

Teaching the Dragon to stand on one leg

Umesh Isalkar | TNN

Here's an area where 'Made in India' matters more than 'Made in China'. Young urban Chinese are queuing up to learn yoga from Indian teachers. About 25 to 30 per cent students enrolled for diploma courses at nationally-recognised yoga institutes across India are being offered jobs at various yoga and fitness centres in China — at attractive salaries to boot. Teaching yoga to Chinese will fetch you, depending upon your qualification, anywhere between US \$1,000 to \$2,000 a per month plus accommodation.

Yin Yan, director of the Yogi Yoga Centre in Beijing, in an email reply to TOI-Crest says: "The demand for certified Indian yoga teachers will never wane."

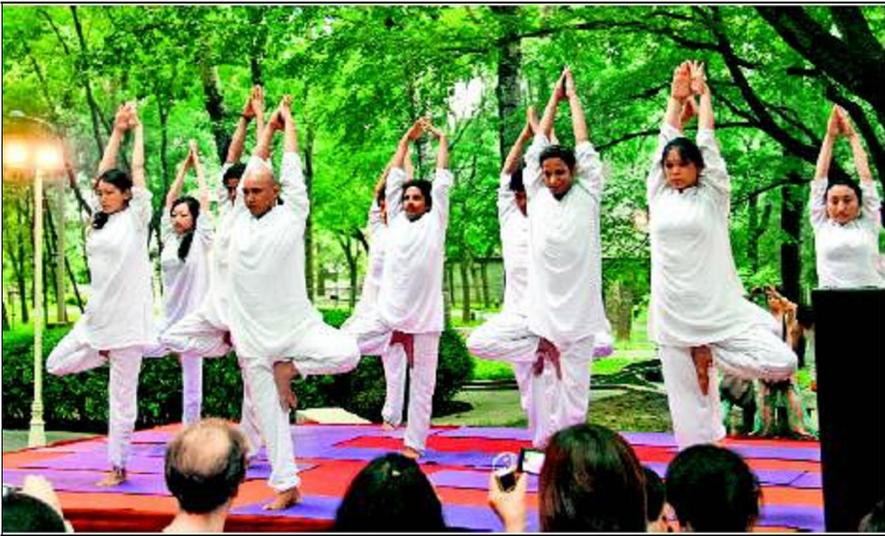
Deepika Dikshit has been teaching yoga for the past four years at Star Gym Club Corp. Ltd., in Shanghai. Most of her students are young professionals who look up to yoga as a status symbol. She has picked up a few Mandarin phrases — 'bend forward', 'raise your hands', 'inhale-exhale' — from an English-Chinese dictionary to instruct her class. "Initially, we use a translator to conduct the classes. Later, we pick up the language with the help of dictionaries and practice," says Dikshit.

In reflection of the young, cosmopolitan spirit of Shanghai, the fast-paced and more strenuous Ashtanga yoga enjoys greater popularity there. "Whereas in Beijing, Guangdong and other regions, the relatively easier and slower Hatha yoga is in great demand," explains Yan. Most students are between 25 to 45 years, and majority is women. Just like in India, people of the growing superpower are taking up yoga to ease off the pressures of modern living.

The first Indian teacher who popularised yoga in mainland China is Yogi Mohan. Incidentally, Mohan introduced Yan to yoga in Rishikesh. So impressed was Yan with yoga, and Mohan, that she convinced him to come along to Beijing and together they set up the Yogi Yoga Centre. He came to the country from Rishikesh and has been living there ever since. He has taught thousands of students from all over that country. "Yogi Mohan has published books and DVDs on the subject in China. In 2009, China Central Television launched a long series of Yoga with Yogi Mohan, which catapulted him, as well as the discipline of yoga, to fame," says Yan. His success paved the way for more Indian teachers in China.

A sizeable number of students enrolled at premier Indian yoga institutes like Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY), Delhi; SVYASA University of Yoga, Bangalore; Kaivalyadhama Yoga Centre, Lonavla and B K S lyengar Yoga Centre, Pune, are being employed in China.

A major reason cited for the popularity of this 5,000-year-old regimen is the International Yoga Show and Conference which was held in China in 2005. "The conference introduced yoga to a large section of the Chinese population. It provided them an opportunity to celebrate, explore and learn about traditional yoga and healthy living," says Subodh Tiwari, chief administrator of Kaivalyadhama Yoga Centre, Lonavla.



SURYA NAMASKAR IN SHANGHAI: Students with diplomas in yoga from recognised Indian schools are bagging jobs at fitness centres in China