



I bow to the Inner light

## ☸ introduction ☸

At this very auspicious point in time, as Sri Dharma turns seventy years old, we gather as a community to recognize the deeply rooted commitment of an extremely gracious, selfless, elegant, humble, honest, inspirational, all around yoga master, Sri Dharma Mittra. He may just consider himself a laundry man, cleaning everybody inside and out, but due to his extreme humility, he has been a well hidden "Saint in the City" for the past 45 years.

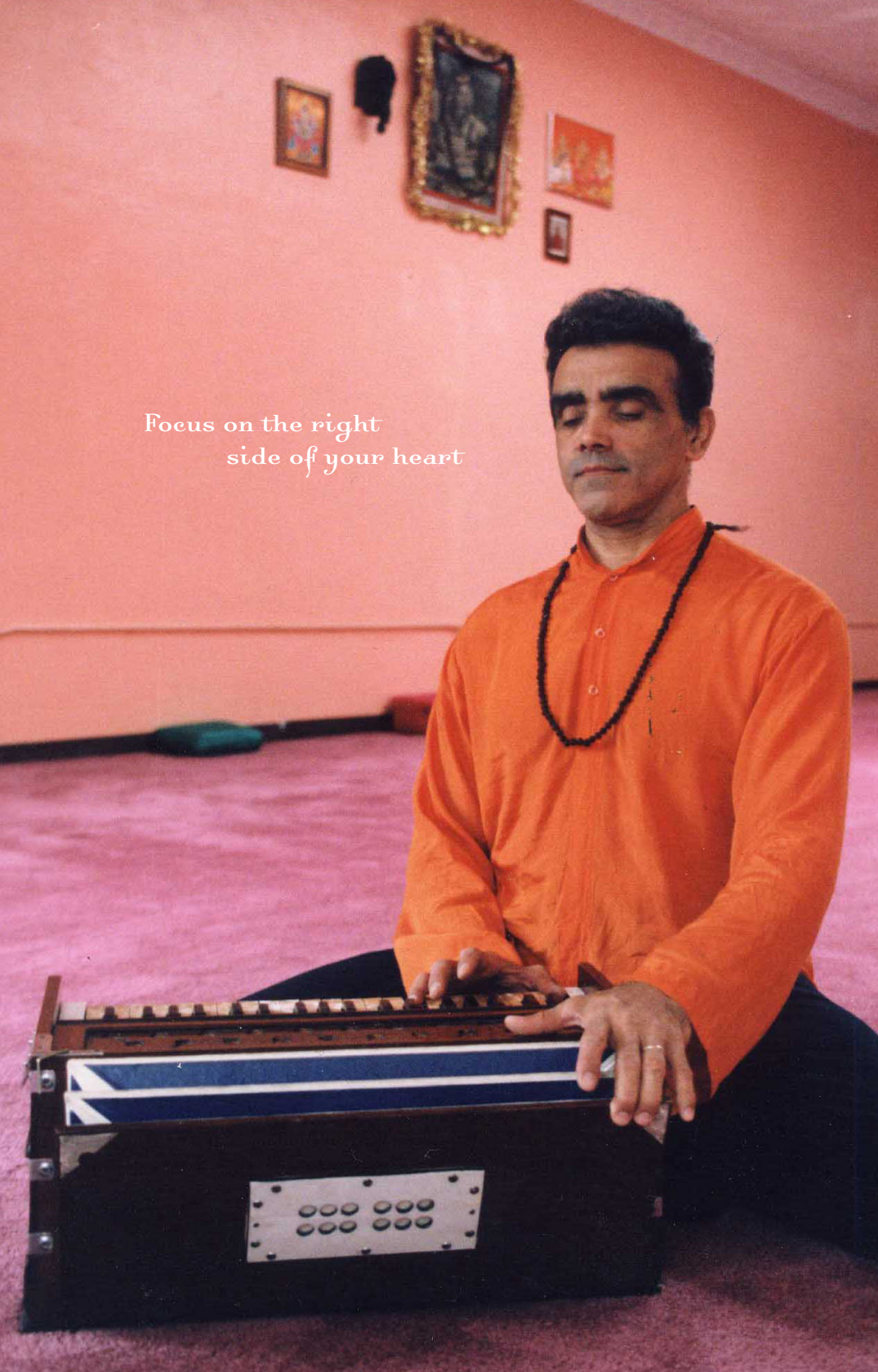
Dharma Mittra possessed a strong will power and an "angry determination" to follow his Guru on the path "no matter what." He took the life of a mendicant right here in the middle of the bustling streets of New York City. As Dharma always tells us, "if you can do yoga here, you can do it anywhere." His desire was to serve, to help others, and he possessed the qualities of a supreme selfless servant. He aided the Guru in all the affairs of the ashram, and waited on the Guru hand and foot. He knew that this, and only this, was the greatest honor to be bestowed upon a disciple, no other, to work for the guru without asking for anything in return. He served as the "Celestial Handyman," putting in air conditioning systems, replacing toilets, and performing all necessary construction work. He taught the Hatha Yoga (Asana) classes for the public, and made fresh live juices for all and the residents. He was also known for the beautiful sprouted foods he prepared for all. Dharma assisted the Guru at free Yoga Lecture series during the 1960's, where he demonstrated all the postures for the Guru and the audience "as an offering" in blissful self-control. His Guru, Swami Kailashananda, has awarded him the title of the "Greatest Hatha Yogi in the West." Swami Bua calls him "The Greatest Yogi in the Whole World."

When he left the ashram many years later, Dharma stood on the street corner with just a small shopping bag, and no worldly objects, except a toothbrush. This was the crossroads at which stood the future mover and shaker of over 300 Yoga posture variations that would be shared anonymously with all, and the monumental pure yoga disseminator that would set an example for thousands of teachers in the United States and worldwide today.

Like Shiva, the Lord of Yogis, in a constant state of pure consciousness, thus is Dharma. Like Shakti, the creative potential force, the vital energy, thus is Dharma. Like Dharma, the way, the upholder of righteousness, and pure consciousness, thus is Dharma. Like Brahman, ever expanding limitless supreme consciousness, the realization of the ultimate consciousness, bliss absolute, what is deep within us all, thus is Dharma.

"In the physical heart there is a small cavity, where resides your spiritual heart, which is eternal, you just have to uncover it." For Sri Dharma Mittra Maharaj, that is why he "shares his knowledge," and why we all practice Yoga. With total love in his heart, his wish is to take the physical man or woman- each student-and help them transition into the spiritual man or woman that he or she really is. Youth is in the heart and mind of the occupant of the body, and Sri Dharma is living proof of youth eternal. He has prescribed to his students for decades the natural miracles of drugless healing, through live food, juicing, sprouting, vegetarianism and encouraging strict veganism (no eggs or dairy). For Dharma this is a firmly rooted tenant of the Yoga discipline.

Sri Dharma or Dharmaji (as many students affectionately call him), has led, fed, supported, sustained, and opened a supreme vista of divine living for me. For this I am eternally grateful. From the first time I stepped foot into his temple, and was bathed in the

A photograph of a man with dark hair, wearing an orange long-sleeved shirt and a black beaded necklace, sitting on a pink carpet and playing a veena. The background is a pink wall with several framed pictures and a black hat hanging on it.

Focus on the right  
side of your heart

supreme peace he established, I have never left. Dharma has had locations east, west, north and south in Manhattan since 1974, and for the past 25 years of my immersion, I have sharpened my asana, internal union, construction, painting, cleaning, and photography skills, and most recently, computer skills, as “you do it because it has to be done.”

My happiness comes from being able to support our “The Dharma,” and bring him and his teachings to all that are in need. Though we live in an ocean, even more than ever, there is a desperate thirst. People are running here and there, but all along Sri Dharma has been right here, a subway token—now card swipe—away, not in a far off place, not in India, but here. He gives us all his home in his heart. Dharma has taken all of us strays in, and we are no longer homeless no matter where we are, what we are doing, or who we are with. Thank you, to all the students and teachers for having the strength to maintain the light he has re-lit in your heart, and for playing your role in his sharing process. As I read through the writings in this book, I was very happy that the work and teachings of Sri Dharma have hit home, like at no other time, as the world is in desperate need. Now I can truly see the progress that he has made feeding and maintaining the hungry students today. “I like to see you happy, forgive, repent, and most of all love. You are now ready to join the army of Yoga teachers, go out there and share what you have learned!” Dharma, I am forever grateful for the post of ambassadorship of being your Hanuman-ji in this lifetime. In full time service only, Om Shanti Om. “Be Receptive.”

Eva Grubler ~ Ismrittee Devi Om, since 1985, DMY Teacher, NYC

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The world works in mysterious ways. Who would have thought that something as mundane as the Yellow Pages would introduce us to a holy man like Dharma! But that’s what happened when Jack was looking for a yoga class thirty years ago. They say for every known holy person, the world is filled with many lights that shine unseen. Dharma is one of those lights, seen mainly by those of us in New York, and in the cities he travels to, and his radiance has added a dimension to the lives of every one who has been fortunate enough to know him.

The traits that Dharma has that have been a model for us: He is patient and serene, no matter what is going on around him. He is kind and compassionate, attentive, and funny. He helps people to become their very best selves. He’s just what the definition of a saint would be, but he’s human, too. He enjoys tinkering with things, is original in his inventions, like the barking dog tape that alerted him to visitors at one of his early studios; like figuring out how to get the cat down from a high perch by bending over and letting the cat jump onto his back. A recent documentary film followed a yoga novice to many studios in New York and around the world. He wasn’t always kind in his assessments of his experiences. But after his class with Dharma, he said, “I really enjoyed the way you taught the class, there is such a nice feeling here.” Dharma was his usual modest, glowing self, giving encouragement in a simple but clear way. During the class, Dharma was demonstrating a very complex posture, his head between his knees, his arms twisted this way and that, and the camera zeroed in on his face. He looked at the camera from his inverted position and said something like, “I find this a very useful position for looking at the world.” Classic Dharma, a light touch, but a very deep message.

Marcia & Jack Kelly, since 1978, Upper West Side, NYC