

## Notes on Sri S. S. Goswami's Yoga Sâdhana

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Basically, knowledge is both substance and form, particularly in cognitive fields like science and technology. However, as time goes by both form and substance become obsolete, for instance when language updates to match new standards and substance becomes outdated by new discoveries. But things are different to seekers of Truth in general, and more particularly to the followers of traditional Yoga where transfer of wisdom, knowledge and know-how has been going on uninterruptedly for ages.

In the late 20s, the father of Sri Shyam Sundar Goswami, a learned Sanskrit teacher and renown sitar player decided to found the original eponymous Yoga school in Santipur, West Bengal. His primary concern reportedly was to promote the psychophysical discipline of Hatha Yoga in Indian youth with the dream, or the presentiment that India was about to be freed from British rule. To this end, he wanted youth to be quite fit both mentally and physically. This will explain why some time later Shyam Sundar Goswami's introduced, in the newly founded Goswami Yoga Institute, a rich program aimed at muscular development and body shaping, specific muscular control, development of strength, seminal control, mental training and prenatal exercises.

This, and a laborious recovery through Yoga exercises from poor health as child, became the starting point of Sri Shyam Sundar Goswami's brilliant educational career. His rational approach of physical culture would later draw much admiration from interested circles, among them Prof. Rammurti, India's apostle of physical culture who at that time was a widely celebrated world champion in strength, with 289 gold medals, but also from the medical body, ruling ministers, rajahs and maharajah and other nobility representatives.

After two consecutive All-India tours and one world tour at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, in the company of his faithful disciple Dinabandhu Pramanick, Sri Goswami accepted the invitation of a delegation of Swedish medical doctors to establish a Yoga school in Stockholm, Sweden. This, in short, is how Yoga was introduced in Scandinavia, and most probably on the European continent. Now henceforth the fresh *Goswami Yoga Institute* would provide to all the opportunity to practice Hatha Yoga, along the lines of the eightfold *Ashtanga Yoga* and its eponymous Yoga master would introduce the full doctrine of Yoga to large audiences - a challenge, indeed, when he had to talk about Yoga's sophisticated technicalities.

Still living as a bachelor, as he did throughout his life, and unlike most retirees of his age, the eminent guru was very active with research work, writing and a rather comprehensive teaching. Where are the octogenarians today who could pretend, and be capable to credibly consider publishing of a 10-volume encyclopedia of Yoga?

Beside well-articulated lectures, delivered with a warm and yet imposing voice, Sri Goswami conducted Hatha Yoga classes at all levels, basic and advanced. The classes were open to both male and female pupils. But, less known was the fact that the mind of the erudite yogi was actually engrossed in a personal project, a votive pledge to what he called an “original work” -the twofold achievement of disclosing mind’s complexity and extract Yoga from the Vedas.

Goswami Yoga Institute’s courses were open to all irrespective of sex, age, race and religion. The Yoga master’s close assistant and disciple, Mrs. Karin Schalander, was in charge of the recruitment of pupils alongside the discrete promotion of the Goswami Yoga Institute. The keen and faithful disciple was later honored with the task of teaching basic *âsanas* herself, while advanced teaching and lectures remained under the exclusive responsibility of Sri Goswami. In those pioneering years of Yoga’s emergence in the West, many pupils issued from a wide social spectrum with an overwhelming presence of medical doctors, enrolled to study and practice Yoga.

Better than any other Indian yogi or swami, who before him had come to the West, after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, with the noble idea of introducing Yoga, Sri Goswami turned to be successful in his adaption of the ancient yogic methods and techniques to modern human needs. By contrast to prevailing habits in India, he never hesitated to introduce mixed Yoga classes, and allowed teens and old pupils to share the same *âsanas* workout. Born freethinker, his liberal interpretation of the versatile potential of Hatha Yoga could manifest in unusual ways to an observer. I remember one of the *âsanas* workouts he held in Stockholm were a herculean built Nordic weightlifting champion was training side-by-side a most graceful opera prima ballerina!

At the age of fifty Sri Goswami took the unusual decision (a “wrong decision”, he insisted later), to definitely put an end to his physical training. The alleged reason for this was the mental and physical saturation that developed after a long period of intensive heavy training to sustain his status of world champion in weight resistance, and the necessity for it to ingest large portions of food.

When teaching Hatha Yoga in the city, the sexagenarian yogi who had decided to settle in the West never appeared in Yoga classes as Indian *yogacharyas* do, that is, in the traditional simple half-naked apparel. Contrary to this assistant and disciple, Dinabandhu Pramanick, a remarkable and accomplished Hatha yogi, who used to only wear bikini briefs in his guru’s Hatha Yoga classes. The teacher did not change his dressing habit when conducting *âsanas* out of his home after the faithful disciple prematurely passed away, keeping up his habit to stand up during the whole workout, and dresses as a western-styled gentleman with dark suit and assorted tie.

## **Deva deha and Kundalini**

Sri Shyam Sundar Goswami's teaching of Yoga, is basically characterized by the vision of a singular paradigm, intended for a human prototype who is able to actually transmute the human condition into *deva deha*, that is a model of human excellence where adepts gradually assume humans' true identity as divine being.

The ancient *deva deha* concept of yogic tradition is a beacon light, indeed, to all would-be yogis. Translated into action, this transcending ideal carries with it a holistic approach to the full range of human potentialities, starting from the physical and vital to the mental with willpower and memory, as well as the moral, religious and spiritual aspects of life. To committed Yoga practitioners, the human prototype of *deva deha* is a constant companion in the long quest to Self-realization.

From a pragmatic point of view, all the physical and mental efforts of the *sadhak* in the path chartered (Yoga sadhana) aim essentially at discovering the static aspect of inner life and awaken its spiritual potential (*kundalini*). *Kundalini* is an amenable latent power, that can be awakened in many ways in human life, either accidentally, that is out of any spiritual contexts, or as the result of intensive yogic practice and irrespective of the Yoga tradition adopted.

## **Hatha Yoga and Laya Yoga**

The Hatha Yoga doctrine is at the core of Sri Goswami's holistic teachings. The reason for his choice of Hatha Yoga in lieu of Laya Yoga, which he mastered as well, was the recurring impression he had that the latter is far more difficult to learn than Hatha Yoga. The pronunciation of the 50 *matrikas* it involves, is a tough challenge to most Westerners whose tongue is not familiar to many exotic pronunciation patterns in the Sanskrit language, not to speak of the time necessary to spend at the feet of one's guru, according to Yoga's oral tradition. The last but not the least is the mastery of the complicated Laya Yoga processes involved around the different *chakras*, and the acceptance of various Hindu divinities that are alien to Western culture. All this supposes not only a background with a steady healthy body and a well-established poise but a superior mental, lest stagnation and frustration do occur. To most students, Laya Yoga prerequisites are dissuasive and insuperable bars to success.

## **Traditional Hatha (ashtanga) Yoga**

The regular practice of Hatha Yoga is linked to the development of latent dynamism, or vitality based on a gratifying feeling of self-control, wellbeing and strengthened self-assertion. Integrated in one's lifestyle, Hatha Yoga offers both youth and adults the

opportunity among other things, to boost latent energies. This supposes however steadiness and determination in practice along with the support of a competent *yogacharya*. In the later days of life, it turns to be the source of juvenescent experiences, an efficient retardant to the ineluctable process of aging.

## **Yama and Niyama**

Contrary to what many amidst today's self-appointed Yoga teachers seem to think, the practice of these ethic rules is therefore neither superfluous, nor antagonistic to other codes of conduct, religious or secular, as claimed sometime in sectarian quarters.

In the heart of Sri Goswami's yogic teachings, there is a transformative process linked to the adoption of ten ancient ethic rules known as *yama* and *niyama*. Daily practice of these rules is inseparable of integral yogic education, where finality stands beyond short-term goals such as subjective feelings and physical sensations, however positive. While the five rules of *yama* regulate students' behavioral course, the counterpart in *niyama* is directed inwardly with the role of self-control monitors. Described as a single ethical measure, *yama and niyama* constitute the very first step of Ashtanga Yoga, the eightfold doctrine. This twin set of ethics is common to virtually all Yoga systems extant as contributors to an integral yogic education in addition to the subjective and transitory results of wellness and the like. The practice of *yama* and *niyama* has always been an integral part of Sri Goswami's educational program and more particularly to ambitious students.

To reach mountain peaks has a price. Likewise, the regular practice of *yama* and *niyama* and its prerequisites: a sustainable ideal or vision, inspiration, self-discipline, willpower and time. Sri Goswami used to describe senior followers of *yama* and *niyama* as *yogi(ni)*, with no less merit than those people who attained the state of *samâdhi*. Experienced chelas who have subjected themselves to these rules know that *yama* and *niyama* is a powerful means to experience heightened awareness, endurance, purity and love.. More important, though, is the discovery of new things in the silent stream of their discrete practice such as the nobility of empathy and compassion, single light in a world whose thousand joys so often are obscured by the dark forces of ignorance and suffering.

## **Satkarma**

In addition to the advocated regular practice of *yama* and *niyama*, a practice that to serious practitioners is as important as training the physical body, Hatha Yoga provides purifying exercises called *satkarma* and the regular practice of asceticism (*tapas*) as well. Used in many religious and spiritual paths, *tapas* has three stages in the Hatha Yoga context: light, mild and advanced. To prevent accidents, the latter requires an experienced and responsible

teacher. The practice of combined *satkarma* and *tapas* is known to elicit positive advantages, such as the increase of one's stamina, willpower, endurance and enhanced immunity to diseases.

The purifying acts of *satkarma* symbolize the popular saying "cleanliness is next to godliness". Its practice constitutes a substantial supplement to ordinary hygiene habits and enables serious Yoga practitioners to delve into the dormant potential of their ontological and social strata: spiritual, intellectual, behavioral and emotional. Those who regularly undergo *satkarma* are capable then to discover new inner vistas along in a frame of heightened awareness. The regular practice of *satkarma* in daily life is often reflected in adepts' increased efficiency in all kinds of undertaking.

### **Vitality**

It is often acknowledged that the regular practice of *yama* and *niyama* develops vitality, too. Now, vitality is a vague Western term that most often is deprived of any tangible specificity, often regarded as too abstract or simply obsolete. Alike any type of metaphysical subject matter, vitality is difficult to grasp unequivocally, and difficult to objectify or qualify except for its etymological link to life (cf. Latin *vitalis* pertaining to life). It remains, though, that vitality to Hatha Yoga adepts is a tangible manifestation of certain subtle inner feelings or sensations belonging to mind and soul, which are tinged by the feeling of joyful youthfulness, conquest and self-confidence. Classic Yoga *sâdhana*, as envisaged and practiced in the Goswami Yoga Institute, supposes a harmonious development throughout all the practices that belong to the eightfold Yoga inclusive of the purifying acts (*satkarman*). These have the capability to elicit positive results such as vitality, dynamism and poise, mental clarity, determination and selflessness.

### **Âsanas**

Then follows the practice of *âsanas*, in a third position in the eightfold discipline and next to the twofold practice of *yama* and *niyama*.

The main purpose of the practice of *âsanas* is a motionless body, able to sit for a given time in a comfortable posture that is suitable for the practice of mental concentration. Regularly practiced, *âsanas* have the advantage to develop at the same time self-control, relaxation and mental concentration. Performed methodically, the practice of *âsanas* surpasses most educational physical systems, insofar as they operate both on the physical and mental while simultaneously and harmoniously acting on strength, flexibility, speed and endurance. *Âsanas* can be performed as aerobic (dynamic) or static exercises. Rare are indeed the risk of physical damages in the practice of Hatha Yoga, contrary to the comparatively large number

of reported injuries in popular sports in particular with football. Carried out according to different training patterns and degrees of intensity, *âsanas* may deliver most positive things such as flexibility of joints, muscle strength, stretching, speed, mobility and endurance – in addition to the much after-sought feeling of wellness.

Human ignorance has many faces. One is malicious harm and the deterioration of universal values such as life, spirituality, freedom of expression etc. Another is the misinterpretation and misuse of sacred things such as Yoga.

The post 2<sup>nd</sup> World War renaissance of Yoga has undoubtedly rendered Yoga's cognitive potential available to all. With no restriction as to whom is qualified and entitled to teach Yoga, its ethics, methods and techniques, a the broad avenue for mercantile exploitation has no limit except for the spirit of fierce competition that exists in crass commercialism. The worldwide infatuation for the practice Hatha Yoga can therefore be questioned, in particular the mercantile extrapolation of the psychophysical postures called *âsanas*. To those for whom the timeless message of Yoga supposes teachers' credentials and deserves respect, its mercantile dissemination is regarded as an unlucky if not harmful deviance, despite the positive results obtained by a partial practice with such results as the much wanted "feel-good" experiences, management efficiency or therapeutic palliative gains. Today's popular acquisition of the science of Know Thyself has become, indeed, a societal phenomenon that clearly attests to another renaissance of Yoga alike the long-lived mythical Phoenix reborn from ashes.

In India, where the original Yoga (*Mahâ Yoga*) and its many Yoga schools saw the day of light, the legitimacy of teaching Yoga by trustworthy representatives, be they enlightened rishis, devoted yogis or selfless gurus, was never put into question. Even today, Yoga and its deserving proxy are being honored and kept in great esteem in the rich inherited tradition where individuals' self-realization is as important as social justice and harmony. It may be asked, though, if Yoga teachers are always genuine, granted the lack of rule or other qualification requirements from established instances. It poses no problem at all in the social sphere, when Yoga teachers decide to single out the exclusive practice of *âsanas* and ignore the seven other disciplines of Hatha Yoga, as is the case in many Yoga schools especially in the northern hemisphere. However, such exclusion may also be seen as a debasing a sacred doctrine.

### **Prânayâma**

Heart and lungs are generally described as vital organs. General vitality (see the above eponymous sub-heading), endurance and willpower belong to the mental effects expected from regular practice of *pranayama* besides several physiological effects such as an increase of lungs' capacity, improved gas exchange and stimulation of abdominal peristalsis.

In the practice of *pranayama*, which is the last preparatory exercise before mental concentration, the lungs are working in three distinct and well-measured phases: hyperventilation, hypoventilation and breath retention. The fourth discipline of Hatha Yoga may be practiced with or without mental factors such as *mantras*.

## **Pratyâharâ**

While it is relatively easy to control the body, the control of the mind, which is constantly on the watch for *vrittis*—sensory images, feelings, and emotions that unceasingly monopolize the waking state, is decidedly more difficult. We are able, via our cognitive senses – hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch, to experience thousands of impressions, feelings and emotions that relentlessly solicit our attention. These various sensory impressions are conveyed by an electrochemical biological process, then transformed automatically into readily grasped mental images, and finally selected and synthesized on the basis of genetic, cultural or aesthetic criteria, that are unique to the individual.

In the process of perception, we use to pick up, for a very brief moment, a particular object in the objective field of our consciousness, which will be replaced at once by another object of our choice.

However, according to Yoga, the control of the mind makes it effectively possible to cut the bond that connects the senses to the external objects of the sensory world. It is precisely the meaning of the root “*hri*” of the Sanskrit word *pratyâhâra*: to move away; in other words, to keep the senses away of their object and thus prevent the formation of new sensory images within a mental vacuum. This is not achieved in sleep, but when one is perfectly awoken, in a state of mental concentration and mental immersion, the mind being withdrawn within with a temporary partition from the external world.

## **Mental Concentration**

More appropriate technically than the popular term “meditation”, Sri Goswami once decided to adopt the term mental concentration - an approximate translation of the Sanskrit term *dhâra* – when referring to the first step in a long mental control process.

The yogic practice of mental control includes several steps that extend from a basic approach, *dhâra*, and followed by *dhyâna* and furthered by a stage of super-concentration called *samprajñata samâdhi*, and its four subdivisions- *vitarka- vichâra-, ânanda-, asmitâ*. Now, *samprajñata samâdhi* is ultimately followed by *asamprajñata samâdhi*, a state of supra consciousness or “non-mens” concentration stage that transforms a *jivatman* or human being into a *jivan mukti* or freed-alive.

Mental concentration supposes a body that is fit and clean, internally as well as externally, and vitalized through various measures prescribed in Yoga such as right diet, periodic fasting, muscular and breathing exercises etc. although mental concentration is physical only through a physical basis (as well as pranic and mental dimensions) that cannot be ignored. Nor is concentration philosophical, since it is not merely intellectual. Concentration is thus a state of mind initiated at the sensory field, but leaving the sensory field with the mind moving freely beyond space.

It also allows the voluntary control of the senses, to make thinking, dreaming or sleep inoperative. Such a mental state differs also from the un-consciousness of deep sleep, granted that one remains fully awake in concentration. This mental concentration gives rise to a quite extraordinary mental state, technically called *turya*, which erases consciousness' three common states of waking (*jagrata*), dreaming (*svapna*) and sleep (*sushupti*). This 'real' concentration is the goal of all yogis, irrespective of the particular path they have chartered, and it is generally attained step by step.

At the interrelated fields of the physical and mental, Sri Goswami's open-class teaching comprised three distinct levels: a) *âsanas*, b) lectures and c) special courses and private teaching as personal advice and counseling.

During his lifetime in Sweden, Sri Goswami taught most pupils the techniques and methods he developed within Hatha Yoga, although he mastered the path of Laya Yoga as well. This did not exclude for pupils to attend most interesting lectures on the science of the *chakras*.

In the Swedish capital of the 50s and later on, the *âsanas* classes at the Goswami Yoga Institute were most attended. Renewal of those workout classes were merely the reflection of a shallow incitement in participants enrolled for various motives: doctor's advice or enthusiastic friends' recommendation, taste for adventure, dissatisfaction with other types of physical training, need for change of lifestyle, presumed source of social interaction or mental disarray or sheer ignorance. Such as when a Finnish magician once emphatically declared his interest in the Goswami *âsana* classes but for one specific reason, that is, learning the art of passing through walls. He added though, with a touching honesty, his definite intention to give up at the end of the workout term if Yoga could not help him to achieve this magic!

Shyam Sundar Goswami's special courses were designed for advanced pupils. They were innovating in including the unpublished yogic bodybuilding system called *châranâ*, the control of *prâna* through *prânayâma* simply described as breathing control exercises and basics in mental concentration or *dhârana*.

### **Beyond the Words Uttered**



The erudite Yoga master lectured thrice a week. Although Sri Goswami kept his classes open to anyone and everyone, the contents of his discourses with multifarious aspects belonging to the vast cognitive field of Yoga did not always match the intellectual orbit of all participants. Sometime delivered with a plethoric Sanskrit terminology, the talk embraced themes with a depth and dimensions far from the trivia or professional aspects of pupils' daily life concerns. Rare were the thinkers who could fully appreciate elevated discourses on the complexity of human ontology or the yogic science of mind.

The home classes of the distinguished Hindu sage were always saturated with a very special atmosphere. There was levitating around a kind of ghostly presence, in the positive sense of the term, beside his physical proximity. This could be perceived as something subtler than the lecturer's yet so tangible presence. But, not every listener was aware of the double presence hiding behind the words uttered. A pupil who once politely apologized for not being able to attend next week's lecture, emphatically insisting that he would not fail to read the actual lecture transcript later, was confounded to hear the master simply replying:

*- Yes, I see... but it will not be the same....*

Nevertheless, rare as it seems in a stark rational world, there were still well-attuned souls who were able to perceive, between the lines so to speak, the indefinable and yet tangible something beyond the physical. I remember the pupil who later gratefully witnessed of his personal experience at a time we sat side by side on the oriental carpet of our guru's modest apartment, a different Saladin flying carpet, powdered by elevated thought and feelings, which sometime induced the strange feeling of actually moving to an other world:

*"What I valued much more than all these profound but extremely theoretical expositions of Yoga was the wordless, simple and very moving bliss that filled me as soon as I closed my eyes. That prolonged and lasting silent peace was more telling than any commentaries could ever express? I was quite happy with that, and very grateful."*

Beyond the scope of intellectually transmitted knowledge and moments of communion of the soul, there was also an additional dimension in that refined human relationship, that is the feeling of something subtle and pure that transcends reasoning and infatuation. Characteristic to traditional Yoga is personal teaching with instructions and advices. It has always been, and still is, adapted to individual needs with paid consideration to the pupil's degree of attainment in self-control. It did also happen, albeit rarely during the more than two decades Sri Goswami lived in Sweden, that the rapport between teacher and student culminated into an informal guru-chela relation resulting in a discrete and strongly committing spiritual initiation (*dikshâ*), aimed at furthering the new disciple's spiritual progress.

## **Imitation, Inspiration and Emulation**

Imitating is a rather natural phenomenon in the cognitive fields and more particularly in schools and training halls but also whenever people seek support in the example of those who perform better. Mimicry operates in humans in the form of emulation. The doctrine of Hatha Yoga is mostly known for its practice of psychophysical postures called *âsanas*, which originally were named mimetically excerpted as they were from Nature or the animal realm: Moon, Tree, Mountain, Moon, Lotus, Lion, Eagle, Cobra, Peacock, Crab, Fish, etc.

In the early 50s many were the pupils who perceived most of the *âsanas* as exotic, in the positive sense of the word, and most challenging and different than the idea of gaining health through sporting activities such as Swedish gymnastics. Nevertheless, in the Goswami Yoga Institute standard *âsanas* classes of around 30 participants, there were always a small group of enthusiastic pupils at the forefront. Intuitively or from personal experience, these pupils had soon realized the possibility of a different self-assertion rationale and the fact that what at a first glance seemed rather strange proved most beneficial in terms of wellness, sleep, accuracy and peace of mind. Accruing to the teacher's existing merits, these pupils emulated other Yoga trainees by their own skills.

Support, encouragement and inspiration are generally found in the friends and fellows who are specially attuned with our pink of life, whether this is ideology, religion or spiritual path. These virtues work, indeed, for anyone who ventures and endeavors, with more or less assured steps, to hold a vision and ideals alive. Often is the influence of dedicated disciples and other soul mates most valuable. Their influence may be of great value for instance when it comes to solve life's trivial problems or making right decisions.

### **"It's never wrong to imitate the master"**

From time immemorial and up to our days of highly sophisticated modernity, yogis in India have linked success in their Yoga *sâdhana* to a guru's presence and support with advices and blessings. This explains why gurus' empirical wisdom is honored in virtually all branches of Yoga beside other types of spiritual quest. Disciples working upon themselves in the sacred sphere of Yoga are particularly aware of the fact that allegiance to one's guru, to mean here a true spiritual guide (by contrast to the connotation given in the Northern hemisphere), is not a trivial sign of weakness or humiliating submission and dependency, as often claimed by Western media in their the misuse of the term, but the sesame key to emancipation that concludes a long journey to Self-realization. There is a well-anchored tradition prevailing in India, claiming that no success can be attained without Guru's blessings. In many cases are gurus regarded as incarnations of the most elevated yogic ideal of *deva deha*.

Really positive and durable results on the versatile discipline of Yoga *sâdhana* require on the

one hand an experienced teacher's competent guidance, and on the other, a fit and determined recipient equipped with willpower, constancy in practice and much patience. These prerequisites do not discard though direct emulation and inspirational sources.

When I started attending the courses of the Goswami Yoga Institute, I noted several advanced pupils in the *âsana* section beside pupils that inspired granted a most laudable behavior. To their credit, they either kept a low profile or were simply unaware of the inspiration and influence they had on many others. In the forefront of the *âsana* classes was Hans F., an angel-like faced handsome student of my age with a flexible and symmetrically shaped body. But still more amazing I found Marguerite., a remarkably intellectual Swedish lady who, at an age when most people are happy to stand baby-sitter with their progeny's own children, regularly assumed the head posture (*sirshâsana*) for one uninterrupted hour.

Who said the oriental saying "*It's never wrong to imitate the master*" does not only apply to disciples as well?

### **Anecdotes**

Sometime there were people who in lieu of expected encouragement felt Sri Goswami's admonitions and pedagogic challenges as stark provocative. Beneficial to all while being exciting to the few, the *âsana* workouts of the "Lion of Bengal" were not always to the taste of all students. Not so much because of the contents of the teaching as such, as to occasionally targeted straightforward remarks that could be construed as provocative when misunderstanding his pedagogics, where provocative remarks instead were intended to boost pupils' energy and determination to progress on the strenuous path of self-mastery. To the best of my experience, his remarks most often targeted people in whom he could foresee latent a potential of spiritual faculties. Sri Goswami's teaching pedagogics were most probably linked to his own cultural and yogic experiences. For some unexplained reason I never saw him bothering to comment on these negative reactions. Nor did he explain the rationale he applied in teasing pupils as he did in *âsanas* workouts. Typically, the Yoga master never encouraged laziness or peoples' inhibited ambitions or blatant mediocrity.

To certain pupils, the strange, and at time seemingly hopeless *âsanas* were simply out of reach, although they could see around that surmounting the "impossible" was in fact a matter of taking the first step toward a discovery of oneself and dormant faculties. Starting positively consisted then first to project oneself into the perspective of long-term results with determination and patience. The demanding Yoga master once targeted me at a time I had the definitive feeling of really doing my utmost:

- "*Your feet are here but your head is in Paris*"

This was the public description of an apparently poor performance of mine, in a class of around 20 males and females, entangled in hot and sweaty endeavors, while lying on the abdomen with the idea of having the two ends of my untrained resisting body to an ideally envisaged union in the so called Serpent-king posture.

I did not find appropriate to apologize for the criticized posture that I laboriously carried out with my stiff body. Born with a weak constitution and prone to all existing child diseases and subject to malnutrition during with wartime years, my 26-year old body had been practically inactive throughout the years.

Similar seemingly pedagogic remarks made in public were not always to the taste of everybody, perceived differently as tactless or as a direct affront from a stranger in particular when the targeted pupil enjoyed a high social status rank of an inflated ego.

I sometime noted, not without a feeling of frustration, that Sri Goswami's teaching style was perceived as harsh, reportedly in female classes. No doubt that his yogic teaching style differed significantly from Nordic standards. On the other hand, there were also unbiased youthful pupils who were more open in receiving Sri Goswami's radical pedagogics in making them discovering, beyond the popular "feel-good" experience, something deeper and more durable, a deeper calmness, rather a peace of mind, linked to the satisfaction of also somehow mastering the art and techniques of self-control.

At the start of an evening *âsana* workout, I remember our teacher's discrete but stern voice addressing my co-trainee, Bertil E.:

- *What is this?*

The class had just been started and the pupils stood silently and motionless, aligned with closed eyes on two parallel rows, breathing normally and instructed to gradually get fully relaxed. Our teacher's provocative question pointed now to a recently retired legal director of Scandinavia's largest insurance. Furtively looking on my side I now could see two fingers pinching firmly on about one pound flesh on my yogic comrade's waist. Surprised and embarrassed the targeted gentleman could but display a polite smile. However, his humble reaction would not mollify the teacher's remark:

- *You are getting old!*

Sri Goswami could push promising pupils to a point where they perceived it as their utmost limit. I once witnessed also his refusal to have me elaborate on the advanced instructions he had previously entrusted to another young promising student who later either forgot them or needed some clarification at the moment he would put them into practice. To his defense, the technique was typically imparted quite incidentally to the student sotto-voce under a short break between two series of *âsana* exercises.

It is the same student who spontaneously would take my defense at the end of a lecture when our teacher pointed to my slow progresses by stressing the fact that I actually did my best. To which the intransigent master retorted:

*- It's not enough, results should be forthcoming too!*

*Edited by Jim Earles*