

## **An Invitation from Douglas Brooks**

Srividyalaya offers a systematic and on-going curriculum of Internet- and media-based courses. Our goal is to advance our appreciation of the history, practice, and interpretation of yoga as it originated in India, as it has developed in the west, and as it is relevant to our lives.

In the Srividyalaya Courses you will be able to develop your understanding of yoga philosophy and the spiritual practices of yoga to any level you seek. Whether you are starting with the essentials or have years of personal study and experience, Srividyalaya is designed to illumine, inspire, and nourish your experience as a yogin by bringing you directly and deeply into the conversations of tradition, history, practice, and understanding.

We study together in live lectures on the phone that are also available for download, we will participate in on-line conversation on an exclusive forum website designed for easy interaction, and we will have the opportunity for in-person immersion study at the conclusion of each twelve-week session. Organized to provide access to the heart of yoga traditions and to be clearly practical for our everyday lives, our program invites you to study yoga from its ancient origins and by the application of its practices. Our learning includes the teachings and practices of the Yoga Tantra, rooted in the goddess-centered Auspicious Wisdom and Kashmir Shaivism, from the most fundamental levels to the most sophisticated forms.

It is my goal to bring the whole of my experience as a teacher, professional scholar, and practitioner of Tantric yoga to the table, and invite you as full participants in this conversation. I'm Douglas Brooks and I've been studying yoga, Indian philosophy, and the traditions of Hindu Tantra for more than thirty years. I arrived in India in 1977 where I met Dr. Gopala Aiyar Sundaramoorthy, whom we fondly call by the Tamil Appa for "father." Over the next sixteen years living with Appa and his family in south India we studied the great breadth of classical Indian culture in the Sanskrit and Tamil traditions. Our focus was the teachings and practices of the goddess-centered Tantra called Srividya Shakta Tantra in the lineage tradition we call Rajanaka Yoga. Ours is a living tradition of insight, meditation, ritual, and the relevant application of yoga teachings to our lives. Our goal is to evolve our understanding of the great breadth and depth of *all* of the yoga traditions that have emerged in India.

I have always been a spiritual seeker and in the traditions of yoga the study of texts, traditions, and application of teachings in meditation and ritual have always been vital practices. Appa was a Professor of Sanskrit in addition to being a master of the practices of Tantra, Srividya, and south Indian traditions linked to Kashmir Shaivism. During my years studying with Appa, I completed Masters degrees as well as my Ph.d from Harvard University's Center for the Study of World Religions. I currently hold a professorship at the University of Rochester in Rochester, New York, where I have worked since 1986. I began to teach yoga philosophies and practices publicly in the early 1990s and have collaborated closely with John Friend the founder of Anusara Yoga.

For the past ten years Rajanaka Yoga has been committed to teaching with authenticity and honesty the history of Indian philosophy, yoga, and particularly the complex traditions of Tantra. We now have the opportunity to create a new kind of learning experience, a spiritual University on-line, and extend that process of learning with systematic courses. Our vision is rooted, as the yoga traditions have always been, within a spiritual lineage. We are open to everyone curious to learn the history and practices of yoga. Rajanaka Yoga affirms that freedom is our nature and that the dignity and value of real diversity is the highest expression of yoga; we are educators not merely advocates of our tradition. Srividyalaya Courses inspires understanding deeply rooted in traditional sources for yoga practice and makes use of resources of modern scholarship. We will study yoga history, texts from all traditions, and create the opportunity for focused learning at all levels of participation.

When I first arrived in India Appa founded a primary and secondary school for families of modest means so that they could offer their children a better chance at life. He called the school "Srividyalaya," the "abode of auspicious wisdom." Teaching in English medium, students also study Sanskrit, Hindi, and Tamil as regular courses. The Srividyalaya Matriculation School in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, south India is still in our family's care, prepares students for college in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and remains true to it's founder's mission to teach the foundations of Indian culture.

I have named our program for advancing education in yoga, Indian philosophy, and the practice of Tantra after our school in south India.

A portion of all earnings received from these courses will be donated to the Srividyalaya school. Perhaps someday you too would like to visit the school with me during our December and January trips to India.

To learn more about the courses being that begin in 2011 and information regarding registration please download our Prospectus 2011.