there are always opportunities to deal with the challenges that life presents. That is shown by the wrinkles on our forehead. They indicate how well we have coped with various problems. They are called 'experiences' and we get plenty of them. Success is measured by the depth of those wrinkles. Superficial lines don't count for much.

If we study the wrinkles more closely we will find other lines in the face. They are caused by the fun we are having in life. Every smile erases a few lines.

A sense of humour makes things so much more bearable, depending on our attitude. Let's laugh often and cry less!

Have you noticed how fast time goes when you are interested in something. Each moment offers opportunities. The secret is to keep that momentum going. Carpe Diem or Seize the Here and Now. It is the time between our birth and death that counts. I intend to make the best of it.

We can feel happy, free, self-fulfilled right away and let go of worries and limitations. There is a pathway that leads to this state. It is called yoga. If offers a way of life that we can verify for ourselves.

The rewards will be great though yoga needs to be practised regularly. The alternative is to keep muddling on from one life to the next. To live long, however, one must have a purpose and make it worthwhile. If anything, it may prevent dementia.

It has been said that wisdom comes with age. I must have been in a hurry to get there and got old too soon. Modesty prevents me from saying more. At least wrinkles don't hurt if you prefer to ignore them. Looks are deceptive!

At seventy-five I have developed 'character'. I may be grouchy at times but that's a superficial trait. On the whole I mean well.

I want to share another observation with you. Now that I am older nobody takes the slightest notice of what I have to say about perplex situations. My opinion is rarely taken any notice of. That leaves me responsible for myself.

We have no choice whether to grow old but we may be able to check the rate of ageing. Try to be healthy, happy and hearty. If you don't feel old you aren't, probably. We must accept that nature has its cycles and there is little chance of escaping from them. Let's behave gracefully.

Anyway, eternal youth has not been invented, yet. There is no pill or potion that is fail proof. The elixir of prolonging life is the best that is available short term. Who in their right mind and body would want to live forever?

Perhaps we could think of the ageing process of our body as a tree. The number of rings of the trunk tells us how old the tree is. The seasons come and go. That's why I think wrinkles in the face and tree rings are both a good measurement of time.
From time to time the question arises if I am going to retire in the near future? That decision is not too far off. Yes! I intend to be less involved in the Centre. During the next few years I want to devote more time to yoga and qigong. Helping people will also be an important aspect of that. Sharing knowledge, will still play a big part. This is also where writing and teaching come in.

With the coming of age it takes more effort to keep physically and mentally in good shape. I will make it a priority to take care of myself. I take great delight in reading, writing, nature and music which are soul enriching.

Sometimes I am asked if I have any regrets in life. No, not really. I have always loved what I am doing, even if it didn't work out as planned. There has been plenty of scope for growth enabling me to obtain insights into my spiritual nature.

I would like to express this in the following words: “May the light shine in your eyes and the sound vibrate in your heart”. For me it leads to a deeper understanding and love of all creation. Yoga is one way of exploring those possibilities.

All the great teachers tell us to keep life simple. Their examples show the way. “Become like a child and enjoy life”. Instead we make things more complicated by the day. That is a sure way to get lost. It can't be reality, don't you think?

The important things (in my view) are breathing correctly, ethical considerations, allowing for service to others. Each one is so often neglected. They make up the essentials of a life well lived. Breathing is necessary to enhance the life force. Ethics lead to higher principles between people. Service leads to unselfishness.

My philosophy of life is still progressing. On the way I have met some enlightened beings and I have learned from them that I must develop the virtues they uphold. Amongst these are unselfishness, truthfulness, happiness, peacefulness and compassion.

I never intended getting old but it has crept up on me somehow. May I age gracefully and accept the lessons to be learned. Every day is special and has many blessings and offers opportunities for growth.

The best anti-ageing medicine is to maintain a healthy lifestyle, be interested in what's going on, share joyfully with others, have lots of friends, take an interest in spirituality and attain the highest degree of consciousness possible.

On a humorous note I should consider living life backwards. You know everything already, become healthier by the day, have a hobby, work for a living, become a student, enter babyhood and get taken care off, etc. It does seem quite appealing. In hindsight it may be better to leave things as they are right now.

Life is a gift and we do not own it. By the grace of our Creator we exist. For how long we can only guess. Yogis transcend life and death. They realise that we pass through cycles and that energy causes everything to change. So there you have it. Nothing lasts forever.

Oh! Those present during the celebrations on the 10th September 2011 were invited to join me, as I blew out the candles on my birthday cake. That took me into the next couple of decades and a half, in one breath. The challenge of keeping body, mind and soul in good order requires all my efforts. Forgive me if I've lost count of the years! I can't remember what I have forgotten!
WHAT I HAVE LEARNED IN LIFE
by Eric Doornekamp

To appreciate every moment
To make someone's day, every day
To use head and heart
To give service whenever
To keep life simple and appreciate all things
Never waste an opportunity for growth
Not to carry a grudge
Keep smiling. Humour is therapeutic
To be honest
To watch your attitude
To keep learning
Everybody needs friendship
To trust in God (or similar concept)
To maintain a healthy and fit condition
To meditate frequently
To have a goal in life
Be thankful for being whom you are
To count your blessings
To let every day be a birthday
To accept that life has meaning
To turn your dreams into reality
To follow your Path with dedication

75th Birthday Celebrations

10th September 2011

An array of thirty people gathered at Whare Ora, the old homestead at 91 Ruapehu Street, Paraparaumu to celebrate the 75th birthday of Eric Doornekamp, Founder and Director of The Lotus Yoga Centre.

It was heartening to have friends of old and new attend the event. Apologies were received from near and afar.

The celebrations started with a drink to toast the 'young looking' 75 year old! Then the feast began. The mouth-watering aroma from the inviting dishes was too irresistible to hold back any longer.

Eric looks like he is about to claim this dish for his own! While Eric is partial to cake, he exercised great restraint as he blew out the candles.
An ensemble of eight people ventured up to the Sanctuary after lunch, while others departed on their cheerful way to attend to other commitments.

A pleasant time was had by all in the warmth of the Sanctuary, an octagonal shaped healing abode overlooking the pond behind the Centre.

Eric read excerpts from his article entitled ‘Celebrating Seventy-five’, featured on pages 4 – 6 of this newsletter.

Stories from years gone by were shared and a thought provoking poem was read.

The event concluded with the Centre’s Healing Mantra.

Thank you list

Chik Hogg deserves a very special ‘thank you!’ for the luscious vegan chocolate birthday cake, made with tender love and care.

In addition, we’d like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their contributions; refreshments, readings, flowers and much more.

News from the Centre

Celebration/Fund raising Event

Members and friends of The Lotus Yoga Centre gathered at 6.45 a.m. on Sunday 24th July to celebrate Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri’s birthday and partake in a fund raising event in support of the Yoganjali Natyalayam City Centre extension and construction, Pondicherry, South India.

Eric Doornekamp, Founder and Director of The Lotus Yoga Centre studied Rishiculture Astanga Yoga with Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri at Ananda Ashram, Pondicherry in 1968.

Gargi skilfully lead the group in 108 surya namaskars (sun salutations), followed by 108 repetitions of aum nama shivaya chanting in the Sanctuary. The celebration concluded with a wonderful shared vegetarian lunch.

$100 was raised on the day and the equivalent of $100 was further received in donations - $25 Euro was sent by mail from a distant member of The Lotus Yoga Centre who studied at Ananda Ashram in the early nineties.

The funds raised were presented to Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani, Director of Ananda Ashram during the ten-day intensive retreat held at Ananda Ashram, 10 – 20 August, 2011.

Those who attended the retreat, had the privilege of visiting Yoganjali Natyalayam and the new City Centre extension and construction. It was an impressive sight to see the unwavering focus of so many children practising yoga within a confined space.

Yoganjali Natyalayam yoga class in progress

The Yoganjali Natyalayam Centre has outgrown itself and is in urgent need of extension to accommodate the hundreds of children who attend yoga classes and other cultural arts.

City Centre extension and construction

Contributions to this worthwhile project would be greatly appreciated by Ananda Ashram. Please contact Cathryn Doornekamp for further information. As Dr. Ananda Balayogi Bhavana-ni says: “Every drop in the ocean helps”. 
The 'Yoga For Sports People' course held in June/July with facilitator Anthony Britton was a great success. The first of its kind, the course attracted some fine athletes. As a result, Anthony held a yoga session, focussing on core stability at a training camp for 22 cyclists in Masterton on Saturday 23rd July.

The date for the next 'Yoga For Sports People' course is yet to be confirmed. Please contact Cathryn Doornekamp at the Centre to register your interest.

Upcoming Courses and Events

Meditation Course
Regular 4 week introductory block courses in meditation are held on Thursday evenings 7.30 p.m. - 9.00 p.m. at The Lotus Yoga Centre with facilitator Eric Doornekamp. Cost $45.00
The aim of the course is to reduce stress and achieve peace of mind, increasing energy levels. Prior enrolments are essential.

Course starting dates:
6 October 2011, 3 November 2011

Bhajans and Mantras
with Ann-Maree Bukholt are scheduled monthly in the sanctuary at 4.00 p.m. on Sunday 16 October and 20 November. Everyone is welcome.

Available from the Centre
Organic Produce
Surplus organic produce from the orchard and vegetable garden is available by gold coin donation. Silverbeet is available on request.

Natural Therapies
The Lotus Yoga Centre has been associated with natural therapies for over thirty-five years. Bookings can be made with Eric Doornekamp for iridology, naturopathy, nutrition, stress management, massage and back/neck/shoulder treatment. Yoga therapy and Tai Chi qigong may also be booked privately.

Iridology can be arranged at any time. Iridology looks at the health patterns in the eyes. It is frequently used to examine a person's status of well-being. A free ten-minute assessment is available by appointment.

Eric has thirty years experience in treating backs, necks and shoulders. He uses massage, postural alignment, exercises, nutrition and stress release.

Supplements
The following products are available on request.
- Malcolm Harker's range of herbal remedies for most ailments.
- Lifestream Spirulina tablets and powder.
Practitioner range supplements are available by appointment.

Books
The Centre publishes books on yoga and health; such as the Amrita Cook Book, Relax with Yoga, Be Fit with Yoga and many more. A full price list is available under publications on our website www.lotusyogacentre.org.nz

Full Members of The Lotus Yoga Centre receive 10% off supplements and books

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