**Panchakosha – an integrated approach to asana**

**Workshop summary**

**Overall aim**

To provide an introduction to the Panchakosha concept and its application in yoga practice. The workshop explores the usefulness of Panchakosha as a way of considering the layers of influence that may arise through yoga. We will consider the application to yoga as ‘keep fit’, yoga as ‘therapy’ and yoga as a ‘path of awakening’.

**Aims of the day**

To provide an overview of the yogic concept of Panchakosha – the five sheaths of existence.

To begin to consider a variety of ways of thinking and talking about the five sheaths linked to yoga practice and teaching.

**Learning Outcomes**

* Students will be able to give personal and practical examples illustrating the Panchakosha concept as it relates to the physical, energetic, mental, intelligence and bliss perspectives.
* Students will be able to identify and assess the balance of the five sheaths in their own relationship to asana.
* Students will be able to provide examples of yoga practices that encourage engagement with each of the five sheaths.
* Students will be able to understand how to use an awareness of the Panchakosha concept to assess and respond skilfully to their students’ needs in the context of yoga teaching.

**Outline plan for the day**

The programme is subject to minor change depending on group needs and interests. However, the main themes, aims and objectives remain constant.

10.00-1.00

* Overview of the Panchakosha concept and its origins in the Taittiriya Upanishad
* Asana, pranayama and meditation based personal exploration of each of the five sheaths.
* Consideration of the integration and interrelationships of the five sheaths
* Consideration of the five skandhas in relation to the five sheaths

1.00-2.00 LUNCH

2.00-4.00

* Personal and group assessments of the five sheaths in the context of asana – learning to recognise limitations and opportunities in ourselves and each other
* Using awareness of the five sheaths to guide and tailor yoga practice – for ourselves and our students
* Closing meditation.
* Completion of BWY feedback forms

(When delivered in on-line format there are two sessions 10-12 and 2-4 covering the same material as described above. During the extended lunch break a personal reflection exercise that bridges the two sessions is set. In addition, the afternoon block incorporates two short periods at the start and end of the session, when questions posted by participants are addressed by the tutor).

**Methods of presenting the subject**

The day will be a mix of tutor presentation, group discussion and practical exploration involving individual asana practice and group work. The day promises to be a day that provokes reflection and provides inspiration and innovation for your practice and/or teaching.

**Other info - What to bring, pre-course reading, target audience etc**

This day is aimed at anyone interested in the wider aspects of yoga and how to engage personally with philosophical concepts. It will provide an opportunity to explore why such concepts might be helpful in yoga practice, teaching and life in general. It will also give the possibility to learn a very personal way to engage with asana.

Bring yoga asana equipment, writing materials, and a healthy curiosity.

No pre-requisite studies in yoga philosophy are required.

**CPD Level –**

general practitioner & teacher

**About the tutor**

Ade Belcham is a Rolfer, Craniosacral therapist, and yoga teacher. His yoga story is centred around a daily ashtanga yoga practice begun in 2000. Nancy Gilgoff has been his most significant yoga influence but he has also been deeply influenced by the Zen teachings of Sonia Moriceau.

He has been teaching yoga since 2004, mostly from a barn in the Black Mountains of South Wales. He continues to do so from his new home in a cowshed in Sussex and via workshops in other UK venues. His teaching style combines a deep understanding of the physical aspects of yoga with a whole-life perspective, highlighting the potential of yoga to enable us to shape who we are and how we meet the world.

**Panchakosha – 5 sheaths of existence**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Annamaya kosha | Physical sheath | The physical body | Physical |
| Pranamaya kosha | Energetic sheath | The energy body | Subtle |
| Manomaya kosha | Mind sheath | The mental body |
| Vijnamayakosha | ‘I’ sheath | The intellectual body |
| Anandamayakosha | Bliss sheath | The divine body | Causal |

First mentioned in the Taittiriya Upanishad book 2 (400-500 BCE). A way of relating to human existence / experience.

May also be considered a description of the full scope of yoga inquiries.

**The five aggregates (skandas) in Buddhism**

Also a model of human existence with clear parallels to the panchakosha

1. Form – all physical aspects of the body
2. Feelings – pleasant, unpleasant, neutral
3. Perceptions – noticing, naming, conceptualising
4. Mental formations – fear, i-ness, attention, concentration, intuition etc
5. Consciousness – seed consciousness from which the other aggregates arise

**Application to the practice and teaching of yoga**

1. Identifying intentions
2. Identifying specific obstacles
3. Identifying underlying themes