Namaste. With Christmas fast approaching and all the 'hype' that comes with the silly season, it is important to find some time amongst the busyness to nurture our own well-being.

Our teachers and therapists are dedicated to providing an ongoing service during the Christmas and New Year period in the peaceful and tranquil surroundings of 'Whare Ora', the old homestead. A flyer outlining the Christmas/New Year class schedule is available from the Centre.

We'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Graeme Richardson on board. Graeme is a Level 2 Reiki Practitioner. He is available by appointment on Wednesday and Friday afternoons during term time and most afternoons during the school holidays.

Reiki is a wholistic form of healing that enhances physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. It utilises the presence of the universal life-force energy to support the body's self-healing ability. The recipient draws on this energy as needed, taking an active part in the healing process.

A deep sense of relaxation, inner peace, increased vitality and improved sleep patterns are amongst the benefits reported. Stress, tension and worry are alleviated. Reiki also assists in the relief of physical pain or discomfort caused by injury, illness or disease and speeds up recovery after surgery.

Details of an Introductory Offer can be found on page 9. Vouchers are available for that extra special gift.

Let us not forget the true meaning of Christmas. This edition of the newsletter features a story that beautifully illustrates the symbology of Christmas. It also includes a collection of poetry written by member, Billy Uber and an article The Ultimate Attitude by Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani, the Director of ICYER, Ananda Ashram, Pondicherry, South India.

Enjoy the festive season and have safe holidays. Aum Shantih. May Peace, Love and Joy prevail.
Contributions to The Lotus newsletter are always more than welcome. If you'd like to contribute an article please let Cathryn know in advance of the following submission deadlines:

14 February 2012   March 2012 newsletter
14 May 2012   June 2012 newsletter

Please note that the contents of The Lotus do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or The Lotus Yoga Centre.

A Christmas Story

Editor's Note – The following story: Teach the Children, intertwines symbology with the 'old meaning of Christmas'. (Author unknown)

I just finished the household chores for the night and was preparing to go to bed, when I heard a noise in the front of the house. I opened the door to the front room and to my surprise, Santa himself stepped out from behind the Christmas tree. He placed his finger over his mouth so I would not cry out.

"What are you doing?" I started to ask. The words choked in my throat, and I saw he had tears in his eyes. His usual jolly manner was gone. Gone was the eager, boisterous character we all know.

He then answered me with a simple statement "TEACH THE CHILDREN!"

I was puzzled. What did he mean? He guessed my question, and with one quick movement pulled a miniature toy bag from behind the tree.

As I stood puzzled, Santa said "Teach the children! Teach them the old meaning of Christmas. The meaning that now-a-days Christmas has forgotten."

Santa then reached in his bag and pulled out a FIR TREE and placed it in front of the fire place.

"Teach the children that the pure green colour of the stately fir tree remains green all year round, representing the everlasting hope of mankind. All the needles point heavenward, making it a symbol of man's thoughts turning toward heaven."

He again reached into his bag and pulled out a brilliant STAR.

"Teach the children that the star was the heavenly sign of promises long ago. God promised a Saviour for the world, and the star was the sign of fulfilment of His promise."

He then reached into his bag and pulled out a CANDLE.

"Teach the children that the candle symbolises that Christ is the light of the world. When we see this great light we are reminded of Jesus who fills our lives with light."

Once again he reached into his bag and removed a WREATH and placed it on the tree.

"Teach the children that the wreath symbolises the real nature of love. Real love never ceases, like God's love which has no beginning or end."

He then pulled from his bag an ornament of HIMSELF.

"Teach the children that I, Santa Clause symbolise the generosity and kindness we feel during the month of December."

He then brought out a HOLLY LEAF.

"Teach the children that the holly plant represents immortality. It represents the crown of thorns worn by our Saviour. The red holly represents the blood shed by Him."
Next he pulled from his bag a GIFT and said, "Teach the children that God so loved the world that HE gave us HIS only SON... We thank God for His very special gift."

"Teach the children that the wise men bowed before the Holy Baby and gave HIM gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. We should always give gifts in the same spirit of the wise men."

Santa then reached in his bag and pulled out a SUGAR CANE and hung it on the tree.

"Teach the children that the sugar cane represents the shepherd's crook. The crook on the staff helps to bring back lost sheep to the flock."

He reached in again and pulled out an ANGEL.

"Teach the children that it was the angels that announced the glorious news of the Saviour's birth. The angels sang 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will toward men."

Suddenly, I heard a soft tinkling sound, and from his bag he pulled out a BELL.

"Teach the children that as the lost sheep are found by the sound of the bell, it should ring to guide us to God. The bell symbolises guidance and return. It reminds us that we are all precious in the eyes of God."

Santa looked back and was pleased. I saw the twinkle in his eyes as he said:

"Remember, teach the children the true meaning of Christmas and do not put me in the centre, for I am but an humble servant of the One that is, and I bow down to worship HIM, our LORD, our GOD."

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**Santosha**

"Through contentment unexcelled joy is attained."

Yoga Sutra 2.42

**Editor's Note** – Santosha is the second 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.

**Santosha is often translated as contentment**

The Sanskrit word Santosha is derived from the root word tush meaning 'to be pleased'.

The Darshana Upanishad describes santosha as "Delight with whatever fate may bring".

Santosha is an inner attitude of being content despite our circumstances. It is total acceptance of the way things are. We are content with who we are, where we are, in all that we do, and in every situation we find ourselves in.

Dr. Swami Gitananda describes Santosha as “mental serenity, with a mind as calm as though settled in the eye of a hurricane”. He says “You may be engulfed in a whirlwind of activity, a hurricane of emotions but you must attain to the quietness of the Self. Discover that in the midst of confusion, peace exists, in the midst of death-life exists, in the midst of untruth-truth exists”.

A contented mind is free of desire. When we allow desires to control our thoughts, our mind becomes restless and discontent. Desires create unhappiness when unfulfilled. We think we will be happy when we acquire this or that but more than often we are not.
Swami Venkatesananda speaks of desire and happiness in the Bhagavad Gita for Students. He says “If you do not desire anything, if you do not expect anything, there can be no failure, no disappointment, no unhappiness, for you will accept everything as God’s Will. You will always enjoy happiness and pleasure”.

Santosha can be said to exist when we experience equanimity, mental and emotional stability or composure arising from a deep awareness and acceptance of the present moment.

The Bhagavad Gita contains references to both contentment and equanimity.

Krishna says “That person of action is free from karma who accepts with contentment whatever comes to them, who is free from jealousy, and has transcended all dualities of life, and who is balanced in success and failure”. 4:22

“Those whose minds are established in equanimity (equal-mindedness) are free from the relativities of existence (birth and death, pleasure and pain), even in this world. They are flawless like the Supreme Reality. With even mind they are already situated in pure consciousness. Being fixed in deep communion with the Eternal Supreme Truth, with unwavering discrimination and free from delusion, they never become falsely elated by pleasant or bad experiences or depressed by bad.” 5:19 – 5:20

Dr. Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani says “When one achieves that state of contented oneness, unexcelled ease and bliss is the reward”.

He also says in his book Understanding the Yoga Darshan that “Un-ease and non-bliss are the result of dichotomy, division, duality. Oneness is contentment”. “Yet not many value contentment in their greed for anything and everything in this material world. As long as greed exists, there can be no contentment. Without contentment, we can never be universal.”

Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani explores the relationship between santhosham and swadhyaya, self-study in the editorial of the October 2006 Yoga Life journal.

She says “The jewel of Self-Realisation is the prize of sincere, earnest swadhyaya. And we are then blessed with santhosham, contentment. This is a real contentment that produces a natural quietude. This santhosham prompts us to love what we have and what we are. Yes! We may not be a great personality or a heroic figure but we are a part, an essential part, of a glorious and great Whole! Swadhyaya leads to Santhosham which leads to Samadhi – Oneness with All. When we are 'All', how can we be small? Every man's joy is our joy! Every man's sorrow is our sorrow! Every man's tales, success, intelligence is also ours! We are not islands, but part of a Whole.

Swadhyaya – Santhosham – Samadhi! Three essential steps in Sadhana!”

Editor's Note – Santosha is the second article in a series of five articles on each of the niyamas.

Shaucha or cleanliness was the first article in this series. It appeared in the September 2011 edition of The Lotus newsletter.

The schedule for publication of the remaining niyamas is:

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A Collection of Poetry

by Billy Uber

Editor’s Note – Born and bred in the United States, Billy Uber came to reside at The Lotus Yoga Centre in 1992, where he was inspired to write poetry. He went on to study with Dr. Swami Gitananda at Ananda Ashram, Pondicherry, India, completing the six month residential Yoga Teacher Training course in 1993. Billy now lives in Baden Baden, Germany with his wife Sally, an accomplished Opera Singer. He has selected two poems for publication within these pages.

Resolution

To speak of longing to the wise old trees, of our need to taste the depths of earth, as do they, to reach ever more toward that profound place of beginnings. To feel the expanse of open air, bright on the skin, the weight of skies, blue and white, bearing down and buoying up, at once, the hands of God, gently guiding our limbs and helping us to stand, unshaking and unshaken.

Betwixt and between, pausing to hear the roar of machines threshing, cutting, binding, and to fear not, but to live comfortably within the confinements and resolutions of our race. Ever struggling to cede the struggle, watchful of all that passes, joining without effort the great movements of time, while remaining alone. And all the while, never ceasing to be amazed that there could be such a thing as us.

Aotearoa

If you split a piece of wood
And expect to find God revealed within it,
He will be revealed.

If you draw a bucket from a well
And expect it to contain God,
It will.

Every thing imagined is true,
And every thing imagined is false,
We are free to choose as we like.
Let us choose to imagine
A World of Love, Peace, and Joy,
Making this the Truth of our lives.

If you gaze up at the night sky
that teems with stars
Expecting to find God in its endless expanses,
He will be there,
Expecting to find you also.

Dedicated to my good friend and teacher
Eric Doornekamp

Whare Ora

July 1992
The Ultimate Attitude

Editor's Note – The following article by Yoga-charini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani, is the editorial she wrote for the Yoga Life monthly journal, Vol. 41 February 2010. Yoga Life is available by subscription from ICYER, Ananda Ashram, Pondicherry, South India.

The Yogic Attitude towards life (Bhava in Sanskrit) must be a conscious choice if one is to progress on the spiritual path. Attitude or Bhava is the way in which we perceive a situation, place or person. It is our perspective, or stance, our viewpoint.

The common mind is burdened with unconscious attitudes, which have encrusted the mind since birth. The mind sees what it has been conditioned to see, feels what it has been taught to feel, and reacts as it habitually has learned to react. Such a one is totally locked in the cellars of unconsciousness, a place of darkness and ignorance. Attitudes towards money, for example, vary from person to person. One may consider money to be the root of all evil. Or, perhaps, one may see money as a necessary evil. Or perhaps, money may be one's ultimate goal of life. Perhaps money, for others, is an energy which can be used wisely and well. Some share money graciously and some hoard money jealously for themselves. Money remains what it is: just money. But how one views it charges money with an emotional valence.

When one evolves far enough to even hear (Sravana) the word Yoga, then one has a chance to free oneself from the prison of conditioned attitudes. (These attitudes may come from hereditary or genetic streams, family, social, educational, cultural, racial, national, geographic, language, etc). It does not really matter where they have come from. It is important to realize, however, that they exist and are the motive power behind one's thoughts, words and deeds. Attitude is the looking glass through which one perceives the world.

In cultivating consciousness, one begins to understand that how one sees the world around one, depends on these attitudes. As one progresses, one realizes that one can and must choose one's attitudes consciously. Every attitude must be charged with a positive valence. The highest attitude is to realize that every event, every person, every place we experience in our lives is a chance, an opportunity to learn lessons which will enable us to grow spiritually. If we firmly anchor ourselves in that Ultimate Attitude, then we can truthfully say, “All is for the best” and “Everything that exists is good”. This High Attitude is called Shraddha or Faith. But it is much more than the English word “faith”, which implies a belief. Shraddha is an unshakable, inner certainty in the validity of one's viewpoint. It is not fanaticism as it also acknowledges that there are as many valid viewpoints as there are the minds of men. It is more a personal experience that one's own attitude, viewpoint, is the very best one that can be consciously formed at one's own personal level of evolution.

Such an Attitude is always based in positivity, affection, kindness, awareness, control, strength, and all the other noble sentiments which bloom in awakened hearts.

The old Jewish mystic Job expressed a beautiful Attitude when he shouted in ecstasy, even after undergoing incredible suffering. “The Lord Giveth and the Lord Taketh Away! Blessed be the Name of the Lord”.

What an Ultimate Attitude! Total Trust and Surrender to the Goodness of That Cosmic Power! Wish such an attitude, Samadhi is just a hop, skip and jump away!
News from the Centre

Give Peace a Spin

Long term member of the Centre, Brodie Andrews has made a creative contribution, by way of Give Peace a Spin.

He says “The spinning of the peace ball when done with intention invokes a prayer for peace. It is not the person who spins the ball that sees the ‘peace dancer’ but those who are watching”.

Brodie has been associated with The Lotus Yoga Centre since it was located in Aro Street, Wellington in the 1970's. He is one of the founding members and taught Yoga at the Centre alongside many other teachers in the days when there were 24 classes a week. Brodie now lives in Auckland and visits the Centre when he can.

Other creations made by Brodie Andrews include the statue of a Yogi and the Aum symbol.

Both are positioned in the garden surrounding the front lawn of Whare Ora. A suitable position is yet to be found for Give Peace a Spin.

A Happy Reunion

The 19th November was a happy day indeed for the Centre's resident yoga teacher, Cathryn Doornekamp. She had the good fortune of being reunited with Trish Dye, Past-President of I.Y.T.A NZ (International Yoga Teachers Association).

Trish Dye was Cathryn's tutor for the 18 month I.Y.T.A Yoga Teachers Training Course. Cathryn undertook this training with I.Y.T.A NZ in 1999 - 2000 and completed her thesis on A study in Pranayama in 2002 as partial fulfilment of her Yoga Teaching diploma certificate.

Trish was the guest instructor for a Christmas 'Yuletide Yoga Day' organised by the I.Y.T.A Wellington/Lower North Island Branch, held in Petone on 19th November. She skillfully led a group of aspiring yogis in a very informative, fun packed day of various yoga practices including a chakra dance.

Trish 'lives and breathes yoga'. She is a fine example of an accomplished yogini in the truest sense. Her latest passion is writing. She is in the process of self-publishing two fiction books: Seven Sages and Consciousness of World Tree.
Helping Hands
Cathryn and Eric Doornekamp would like to acknowledge the many 'helping hands' that go on behind the scenes at the Centre. Diane Evans for persisting with weeding the oxalis from the garden inside the front gate. Rosalind Derby and Sarah Swann, two willing gardeners. Brodie Andrews for tackling the waist-high grass behind the Sanctuary and Cottage with the weed eater!

Help in the garden is always more than welcome. If you'd like to be of service in this way, please contact Eric or Cathryn.

In addition, we'd like to take this opportunity to thank Selwyn Williams for taking the 6.00 p.m. Yoga Class on Tuesday evening 2 November. Encouraging feedback was received by those in attendance.

Upcoming Courses and Events

Massage Workshop
Relax those knotted muscles and unwind those frayed nerves.
Treat yourself to a one-day hands on Massage workshop for family and friends with facilitator Eric Doornekamp.

Sunday 19 February 2012
9.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. Cost $70.00 prepaid.
The content of the workshop is ideal for the beginner or an excellent refresher for those wanting to brush up on their techniques. It covers the basics in Swedish massage: back, neck, shoulders, face, arms and legs; both theory and practice. Numbers are limited. Bookings essential.

Invitation to Classic Yoga Course
The Classic Yoga Course is an in-depth course aimed at those who are able to dedicate more time to the practice and theory of yoga. The course is progressive, with an ongoing commitment. Participation in the lessons is required. The course is therefore only suited to individuals with discipline, sincere dedication and a deep love of yoga.

With once-monthly meetings on a Saturday over a period of four years, this course covers major aspects of yoga, enabling the student to gain insight into its practice. Topics are of an ongoing nature and include different paths of yoga, breath control and relaxation techniques. The course aims to provide a deeper insight through physical, emotional, mental and spiritual development.

Facilitator Eric Doornekamp is a practising yoga therapist, with a Ph. D. in yoga issued by Vishwa Unnyaya Samsad. He studied under Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri in 1968 at Ananda Ashram, Pondicherry, South India.

The next Classic Yoga Course is scheduled to start on: 11 February 2012
A full prospectus is available from the Centre. For more information or to enrol, please contact Cathryn Doornekamp.

Bhajans and Mantras are scheduled regularly in the Sanctuary behind the Centre. Everyone is welcome.
For more information please contact Cathryn Doornekamp.
**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:**

2 Feb 2012, 1 March 2012, 5 April 2012

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**Available from the Centre**

**Books**

The following books published by the Centre are available for purchase:

- **Recipes from the Farmyard**
  *Bruce Collins* - $10.00

- **Nectar of the Lotus**
  *Eric Doornekamp* - $5.00

- **Be Fit with Yoga**
  *Eric Doornekamp* - $5.00

- **Relax with Yoga**
  *Eric Doornekamp* - $9.00

- **Yoga Humour**
  *Eric Doornekamp* - $9.00

**Full Members receive 10% Discount**

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**Vouchers**

Purchase your loved ones a voucher for Christmas.

**Massage, Reiki, Yoga, Taichi Qigong**

vouchers are available from the Centre.

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**Reiki Healing**

with Graeme Richardson

**Level 2 Reiki Practitioner**

**Member of Reiki NZ**

**Special Introductory Offer**

$20.00 for a 20 minute session during December 2011 and January 2012.

Graeme is available by appointment on Wednesday and Friday afternoons during term time and most afternoons during the school holidays.

**Cost**

$40.00 – 40 minute session

$160.00 – Five session concession

For more information or to make a booking please contact Cathryn Doornekamp.

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**Supplements**

Malcolm Harker's herbal remedies and Lifestream Spirulina tablets and powder are available on request.

Practitioner range supplements are available by appointment.

**Full Members receive 10% Discount**
## Naturopathy/Iridology

Eric Doornekamp is a natural therapist with 35 years experience as an alternative health practitioner. His motto is "Nature Cures".

The aim is to draw on the curative powers inherent in each person. Using a holistic approach, Eric assists in this process by prescribing a health regime, such as detoxification programmes with herbs. Vitamins and minerals are used as complimentary medicine. Iridology may be used as a form of diagnosis.

Iridology looks at the health patterns in the eyes. It is frequently used to examine a person's status of well-being. Abnormal markings in texture and colour of the iris may reveal the physical – mental state of the body. It is a useful tool in the preliminary diagnosis of an illness before there is a serious breakdown in health. A free ten-minute assessment is available by appointment.

### Cost
- Initial consultation **$45.00** – 1 hour
- Subsequent consultations **$30.00** – ½ hour

To make an appointment with Eric please contact Cathryn or Eric Doornekamp.

## Massage

Eric Doornekamp has 40 years experience in massage. Swedish massage involves deep tissue therapy to relieve stress and Oriental massage on pressure points stimulates the flow of qi or energy in the meridians. The benefits are well documented such as soothing nerves and relaxing sore muscles, increasing circulation.

### Cost
- **$30.00** – ½ hour
- **$45.00** – 1 hour

## Back/Neck/Shoulder Therapy

Eric has 40 years experience in treating backs, necks and shoulders. Muscular and skeletal structures are examined and massage is applied to loosen up tight muscles and to relax the body. Gentle manipulation is applied to free up the neck, spine, and limbs to realign immobile joints. Specific programmes including flexibility and strengthening exercises are suggested to improve fitness.

### Cost
- Initial consultation **$45.00** – ½ hour
- Subsequent consultations **$40.00** – ½ hour

To make an appointment please contact Cathryn or Eric Doornekamp.