



# *namaskar*

A VOICE FOR THE YOGA COMMUNITY OF ASIA

APRIL 2012

*Birth*

*Christianity & Yoga*

*Global Warming*

## My Story

# Reborn

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AS I WAS BEING WHEELED INTO THE OPERATING theatre to remove two ovarian cysts, I remembered what others had told me – their greatest fear was this moment would be their last seeing this colourful world. In contrast I felt unusually calm. Little did I know then, that through my pain, I would feel reborn!

Just two weeks before, my doctor broke the news to me, after an ultrasound scan, that I had two ovarian cysts, one the size of a four-month foetus, and had to have them removed quickly. My doctor took care to explain that my cysts, called chocolate cysts [formed when a patch of endometrial tissue sloughed off and became implanted and enlarged inside an ovary] was fortunately benign. These cysts can be genetic, hormonal or the result of endometriosis.

I'd traced back over my teen years, recalling the hormonal disorder which resulted in my having two heavy flows a month. My first ultrasound scan at 16 revealed I had immature ovaries and the doctor suggested I take contraceptive pills. My mother decided instead to take me to a Traditional Chinese Medicine doctor. And after a short course of bitter herbal medicine twice a day, I thought I was cured. That was until last October, when menstrual irregularities, lower abdominal pain and frequent urination sent me to this doctor.

The night I told my mother about my condition, she burst into tears asking how this could happen to such a young woman. I've two relatives with the same condition, and both after years of treatments, eventually resorted to complete hysterectomies. While I was scared, I never questioned why this had happened to me. But seeing my family worry about me, broke my heart.

I gave up job running my own publication and escaped to India for a yoga vacation. During my time there I learned to surrender to this situation over which I'd no control. And in this peace, I was inspired me to pursue yoga professionally. While the cysts certainly affected my daily life and yoga practice, I continued to practice daily up till the day before my operation. It helped - as I lay on the gurney in the hospital, I felt like I was in *Savasana*.

The cysts were successfully removed, though there's no guarantee they won't grow back again. I've had to accept this and the fact my body is different than before. My doctor has already warned it will be difficult to become pregnant in the future. I will be on long-term medication to balance my hormone levels and I will need frequent medical check ups.

After a month's rest, I took my first yoga class. It started with *Adho Mukha Svanasana*. Cautiously I lifted my knees, lengthened my tailbone, pushed my upper thighs back and stretched my heels to the floor. Despite a regular practice of four years, I felt helpless. The sharp abdominal pain and lack of any core strength meant I couldn't do many previously-easy postures. I felt like a complete beginner – a yoga baby.

During that time, I kept reminding myself to "listen to my body because yoga is your own practice. Don't compare or compete with others." I also dealt with my rehabilitation, as the prescribed contraceptive pills didn't work well for me. The practice of yoga and its theories helped me stay positive and surrender my frustration despite the odds.

I changed my medication and continue my yoga routine everyday, but have shortened the duration and limit my movements. I manifested a mantra – Let go more to go deeper. After three months, I feel my body is slowly getting back to how it used to be. I feel reborn, learning to crawl, walk, run and practice yoga all over again.



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