



Yoga Mandir Newsletter

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Yoga Mandir Newsletter. This publication coincides with the 20th anniversary of Yoga Mandir and marks Alan Goode's 50th year of Yoga practice. It is intended as a quarterly release, dedicated to sharing new writings by Alan Goode. A comprehensive archive of his earlier articles remains available on the website under [Articles](#)

The first version of the Yoga Mandir Newsletter dates back to the late 1990s, emerging from the Blue Mountains Yoga Studio. In those formative years, the newsletters were physically produced—typed, stapled, stamped, and mailed to students and teachers around the world. They served as a vehicle for Alan's writing and student contributions and, significantly, raised funds to build a student library.

A second phase of the newsletter was established between 2008 and 2013, following the founding of Yoga Mandir in Canberra. During this period, David Leong joined as editor, guiding a small editorial team. The focus of the publication shifted slightly to showcase student writing and to frame a feature article by Alan. Much of the content reflected the ongoing evolution of the school's syllabus and the values that remain integral to the Yoga Mandir approach today.

One such evolution occurred in 2006, when we reimagined our enrolment structure. Where many schools followed the RIMYI model of monthly rotating class focus each week—standing poses, forward bends, backbends, pranayama—modelled after the rhythm of foreign students visiting Pune, we recognised the limitations this imposed on deep enquiry. The constant change of focus, while practical in that context, risked fragmenting learning to a stable student body. We introduced a term-based model of enrolment, structured across four terms and four levels, integrating asana and philosophy into a cohesive curriculum. This framework allowed students to work progressively and systematically in a subject area, promoting depth and consolidation of understanding. Supporting materials, guidance for independent practice, and the option to participate in Led Practice sessions guided by fellow students created the basis for practice-based learning, a hallmark of Yoga Mandir's response to the evolving needs of students.

Over time, a year-long program, the Sadhaka program ran for over a decade and with the introduction of zoom classes our current study program [Yoga Studies](#) emerged. It includes class attendance, self-reflective tasks, mentor

interviews, forum discussions, and is enriched by the resources available through Yoga Vidya.

At the turn of 2019 and 2020, due to limitations and in order to continue practicing with students, Yoga Mandir introduced online classes. This not only enabled the expansion of our yoga community on a broader scale, but Alan began actively sharing the vision and work of Yoga Mandir with a wider, international community through his travel to China and Europe. Drawing on five decades of practice experience, these dialogues and exchanges with students and colleagues have deepened and broadened the insights. The purpose of this newsletter is to carry those insights forward and to include the voices of senior colleagues through interviews, offering them to you as points of reflection and exploration.

Alan's commitment to writing continues. Each issue of this newsletter will feature new essays and articles aimed at stimulating thought and encouraging contemplation on the world of Yoga practice and teaching.

We invite all those who wish to stay connected with these writings and to be part of this ongoing conversation to subscribe to the newsletter.

Sign up to the Newsletter



Pose-Asana-Yogasana

Understanding the Difference Between Pose, Asana, and Yogasana in Iyengar Yoga

In the language of contemporary yoga, the terms Pose, Asana, and Yogasana are often used interchangeably. However, within the tradition of Iyengar Yoga—a system known for its clarity, precision, and depth—each of these terms carries a distinct significance. These distinctions are not a matter of semantics but are rooted in a progression of understanding that reflects the maturing of the practitioner. As practice deepens, what begins as a mere pose is transformed through discipline and awareness into an asana, and ultimately into a yogasana, wherein the deeper essence of yoga is realised.

Pose: The Outward Form

The term pose is the English equivalent of asana, yet in Iyengar Yoga, it is used with a more defined connotation. A pose refers to the external appearance—the shape or geometry that the body takes when performing a specific posture. It is what can be observed from the outside: the arms extended in Utthita Trikonasana, the symmetry of legs in Virasana, or the arch of the spine in Urdhva Dhanurasana. For many students in the early stages of practice, the pose represents the starting point—a necessary entry into the field of asana.

However, a pose in this sense is superficial unless it is infused with awareness. It is possible to execute a technically correct pose, mirroring the alignment seen in books or classes, while the inner faculties of perception, attention, and integration remain dormant. In this way, the pose is akin to an empty structure—well-constructed perhaps, but without life. The practitioner may appear composed on the outside, but without the internal engagement of breath, mind, and perception, the practice remains limited to the periphery.

In Iyengar Yoga, the value of a pose lies in its potential. It is the doorway through which one enters into the deeper realms of asana. But unless it is inhabited fully—where each limb, each breath, and each moment is filled with alertness and enquiry—it remains a form without content.

Asana: The Integration of Form and Consciousness

The word asana comes from the Sanskrit root as, meaning "to sit, to dwell, or to be established." This etymology reveals a profound truth: asana is not merely about positioning the body but about establishing oneself—becoming firmly seated—not just in the physical form, but in a state of composed awareness. In Yoga Sutra II.46, Patanjali defines asana as "sthira sukham asanam"—a posture that is steady and comfortable. This terse aphorism points to both the physical and mental qualities required in asana: firmness and ease, discipline and relaxation.

In the Iyengar tradition, an asana is much more than a pose perfected through muscle memory or repetition. It is a structure in which the practitioner explores the interaction between body, breath, and mind. Each posture becomes a site of self-enquiry where patterns of resistance, imbalance, or unconscious habit are revealed and refined.

Through the precision and methodology characteristic of Iyengar Yoga, the practitioner learns not only to "do" the asana but to experience it. Props may be used not as shortcuts but as tools of education, revealing aspects of the body and breath that might otherwise remain hidden. Timings are extended to allow the body and mind to settle and become observant. Sequence is structured to support progression and refinement. The technical mastery of alignment is not an end in itself but a means to awaken the inner intelligence of the body, cultivating discrimination (viveka) and sustained attention.

An asana becomes a mirror, reflecting the state of the practitioner. As the body is aligned, so too is the mind drawn into alignment. As breath becomes rhythmic and unobstructed, the pranic energy stabilise. The practitioner does not escape the world through practice; they are able to observe and confront themselves—tensions, fears, habits, and possibilities alike—within the frame of the posture.

Yogasana: An Instrument of integration

The term yogasana unites two essential concepts: Yoga—meaning union—and Asana—a seat, or posture. In this compounded form, yogasana expresses a further evolution in the practitioner's journey. It is not merely an asana performed with precision, but one imbued with attention and awareness.

Prashant Iyengar, in *The Alpha and Omega of Trikonasana*, articulates this transition with clarity: "Once the body is positioned in the asana... create a 'condition' in the embodiment which is the next step and the most vital, as it is in this internal conditioning which makes an asana a yogasana." Here, the asana becomes a means, not an end—a vehicle through which union is cultivated: between one part of the body and another, between the body and the breath, between the senses and the mind, and between consciousness and its field of operation.

This internal integration transforms the asana into a yogic process, not merely a physical one. The asana is done by the body, but for the mind, for the intelligence, and for the culture of consciousness. It becomes a mode of svadhyaya—self-study—in which the practitioner does not merely enact asana, but studies their responses, tendencies, resistances, and reactions that arise. The experience of yogasana begins when the pose is infused with both discipline and surrender, involving effort and reflection.

A yogasana therefore transcends the ideal of a correct shape. It expresses an integrated state in which the outer form, the breath, attention, and the quality of mind are harmonised. The mind witnesses the asana; sensitised and refined through its relationship to the structure and rhythm of the body.

Progression in Practice

In practice, these three—pose, asana, yogasana—do not exist as rigid categories but as phases in a journey. A beginner may begin with a pose, attempting to mirror what is seen. With training and refinement, the pose matures into an asana, where the shape becomes animated by attention and alignment. With ongoing discipline, humility, and depth of enquiry, asana matures into yogasana—a lived expression of yoga.

This progression is not linear in time but cyclical and recursive. Even advanced practitioners must return to the basics, to re-examine their poses, to realign and recondition their efforts. Each revisit to an asana holds the po-

tential to deepen its yogic expression, to expand perception, and to quieten the fluctuations of the citta.

In this layered understanding, Iyengar Yoga does not treat postures as ends in themselves. They are instruments, environments, and occasions for the unfolding of yoga. The external form is a doorway into the inner experience. Precision in action leads to clarity in perception. And it is through this clarity that the asana becomes yogasana—an embodied experience of union.

The distinctions between pose, asana, and yogasana reflect not a hierarchy of form, but a maturation of inner experience. In Iyengar Yoga, this journey is nurtured with rigor and reverence. A pose becomes an asana when it is inhabited with awareness and refined through discipline. An asana becomes a yogasana when it becomes an expression of integration.

A Sadhaka (practitioner) does not merely learn to perform but to perceive an asana. Not simply to stretch or strengthen, but to become sensitive and still. It is this sensitivity—the cultivated awareness of all aspects of the self within the field of the posture—that defines a yogasana. It is here that the practitioner ceases to “do yoga” and begins to be in yoga.

Yoga Sadhana & Yoga Syllabus



Yoga Sadhana & Syllabus

Yoga Mandir is guided by 2 significant documents.

Yoga Sadhana is our Student guide for each of the levels on the school and defines both practice and philosophy across 4 levels along with practice sequences, menstruation focus, restorative and Pranayama. It is an invaluable guide for students and teachers.

The Yoga Mandir Syllabus guides our teachers across 4 terms for each level of the school.

Yoga Sadhana can be purchased as a downloadable Pdf at [Yoga Vldya](#)

Parampara-Lineage Interviews

The tradition of Parampara—the passing of knowledge from teacher to student—sits at the very heart of Yoga. More than a method of instruction, it is

a transmission of understanding, grounded in direct experience and sustained by an enduring relationship. Unlike an academic syllabus or a procedural manual, Yoga is communicated through the living presence of a teacher who has themselves walked the path, refined their practice, and uncovered a way of seeing that cannot be captured through technique alone. It is in this context that the Guru-Siṣya relationship arises: a dynamic exchange over time through which the student is drawn into the culture of practice and supported in the unfolding of their own enquiry.

As B.K.S. Iyengar often emphasised, we do not copy the teacher's form—we walk the path they reveal and come to our own insight through persistent practice. It is not the form of the practice that constitutes lineage, but the integrity of enquiry, the discipline of self-study (svadhyaya), and the transmission of subtle understanding from one generation to the next. To uphold Parampara is not merely to preserve a system but to enliven it—to engage fully with the process of becoming a practitioner.

In recognition of the centrality of lineage to our work, we will be conducting a series of interviews over the coming years with senior colleagues and long-standing practitioners from around the world. These conversations will explore how Parampara has been sustained in their own lives and practice, and how they transmit the values and disciplines of Iyengar Yoga within their communities. We hope these interviews will offer insight into the lived reality of lineage and the many forms it may take, while affirming the shared thread that connects us all.



Interview with Fr Joe Pereira recorded in Germany in September 2024.

This excerpt from a longer interview in which Fr Joe responds to a question about Dharma
'The work of a wounded healer'

Access to the full interviews and session recordings at:
<https://study.yogamandir.com.au/courses/yoga-christianity/>

Yoga Vidya

A living resource of practice-based learning

For more than 25 years, Yoga Mandir's Digital Research Library (DRL) has quietly evolved into one of the most significant and unique archives of Iyengar Yoga around. The DRL includes video extracts from conventions, audio extracts from class recordings at RIMYI, and articles from a range of sources to enable students to listen to the Iyengar's in their own voice wherever possible, and to broaden their understanding of Iyengar Yoga and of

Yoga as a subject. This extensive body of work is the result of decades of inquiry by Alan Goode, a senior teacher and long-time student of B.K.S. Iyengar. Alan's personal collection of notes and recordings and his systematic approach to collecting, consolidating and digitizing materials throughout his life have allowed him to create insights into understanding empirical knowledge on a profound scale.

The DRL is rooted in the Iyengar tradition and underpins our study platform Yoga Vidya, which reflects not only a sustained commitment to the system taught by B.K.S. Iyengar but also an ongoing attempt to examine and articulate its principles and link to the Yoga Sutras. Alan's philosophical training, combined with his experiential approach to Yoga as a living practice, has shaped the way this archive functions.

Subjects on Yoga Vidya are not merely a collection of information but are structured into parts using **Learn/Study/Practice** framework, which is consistent with the experiential learning paradigm used by Alan in his practice and teaching. These three strands define a way of engaging with Yoga. **Learn** introduces each topic providing a definition that supports a student's conceptual understanding. **Study** invites deeper philosophical reflection, introducing other voices and perspectives on the topic through articles, video extracts and audio excerpts. **Practice** applies these principles within practice through class recordings that can be followed by students.

What sets Yoga Vidya apart is its refusal to separate knowledge from experience. Yoga Vidya is a resource not only for current students, but an asset that is continually being developed and created for future generations of teachers and practitioners seeking to understand the profound intelligence embedded in Iyengar Yoga.

This 10 minute video taken from [T-Ph07 Integrating layers of experience](#) by Geeta Iyengar is asked about the place of vayus and kosas in asana practice at the Yoga Convention in Canada.

Listen to her response which captures the essence of how these concepts should be explored and understood through practice



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