

Perspective

The Future of Yoga Therapy: Visibility and Vision

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I have often thought that the role of a teacher is to become invisible. And yet increasingly, I find that Yoga is far from invisible in its influence on our culture. Therefore, we might, from time to time, reflect on the tide of our history, the demands we place on ourselves, and the perceptions our culture projects upon us.

I meet many people dedicated to vastly diverse fields of Yoga, connected by various degrees of agreement that this ancient field of Yoga has been plunged into a dynamic time of rapid growth. To a large and refreshing extent, much of Yoga is in the process of migrating to a different world. In practice, a new *āsana* is introduced; edges are explored until the conditions are such that transition occurs again. To understand our current limitations is to understand that they, too, will dissolve over time.

In a climate teeming with conditions of change, we practice, study, and make livelihoods according to the authenticity of our traditions. Our ideas and intentions will spring another adoptive aspect of Yoga. For example, the vocabulary of Yoga is not completely in synch with the vocabulary of Western research, science, and teaching parameters. It is the combined quality of our various patterns, breathing together, that will inform our progress.

Yoga and Yoga therapy are forging new ground and building new bridges. IAYT encourages research in Yoga therapy and collaboration with CAM systems, healthcare institutions, and government funding agencies. IAYT has much interaction with Yoga Alliance, and the two organizations combined have over 16,000 members: a community of Yoga teachers, Yoga therapists, researchers, and healthcare professionals who will, in a landmark event, have the opportunity to gather together at the first IAYT Symposium on Yoga Therapy and Research to be held in January 18-21, 2007 in Los Angeles, CA.

At the moment, we are called upon to represent Yoga to the larger community in which we live, work, and study.

There is an ever-expanding circle of issues including politics and policy, business interests, and the complexity of insurance company coverage of Yoga therapy. The board of IAYT appreciates that decisions facing IAYT require diligence from those who represent the field and a commitment to building relationships across the field. Each step, when taken collectively, benchmarks our progress and informs how we define our place in the world and with each other. In doing so, we are far from invisible.

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