



Bio: Yogacharya



Yogacharya is a senior teacher in the Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga lineage of Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Gurumaharaj, of Pondicherry India. He is the **Founder** and **Director** of International Yogalayam, an online school of yoga, and **Managing Editor** of *The Yoga News*, a web-based monthly yoga magazine.

Yogacharya is a unique personality in the modern yoga world. He is a dedicated exponent of the cultural heritage and traditional teachings of yoga, while at the same time a leader in bringing the ancient science of yoga together with modern technology in a practical and meaningful way.

His passion for yoga began early in life. Born in Canada, he travelled extensively as a young man, exploring various cultural and spiritual traditions around the world. By the age of twenty-seven, he had already journeyed to over 50 countries, eventually finding a familiar and strong connection to the spiritual culture of India.

Like many Westerners who go to India in search of yoga, Yogacharya spent several years traversing this great land, studying in various places with a variety of teachers from different yogic traditions. This included a venture into the esoteric teachings of Tantra Yoga, practicing Mysore Ashtanga Yoga in Mysore city, and also learning from senior teachers in the Iyengar Yoga line. He has also studied the principles and practices of Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of health and medicine, explored the sitar (stringed instrument) and tabla (drums) of Indian Classical Music, and continues today to study Sanskrit, the ancient language of yoga.

He eventually found his guru, Swami Gitananda Giri, Gurumaharaj in South India, and remains a dedicated student of Swamiji's son and successor, Yogacharya Dr. Ananda Balayogi Giri, as well as Swamiji's wife, Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani. In Yogacharya's own words, "*Swami Gitananda taught the most practical and well-developed Hatha Yoga practices I have ever come across. In particular, his system of Pranayama is by far the most extensive and elaborate of any lineage today. All of these practices are taught upon the rock-solid foundation of the Ashtanga Yoga Principles of the great sage Patanjali, making the teachings of Swamiji's Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga, in my opinion, the most comprehensive, authentic and effective approach to yoga today.*"



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Yogacharya also has significant training and experience in the field of alternative health care. He practiced for many years as a Registered Massage Therapist in Canada, and later studied the ancient healing system of Traditional Thai Massage. He became a recognized authority in Thai Massage in Canada after his years of study with various masters in Thailand. In his home country, he taught Ancient Thai Massage to health care professionals, and was enlisted to help develop the curriculum for a Thai Massage and Traditional Thai Medicine Certificate Program in a joint venture between the Ministry of Health in Thailand, and the private Canadian-owned Corporation, Asian Spa Therapies.

Yogacharya is also a prolific writer and has published dozens of articles on the various concepts and principles of yoga. He is recognized for his unique ability to address the day to day concerns of modern life from a yogic perspective, and to bring the ancient teachings of yoga to life in a way that is relevant and practical today.

He is the author of *The Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali*, arguably the most extensive yoga distance education program available today. He also authored *3 Weeks of Yoga*, an introductory yoga e-course that has received much praise since its launch in mid 2008. Yogacharya also wrote, in its entirety, the over 200 densely packed pages of yoga-related content on International Yogalayam's website (www.discover-yoga-online.com), which has become a leading internet resource on the traditional teachings of yoga.

He is currently working on three new books: *The Yoga/Sanskrit Dictionary*, a comprehensive guide to the language of yoga; *The Power of Thought*, a yogic exploration of the mind and its capacity to shape our lives; and *Understanding Asana*, a guide to the principles and methodologies of yoga practice.

Yogacharya still spends most of his time in India and Southeast Asia, where he continues to study Sanskrit and Indian culture, consult, write, and practice yoga.

For more about Yogacharya, please visit [International Yogalayam](http://www.internationalyogalayam.com).

Or email Yogacharya directly at editor@discover-yoga-online.com