Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute (RIMYI) has always been Guruji, Geetaji Prashantji and Ramamani Iyengar. It was built and continues to exist as a tribute to Guruji's wife, Geetaji and Prashantji's mother Ramamani Iyengar. In interviews with Geetaji and Prashantji they have both expressed the profound effect she had on their lives and yoga studies. I never met Ramamani Iyengar but I feel her presence at RIMYI. As soon as you enter the gate there is a bust of Ramamani.

The first time I saw Guruji in 1981 he was walking in between his house and the Institute. He wore a cream-colored dhoti and kurta and glowed like the sun. The area around the Institute was quiet and pastoral. There was little traffic. Carts with oxen were common. The water buffalo were driven down the main road in front of the Chetak Hotel to the lake to be washed. The women gathered up the cow pies to dry and use as fuel. There were three of us foreigners in the general classes for most of that summer.

Guruji fills the yoga hall when he walks into it and at the same time Guruji holds all of the yoga students in that hall in himself. When he was younger he knew what to do and how to help the elderly, the paralyzed, the pregnant who wanted to learn yoga. Now that he has gone beyond 95 he knows how to help the young, the modern to learn.

What many take for granted he slaved over- the photos in LOY, LOP, the writing of his other books. He opened up the study of asana in Yoga to us through Light on Yoga. Then the study of pranayama/dhyana though Light on Pranayama and the Yogic scriptures through Light on the Yoga Sutras. Through Light on Yoga Sutras he opened up to the great sage Vyasa and to well respected commentaries by Swami Hariharananda Aranya and Vachaspati Mishra and also to other saints and sages. On nearly every page there is a reference to the writings- Bhagavad Gita, Yoga Vasistha, Mundakopanishad, Samkhya, Puranas etc.

He had the priests record the chanting of the yoga sutras so that we could learn those. I am eternally grateful for those tapes, as I don't think I would have memorized the sutras without the tapes. Every year when my husband, Lee Sverkerson and I make our pilgrimage to RIMYI Guruji, Geetaji and Prashantji add something to help us understand our subject and life.

I went down memory lane rereading all of the letters Lee and I have received from the Iyengars. Guruji and Geetaji would number the letters. In some years our letter was one of hundreds.

The sentiments Guruji expresses are universal and meant for all of us so I share a few of those here.

Regarding the film "Atma Darsana”: The subject matter is very touching and I hope that people will understand how asana practice makes one to see oneself from within to know the inner and the interior depth of consciousness where the Atma rests and shoots out the consciousness to be equal in all the frontiers of the body."

Regarding the convention in 2004: "You are all in my heart and my affection and love cannot fade at all from my students. I love one and all and admire all in their own ways. Yet I wish that you all group together and take the points I gave for so many in so many classes both collectively as well as individually so all these are brought up to the surface in the coming convention. So that the new comers too benefit from these thoughts braided together..."

Regarding Saint Thiruvalluvar: " No doubt He was a great saint and the way he lived with humbleness is a great thing for each of us to learn."

Regarding deaths in our family" "Birth and death and death and birth follow in cycles. You have to accept this law of cause-and-effect...

It is but natural that as family members we have to face all these emotional upheavals in life and yet to have dispassionate mind in anticipating such things."

" It is always very difficult to predict the life of anyone who is close to 90 and above. One has to treat them and look after them on a day to day basis only... Let us serve not only parents but all others with love and affection rather than feeling sorry after death without doing anything good for them... you too will have peace of mind."

Guruji and Geetaji each made one visit each separately to Minnesota. They were wonderful guests. Guruji gave advice on cooking- always use Patna rice for kheer and use the eggbeater to break down the rice. Geetaji gave us philosophy lessons while drinking her morning coffee at the kitchen table. We are still holding out hope Prashantji may visit.

Now we see the same Guruji as 30 years ago but we see the ripe state of the fruits of his tapas- control over one's emotions, clear understanding of moral values and purification of character and to our benefit he is willing to share his experiences with us.

Like that day in 1981 you may still find Guruji clad in cream-colored clothing between his house and the Institute. For me Guruji, Geetaji and Prashantji form a part of the wide and benevolent Ganga of yoga wisdom and knowledge whether it is in class, through their interviews, or through letters. RIMYI will always be the three of them and Ramamani Iyengar.