

# Improvement of Personality

Magazine "Sensa Pilates Yoga" (No. 1-2008)\*

Interview with Ranko Stoiljković

Interviewer: Maja Pakić

"The aim of yoga is meditation or self-realization". Regular and correct practicing of yoga prepares you for the experience of quietness and peace, allowing you to hear the sound of silence and feel the life force. The key is unconditional love, like teacher Osho said - if love is true, it makes you meditative; if it is true, the meditation fills you with love."

Ranko Stoiljković – Vairagya (52) is a Bachelor of Law, when it comes to education, but a yoga teacher, when it comes to profession. He has been practicing yoga for 36 years and teaching different yoga systems for the past 12 years. He is convinced that awareness represents the key moment in yoga because it opens and activates the sleeping parts of our mind and boosts our creativity.

Ranko became familiar with yoga as a second grade student of XIII Belgrade High School, a couple of months after he had started seriously practicing karate. Unfortunately, only two years later, he was diagnosed with irregular heart rhythm, because of which he had to quit his intense trainings and was deliberated from military service. But, he didn't give up. With the help and support of his parents and sister and a strong wish to regain his health, would practice yoga a couple of hours every day. After six years of practicing yoga, he finally made it. He was healed. He also graduated at the Faculty of Law at University of Belgrade. After that, he continued practicing karate and, just like in a fairy tale, became a member of Serbian national karate team.

"I learned from different books and mystics, constantly observing how my body, nervous system and mind reacted to various practices. What has always been guiding me, not only through yoga but also through life, is love for life, for practices that can improve our life and that we can use to help others", says Ranko adding that, after his first encounter with yoga he was enchanted by exercising and delighted because of the amazing feeling of self-confidence, joy and pleasure that came with it. Books written by Jasmina Puljo and Selvarajan

---

\* This is an unofficial translation provided by Ashtanga Yoga Belgrade for informative purpose only. The original version of this newspaper article is written in Serbian and was published in 2008 in No. 1 of Magazine "Sensa Pilates Yoga"

Yesudian instantly drew his attention. "I realised that, after some time, yoga would make my body extremely flexible and my mind calm and that it could help me improve my karate skills but also to become better and more successful in everyday life."

In 1994 he visited Swami Satyananda, and that is when he also met his teacher Swami Sivamurti Saraswati. Between 1996. And 2004, he used to live, practice and, thanks to the encouragement of his teacher Swami Sivamurti Saraswati, taught different systems of yoga in her Ashram in Greece. After spending a short time in Germany, he started teaching yoga in Belgrade, as a professional yoga teacher. He emphasises that Dragan Lončar helped him a lot when it comes to understanding yoga. "He taught me the secrets of yoga and I taught him martial arts. We built a strong friendship that still lasts."

In the past couple of years, Ranko has been practicing Ashtanga Yoga, he refers to as Patanjali Yoga, a complete system of self-realisation. He spent two months at Ashtanga Yoga Institute in Mysore, India practicing this system of yoga on a daily basis. "Our body is our means of spiritual improvement and it is our duty to take care of it."

"My teacher of Ashtanga Yoga, Sri K. Pattabhi Jois, still highlights the need to feel our own personal experience of body transformation, but also the improvement of other parts of our personality. By connecting breathing and movement with constant awareness, we boost inner warmth that causes the purification of physical body and the calmness of mind. As the time passes, our body becomes healthy, light and strong, our mind becomes stable and calm, whereas Ashtanga Yoga practice turns into moving active meditation as a precondition to discover our universal essence."