



South Asia Times

Editor: Neeraj Nanda Ph: 03 9893 4947 / 0421 677 082 Contact: editor@southasiatimes.com.au / PO Box 465, Brentford Square Vic 3131

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Yoga Patent: Yes or No?

By Neeraj Nanda

Melbourne: Yoga – a system of physical and spiritual exercise practiced in India for thousands of years, is all set to pit the Indian Government versus the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). The USPTO has over the years granted 150 yoga-related copyrights, 134 patents on yoga accessories and 2,315 yoga-related trademarks. What has triggered the Yoga patent war is the US granting of copyright and trademark to 26 yoga poses performed in a heated room. Called “Hot Yoga” and developed by the India born Yoga guru Bikram Choudhury. This version of yoga is available in many countries including Australia.

It is not that the copyright and the patent have come recently. In 1978, Bikram Choudhury got the copyright for his yoga sequence and obtained a trademark for “Bikram Yoga” in 2002. So, was the Indian Government sleeping? What was the Indian embassy in Washington dc doing? Those were the days when BJP’s Atal Behari Vajpayee was the Prime Minister of India and had appointed a ‘Sangh Parivar’ man in the United States Dr.Bhishma K. Agnihotri, India’s Ambassador-At-Large for NRI’s & PIO’s (Global). See Bikram Choudhury’s site (www.bikramyoga.com) which shows a photograph of Rajashree Choudhury, Dr.Bhishma K. Agnihotri and Bikram Choudhury at the 2002 graduating class of the “Bikram’s Yoga College of India” in Los Angeles. Therefore, things were happening under the very nose of the Vajpayee government and its choice man in the US.

A rediff report filed from California, Los Angeles (November 8, 2002) also on the site says:

“Dr. Bhishma K. Agnihotri, India’s Ambassador-At-Large for NRI’s & PIO’s (Global), received a rousing standing ovation for his speech by more than three hundred future yoga teachers and invited guests at the world famous Bikram’s Yoga College of India in Los Angeles. Dr. Agnihotri was invited by Bikram Choudhury, the Yogi to the Stars in Hollywood, to address his Fall, 2002 graduating class of yoga teachers.

(Continued on page 36)



Photo: www.bikramyoga.com

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