His Inspiring Light

I had the good fortune to be able to participate in B.K.S. Iyengar’s classes in Poona.

His teachings demonstrated profound knowledge and very high standards. Whenever I became discouraged by not understanding enough, his "light" inspired me to continue practicing.

I attended the institute in Poona for the first time in 1991. After the first week, B.K.S. Iyengar’s called me to the library. My heart pounded in my throat – had I done something wrong? Would I be dismissed from the institute? No. Guruji explained that he’d been asked to create postal stamps showcasing yoga asanas and having heard I was a graphic designer, he requested that I design the stamps! I was a bit disconcerted, being there to study yoga, but when the master calls, one follows.

I was to portray four asanas: Eka-Pada-Rajakapotasana, Urdhva-Mukha Shvanasana, Dhanurasana and Dwi-pada-Viparita-Dandasana. Basic design materials – tracing paper, a good brush, decent colors, a ruler, a photocopier – these were difficult to come by there. It was also the monsoon season. Everything was damp and stuck to my hands, but after a week I presented the first drafts to Guruji (see illustration). He studied them for a long time before declaring “Not correct!” “But, but…I took the positions from ‘Light on Yoga’!” I said. He informed me that, since the publication, he’d changed the curve of the spine in Dwi Pada-Viparita-Dandasana.

So it was back to the drawing board where I redrew everything to his satisfaction. The drafts were sent off. Guruji appeared a few weeks later quite upset to report that it hadn’t been a commission, but a competition! No one had informed him – and someone else had won.

In 1996, those of us from Switzerland were invited to join a "German Intensive" class. During one of the afternoons, Gurji Viparita-Chakrasana practiced Urdhva-Dhanurasana about 50 times, then lay down on the floor in Savasana. When he stood up I saw that the body heat imprints he’d left behind were in perfect symmetry: the heels, calves, thighs, buttocks, spine, shoulder blades, skull, upper arms, backs of the hands. I stood mesmerized before the mirrored forms. He saw me, laughed and asked "Can you do that?"

With profound gratitude and great respect for B.K.S. Iyengar (Guruji),

Trix Wetter, Iyengar Yoga-Zurich