

Indian yoga guru B.K.S. Iyengar dies at 95

August 20 2014, by Nirmala George

Indian yoga guru B.K.S. Iyengar, who helped popularize yoga around the world and wrote 14 books on the subject, died Wednesday at age 95.

Bellur Krishnamachar Sundararaja Iyengar's death was reported on his website as well as by major Indian TV stations, which said he had been hospitalized with a kidney ailment over the past week in the western city of Pune.

Born in a poor family in Bellur village in the southern Indian state of Karnataka, Iyengar was a sickly child who suffered multiple illnesses including typhoid and tuberculosis.

When he was 15, a relative introduced him to yoga in an attempt to build his resistance to disease. By the time he was 18, he moved to Pune to practice yoga and to teach its techniques to others.

Iyengar created his own brand of yoga, called "Iyengar yoga," and established studios in 72 countries where yoga practitioners are taught ways to improve breathing, concentration and meditation.

By the mid-1950's word of Iyengar yoga spread in Europe, where he began teaching many new converts, including violinist Yehudi Menuhin and author Aldous Huxley.

The popularity of Iyengar yoga spurred him to write a book called "Light on Yoga," explaining the 216 yoga postures that formed what he called the science and art of yoga. The book became a global best seller with

more than 3 million copies sold and has since been translated into 17 languages.

Iyengar, easily recognizable by his bushy eyebrows and silvery locks of shoulder-length hair, practiced yoga until two months ago and even did headstands in his 90s.

Iyengar yoga's physically challenging poses and breathing techniques have been adopted by mainstream medical practitioners to help patients suffering from diabetes, [high blood pressure](#) and chronic back pain.

In 2004, Iyengar was named one of the 100 most influential people in the world by Time magazine.

In a condolence message, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi described Iyengar as "a fine guru, scholar and a stalwart who brought [yoga](#) into the lives of many across the world."

President Pranab Mukherjee said, "The nation has lost a personality who devoted his entire life to the teaching and dissemination of India's ancient knowledge and wisdom to millions all around the world."

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