

The Indian Culture and Yoga Mythology

Yoga is an art and philosophy developed in India over three centuries ago. Yoga is intertwined with the Indian culture and its spiritual practices. Yoga is not a religion or dogma but endeavors to support and cultivate the individual to live a healthy and productive life in society. It encompasses many practices which should always be considered in its cultural context.

Our school has some Indian statues which symbolize the Indian culture and are not intended to represent any religious viewpoint. As we are practicing an Indian art form, these statues are appropriate and a pleasant reminder of Yoga's origin (India).



Shiva – Dancer

Hannaman - Monkey

Buddha - Prophet

Ganesh - Elephant

Krishna

Iyengar yoga is based upon ancient texts known as Patanjali's yoga sutras. Yoga encompasses many different practices. Amongst these is the classic chanting of Patanjali's yoga sutras. In classes, at times, the invocation to Patanjali may be presented. This is the primary chanting that the Iyengars wish us to learn. It takes approximately two minutes.

INVOCATION TO PATANJALI

Om-0m-0m

yogena cittasya padena vācām

(yo-gay-nuh chih-tah-syuh pah-day-nuh vah-chahm)

malaṁ sarīrasya ca vaidyakena

(mah-lahm shah-ree-rah-syuh chuh vy-dyuh-kay-nuh)

yo'pākarottam pravaram muninām

(yo-pah kar-oh-tahm prah-vah-rahm moo-nee-nahm)

patañjalim prāñjalirānto'smi

(pah-tahn-jah-lim prahn-jah-leer-ah-nah-to-smee)

ābāhu purusākāram

(ah-bah-hoo poo-roo-shah-kar-ahm)

saṅkha cakrāsi dharinaṁ

(shahn-kah chah-krah-see dar-ee-nahm)

sahasra sīrasam svetam

(sah-hah-srah sheer-ah-sahm shvay-tahm)

pranamāmi patañjalim

(prah-nuh-mah-mee pah-tahn-jah-lim)

Hāri om

English Translation

Let us bow before the noblest of sages Patanjali, who gave yoga for serenity and sanctity of mind, grammar for clarity and purity of speech and medicine for perfection of health.

Let us prostrate before Patanjali, an incarnation of Adisesa, whose upper body has a human form, whose arms hold a conch and a disc, and who is crowned by a thousand-headed cobra.