



May 2001 Contemplation Theme

## Change

By Rama Berch, C.S.Y.T., E-RYT 500

It is always easier to go through a change when you are the one initiating it. To quit your job is a very different experience than being fired; to end a relationship or move to a new city is easier when you make the choice than when someone else does. Master Yoga Academy is changing, and you have been part of creating this change. Whether you have been coming to classes or merely receiving this newsletter, you have contributed by participating.

Yoga in general is growing and expanding. A Wall Street Journal poll showed 18 million people already practicing yoga in the US in 1998. By 2002 (next year!), it is projected to be 26 million, almost 50% growth. Yoga Teacher Training programs are expanding for all schools as well as for Master Yoga, which now offers trainings on both coasts, and has conducted the first program in Australia. National yoga conferences have gone from one in 1997 to 8 conferences this year. My personal schedule has expanded correspondingly to incorporate presentations at some of the yoga conferences as well as workshops internationally. I travel over 100 days each year.

Master Yoga Foundation has defined five distinct “arms”, serving different segments of our community in varying ways, as detailed in an earlier newsletter. MYTI (Master Yoga Teacher Institute) has expanded into a new facility. Now Master Yoga Academy (serving local yogis) is shape shifting to match our community – in needs and in locations. Our commitment is to serve and support you, and we need your help to do this. The next few months will see some changes in your classes, further described in this newsletter.

What is the yoga of change? The Pratyabhijnahridayam describes the world as being an expression of one unchanging Reality into many forms, which are in ever-constant movement and change. That one Reality lies at the foundation of your being as your own essence: consciousness itself as your “Self.” Yoga is the science of finding that basis inside. When you haven’t yet become stabilized in it, change can rock you to the core. You have a number of options for how to handle change, whether it is a change in your yoga classes or a change in your life. Some of the options are familiar. You can:

- 1) Complain, blame, resist, and/or withdraw. You can say, “He said, she said, I don’t know who but somebody said...” You can undercut all efforts to improve your experience, and even sabotage the process. You have probably already tried one of these techniques at some other time in your life.
- 2) Step backs on the sidelines and wait quietly (but not patiently) for the dust to clear, hoping that things turn out in a way you like.
- 3) Continue on as though nothing is changing, like an ostrich with its head in the sand. Then you can be righteously indignant when it affects you.
- 4) Go somewhere else that doesn’t have so much going on, so you can feel “safe”.
- 5) Just “kibitz”. This is one of my personal favorites. I learned it as a child, watching family members playing cards, and offering my opinion of what they should do with the cards in *their* hand.

The problem is that the cards are not in *their* hand. These cards are in your hand. You have a right to say what happens next. We want to hear what you have to say, so we can serve you in the way you would most like to be served. This is not the time to be sitting in full Lotus Pose, meditating on your navel. Play the game! One of my favorite teaching stories is about the Guru who took his young disciples into the nearby park and said, “Let’s play baseball.” They chose up teams and the first team went up to bat. After scoring 5 runs, they were put out and the other team prepared to go up to bat. Just then, the Guru said, “Let’s play soccer!”

Now what? Do you moan, “But the other team is ahead. Can’t we have a chance to catch up?” Life is not a competition! It is a divine play, and you are here to have experiences as well as to see through them to the greater Reality beyond. I invite you to play the game. This is an opportunity to shape the future of Master Yoga Academy. When you participate, you have a better chance of getting what you want. We get to know you better, and you get to know each other better. Then we all win, and we all draw closer to living in the knowing of the Reality within.

Namasté,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Rama', with a small heart symbol above the letter 'a'.