

# Yoga Spirit Academy

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## New Class Begins in January

### From Carl Jung

"Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart.... Who looks outside dreams; who looks inside, awakens."

If you or someone you know would like to be a yoga teacher or is interested in going further in their exploration of Yoga, then please consider Yoga Spirit Academy yoga teacher training. Our next

class begins January 23 and 24, meeting one weekend a month for a year. The application deadline is December 20. Call Janet at 918-261-9786 for more information. *How will Yoga change your life?*



## Merry Pancha Ganapati by Victor M. Parachin

One of the world's newest holidays was created by Satguru Sivaya Subramunayaswami, founder of the magazine Hinduism Today. In 1985 he proposed an alternative December holiday for western Hindu families. It is called *Pancha Ganapati*, a modern five-day festival

observed from the 21st through 25th of December. *Pancha* (five) denotes Ganesha's (the Hindu elephant deity) five faces, each representing a specific power (*shakti*). One face is worshiped each day in the following manner:

**Day 1** is devoted to creating a vibration of love and harmony among immediate family members. Gifts are exchanged and placed unopened before a shrine or picture of Ganesha.

**Day 2** is devoted to creating a vibration of love and harmony among neighbors, relatives and close friends and presenting them with heartfelt gifts.

**Day 3** is devoted to creating a vibration of love and harmony among work colleagues and others who provide goods and services. Gifts are given.

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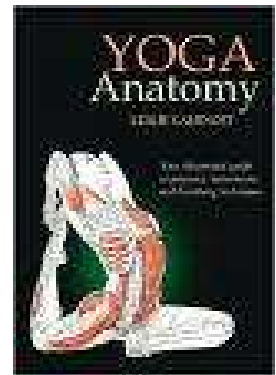
Whether you celebrate Pancha Ganapati, Kwanzaa, Christmas, Hanukkah or Eid al-Adha this year, we extend our warm wishes for a happy, healthy holiday season. May the spirit of love and peace fill your hearts and homes now and in the year ahead. And may the practice of Yoga bring insight and balance to your body and mind.

*Janet and Victor Parachin*

## Book Review: Yoga Anatomy by Leslie Kaminoff

This wonderful book is used every month in our yoga teacher training program and has quickly become a “highly recommended” text. Over 60 asanas are illustrated using a unique hand drawing based on an actual photograph of someone in the posture. Each asana is described according to which muscles are working or lengthening, and the author notes any special issues that come up when practicing the posture. For example, in the notes for *Vrksasana* (Tree Pose) he says that when the abductors of the standing leg are weak or tight, the hip of the lifted leg will hike up. Information like this is helpful for teachers and students alike as we try to develop a well-rounded and individualized yoga program. The opening chapter on

breathing is well-written and easy to understand. He follows up with notes on breathing for each posture, explaining how different ways of breathing affect the postures. One slight deficiency in the book is that the working and lengthening muscles are not differentiated in the drawings. Several different muscles are shaded in color, making them easy to find, but without reading the text closely it can be confusing to determine their individual functions in the postures. The reader of this book is fortunate to receive the benefit of Kaminoff's over 20 years experience in and knowledge of breath anatomy. Every serious yogi should have a copy.



Champaign, Ill.:  
Human Kinetics,  
2007. \$19.95 list  
price

## Merry Pancha Ganapati, continued

**Day 4** is devoted to creating a vibration of love and appreciation for cultural arts. Various artistic gifts - art, music, dance, etc - are acknowledged and celebrated.

**Day 5** is devoted to deepening love consciousness. Family gifts given on the first day are now opened.

The festival has become a worldwide favorite among Hindu children and families. During these

five days, cards are exchanged and communal meals enjoyed. It is a time of sharing gifts, renewing ties of family and friendship as well as focusing inward on God's generous blessings upon people.

## Reflections by Jessica Cunningham

I became a yoga teacher just six months after becoming a mom. My journey of learning and practicing yoga has coincided with learning how to mother my children and watch my 7- and 5-year-old blossom into these two amazing little people.

Lately, as I catch myself rushing from place to place, telling my kids to “hurry up and eat,” we’ll be late for whatever is next on our busy schedule, I find myself asking the question, “How can I bring my yoga practice into my

parenting?”

Children are natural yoga practitioners. I watch my five year old son stretch into child's pose when he wakes up in the morning. I watch my daughter giggle with her girlfriends as they cartwheel around the yard, ever mindful and present, not a care in the world.



My children, the best yoga teachers there are, bring me back to the moment. I slowly observe and stop my mind chatter, give my children eye contact and my complete focus and attention. I slow down my breathing and really listen, not just with my ears but with my heart. Isn't that what yoga is all about? Being present? My dream is to help my son and daughter find their voice, their *Satya* with my love, connection and presence. Yoga sure helps.