The yellow t-shirt

In Pune, because visitors rotate by hundreds every month, it is impossible for teachers to learn the students’ names. So we are often called by our t-shirts: “Green t-shirt, stretch your legs more! Red t-shirt, lift your arms higher!” Everything you do, can always be done better.

Because Guruji was usually in his practice corner during women’s class, people were shy and slow to occupy the mats around him. If your were wearing a bright shirt, like I did that day in August, a year before he passed away – a yellow one with Guruji doing Padangustha Dhanurasana on it – your were more likely to be spotted by the assistants looking for people to be sent on those mats: ”Yellow t- shirt! Over there! Quickly! Quicky!”

That’s how I ended up doing Chatus Padasana practically at the feet of Guruji. He wanted us to bring our knees towards our chests in the pose. So there I was, trying to do what he asked giving it all I had, when suddenly I heard his disappointed lion roar: ”The yellow t-shirt is not doing it!” He even repeated it: ”The yellow t-shirt is not doing it!”

This was my one and only personal instruction from Guruji – his only judgment of my practice. You might think, well, nothing to be proud of there. True, it could have left me frustrated – but instead, it left me inspired. It will stay with me as a reminder to internalize his ‘divine dissatisfaction’ concept: never settle within your limits. Measure yourself bravely up against someone greater than you. Measure yourself with the expectations of BKS Iyengar. Measure yourself with the universe. See where this takes you.

Réka Forrai

Intermediate Junior I

Hungary