

# Training in Healthy Living

## A unique Yoga Retreat — Nov 18<sup>th</sup> to Nov 23<sup>rd</sup>. 2007

*(Held at St. Kathrine's – Parmoor – Henley-on-Thames)*

Forty one people attended the first unique yoga retreat organised by Navjivan Vadil Kendra. The retreat was unique in the sense that it was organised by a charity group without any profit making motive, and catered for elderly people who could benefit most from such a retreat. The retreat was a positive attempt to train and teach people on how to lead a healthy life. Entire rejuvenation experience was based on the principles of Naturopathy and Yoga with a view to changing lifestyle.

It took months of preparations as all the healthy style food had to be prepared on the premises, and all the supplies had to be taken from London. The venue, two houses in the country side near the Henley on Thames, was perfect for the purpose with reasonable accommodation as far as sleeping and bathing needs were concerned, two large halls, four large rooms for treatment, a large dining hall with good cooking facilities, and the houses were surrounded by lush greenery till eyes could stretch made the venue extra pleasant. The whole venue was entirely at our disposal for the period of our stay and it felt like home away from home.

Daily routine was planned and followed meticulously. It included two and half hours of yoga in the morning starting at six, and two hours of yoga in the evening. After breakfast we had one hour of brisk walk in the country side, followed by massage, reiki, head massage and other treatments. After lunch and some rest, there were talks on holistic subjects relating to healthy lifestyle. Following two hours of yoga, and dinner, we had two hours of entertainment.

Food was prepared on the basis of naturopathy principles which advocates that cooked and uncooked food must not be mixed. Lunches consisted of cooked but simple food (khichadi and bhaji), and dinner consisted entirely of fruits and salads. A large selection of fruits, including some exotic varieties made dinner satisfying. The afternoon talks consisted of subjects like reiki, nutrition and diet, alternative medicines and ayurvedic supplements, aromatherapy and a session on practical massaging. The nutrition value of aloe vera was explained and everyone was shown how the juice of the same is made. One day a demonstration was given of how juice is made from wheat grass. All the participants were served both these juices and explained their health advantages. The ladies used innovative ideas, and mixed all the fruits to make exotic fruit juices.

Dipak Jashapara, the yoga teacher and the inspiration behind the project, gave regular lessons on yoga, warm up exercise, Chinese massage, facial and pranayama (breathing exercises). He was helped by Chandrikaben Bheda and his wife Sushilaben, They brought a variation and a different approach to teaching yoga. Some of the participants had never ever practised yoga, while some were quite well versed and advanced in the practice. However, everyone participated in the long sessions of yoga with great interest and enthusiasm. Everyone was on time in the hall before six in the morning expressing their dedication and enthusiasm for the retreat program.

Cooking, preparing food, cutting fruits, making juice and cleaning up involved lot of work but all the participants enthusiastically helped in all the work. Buying all the required items, bringing all the items to the venue, and then taking the left-overs back to London was a mammoth task but with all the participants helping the work was made easy.

Evening entertainment became interesting and exciting as everyone came to know each other well. A mixture of games, jokes, singing and ras garba and dandia were very exciting and memorable, and ended each day with joy and satisfaction. This was followed by an hour of Bridge by some keen Bridge players – 17 members from Navnat Bridge Club attended this retreat, including its President Dilip Mithani.

On the last day a debriefing meeting of the participants was held. After appreciation of yoga teachers and the volunteers in the kitchen, comments from the participants were invited. All the comments were very positive, and overall the consensus was that the retreat was a resounding success and should be repeated more often, and very soon as such. The purpose of the retreat was to teach yoga and to change the way people eat and live, and quite a few participants commented that the retreat had certainly given them an incentive to change their life styles. Written comments by the participants are attached with this article that gives an insight into the thoughts of those who participated.

The six day Jindal-style first ever retreat in UK ended successfully.

Several photographs were taken during the week. A CD of all these photos is available for a nominal cost of £10, all of which will be donated to NVK. If you would like a copy of this CD please contact Surendra Mehta (Tel: 020 8905 0415). Also, a low resolution photos will be loaded on a secured website. If you wish to view them, please send your e-mail to Mahendra Kothary (mpkothary@sky.com)

**Jayant Doshi**

Secretary – Navjivan Vadil Kendra.

Navjivan Vadil Kendra  
Yoga Retreat – 18th to 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2007  
Some comments from participants

- 1 This Yoga Retreat has been a wonderful experience – healthy food, lots of yoga and have made good friends.  
– **Naheed Akbar**

*[Note from SDM: Naheed gave reiki treatments to participants and she gave all the money she collected on the last day for the treatments to Dolly, our helper.]*

- 2 I, being a newcomer to Yoga, have learnt a lot, and enlightened my thinking for healthy living. I thank you sincerely for the support, guidance and help given to us with lots of care and kindness. Many thanks and hope we have more of it! – **Kishor Lakhani**
- 3 A very impressive week of learning a new way of life. I have taken back so much with me and hope to implement some of the ideas in my everyday life. I would have appreciated shorter yoga classes in the evening and totally different classes for laughing classes. I look forward to the next retreat! – **Hema Patel**
- 4 Extremely enjoyable yoga retreat and a wonderful experience. I am definitely taking a lot with me – diet and breathing exercises. Perhaps food at meal times should be portioned. I thank you for all your effort and look forward to the same next year. – **Jyoti Patel**
- 5 I had heard a lot about yoga but I never knew how much enjoyable it is. It was a wonderful experience and I have learnt a lot. I wish I had taken yoga earlier. – **Dilip Mithani**
- 6 It was a wonderful experience. I have just been to Jindal (Health Farm in Bangalore) and I thought it would never take place in this country but it was as good as Jindal. Please try and organise some more trips like this – thank you. – **Taruna Mithani**
- 7 Enjoyed and learnt a lot – excellent retreat. – **Ramesh Shah**
- 8 I learnt a lot about yog. It has changed a way of living for me. I think I will value my life lot more after coming to this retreat. We normally take life for granted but after attending this retreat I would say life is more than we actually value. – **Saroj Shah**
- 9 From start to finish, one word ‘Excellent’. – **Mahendra Kothary**
- 10 This yoga treated exceeded all my expectations – thoroughly enjoyed all aspects of the retreat.

**Yoga:**

- (a) Warm up exercises were very good and varied;
- (b) Enjoyed different ways of doing pranayams from different instructors;
- (c) Asanas were very good, although a number of them were quite tough for me;
- (d) Chinese massage, self facial and sessions on meditation were just wonderful;
- (e) Lectures on holistic topics were very informative.

**Food:** This was very good but we had too much of it and too many varieties. We should have less food.

**Accommodation:** This could be better, but cannot complain considering the price we paid.

**Suggestion for next retreat:** Not self catering and better accommodation.

– **Surendra Mehta**

- 11 I had heard a lot about Jindal. My husband had been there and I thought I had missed out. Now you gave me a chance to taste a way of life in Jindal. I think this was a wonderful experience with healthy food everyday. I learnt a lot about healthy way of life and learnt lots about tips about the various benefits of yoga. – **Neela Kothary**
- 12 This was your (Dipakbhai’s) dream and a challenged for me to organise it. I have learnt a lot and assume we will make less mistakes next time. Overall it worked out well, and it was a resounding success. – **Jayant Doshi**
- 13 I wanted to experience the difference between the food which we normally eat at home and the one provided at the retreat so that we can adopt some of the changes in our life style. I will try and improve my diet and thereby improve my health. – **Shirish Parikh.**
- 14 The visit to this camp was a very good experience about normal living life & yoga linked life. It was an excellent experience and have learnt a lot about various changes one should make to life lead peaceful and healthy life. – **Kirit Kothary**

- 15 This has been my first experience of yoga retreat. It has been organised well. Learning yoga properly has been my wish and it certainly came true. All the teachers were excellent. They taught way of life and that has truly been wonderful. I feel this will have an impact on my lifestyle. The organisers have also done a very good job and look forward to similar functions in future. Once again well done and thank you. – **Abhay Mehta**
- 16 Words fail me. The yoga retreat exceeded my expectations. I have learnt a lot and hope to implement some in my daily life. The entire programme from transport to yoga exercises, dinner, walking, afternoon lectures were very well and meticulously organised. Everybody chipped in and worked as team. A thoroughly enjoyable week. – **Dhiru Galani**
- 17 What a treat this was. What an experience – we will cherish this togetherness forever. We hope there are many more which no-doubt will get even better. The yoga experience was excellent, the food marvellous. It was an eye opener and will certainly bring changes in our lifestyle. We thank sincerely the organisers of this event. – **Dinesh Shah**
- 18 My first yoga retreat – thoroughly enjoyed it, though it was somewhat hectic. Surrounding was very nice and everybody was co-operative. – **Dolat Sheth**
- 19 My first yoga retreat and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Hopefully I will try to do some of the yoga and join a yoga class. I met some wonderful people who were very friendly and helpful. All the yoga teachers were wonderful too. Thank you very much and thanks to the team who inspired me a lot. – **Nargis Sardarwala**
- 20 As a novice it was a fantastic experience – made me appreciate how unfit I am. I know that I have a lot to put in practice. My sincere thanks to all the hard work from the Team – it must have been a lot of hard work not only during but all the preparation which went before this week. My only concern is that the sessions were too vigorous and long for me – found it rather trying to keep up with it. I wish you all success and happiness in future. – **Gulshan Musgrave**
- 21 In one word ‘EXCELLENT’ experience. – **Usha Jobanputra**
- 22 We are lost for words to thank you all. We really enjoyed yoga, food, entertainment and other aspects of the retreat. This was a wonderful experience and we learnt a lot. We hope that your next trip will be even better than this. We will definitely support you. The evening entertainment was very good and particularly Garba. – **Vidula and Sharda Shah**
- 23 I really enjoyed the yoga retreat – teachers were professional and friendly. I had lovely time, though it was a bit hectic. Nevertheless, I enjoyed the experience. All the people were cooperative and supportive – will miss them. What more can I say? I expect more retreats like this. Thanks goes to all those who worked hard to make it a success. – **Jasu Sheth**
- 24 Yoga retreat has been a wonderful experience; going home with lots of health tips. I learnt a lot about yoga. Walking experience was fantastic. I am glad I joined the Group and hope that the next retreat will be better than this one. – **Pratibha Desai**
- 25 I just experience life changing way of life. I am extremely grateful to the organisers for the splendid work. The therapists were also very helpful and knowledgeable. It was also pleasing to see everyone doing their own bits. I hope I can perform at least 25% of what I have learnt and hope to change my life. You only live once; so I hope everyone makes the most of what we have learnt. – **Kamlesh Mehta**
- 26 My first experience of yoga retreat, even though we always conduct yoga classes on all our trips. I learnt a lot of new techniques and going back with a world of extra knowledge. I hope we have lots more of such retreats in future. The food was too good and too much of it and so I have put on weight rather than losing it! Some beginners felt that 2.5 hour yoga sessions were too long for first timers, but it would be difficult to offer yoga for shorter spells as we would not have three clear hours of empty stomach for more sessions. – **Usha Mehta**
- 27 This was my first yoga retreat and enjoyed the wonderful experience i.e. staying in the most beautiful natural surroundings, fresh air, good healthy food and good entertainment at night. It worked like a tonic to mind, body & soul. I hope our centre will do such trips in future. I will recommend everybody to attend such retreat at least once. – **Nayna J Shah**
- 28 This was a wonderful experience and hope we have many more opportunities like this. I would like to suggest a few points which you might like to consider for future retreats:
- a. The yoga session seemed rather too long and I suggest that we have three 1hr sessions – ie morning, afternoon and evening,

- b. There was too much interference by the participants with the instructors. This should be strictly controlled and silence should be maintained throughout the session.
- c. There seemed to be less control over food and perhaps could be looked into in future.

I am sure this trip has given a lot of experience in organising and in future more changes will happen for better. – Bina Shah

*[Note from SDM: Bina and Dinesh donated all the money they earned for the massage treatments to NVK – thanks.]*

- 29 This yoga retreat has been very good learning experience. This has taught us how to lead a healthy happy life with simple, natural food. It was good tuning for mind, body & soul.
- a. I would suggest yoga would be for 2 to 3 times a day but for shorter period.
  - b. Living arrangements should be more comfortable
  - c. There should be more discipline in eating (food).
  - d. I am sure the next retreat will be even better than one.

**- Harsha Kothary**

- 30 I am extremely grateful to Navjivan Vadil Kendra for making my dream come true! As Naturopath teacher and therapist, it has been my ambition to organise a Health retreat based on yoga and Naturopathy – in a unique style, perhaps never done in the UK. I was fortunate to provide technical support. The aim of the retreat was to change the life style – and looking at the comments from the participants, it appears that NVK has achieved its aim! I sincerely hope and wish that we organise many more of such retreats. Let healthy living be our Birth-right!! - **Dipak Jashapara**