



February 2015

Social Evening – 21 February

Come along on Saturday 21 February (we'll get started around 6:30pm to 7:00pm) for food, dance and conversation. The food is provided by one of our students, Claire (koha would be appreciated). The dance is provided by Jess McLachlan and her dance partner. Drinks are BYO. All are welcome – partners and children included. Please let Margo know if you are coming: 027 2272026.



Workshops:

40 Days to Personal Revolution

This transformative programme to spring-clean your way of being starts this Sunday, 22 February, and runs through to 29 March. We meet each Sunday at midday to meditate, practice, discuss matters of nutrition and delve into matters pertaining to our way of being.

The cost for the programme is \$300.00 and includes a copy of Baron Baptiste's book, *40 Days*

to *Personal Revolution*. The cost for annual members is \$170.00 including the book.

There are still places available. All that is missing is your commitment to a happier you. Sign up NOW!

Asana Spotlight:

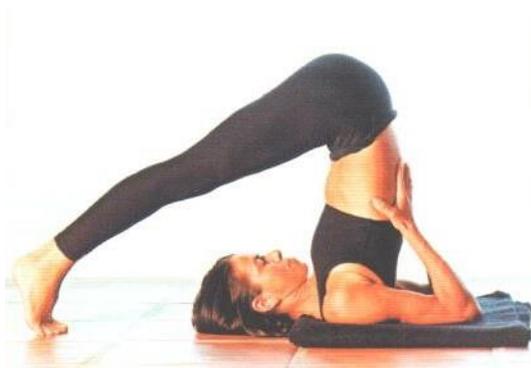
The asana focussed on this month is *halasana* (plow pose). *Halasana* is a pose that evolves out of (or in some traditions, in to) shoulder stand. It builds a coiled power into the body and is a pose used dynamically to open into other poses. It is a strong stretch for the back side of the body but has the added element of being an inversion.

Please note the same cautions we gave last month about inversions in the context of our focus on shoulder stand: there is pressure on the lower cervical spine (C6 and C7). Do not try to push through pain in your neck. Take care and feel free to use folded blankets under your shoulders. The use of blankets will both cushion your shoulders and reduce the degree of forward flexion of your neck. Iyengar recommends using your yoga mat over the top of the blankets so you still have the gripping qualities of your mat at play.

- You can take the same set-up that was described for shoulder stand in the January edition of this magazine and move into plow

from there or you can try a variety of different variations to come into plow.

- If taking the first option, come into shoulder stand then begin to hinge at your hips and lower your legs with control over your head towards the floor.
- It is important to move slowly here and not rush the process. The compression of the front side of your body increases the deeper into plow you go and there is the potential for your hips to go over your head and increase the degree of flexion (forward bending) of your neck.



- If your feet come all the way to the floor tuck your toes under and engage your quadriceps muscles to press the back of your thighs towards the sky.
- If your feet have come to the floor then you may not need the support of your hands at your back. You may lower your arms flat to the floor, reaching them towards the front of your mat away from your head, or even clasp your hands with your arms flat to the floor (as you do in bridge pose). Finally, you might choose to reach your arms over your head and hold your feet, as if you were in an inverted *paschimottasana*.
- If your feet do not come to the floor then they may hover. In this instance keep your hands supporting your back. Look to be as stable in your legs as you can be. It is potentially harmful if your legs start to drift from side to side or one leg drops lower than the other pulling you out of balance.

- If not lowering from shoulder stand you should begin by lying on your back with your arms alongside your body and pressing firmly into the floor. Lift your legs skyward. Keep them straight and engaged.
- As your legs rise engage the lower rectus abdominus muscles to draw your pubic bone towards your navel and correspondingly lift your tail from the floor.
- Engage the mid rectus abdominus muscles to further bring your legs towards your spine.
- The last section of the rectus abdominus, the upper portion, is, for many people, the hardest to isolate and engage but do so to lift your hips over your shoulders.
- At all times work to lift your hips up from the floor and elongate your spine towards the sky. Collapsing muscularly here sees you lose good alignment in your spine and accentuate the pressure on your lungs that can cause some people to feel stifled and stressed in this position. Take responsibility for yourself and do the work to lift as your legs come up and over.
- Keep the abdominal muscles working eccentrically as you lower your legs with control towards the floor over your head.
- A more challenging variation of the process just described is to have your arms extended over your head along the floor rather than alongside your body during this transition.
- It is important, whichever way you come in to the pose, to ensure your head, neck and shoulders are not twisted. *Drishti* is helpful here. Look straight up towards the sky at all times and do not let your gaze deviate to either side.

There is much to enjoy in plow pose. Mental poise is one great benefit. Some people get panicky as they come into deep front side compression. Breathe slowly and calmly and separate yourself from reactive emotional response to the pose to a patient, composed observation of the way the pose reveals itself in you. As if you were a hedgehog or a hermit crab, enjoy the security of curling up upon yourself.

Budokon® Yoga Primary Series Training:

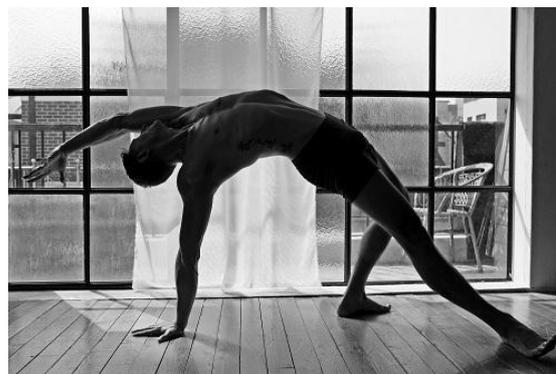
Over 13, 14 and 15 February Hamish trained with Cameron Shayne in Sydney in the Budokon® Yoga Primary series. Martial arts Grandmaster Kancho Cameron Shayne holds black belts in three Japanese and Korean systems and is a direct student of the legendary Master Rickson Gracie. He is also a hatha yoga master. Budokon® Yoga is a fusion of the martial and the yogic.

Cameron explains his surprise when he started practising yoga at how static it felt compared to martial arts where constant movement is the key – if you remain in one position too long in martial arts you receive a blow or a kick. To counter your opponent's actions you must be in action. To penetrate the defences of your opponent you must be in action. To create power for your strikes at your opponent you must be strongly engaged inwards ready to spring, strike or kick outwards.

In creating the Budokon® sequence Cameron sought to create a transition-based practice that incorporated the dynamism and motion of martial arts together with the poise, position and grace of yoga. The outcome is a very powerful sequence that calls for real strength and courage as well as great mind-body connection as your feet move independently and your arms move independently both from each other and from your feet to create a fluid fight dance.

Budokon® is a word made up by Cameron. *Bu* means warrior. *Do* is a way or a life course. *Kon* means spirit or soul. Budokon® is the way of the warrior spirit. The Budokon University, based in Miami, Florida, has six guiding pillars: Movement, Thought, Emotion, Relationships, Environment and Nutrition. Cameron's training is not confined to the movement but addresses each of the six pillars and students

are encouraged to make those pillars their "Do", their way of being.



Warrior's Bridge by Cameron Shayne – not wild thing nor flip dog but an action that appears numerous times in the Budokon® Yoga sequence.

Simply showing up for three days is not sufficient to qualify as a Budokon® Primary Series teacher. You must first also be a 200-hour trained teacher of yoga and you must complete some essay work on philosophical aspects of the training and submit a video of yourself practising and simultaneously cueing the entire practice. The essay and video must meet the requisite standard. Hamish received very favourable feedback on his work over the weekend (certainly compared to the Australian teachers who struggled and whose training did not appear to stand them in great stead for teaching something new).

The Primary Series is not long and can be completed in as little as 45 minutes if one flows quickly through. Alternatively, one could slow it down, repeat cycles within the sequence and take 90 minutes to do half the practice. For most people it shows up as a physically demanding practice. Hamish was working during the training with a woman who has completed the Hawaii International Ironman event and was a serious multi-sport athlete. In the latter stages of Day 2 of the training she was exhausted and said it was a more thoroughly exhausting practice than anything she had tried previously. The challenge to

upper body strength and core stability is considerable in Budokon.

Hamish found the soles of his feet were tender because of the circular actions in the practice, the turning on one's feet and the jumping which are all martial elements that help distinguish this style from more traditional yoga practices.

You may choose to be afraid of the physicality of a practice such as this or you may choose to see it as a chance to grow and develop. It is a philosophy we ascribe to at Apollo Power Yoga that everyone should be the best they can be. That means making the most of your strengths but also means identifying your weaknesses and working to make them strengths. The Budokon® practice is another means to achieve those ends.

Apollo Power Yoga will be offering one Budokon® practice per week from Saturday 14 March 2015.

Pregnancy and Power Vinyasa Yoga:

We've had a number of questions lately about whether our classes are suitable for pregnant women. The answer is, it depends.

Always check with your doctor if you're planning to practice yoga during pregnancy. As a general rule, it is safe to practice yoga while pregnant, but if there are particular issues with your pregnancy (for example, an incompetent cervix) then you may be advised against it.

If there are no medical reasons for not practicing yoga during your pregnancy, then our Power Restore classes can generally be practiced throughout all 3 trimesters. There are a few modifications which you will want to take, which will be discussed later in this article.

As regards our Power Vinyasa (i.e. Power Basics, Power All Levels and Power Groove) classes:

During the **first trimester**, you can do the normal practice, if there are no medical reasons against it. The only modifications you need to take are:

- You should step forward and back on your mat instead of jumping/floating.
- The only inversion you should do is waterfall – don't do shoulderstand, headstand or handstand. This applies in relation to Power Restore classes, also.
- Don't go more deeply into poses than you could manage before you became pregnant. The hormone *relaxin* is at work in your body, loosening up your joints to prepare you for accommodating the baby and the birth. If you open your joints too far by going deeply into your poses, it will make it more difficult for the joints to return to their normal state after the birth. Again, be mindful of this rule during your Power Restore classes, as well as during Power Vinyasa classes.



- If something doesn't feel right, just don't do it. Trust your intuition and feel comfortable with what you are doing.
- Do let your yoga teacher know if you're pregnant.
- You may find that you get puffed more easily during pregnancy. This is because your blood volume increases by about

50%. During sun salutations, you may find it difficult to get through each movement on the half breath. If you need to slow down your sun salutations so that you can take 2 or 3 breaths on each movement (which will mean that you get out of step with the rest of the class) that is fine. Just take the pace that you can manage and/or stop to rest in down dog or extended child's pose whenever you need to.

During the **second and third trimesters**, there are quite a few modifications that you will need to make. These involve ensuring that you don't squeeze the baby, as well as taking care of your back and your joints. You will be thrilled to hear that abdominal twists and the rest of the core stability section is off the menu for you!

- There is a modified Power Vinyasa series which you can practice alongside the non-pregnant people in any of our Power Vinyasa classes. If you want to be taught the pregnancy series, you can book in for a private lesson with Margo, who will take you through it and give you a hand-out. You should try to do this near the end of your first trimester, so that you're set to go with the alternative practice by the start of your second trimester.
- If you haven't practiced Power Vinyasa before becoming pregnant, don't start this practice during your pregnancy. Stick to the Power Restore classes.

Bhagavad Gita:

This month's discussion of the Bhagavad Gita begins with Chapter 9: Yoga of the Real Science and the Royal Secret. It is a big title to a chapter and begins with a big claim as Krishna tells Arjuna that he will reveal the most profound and secret knowledge which,

combined with personal realisation will free Arjuna of even the worst wrong-doing!

This secret as revealed in this chapter adds little or nothing to what has gone before in the Gita however. Krishna advocates devoted worship of him so as to realise God in all things and in oneself and thus, at the time of death be freed from the cycle of rebirth. Krishna as God, the creator and destroyer of all things, says he is part of all things. It may not be possible to see him in his entirety because he pervades everything but it is possible to gain a sense of him in the same way that standing on a beach looking at the sea does not let you see the whole of the oceans but you can get a sense of the whole of the oceans from so doing.

Sloka 10 in this chapter is interesting in that it says that through Krishna's presence, the elements of nature generate all that is stationary and all that moves and, thus, the world revolves. Remembering that the Gita dates from many centuries before the likes of "modern" Western scientists like Gallileo and Copernicus, it is interesting to see reference to the revolving of the earth. Free from the dogma of scripture and the assertions made in the book of Genesis about the creation of the world, ancient observers could happily conclude that the world turns.

Another interesting aspect of this chapter is its reference to Soma. Krishna says those who perform religious rituals, continually sacrifice to God and take Soma will see their hearts purified. Soma is a plant and the drink made from it referred to in the ancient vedic texts. There is debate as to what plant it is but it seems accepted that it had some hallucinogenic properties, altering the state of consciousness and giving those who ingested it a different perspective on their existence.

Krishna acknowledges that he is in all things both good and bad. He is present in those who

do evil things just as he is present in saintly people. He is present in life and equally so in death. Through these dualities he can manifest in any form rather than being fixed in one form. By being present in all things, both good and bad, Krishna offers the hope that the bad may become good. The carrot of redemption is offered. He states that even the worst sinner can become as one with Krishna by devoted worship. By assuming a life of Yoga they can be freed of bad habits and become good so as to be freed from the cycle of reincarnation.

Krishna does not deny anyone, regardless of their birth, their status in life, their behaviour and life history, the right to worship him and to become good. Just as dirty clothes go to the laundry to be cleaned so people tainted with sin may go to the temple to be cleansed of their wrong-doing.

Krishna summarises the chapter and what he describes as the real science and the royal secret in the final sloka of the chapter:

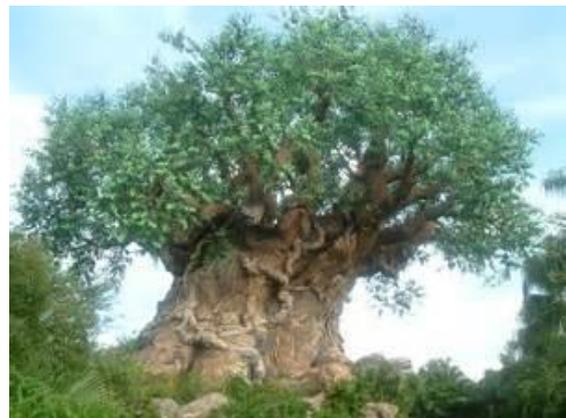
Think of me constantly; devote your life to me; offer all your actions to me, and bow down and surrender before me. Thus you will become steady on your path to the supreme goal, and come unto me.

Chapter 10: Yoga of the Divine Manifestations. What is a divine manifestation? It is where even the basest or foulest of things takes on the qualities of the holiest of holy. In India there are rituals and ceremonies using holy ashes called *Vibhuti*. *Vibhuti* is made by burning cow dung in a sealed chamber until it is pure white ash. From dung comes a holy substance. It is a divine manifestation.

Krishna recaps some of the ground he has covered previously in naming things that arise from him: discernment, wisdom, forgiveness, truth, self-control, non-harming, austerity,

generosity, tranquillity, birth and death, fear and fearlessness, honour and dishonour. He tells Arjuna that because of his compassion he dwells in the hearts of everyone and from there he removes the darkness of ignorance using the great light of wisdom.

Arjuna then asks, if there are so many manifestations what ones he should meditate upon. Krishna does not answer precisely. Instead he lists many things where he identifies himself as being the greatest of all and offers these as an object of meditation. He says he is Vishnu the all-encompassing light, Marichi the lord of wind and storm, of the senses he is consciousness, he is the tree of life, the primordial horse born in the nectar



of immortality. He is the cosmic serpent, time eternal, the first letter “A” (pronounced as “ah”). He says the details do not matter. Wherever you see anything beautiful, prospering or powerful those qualities arose from just a spark of Krishna’s inner light.

In March we shall look at Chapters 11 and 12; the Yoga Vision of the Cosmic Form and the Yoga of Devotion.

Private Alignment Lessons:

We have video cameras that we can use in private lessons, allowing you to see yourself in

poses and correct accordingly to find better form.

Private lessons are a good way for you to make a break through, learn a technique that is challenging for you or tune up your practice so that you bring good form and get from each class all that you can.

Contact Hamish by phoning 021 0551884 or 3656740 or email him, hamish@apollopoweryoga.co.nz, to arrange a session to elevate your practice.

Team Korudouble7 Drives For Kidscan:

Two of Apollo's students, Peter and Janene, are Team KoruDouble7 and are driving a Mini from Kaitaia to Bluff in the **Pork Pie Charity Run 2015** at Easter.

You can help them raise money for the KidsCan Charitable Trust which helps meet the physical and nutritional needs of disadvantaged Kiwi kids. There are two fundraising nights. One being a Quiz Night on Sunday 22nd Feb and the other a 'Goodbye Pork Pie' Movie night on Wednesday 11th March. For details please see the posters at the Apollo Power Yoga studio. You can also donate independently to their cause at <https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/KoruDouble7> and follow Team KoruDouble7 on facebook.

Namaste

©Hamish Kenworthy and Margo Perpick 2015

