



# YOGA MAKARANDA (Part II)

SRI T. KRISHNAMACHARYA

About this Document by A. G. Mohan

While reading the document please bear in mind the following:

1. The document seems to have been written during the 1930s and early 40s. It contains gems of advice from Krishnamacharya spread over the document. It can help to make the asana practice safe, effective, progressive and prevent injuries. Please read it carefully.
2. The original translation into English seems to have been done by an Indian who is not proficient in English as well as the subject of yoga. For example:
  - a. You may find translations such as ‘catch the feet’ instead of ‘hold the feet’.
  - b. The word ‘kumbhakam’ is generally used in the ancient texts to depict pranayama as well as the holdings of the breath. The original translation is incorrect and inconsistent in some places due to such translation.
  - c. The word ‘angulas’ is translated as inches. Some places it refers to finger width.
  - d. The word ‘secret’ means right methodology.
  - e. ‘Weighing asanas’ meaning ‘weight bearing asanas’.
3. While describing the benefits of yoga practice, asana and pranayama, many ancient Ayurvedic terminologies have been translated into western medical terms such as kidney, liver, intestines, etc. These cannot be taken literally.
4. I have done only very minimal corrections to this original English translation to remove major confusions. I have split the document to make it more meaningful.
5. I used this manuscript as an aid to teaching yoga in the 1970s and 80s. I have clarified doubts in this document personally with Krishnamacharya in the course

of my learning and teaching. I have not added any of the clarifications or explanations in this document.

6. No detailed explanation for nadis, vayus, cakras, etc. have been given. These call for the study of the text Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita and Yoga Yajnavalkya.
7. This document which appears to be a continuation of the Yoga Makaranda, Part 1, contains material along the similar lines of Yoga Yajnavalkya (order of the 8 limbs of yoga).
8. In this document Krishnamacharya continues to give a detailed explanation for the practice of the various asanas. There are 37 asanas covered with an addition of 25 variations.
9. Yoga Makaranda Part 1 contains description of 42 asanas ending with Sarvangasana. Krishnamacharya concludes, “This asana as well as the next one, sirshasana, should be practiced with great caution.”
10. This document begins with Sirshasana and contains description of 37 asanas . There are some asanas like sarvangasana and baddhakonasana described in both manuscripts.
11. The concept of preparation of the asanas, the need for counter pose / balancing postures as well as progression of asanas is explained (not explained in part 1).
12. Krishnamacharya also cautions in several places against the use of force in asanas. He also emphasizes the use of caution in the practice of pranayama.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Whatever be the walk of life one occupies, he will not be able fully to discharge his duties or enjoy its benefits unless he ensures a healthy body, bold and clear mind and long life. For the attainment of these essential pre-requisite conditions, no system can equal the practice of YOGA which has been laid down in such meticulous detail by our ancient rishis.

Numerous asanas have been mentioned in the treatises on YOGA. Each has its own special benefits. But of all these asanas, the SIRSHASANA and the SARVANGASANA hold the top place as they give the greatest benefit, and sastras extol their benefit.

In the normal erect posture, the main organs of perception, eyes, ears, etc., and the brain do not get a copious supply of blood as they are situated above the heart, and the blood to flow to these organs has to work against gravity. Again when we breathe in, and retain the air in the lungs, there is an increase of thoracic pressure with the consequence that there is a tendency to press down on the intestines, liver, kidneys diaphragm etc., that these organs get displaced. Their proper functioning is impaired and a host of diseases, like constipation, rheumatism, varicose veins, ungainly figure etc. follow.

In designing the SIRSHASANA and SARVANGASANA the rishis have automatically removed the above difficulties by adopting the topsy-turvy posture by which gravity will now aid in the free flow of blood to the organs of perception and also aid in restoring the organs in the lower part of the body to their normal places. These two asanas are both preventive and curative. In the case of those, however, who are unduly fatty, it is imperative that the body should first acquire some suppleness in the movement of the limbs by practicing mudras and pranayamas, before attempting these asanas.

Sayanacharya in his commentary on Patanjali's YOGASUTRAS has given a lot of practical details to be observed in the practice of asanas. The main objective of SIRSHASANA and SARVANGASANA are not merely to arrange for a copious supply of

blood to the head and upper part of the body but also to slow down the respiratory rate. When SIRSHASANA has been sufficiently mastered, the breathing rate which normally is about 15-18 a minute, automatically comes down to four a minute. The aim should be to reduce it to, two per minute. Thus at this rate, 24 rounds of breathing in SIRSHASANA will take 12 minutes.

It is laid down that SIRSHASANA should be done only in the mornings. This should always be followed by SARVANGASANA. The proper procedure is to do SIRSHASANA with 24 deep inhalations and exhalations. Take two minutes rest. Then do SARVANGASANA with 24 rounds of deep breathing. Take two minutes rest. Follow with some sitting asana. In SIRSHASANA the organs in the head and the brain get a copious supply of blood, the internal organs in the body get displaced upwards. The two minutes rest normalizes. In SARVANGASANA the blood supply to the head is restricted by resting the body on the neck and making the chin lock. The thyroid and the upper part of the internal organs of the body get displaced upwards. The two minutes rest normalizes. When a sitting asana is now done the internal organs regain their proper positions. This is the reason behind doing the asanas in this particular order.

Sayanacharya has mentioned six specific asanas for daily practice. He however prescribes that along with these some other asanas (this may vary each day) should be done.

In SIRSHASANA, normally no kumbhakam need be done (in the beginning), though about two seconds ANTHAR and BAHYA kumbhakam automatically result when we change over from deep inhalation to deep exhalation and vice versa. During the automatic pause, kumbhakam takes place. When after practice has advanced and kumbhakam is deliberately practised, ANTHAR kumbhakam can be done up to 5 seconds during each round and BAHYA kumbhakam up to 10 seconds.

In SARVANGASANA, there should be no deliberate practice of ANTHAR kumbhakam,

but BAHYA kumbhakam can be practiced up to 5 seconds in each round.

These deep breathings along with the asana help in slowing down the breathing rate with a consequent elongation of life. Sayanacharya prescribes that the number of deep breaths one should practice per day should not be less than 320. This number could be spread out during the day-some may be done along with asana in the morning and evening, some along with pranayama, morning, noon, evening and at midnight, or whenever some spare time is found.

### **PRANAYAMA:**

Indian treatises on Yoga state that man's life is preordained and is laid down as a certain number of breaths and not in terms of the number of years, months and days. Thus it lies within the freewill efforts of man to increase his span of life by the practice of pranayama. Normally man breaths at the rate of 21,600 per day. The total number of preordained breaths divided by this number gives the normal span of life of the individual in years, months and days. If however by one's effort the number of breaths is reduced below 21,600 per day the years of life are automatically increased. On the other hand if by fast living and unnecessary strenuous exertions the number of breaths is more than 21,600, to that extent life span is shortened. Giving free vent to the passions also increases the breath rate, while mental poise and control decreases the breath rate.

PRANA, is something which each individual is born with. It is capable of being exercised and strengthened just as our limbs, intellect and mind can. During the exercising of prana external air comes into play, but prana should not be identified or mistaken with the air we breathe. Prana is attached to the body, and so long as it is thus attached man is alive. Yoga treatises say that this prana forms a sheath round our body extending for about twelve inches round it. The more gently we breathe, we conserve it, the more violently we breathe we waste it. The proper ways of exercising and conserving prana have been laid down by the

ancient seers in the light of their experience.

### **PERSONS COMPETENT TO PRACTICE YOGA:**

All the ancient authors on Yoga are unanimous that everyone, be young or old, of either sex, in good health or not, is competent to practice Yoga, as far as it is aimed towards attainment of physical and mental benefits. There are as many asanas as there are living beings, says an ancient text. Thus, whatever be the state of the body, particular asanas and Yogic breathing exercises can be found and prescribed, by a competent Guru, which will be of benefit to the individual. The practices are so comprehensive as to cater for everyone.

Systematic course of Yoga practices has been given in a number of books written by the ancient rishis. These are the outcome of their rich experience. Similar practices are also found in books written by men of other religions.

Some ideas are prevalent that beginning of Yogic practices by the young, may stunt their growth and hence these should be practiced only after the age of sixteen. It is time that such erroneous notions are cleared.

No such age limit has been prescribed in any of the ancient treatises and my experience has shown that there is not only no deleterious effect but on the other hand there is considerable benefit. The other types of physical exercises, may make for showy muscles, but one should take into consideration also the fact, that in the enthusiasm parts of the body may be considerably strained and there may be no balanced development. The great benefit which Yogic exercises give of mental development and poise will be absent.

That these practices were intended to be started at a fairly young age would be clear from the fact that Pranayama forms part of the daily sandhya to be done after Upanayanam and this samskara was prescribed at the age of seven.

In the young, if habits of food restrictions are not observed, the boys tend towards becoming fatty or by taking of improper food and at irregular times tend to become subject to stomach

upsets. Yogic exercises act as a corrective. Muscles may not be showy, but better health and balanced development of mind and body takes place.

There are quite a number of authoritative texts in Yoga and Ayurvedic treatises that prescribe Yogic practices for pregnant ladies, both in good health and for those who are not.

My own experience shows that such a practice is of considerable benefit to the mother, the unborn child and the child when born.

When Yogic practices can be undertaken even by ladies in a delicate condition, there need be no apprehension at all that Yogic practice will harm the young.

### **19. SIRSHASANA--HEAD STAND**

This asana is so called because the head supports the whole body. This is also variously called KAPHALASANA, BRAHMASANA. These three, however, differ to some extent both in the technique and in the benefits derived. These differences have to be learnt under personal instructions from a Guru. This asana is beneficial in a large number of diseases and is rightly termed the 'king of all the asanas'.

Technique:

1. Place something soft, like a cushion, folded blanket or carpet on the floor touching the wall.
2. Kneel on the ground facing the wall.
3. Lock the fingers together, thumbs upright, and place them about four inches from the wall. Let the elbows rest on the cushion, the elbows being not more than a foot apart.
4. Bend the neck and place the top of the head firmly on the cushion inside the knitted fingers. The thumbs should press behind the ears.
5. Eyes are to be kept closed.
6. Raise the hips, so that the knees are straightened and bring the feet as near the head as possible. The toes, the feet and knees are to be kept together. The back will now rest

against the wall.

7. Take long breaths twice.

8. Lift both the feet simultaneously to an upright position. Toes together, knees together. The back will rest on the wall. Straighten the back so that the whole body may rest solely on the top of the head without the support of the wall.

Note: For beginners to raise the legs upright without bending the knees will be difficult and the help of another person may be taken. If necessary the knees may be bent, brought closer to the body, the back still kept in contact with the wall and with a slight jump the legs taken above the head, and the knees still bent. The legs are then straightened slowly, the knees together, the toes together and the toes pointed.

9. Toes should be pointed and the thigh and calf muscles should be stretched.

10. Slowly inhale and exhale deeply with rubbing sensation in the throat. When exhalation is complete the abdomen should be well drawn in (UDDIYANA BANDHAM).

Note: For proper benefit of the asana it is essential that the breathing should be regulated i.e., as long and as thin as possible, Normal shallow breathing does not give any benefit. (Concentration on Lord Ananthapadmabhanu gives added benefit.) (a combination of asana, pranayama and dhyana gives proper benefit.) (See in this connection Sutra 47 Chapter II of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Vaschaspati Misra's and Bala Ramodasin's commentaries.

For the first week do not exceed six inhalations and exhalations. There should be no retention of breath. Uddiyana bandha, in the beginning should be done only once a day.

Every week the number of inhalations and exhalations may be increased by four, so that the duration of the asana is slowly brought up.

11. After the number of rounds of breathing is over, slowly bring down the legs. In the beginning the knees may have to be bent, but as practice advances, the knee can be kept

straight.

12. Lie on the back relaxed and take rest for at least for three minutes.

Note: 1. For people who are overweight over 190 lbs. Sirshasana should be begun only after the weight has been reduced.

### **SIRSHASANA-VIPARITAKONASANA (according to the Hatha Yoga)**

Technique:

1. Place something soft, a folded blanket, cushion, or carpet on the floor. Kneel on the ground. Bend the neck and place the top of the head firmly on the folded blanket. Stretch the arms in front of the body, with the palms upward, fingers together and pointed, and the palms not more than 2½ feet apart.

2. Raise the hips, so that the knees are straightened, and bring the feet as near the head as possible. The toes of the feet and the knees are kept together.

3. While inhaling, lift both the legs together to the upright position. The legs are spread apart, toes should be pointed, and the thigh and calf muscles kept stretched.

4. Spread the legs apart while exhaling, and the thigh and calf muscles kept stretched. (toes should be pointed).

5. Stay in this position for 6 deep breaths.

6. Bring the legs together, while inhaling.

7. While exhaling, lower the legs to the ground by bending the body at the hips. Bend the knees and get to the kneeling position, and rest.

### **SIRSHASANA-EKAPADA-VIPARITAKARANI - (Hatha Yoga)**

Technique:

1. The first three steps are the same as for the last asana.

2. While exhaling, slowly lower right leg to the ground so that the right foot will rest on the right palm. The left leg is kept upright. The thigh and calf muscles of both the legs

are kept stretched.

3. Stay in this position for 6 breaths.
4. While inhaling, raise the leg back to the upright position.
5. Repeat with the left leg.
6. The next steps are the same as in step 7 of the previous asana.

### **SIRSHASANA-DVIPADA-VIPARITAKARANI - (Hatha Yoga)**

Technique:

1. The first three steps are the same as for the last asana.
2. While exhaling, both the legs are lowered so that the feet may rest on the respective palms. The knees should not be bent. The thigh and calf muscles should be kept stretched.
3. Stay for six deep breaths.
4. While inhaling raise both legs together to the upright position.
5. While exhaling bend knees and return to the floor and rest.

When Sirshasana has been sufficiently mastered so that one can stand steady without support, for at least 15 minutes, the following variations may be practised.

### **VIPARITA KONASANA:**

1. The first eight steps are the same as for Sirshasana.
2. Exhaling, the legs are spread apart, and the thigh and calf muscles kept stretched, toes should be pointed.
3. Do six deep breathing.
4. Inhaling, bring the legs together.

The next steps are the same as 11 and 12 given under Sirshasana.

### **DVIPADA VIPARITAKARANI**

Technique:

1. The first step is the same as Sirshasana.



2. While exhaling both the legs are lowered to the ground without bending the knees and keeping the thigh and calf muscles stretched.
3. Do six deep breathing.
4. While inhaling raise both the legs together to the upright position.
5. While exhaling bend knees and return to the floor and rest.

(Note: The above three variations are according to Hatha Yoga).

Note: In the beginning it may be difficult to bring the body to an upright position without bending the knees. So the knees may be bent and the thighs bent over the body. The hips are raised from the ground and the back supported by the palms. The legs are now stretched. If there is still difficulty, the help of somebody should be taken.

If the body is fat and no help is available, the help of the wall may be sought so that it can support the heels at gradually increasing levels. This is done by lying on the ground facing the wall perpendicular to it. After some time the hips can also be raised by having a bedroll near the wall. When some strength is gained the heels are removed from the wall and the legs brought upright. (As breathing exercises are done in these positions the abdominal muscles get toned up and the stomach becomes more and more pliable and soft.

4. The chin should be locked in the neck pit. This ensures that the head is placed symmetrical with the body so that the neck muscles may not be strained. The neck pit is the depression in front of the thyroid between the collar bones.

Note: The chin lock will not be possible in the beginning stages, but it should be kept in mind that the head is kept symmetrical with the body and the neck muscles are not strained.

The full chin lock will become possible when the body is fully upright and the palms have reached a position in the back as low as possible.

5. Slowly inhale and exhale with even, long breaths through both nostrils, with rubbing sensation in the throat, not more than six times at the beginning. There should be no

retention of breath. The number of inhalations and exhalations may be slowly increased at the rate of two each week.

Note: The final duration of this asana can be 5 to 10 minutes when it is done by itself. If on the other hand other asanas are also being done the duration may be suitably reduced.

6. Exhale, bend knees, so that they approach the throat, lower the hips so that the back rests on the ground and then stretch the legs, so that the whole forms a rolling movement.

7. Take rest at least for a minute.

Benefits: The thyroid gets special benefits. The waist line is reduced. This tones up the liver. This helps in preventing piles, and helps in curing gastric troubles.

## **20. SALAMBA SARVANGASANA - SHOULDER STAND WITH SUPPORT**

This asana tones up all the centres, nerves, organs, joints etc. and hence is called SARVANGASANA. The asana is of two kinds with support and without support, the former is dealt with below.

Technique:

1. Lie flat on the back, with legs stretched, knees close together and toes pointed. Raise the head and align the toes, knees and hand and return the head to the floor placing the chin on the chest. The arms lie stretched close by the side of the body with the palms touching the floor, fingers closed.

2. Inhale and exhale slowly and deeply with a rubbing sensation in the throat, through both nostrils three or four times.

3. Slowly exhale and raise both legs together. Bring the body to an upright position, the neck resting on the ground. Bend the elbows and bring the palms up to support the back on either side of the backbone, the palms being placed as near the shoulder blades as possible. The elbows should not spread out but be placed as close as possible, the distance between them will be about 12 inches.

## **21. MAHAMUDRA**

Technique:

1. Spread something soft on the ground, sit on it.
2. Stretch the right leg in front, so that it makes an angle of about 30 degrees to the right. The foot should be perpendicular to the ground, the calf and the thigh touching the ground (seat and the leg straight)
3. Bend the other leg at the knee and bring the sole of the foot to touch the inside of the right thigh, and heel of the left foot below the penis. The thigh of the left leg should touch the ground (seat that has been spread on the ground). The two thighs should make an angle of 120 degrees
4. Sit upright and keep the spine straight.
5. While exhaling, twist the trunk to the right, so that the two shoulders may be equidistant from the right toe.
6. Do chin lock, so that the chin is drawn tightly in the notch between the collar bones, keep the spine straight, draw in the abdomen, and catch hold of the right toe by the hooked forefingers of both the hands, bending at the hips.  
Note: Catching hold of toes may not be possible at the beginning, it is enough if the hands can be placed on the right thigh or the right kneecap or the right shin or the right ankle i.e., as forward as possible without undue strain. As practice advances it will become easier to bend forward, and later on it would be easy to interlace the fingers round the right foot at the instep, even the heel. The important points to note are that the spine is kept straight, the chin is locked, the stomach drawn in, and the trunk twisted so that both the shoulders are equidistant from the right toe. Both the thighs should touch the ground.
7. Keep eyes closed so that the mind may not get distracted. Take long and deep even inhalation and exhalation with rubbing sensation in the throat, six breaths.

Note: For beginners the trunk is not bent. After practice has advanced, after having taken six breaths without bending the trunk, three deep breaths are taken, exhaling while bending the trunk. The forehead to touch the knee, at the end of the forward bending but it need not be kept touching the knee. If this be not possible the trunk to be bent forward to the extent possible without undue strain.

8. Repeat with the other leg.

When practice has advanced, breath can be kept controlled both for retention and keeping out for 2 to 5 seconds in each round of deep breathing. Not more than 5 deep breaths each side. If there is any heart weakness, this control of breath should not be for more than a second.

For advanced trainees, who observe BRAHMACARYA, who live in a cool place and can have rich food, maximum of 32 rounds of breath can be done for each side, with control of breath for 5 seconds each round.

NATHAMUNI of Maduranthakam, in his treatise on Yoga-YOGA RAHASYAM-writes that if this mudra is done with Uddiyana bandha for ten seconds one conquers death and can overcome all poisons

This is extremely beneficial in the treatment of diabetes, spleen complaint, dysentery and other stomach disorders.

When specifically used for the purpose of overcoming poisons inhalation is as in sitali pranayama i.e., with rolled protruding tongue. The tongue is now taken in rolled back so that the tip touches the UVULA (JIHVA BANDHAM), chin locked, and stomach drawn in and upward (UDDIYANA BANDHAM) and slow exhalation through both nostrils.

## **22. SUPTA KONASANA**

Technique:

1. Take up the position in variation 3 given under Halasana.

2. Hold the toes, the right toe, by the right thumb forefinger, and the left toe by the thumb and forefinger of the left hand.
3. Slowly spread the legs, the right leg to the right of the body and the left leg to the left of the body, with the hips as centre. The legs should move symmetrically on either side of the body. While exhaling, the legs are spread. The movement is stopped for inhaling. While exhaling the spreading is done. Thus by steps, the spreading of the legs is continued, till they have been spread as far apart as can be conveniently done.
4. Take six deep breaths, when the legs have taken the extreme position apart.
5. The legs are brought back step by step, till they are together. As before, the movement is made while exhaling, and inhalation taken when the legs are at rest.
6. Take steps 5,6 and 7 described under HALASANA.

Benefits:

1. Spleen liver and intestines are toned up.
2. The nerves on the front side of the lower part of the body are toned up.
3. Cures tonsils.
4. Loosens the shoulder muscles.

Note: As practice advances, the movement of spreading the legs may be made in a single movement instead of step by step.

### **23. KRAUNCASANA**

Preparatory Exercise:

Technique

1. Sit on a piece of folded soft cloth, with one leg stretched in front, and the other folded back at the knee, so that the heel is by the side of the buttocks, the sole of the foot upturned, toes stretched and the back of the foot touching the cloth. The knees should be as close as possible. The foot of the leg stretched in front should be upright to the ground and

not inclined sideways. The toes should be pointed. The body should be erect, and the spinal column should be stretched. Chin lock.

2. Place the palms of the hands on the folded cloth so that the fingers are outstretched, close together, pointing forward, and on either side of the body, and not more than one foot behind the buttocks. The distance between the palms to be about a foot.
3. While inhaling, lift trunk, and bend the neck backward as far as possible.
4. While exhaling lower trunk to position (2).
5. Repeat the movements in steps (3) & (4).
6. Repeat with the other leg.

The asana proper:

Technique:

1. Step (1) is the same as for the preliminary exercise.
2. Interlock the fingers, stretch the arms upward and while exhaling lower the stretched arms, so that the palms touch the sole of the foot stretched in front. Now, lift the stretched leg, without bending the knee, as far back as possible. In the final stage, the knee will be by the side of the ear. No undue force should be used. As practice advances, the abdominal muscles become supple, and the final position will become attainable with ease.

Note: The trunk should be kept erect throughout or slightly leaning to the back. The backbone should be kept straight and stretched.

3. A few deep breaths can be taken. Maximum benefit is obtained when in this position the breath is kept out (Bahya Kumbhakam).
4. While inhaling, lower the leg to the position in position (1).
5. Repeat movements in steps (2) & (3) a few times.
6. Repeat with the other leg.

## **24. VAJRASANA**

Technique:

1. Place a piece of folded soft cloth or blanket on the floor. Stand upright on it, with the knee together, heels together and toes together. Stretch the arms overhead, with the fingers interlaced and palms turned upwards.
2. While inhaling, rise on the toes.
3. While exhaling, lower the body by bending at the knees, and allow the knees to touch the folded cloth. The arms should throughout this movement be kept stretched overhead and the spine should continue to be kept stretched and erect. The knees should be together and the heels should be touching and the instep vertical.
4. Take a deep inhalation.
5. While exhaling, lower the body so that the buttocks rest on the heels. Stretch the toes backwards, so that the back of the feet touch the cloth. The heels should be kept touching. Keeping the fingers interlaced, the arms should be lowered by bending at the elbows, and the palms brought behind the neck to touch it.
6. While inhaling, raise the body and the arms to the position in step (3). Do three rounds.
7. When the body has been brought back to the position in step (5); while inhaling, stretch the arms overhead to the position in step (3), without lifting the buttocks of the heels.
8. While exhaling, bend the trunk forward at the hips, bringing the forehead to touch the ground, and the outstretched arms to touch the ground in front as far out as possible.
9. While inhaling, get back to the position in step (7). Do three rounds of the movement in steps (8) & (9).
10. Having got back to the position in step (7) place the palms on either side of the body, about 12 inches behind the toes and about 18 inches apart. The fingers should be together and pointing to the front. Stretch the arms by straightening the elbows.

11. While inhaling, raise the body, and bend the head backwards as far as possible. The knees should continue touching the ground.

12. While exhaling, lower the body and get back to position in step 10. Do three times the movement in steps (11) & (12).

Note: When doing this asana keep the eyes and mouth closed, so that the mind may not be distracted.

13. Place the palms on either side of the body near the feet, the fingers together and pointing to the front, raise the hips by straightening the knees the body may rest squarely on the feet. While inhaling lift up the trunk and get back to the upright position.

14. Take rest.

Note: In the case of all 'TAN' - asanas it is important that the counter pose is done immediately after. The appropriate counter pose is given after each asana. TAN-asana are those which stretch the nerves e.g., PASCHIMATANASANA stretches and straightens up the nerves on the backside of the body, while PURVA TANA asana, the appropriate counter pose, stretches the nerves on the front side of the body.

A variation of the above asana which is somewhat more difficult is given below. This is attributed to GORAKSHANATH.

Technique:

1. This is the same as given under PASCHIMATANASANA.

2. Place the palms with the fingers to the front, about 12 inches behind the buttocks and about 18 inches apart. Stretch the arms by straightening the elbows.

While exhaling, bend trunk forward at the hips. keeping the spine straight, till the forehead touches the knees or as low down on the shin as possible. The knees should be kept together and not raised from the ground.

4. Take deep breaths.



5. While inhaling, lift trunk to the position in step (2).

### **VAJRASANA (b)**

Technique:

1. Kneel on a piece of soft cloth with the knees together, the heels together, the soles of the feet upturned, toes stretched and the back of the feet touching the cloth. The body should be erect, the spinal column stretched and the chin locked.

2. Stretch the arms and place the palms to enclose the knee caps.

3. Take deep inhalations and exhalations with hissing sound in the throat with holding in of breath after inhalation has been completed. It is important to do both types of Kumbhakam to get the full benefit from this asana. The total number of deep breaths should be slowly increased as practice advances from 6 to 16.

Note: When practice has advanced, instead of starting the asana from a sitting posture, it should be begun from a standing posture. Stand upright with the heels together, and big toes touching each other. Raise the heels, bend the knees, and get to a kneeling posture. Stretch the feet, so that the back of the feet may touch the cloth, and the buttocks rest on the heels which are together. The other steps are to be followed as given above.

### **25. BADDHA KONASANA**

Technique:

1. Spread something soft on the ground to form a comfortable seat. This seat is referred to as the ground.

2. Sit erect on the ground, with the legs bent at the knees, the edges of the feet touching each other, the soles facing upwards, the heels placed below the generating organs, the two thighs touching the ground and in straight line.

3. Catch the feet by the palms of the respective hands. Keep spine erect and stretched. Chin lock. Mula Bandham. (Drawing the back of the lower abdomen as far as possible)

4. Close the eyes so that the mind may not get distracted. Do deep inhalations and exhalations. Those have to be even, slow and as long as possible with rubbing sensation in the throat. The number of rounds should be equal to that done in Maha Mudra for both sides.

5. After practice has advanced, after having taken the number of rounds of breath without bending the trunk, three deep breaths are taken, with bending the trunk at the hip, exhaling while bending and inhaling while raising the trunk. At the end of the forward bending the forehead to touch the ground. The buttocks should not be raised. If this final position is not possible the trunk to be bent forward to the extent possible without undue strain.

Special benefit: For those suffering from constipation piles, hernia etc.

## **26. PINCA MAYURASANA**

Technique:

1. Kneel on the ground. Now place the forearms on the ground in front parallel to each other and about 12 inches apart. The elbows should be about 12 inches in front of the knees. The palms with fingers stretched and close together should be touching the ground.

2. Raise the head. Lift the knees slightly from the ground. Inhale deeply, hold the breath, jump and take the legs above, so that the body is balanced on the forearms. Spread the legs. The legs are bent backward so that the leg is in the form of a bow.

3. Cross the legs as in Padmasana. Take one or two deep breaths. There should be no retention of breath. The eyes should gaze at the midpoint of the eye brows.

4. Unlock the crossed legs, bend the legs and body backwards so that the feet touch the ground and the body forms an arch. Lift the elbows and stretch the arms.

5. From this position, by jumping, bring the legs over the head and place the feet so that they lie midway between the palms. Stretch the legs, bend the head so that the forehead

may touch the knees.

6. While inhaling, lift the trunk and arms and reach the standing posture.

This combines both the asana and its counter pose, as doing the counter pose immediately after the asana is very important.

## **27. PADMA MAYURASANA**

When ordinary Mayurasana previously described has been mastered sufficiently to keep the body steady horizontal for half a minute, the variation mentioned below can be done. This, however, should not be attempted unless by previous practice, Padmasana, crossing of the legs, can be done without the help of the hands in the Sarvangasana and Sirshasana positions.

Technique:

1. The steps are the same as in the case of ordinary Mayurasana up to the stage when the body assumes the plank position - step (8)
2. At this stage the legs are crossed into the Padmasana position. The body with the crossed legs are to be kept in a horizontal position. The head is lifted up.

The restrictions mentioned under Mayurasana apply here also.

Benefits: Are the same as those mentioned in Mayurasana.

## **28. MAYURASANA**

This asana has to be done on the bare ground. There should be no carpet or other spread on the ground.

Technique:

1. Stand upright with the legs together. Jump spread the legs apart so that there may be 12 inches between the feet. Lift the arms, interlace the fingers and turn the palms upwards. Stretch the body and the arms. Inhale.
2. While exhaling, lower the trunk by bending the body at the hips. Keep the arms

stretched. When the hands are near the ground, the fingers are freed, the palms turned downwards and placed between the feet firmly on the ground, the finger pointing towards the back and the little fingers touching each other. The legs should be kept stretched and the knees should not be bent. The spine should be kept stretched and as straight as possible.

3. Inhale and lift the head.
4. Exhale, bend the head, spread, the elbows for the passage of the head and place the head between the knees.
5. Inhale, lift the head and come back to the position in step (3)
6. Take a few deep breaths.
7. While inhaling, jump back with both feet, so that the navel may be above the elbows, when the legs are stretched behind. The legs touch each other, stretched with the toes pointed and the back of the feet resting on the ground. The elbows are placed firmly on the either side of the navel, and the elbows kept as near to each other as possible.
8. Slowly inhale, the inhalation should be only to half the extent that was being done during the previous deep breathing, and move the body forward by about three inches, so that the body assumes the position of a horizontal plank. The legs are to be kept stretched, the knees together and the toes pointed. Head should be raised up.

Note: The final position prescribed above may not be possible in the beginning stages. The feet should be raised only about an inch in the beginning stages of practice, and the height lifted slowly increased as practice advances.

9. Breathe in and breathe out in a regulated manner but with no retention of breath.
10. While inhaling, lower the legs.
11. While inhaling, jump forward and bring the feet on either side of the palms and while inhaling lift the head to the position in step (3).
12. While exhaling, bend the head, widen the elbows and place the head between the

knees.

13. While inhaling, lift head and reach the position as in step (3).

14. Lift the trunk and with a jump bring the legs together and reach a position as at the beginning of the asana.

In this asana, the stomach is compressed, and the lungs are also compressed, and it may appear that regulated breathing in this posture may not be possible. When Mayurasana has been mastered sufficiently to keep the body steadily horizontal for half a minute, the variation mentioned below-Padma Mayurasana-can be done. This variation should not however be attempted unless by previous practice padmasana i.e., crossing of the legs can be done without the help of the hands in the Sarvangasana and Sirshasana positions. If at this stage, regulated breathing is practiced in Padma Mayurasana position, it becomes easy later to practice Pranayama even in the ordinary Mayurasana position. Care should however be taken to see that the lungs are not unduly strained. For maximum benefit Pranayama should be done for 5 minutes, when the body is held as a plank in the horizontal position. Proper practice of Pranayama is difficult, but becomes easy after practice.

Note: At least 4 hours should lapse after the last meal, before this asana is attempted.

Benefits:

- i. This prevents all diseases pertaining to the liver and spleen.
- ii. This also cures diseases of the spleen and liver, but such treatment, in the case of those suffering from these diseases should be undertaken only under the personal guidance of a properly qualified teacher.
- iii. This increases the powers of digestion.

This asana should not be done by those suffering from excessive fat, breathing trouble, blood pressure or kidney complaint. This asana should be done in moderation during summer.

Milk should form a regular article of diet while practicing this asana.

## **29. BHARADVAJASANA**

Technique:

1. Sit on a piece of soft folded cloth, with one leg stretched straight in front, and the other leg folded back at the knee, so that the foot is close and by the side of the buttocks, the sole of the foot upturned, toes stretched and the back of the foot touching the cloth. The knees should be as close as possible. The foot of the leg, stretched in front, should be upright, to the ground and not inclined sideways. The body should be erect and the spinal column stretched-chin lock.
2. Bend the stretched leg (say the right) at the knees and bring the right heel very near the umbilicus. The right knee should touch the ground. Both the knees should be as near to each other as possible.
3. The right hand is taken round the back to catch hold of the toes of the right leg. The palm to touch the back of the foot.
4. The palm of the left hand is placed on the cloth below the right thigh. The hand should be stretched and not bent at the elbow. The left wrist should touch the outside of the thigh.
5. Twist trunk to face front. Turn the head, so that the chin is over the left shoulder.
6. Take deep inhalations and exhalations with holding in of breath and holding out of breath. Both types of kumbhakam are necessary. The total rounds of deep breaths may be slowly increased as practice advances, from 12 to 48.
7. Repeat with the other leg.

Note: This is contra indicated to those who have had abdominal operation.

## **30. BHEKASANA - FROG POSE**

Technique:

1. Stand upright with feet together and legs stretched. Stretch the arms downwards behind the back and interlock the fingers. While inhaling, bend the neck and spine in an arch as far backwards as possible.
2. While exhaling, straighten the back and the neck and regain the upright position. Disengage the fingers, and while inhaling, lift the arms (keeping them stretched) to the side of the body and with a sweeping motion take the arms overhead, interlock the fingers and turn the palms upward.
3. While exhaling, bend the body at the hips, and place the palms on the ground on either side of the feet, and as far back as possible. The knees should not be bent.
4. Keep the palms firmly on the ground, and while inhaling, jump as far backwards as possible with both feet together, bend the elbows, and lie on the ground, with the legs stretched, the knees together, and toes pointed, and the back of the feet touching the ground. The chest and the head should be lifted.
5. While exhaling, bend the legs at the knees and catch hold of the feet by the hands, so that the palms cover the back of the feet. Press the feet downwards, so that the heels touch the ground on either side of the body and as close to it as possible. Study the photographic illustration.
6. While inhaling, lift the chest and bend the neck as far backwards as possible.
7. Take a few deep breaths, only slow inhaling and slow exhaling, but no retention.
8. Regain the position as at the end of step (4) by retracing the movements. Lift the body keeping it straight as a plank, so that the body is supported by the toes and the palms. Lift the hips and stretch the arms without moving the palms, and bring the head between the arms. Now jump forward with both the feet and bring them between the palms. Straighten the legs and touch the knees with forehead. Inhale, lift the trunk and stretch the arms overhead. Exhale, bring down the arms and resume the normal standing posture.

Benefits: This gives relief in the case of backache and stomach ache. It tones up the kidneys and the bladder.

### **31. ARDHA MATSYENDRASANA - Section A.**

Technique:

1. Sit erect, with both legs stretched in front.
2. Bend one leg, say the right, at the knees, and place the foot of the right leg on the left thigh, so that the heel of the right foot is as near the naval as possible. The tendency of the stretched leg to twist to the left should be resisted. The foot of the left leg should be perpendicular to the ground. The knees should not be more than 12 inches apart.
3. Exhale slowly, and twist the trunk to the left, keeping the spine erect. Take the left hand behind the back so that the fingers of the left hand may catch hold of the right leg at the shin, just above the ankle.
4. Twist the head to the left so that the chin is above the left shoulder.
5. The right hand is stretched and the outside of the left foot is caught hold of by the palm of the right hand. The fingers of the right hand should touch the sole of the left foot. In this position the shoulder blades and right arms will be in a straight line.
6. The eyes should gaze at the tip of the nose in the case of married people. In the case of those who are unmarried the gaze may be to the midpoint of the eyebrows.
7. Take deep breaths. Not more than three at the beginning stages. The number may be slowly increased to twelve as practice advances.
8. Repeat on the other side.

Note: It is important that the counter pose should be done soon after the above asana is completed. The counter pose BADDHA PADMASANA, will be described later.

### **32. ARDHA MATSYENDRASANA - Section B**

Technique:



1. Sit upright, with both legs stretched in front. Bend one of the legs, say the right, at the knee and bring the heel below the seat. The outside of the knee and the thigh should touch the ground. Bend the left leg and place the left foot by the side of the right knee and to the right of it. The left foot will be firmly placed flat on the ground and left foreleg will be perpendicular to the ground.

2. While exhaling, twist the trunk to the left and bring the stretched right arms so that the armpit is above the left thigh and the left knee touches the outside of the right upper arms and fingers of the right hand catch hold of the left foot.

Note: It should be carefully noted that to avoid danger to the elbow of the right arm, the right elbow reaches a position below the left knee as low as possible. See the illustration and note the position carefully.

3. The left arm is taken round the back, so that fingers touch the right thigh. Care should be taken that the spine is kept erect.

4. Turn the head to the left so that the chin is near the left shoulder.

5. Take three deep breaths.

6. Repeat on the other side.

Note: The deep breaths should be taken without retention of breath and without strain to the lungs.

As a variation, to make the asana somewhat easier, the heel of the right leg instead of being placed below the seat, may be placed a bit to the left so that balancing is easier in the final position.

Benefits: This is of special benefit to those suffering from stomach complaints. This rapidly reduces the waistline.

### **33. MARICASANA**

It is said that Marichi, one of the sons of Brahma discovered this asanas in the treatment of

one of his wives. This asana has a number of sections. These are described below. The asanas are of special benefit in the cases of diseases peculiar to women. These asanas are described in Yoga Ragasya and Nadha Bindu Upanishad. These asanas should be done with advantage on an empty stomach. In any case there should be an interval of at least 4 hours after the last meal.

#### Section A

Technique:

1. Sit erect, with both legs stretched in front, bend one leg, say the left, at the knee and place the foot firmly on the ground near the buttocks. The foreleg should be kept upright to the ground. (See the illustrations)
2. Take the left arm round the left knee and toward the back. Take the right arm behind the back and catch hold of the left wrist with the right hand. A point to be carefully noted, is that the left thigh should be closely pressing the body. The spine should be kept as straight as possible. The right leg should be kept stretched with the toes pointed and the calf and the thighs should be touching the ground.
3. While exhaling, bend the trunk at the hips, and touch the right knee by the top of the head. The knee should not be raised when the body is bent.
4. While inhaling, lift trunk.
5. Repeat on the other side.
6. The trunk may be lowered and lifted a few times, as may be possible without undue strain.

Benefits: This reduces the fat round the waist. In the case of ladies it acts as a corrective in regulating their periods, and the flow.

#### **MARICASANA - Section B**

Technique:

1. Sit erect with both legs stretched in front. Bend one leg say, the left, at the knee and place the foot firmly on the ground near the buttocks. The foreleg should be kept upright on the ground. The other leg should be kept stretched with the toes pointed and the calf and the thigh should be touching the ground.

2. Exhale, and twist the trunk to the left, so that the navel is above the middle of the left thigh and the right shoulder is to the left of the left knee. The right arm is taken round the left knee, round the right side of the body and behind the back. Care should be taken to see that the right elbow is as below the left knee as possible so that the elbow may not be unduly strained. The left arm is taken to the left of the body and behind the back, and the left hand takes hold of the right wrist. (See illustration).

Note: It may not be possible to catch the wrist at the beginning. Attempt should be made to the extent possible without undue strain. As practice advances the final position will become possible.

3. Turn the head to the left so that the chin is over the left shoulder. Keep the spine straight to the extent possible.

4. Take a few regulated breaths, but there should be no retention of breath. Care should be taken to see that there is no undue strain.

5. While inhaling, regain the position in step (1).

6. Repeat on the other side.

Benefits: In addition to the benefits mentioned under Section-A, this asana also controls diabetes.

### **MARICASANA - Section C.**

Technique:

1. Sit erect, with both legs stretched in front. Bend the right leg at the knee and place the right foot on the left groin, the right heel being placed as near the navel as possible, as in

the ARDHAPADMASANA position. The right thigh and knee should be touching the ground and continue touching the ground throughout the asana. The left leg is bent at the knee and brought to the position as described in step (1) of Section A. Take the left arm round the left knee and behind the back. The right arm is taken behind the back by the right side of the body and the left wrist is god hold of the right hand. The movement of the arms is as in the case of step (2) in Section A.

2. Take a few deep breaths.
3. While exhaling, bend the trunk and touch the ground with the top of the head.
4. Take a few regulated breaths, without retention of breath.
5. While inhaling, lift trunk.
6. Repeat on the other side.

Benefits: In addition to the benefits mentioned under Section A & B this asana cures cases where ladies have pains during their monthly periods.

This asana tones up the liver and the spleen.

### **MARICASANA - Section D**

Technique:

1. Sit erect, with both legs stretched in front. Bend one leg, say the left knee, at the knee, backwards, and bring the heels by the side of the buttocks (see illustration). The other leg, the right, is bent at the knee and the foot placed firmly on the ground near the buttocks in front of the body. The chin should be kept vertical. (See illustration.) The right leg is as in Maricasana Section A.
2. Take the right arm round the right knee and towards the back. The left arm is taken round the back and the right wrist is caught hold of by the left hand. A point to be carefully noted is that the right thigh should be closely pressing the body.
3. While exhaling, bend the trunk at the hips and touch the ground with the forehead.

The spine should be kept as straight possible. The right foot should continue touching the ground and the heel should not be lifted when the trunk is bent forward.

4. While inhaling lift trunk. This forward bending and lifting of the trunk may be repeated.

5. Release the hands and bring back the legs to the original position and repeat on the other side.

### **MARICASANA - Section E**

Technique:

1. Take the position as in the last Section D in step (1).

2. Exhale, and twist the trunk to the right so that the navel is above the middle of the right thigh, and the left shoulder is to the right of the right knee. The left arm is taken round the right knee, round the left side of the body and behind the back. Care should be taken that the left elbow is as below the right knee as possible so that the elbow may not be unduly strained. The right arm is taken behind the back, and the right hand catches hold of the left wrist. (This step is similar to step (2) of Section B. (See illustration).

3. Turn the head to the right so that the chin is over the right shoulder. keep the spine straight to the extent possible.

4. Take a few regulated breaths, but there should be no retention of breath. Care should be taken that there is no undue strain.

5. While inhaling, regain the position in step (1).

6. Repeat on the other side.

### **MARICASANA - Section F**

Technique:

1. Take the position as in step (2) of Section C.

2. Twist the trunk and move the hands as in step (2) of Section B.

- 3, 4, 5, 6 are the same as steps 3, 4, 5, and 6 of Section B.

### **MARICASANA - Section G**

Technique:

1. Sit on the ground with both legs, stretched in front. Take one leg, say the left, round the left shoulder and behind the back and place the left calf on the neck and left ankle over the right shoulder. The right leg is now bent at the knee and brought to the position described in step (1) of Section D. The order in which the legs are bent is important.
2. The arms are moved as in step (2) of Section D.
3. 3, 4, and 5 are the same as steps 3, 4, and 5 of Section D.

### **34. PASHASANA**

This asana is so called because it binds the vital fluid.

Technique:

1. Stand upright, feet together. Interlock the fingers and stretch the arms over the head, with the palms turned upwards.
2. Bring back the neck and spine back to the normal upright position, but keep the arms still stretched overhead. While exhaling, bend the knees and squat on the heels. The foot should be firmly in contact with the ground, the knees together, and the spine erect. The thighs should be in close contact with the chest.
3. While exhaling, twist the trunk to the left, keeping the spine upright. Unlock the fingers and bring the arms down. Take the right arm round the left knee and towards the back. The left arm is taken round the back and the left hand catches hold of the right wrist. Turn head towards the right, so that the chin comes over the right shoulder without touching it.
4. Take three deep breaths. No retention.
5. Bring the head to face front, bring back the arms to the front untwist the trunk and

repeat on the other side.

6. Stretch the arms overhead with the fingers interlocked and the palms turned upwards. While inhaling stand upright.

7. While exhaling, bend body at the hips and place the palms on either side of the feet and as far as back as possible. The leg should not be bent but kept stretched. The forehead should touch the kneecaps.

8. While inhaling, come up to the normal standing posture.

Note: For getting the full benefits of this asana, the steps 1, 3, 6, 7, and 8 are important.

The counter pose, KANCHYASANA should be done immediately after PASHASANA.

### **KANCHYASANA**

This asana is the counter pose to PASHASANA and should be done immediately after it.

Technique:

1. Steps 1 and 2 are the same as in Pashasana.

2. Spread the knees. Bend the trunk forward, and take the arms round the shins towards the back of the body catching hold of the fingers of the hand by the fingers of the other. See the Photographic illustration.

3. Inhale and exhale.

4. Get back to the position as at the end of step 1 and do the steps 6, 7 and 8 of PASHASANA.

### **35. BADDHA PADMASANA**

This asana is the counter pose to the ARDHA MATSYENDRASANA - Section A, and should be done immediately after that asana.

Technique:

1. Sit upright, with both legs stretched in front. Bend one of the legs, say the right, at the knee and place the foot on the left thigh as high as possible. The heel should be as near

the navel as possible. Now bend the left leg at the knee and place the left foot on the right thigh as high as possible, and the heel as near the navel as possible. The knees should be as close as possible and touch the ground.

2. Take the left arm around the back and catch hold of the toes of the left foot by the right hand. Next, take the right hand behind the back and catch hold of the toes of the right foot by the fingers of the right hand.

Note: Which hand is taken round first is important. In the position described above, it will be observed that the LEFT leg is crossed over the right leg, and it is the LEFT arm that is taken round the round back first, to catch hold of the toes. When the asana is repeated on the other side, the right leg will be over the left leg and right arm will be taken round the back first.

3. Chin lock, chest forward. In the case of those who are married, the gaze should be to the tip of the nose, and in the case of the others the gaze should be to the midpoint of the eyebrows.

4. Take deep breaths. The deep breaths in this asana can with advantage be with control both after inhalation and after exhalation i.e., both ANTER AND BAHYA Kumbhakam. The retention of breath, in the beginning stages, should not be more than 5 seconds after inhalation and not more than two seconds after exhalation. The breathing in and breathing out should be as thin and as long possible, with rubbing sensation in the throat. The number of rounds can be as many as it is conveniently possible without strain.

5. Get back to the position in step (1) and repeat on the other side.

This is one of the asanas specifically recommended for doing Pranayama. When a large number of Pranayamas are done there is a feeling of hunger, but it is a false sensation.

Benefits: This benefits all parts of the body, reduces the waistline, strengthens the lungs and the blood vessels.



### **35. YOGA MUDRA**

Technique:

After step (3) described under Baddha Padmasana while exhaling, bend trunk forward, till the head touches the ground.

Take deep breaths as many as is possible without undue strain.

While inhaling raise trunk.

Yoga Mudra should be done immediately after Baddha Padmasana. The above describes the final complete pose and may not be attainable at the beginning but only after considerable practice. In the beginning the trunk should be lowered to the extent that is conveniently possible without undue strain and the final position will become possible in course of time.

The counterpose of both Baddha Padmasana and Yoga Mudra is SUPTA VAJRASANA described below.

### **SUPTA VAJRASANA**

Technique:

1. Take the first two steps as in the case of Baddha Padma Asana.
2. Bend the trunk backwards and the head backwards, so that the top of the head touches the ground. The back forms an arch. The knees should be touching the ground.
3. Keep eyes closed. Maintain normal breathing.
4. Raise the trunk and get back to normal position.

Note: When the back is arched the elbows rest on the ground and it is better to have a soft seat when doing this asana.

### **36. KARNAPIDASANA**

As this asana cures diseases connected with the ear this asana is called Karnapidasana.

Technique:

1. Get to the position indicated as variation (2) in Halasana.
2. Exhale, bend knee and bring the knees by gradual stages, so that the inside of the knees may touch the ears, the knee caps and ground and the thighs be close to the body, the shoulder touching the thighs.
3. Do deep breathing as indicated below.
4. Inhale and reverse the steps, till lying on the back.
5. Take rest.

Deep breathing: This asana in combination with pranayama is of benefit in curing deafness. Deafness is of two kinds. One where the eardrums are curved inwards and the other in which the eardrums are slightly curving outwards. The former case is generally distinguished from the latter in that those of the former type are more hard of hearing than those of the latter type.

In case where the drum is curved inwards, Pranayama is to be done with holding in of breath. In the other case Pranayama is to be done with holding out of breath. For those with normal hearing both types of pranayama are to be done. The period of holding in of breath is to be twice the duration of the holding out of breath.

But these benefits will not be attained unless Sarvangasana and Halasana have been mastered before taking up Karnapidasana.

Besides its usefulness in curing deafness this asana is also useful in

1. reducing the fat round the umbilicus,
2. in curing piles,
3. in the case of appendicitis and chronic stomach ache.

PILES: Piles is of two kinds-one in which it is internal and the other in which it moves out and is accompanied sometimes with bleeding. Both types are benefited by this asana. The pranayama to be done however should have the duration of holding in of breath and holding

out of breath kept equal. This period should be regulated by the period for which breath can conveniently be kept out after breathing out and not by the period for which breath can be retained after breathing in.

Sirshasana should first be done, rest taken and then followed by Karnapidasana in the treatment of piles. A general observation may be made that those suffering from piles should avoid as far as possible from sitting upright for long period at a time.

For maximum benefit the asana should be done on an empty stomach.

Note: The number of pranayama to be done by those in normal health should not exceed 8 rounds. The important point is that at no stage should any strain be felt. In the case of those where the asana is practised as a curative measure the number of rounds will depend on particular stage of health and strength of the individual. Pranayama essentially means regulated breathing, and will be dealt with in considerable detail in the chapter dealing with this subject.

#### APPENDICITIS AND CHRONIC STOMACH ACHE:

These are generally due to defective functioning of liver, spleen or the intestines and this asana helps in toning up these organs. If the person has undergone any abdominal operations before, this asana has to be modified somewhat in that it has to be done in combination with halasana. One leg will be as in Karnapidasana. This is done by getting to the halasana variation (3) position and by bending each leg alternately to bring the knee near the ear. This way the pressure on the abdominal region is reduced. In the case of those not operated, Karnapidasana is done in combination with ardhapadmasana to increase the pressure on the abdominal region. Start with Sarvangasana position, keep one leg upright, bend the other at the knee, bring the heel to rest near the groin (ardhapadmasana position) on the other side, the left heel near the right groin, and vice versa. Now exhale and bring the upright leg behind the head as in Halasana, then bend the knee and bring it near the ear

as in Karnapeedasana.

Another variation which is effective combination of Exapadasarvangasana-front with Karnapidasana. In this variation, one leg is kept upright and stretched, the other leg is taken behind the head as in Halasana and then the knee bent and brought back near the ear as in Karnapidasana. In the final position the thigh should press the abdomen. Repeat with the other leg.

In all these positions pranayama is to be done with holding out of breath after exhalation. Pranayama will have therefore periods of both Anther and Bahya kumbhakam. These two periods will be equal and be for 2 or 5 seconds. The number of bending of each leg will be as a maximum. The number of each leg should be the same so that both sides of the body may be equally exercised.

The above variations of the asana are according to RAJA YOGA. According to MATSYENDRANATH, GORAKHANATH and others of the Hatha Yoga school, a more strenuous variation of Karnapidasana is prescribed in the case of those suffering from stomach complaints. This variation starts with the Sarvangasana position with both legs upright, stretched, knees together, back supported by palms. The legs are bent at the knee so that the heels touch the buttocks. The folded legs are now bent at the hips in such a manner that the two knees are kept together and left knee brought near the right ear. The legs are then brought upright to the Sarvgangasana position by reversing the steps. At the next bending the right knee is brought near the left ear. Extra pressure is brought to bear on the abdominal region. The number of bending on each side should be the same.

These variations of the asana when done by normal people help in warding off stomach troubles.

The counter pose for this asana are Dhanurasana - Bow posture - and Urdhva Dhanurasana. These will be described later.

### **37. SETUBANDHASANA**

The same asana is called UTTANA MAYURASANA in Yoga Kurantam.

Technique:

1. Lie flat on the back, the legs stretched and close together, and the arms stretched and by the side of the body, the palms open and touching the ground.
2. Take the hands back, so that the palms rest on either side of the head, the heel of the palms near the ears, tip of fingers near the shoulders.
3. While inhaling, press hard the on the ground by the palms, and lift the back by arching it. Arch back the neck also till the top of the head rests on the ground. At this stage, the top of the head rests on the ground and the back is arched and lifted up, but the legs and hips still lie on the ground. The palms are also supporting the body.
4. Now bring the hands back to their original position as in step (1)
5. Press on the ground hard by the palms, and lift the hips also. The thigh and calf muscles are kept stretched. The heels and knees are kept together, but the feet are spread apart so that the small toes of each leg rests on the ground.
6. The hands are now crossed over the chest.
7. In this final position, take not more than six deep breaths.

This asana considerably benefits those suffering from piles.

### **38. UTTANAPADASANA**

The same asana is called Uttana Mayurasana in Gherenda Samhita by Chandakapali.

Technique:

1. Complete the first four steps described in Sethubandhasana.
2. While exhaling, press hard on the ground with the palms and lift both the legs together keeping them stretched, till they reach a position making an angle of 45 degree with the ground.

3. Lift the arms keep them stretched but with the palms together as in prayer, till they are parallel with the legs.
4. Take not more than six breaths.
5. While inhaling, lower either both the legs and arms together to the ground or the arms first and then the legs.
6. Lower the back and straighten the neck.

### **39. UPAVISHTAKONASANA**

Technique:

1. Sit upright. Stretch the legs, and spread them equally on either side of the body, as far as they could be spread apart.
2. Catch hold of the toe of the right leg with the thumb and forefingers of the right hand, and similarly on the left side.
3. Bend the head to form the chin lock.
4. While exhaling, bend the trunk forward, till the forehead rests centrally on the ground between the legs.
5. Take three deep breaths.
6. While inhaling, lift the trunk to the upright position.

### **39-A. PARSVA UPAVISHTAKONASANA**

7. Release the toes. Interlace the fingers, and place the interlaced fingers to catch hold of the right foot, so that the palms are touching the instep of the right foot.
8. Twist the trunk and bend it to the right, so that the forehead touches the right kneecap.
9. Take three deep breaths.
10. Lift the trunk while inhaling.
11. Take similar steps to 7, 8, 9 and 10 on the left side.

Benefits:

1. Tones up the kidneys, lungs and nerves and the backside of the legs and hips.
2. Cures tonsils also.

#### **40. PASCHIMATANASANA**

A Preliminary Exercise

While the exercise mentioned below, has not been prescribed in any of the old treatises on asanas, I have found, by experience, that a preliminary practice of this exercise makes it easy for the Paschimata and Purvatan asana positions being attained.

Technique:

1. Sit on the ground, with both legs stretched in front, knees together, and feet perpendicular to the ground. Sit erect and keep spine stretched.
2. Stretch the arms and catch hold of the toes by the thumb and forefinger of the hands.
3. While exhaling, bend the trunk as far forward as possible, keeping the spine stretched.
4. While inhaling, lift the trunk and bring the body to the erect position of step (2).
5. Swing the stretched arms to either side of the body, till the arms are in a straight line at the shoulder level. By a rotary movement of the stretched arms round the shoulder joint, first move them upwards, then forwards and then backwards and place the palms, fingers pointing to the front, above 12 inches behind the buttocks and about 18 inches apart. Keep the arms stretched.
6. While inhaling, lift the body, so that it rests on the palms and heels and is as straight as a plank. Bend the head backwards and stretch the feet so that the toes are pointed.
7. While exhaling, lower the body and reach position in step (5).
8. Bring the stretched arms to either side of the body, till they are in a straight line at the shoulder level. Twist the arms so that the palms face upwards and rotate the arms first

upwards till the arms are upright and then move them forward to catch hold of the toes by the thumb and forefinger of the hands and thus get into position in step (2).

9. Go through this cycle of movement and regulated breathing.

Note:

It may be difficult, especially in the case of those with fatty bodies, either to catch hold of the toes in step 2 & 8 or raise the body sufficiently high till it is as straight as a plank in step 6. No attempt should be made to reach these positions by unduly straining the body. It is enough to make these movements to the extent possible. In the case of step 6 undue strain will be indicated by the arms beginning to shake. By practice the body will become supple and the final positions reached in course of time.

#### **41. PASCHIMATANASANA**

Technique:

1. Sit on the ground, with both legs stretched in front, knee together, and feet perpendicular to the ground. Sit erect and spine stretched.
2. Stretch the arms and catch hold of the feet, by making the palms of the hands rest on the toes of the feet, and the fingers of the hands touch the soles of the feet.
3. Chin lock the chest forward.
4. While exhaling, bend trunk forward at the hip keeping the spine straight, till the forehead touches the knee.

Note: For beginners it may be difficult to catch hold of the feet by the hands. Even if this is possible it may be difficult to bend the trunk so that the forehead touches the knees. Every attempt should be made to reach these positions, but if these are not attainable, make these movements as far as possible, and avoid undue strain. With the breath regulation to be mentioned below, the positions will become easier as practice advances. When practice has further advanced, effort should be made when bending the trunk, to make the forehead



touch the shin as far away from the knees as possible.

5. Take not more than 12 deep breaths. In the beginning one should start with 3 deep breaths and slowly increase it to the 12 mentioned above.

6. While inhaling, lift trunk.

Note: In the case of all TAN asanas it is important that the counter pose is done immediately after. The appropriate counter pose is given after each asana. TAN asanas are those which stretch the nerves e.g., PASCHIMATANASANA stretches and straightens up the nerves on the backside of the body, while PURVATANASANA the appropriate counter pose, stretches the nerves on the front side of the body.

A variation to the above asana which is somewhat more difficult is given below. This is attributed to Gorakshanath.

Technique:

1. This is the same as given under Paschimatanasana.
2. Place the palms with fingers to the front, about 12 inches behind the buttocks and about 18 inches apart. Stretch the arms.
3. While exhaling, bend trunk forward at the hips, keeping the spine straight, till the forehead touches the knees or as low down on the shin as possible. The knees should be kept together and not raised from the ground.
4. Take deep breaths.
5. While inhaling, lift the trunk to the position in step 2.

### **PASCHIMATANASANA - Final pose**

This can be practised only after mastering Sarvangasana. Halasana, Parsva Halasana Uttana Mayurasana, Paschimatanasana Purvatanasana etc.

Technique:

1. Sit on the ground, with both legs stretched in front, knees together, and feet

perpendicular to the ground. Sit erect and spine stretched.

2. While exhaling the trunk is twisted to the leg and bent forward at the hips. The right hand catches the left foot on the outer side and the left hand on the outer side of the right foot. Please note carefully the position of the hands in the illustration. In this position the right shoulder touches the right knee cap and the trunk gets a 90 degree twist to the left so that the line joining the shoulders is at right angles to the ground.

3. Take three deep breaths.

4. While inhaling, get back to position in step (1).

5. Repeat on the other side.

#### **42. PURVATANASANA**

This is the counter pose to Paschimatanasana and should be practiced immediately after it.

Technique:

1. Sit on the ground, with both legs stretched in front, knees together and toes pointed.

Sit erect and with spine stretched.

2. Place the palms with fingers to the front, about 12 inches behind the buttocks and about 18 inches apart. Stretch the arms.

3. While inhaling, lift the body supporting it on the palms and the heels. The body should be straight as a plank and kept stretched. Bend the head backwards as far as possible. This stretches all the nerves on the front side of the body.

4. While exhaling, lower the body to the position mentioned in step 2.

5. Do three rounds.

Note:

It may be difficult, especially in the case of those with fatty bodies, to raise the body sufficiently high in step 3, to make the body straight as a plank. Undue strain should be carefully avoided, and it is enough if the body is lifted to the extent that it is conveniently

possible. Undue strain will be indicated by the arms beginning to shake. As practice advances the final position will become possible.

### **43. ARDHA BADDHA PADMA PASCHIMATANASANA**

Technique:

1. Sit upright on the ground.
2. Stretch the right leg in front of the body. The leg should be kept stretched, toes pointed, the back of the thigh, calf and heel touching the ground. Knees should not be raised throughout this asana. This position of the right leg should be maintained undisturbed throughout this asana.
3. Place the left foot on the right thigh as near the groin as possible, the heel should be to the right of the navel and as near to it as possible, the sole of the foot upturned, the toes pointed and the muscles stretched. The outer side of the left knee and the left thigh should touch the ground. The two knees should be as close as possible.
4. While exhaling, stretch the spine, keep the body upright, and take the left hand round the back and catch hold of the big toe of the left foot with the thumb and forefinger of the left hand.

The trunk should not be twisted to the left but kept facing the front.

5. Inhale and then while exhaling, stretch the right arm and catch hold of the big toe of the right foot with the thumb and forefinger of the right hand. If it is possible, and it becomes easy with practise, the fingers of the right hand may encircle the right foot.
6. Throw the chest forward, chin lock, keep eyes closed, stretch the spine, and take two deep breaths with rubbing sensation in the throat. The breathing is done by both nostrils, and effort is taken to make the inhaling and exhaling as slow, thin and long as possible.
7. While exhaling, slightly twist the trunk to the right and slowly lower the trunk by bending the body at the hips without arching the spine, till the forehead touches the right

kneecap. As practice advances attempt should be made for the forehead to progressively touch the shin beyond the knee and nearer the ankles.

8. Take two or three deep breaths. This is for beginners, as practice advances, the number may be slowly increased to not more than six. Normally no retention of breath is necessary. But as practice advances, breath may be retained after inhalation and breath may be kept out after exhalation for one second each.

9. While inhaling, lift the trunk and come back to the position in step (5).

10. Repeat on the left side.

Benefits:

This asana tones up the liver, spleen and the intestines by the internal massage of these parts during controlled breathing. The waist line is reduced and the spinal column strengthened. It gives relief to those suffering from chronic stomach ache and cures the disorder.

#### **44. TIRYANKMUKHA EKAPADA PASCHIMATANASANA**

Technique:

1. Sit on the ground, with one leg stretched in front, and the other leg folded back at the knee, so that the foot is close and by the side of the buttocks and the sole of the foot upturned. The leg muscles should be stretched. The foot of the leg, stretched in front, should be upright to the ground and not inclined side ways. The body should be erect and the spinal column stretched.

2. Interlace the fingers, extend the arms, and encircle the foot of the extended leg with the interlaced fingers.

3. Chin lock, chest forward.

4. While exhaling, bend the trunk forward, keeping the spine straight, till the forehead touches the knee of the stretched leg.

5. Take 3 deep breaths.

6. While inhaling raise the trunk to the position (2).
7. Repeat on the other side.

Note: In the case of fatty people, the above steps may not be possible as described, especially catching hold of the toes. It is enough to move the limbs and make the movements in the directions indicated to the extent possible. The muscles get supple and after some time the final positions become possible. In the case of those with short breath, the particulars regarding inhaling and exhaling need not be observed while making the movements. As practice advances the breathing becomes easier and the directions regarding breathing may be observed.

#### **45. EKA PADA PURVATANASANA**

This is the counter pose to ARDHA PADDHA PADMA PASCHIMATANASANA, and should be done immediately after it.

Technique:

1. Sit upright on the ground.
2. Stretch both the legs in front of the body. Place the left foot on the right thigh as near the groin as possible, the heel should be to the right of the navel and as near to it as possible, the sole of the foot upturned, the toes pointed and the muscles stretched. The outer side of the left knee and the thigh should touch the ground. The knees should be as near as possible. The right leg should be kept stretched, toes pointed, and the back of the thigh and calf should touch the ground. Keep the body upright and the spine stretched.
3. Place the palms with fingers to the front about 12 inches behind the buttocks and about 18 inches apart. Stretch the arms.
4. While inhaling, lift the body, supporting it on the palms and the heel of the right foot. The knees should be on the same level. The body should be straight as a plank and kept stretched. Bend backwards as far as possible. This stretches all the nerves on the front

side of the body.

Note:

It may not be possible in the beginning stages to lift the body to the full extent mentioned above. It is enough to lift the body to the extent it is conveniently possible without undue strain. As practice advances the body becomes more supple and the muscles are strengthened and the final position is possible to be attained without strain.

5. While exhaling, bring the head forward and lower the body to the position mentioned in step (3).
6. Do three rounds.
7. Repeat the above steps with the other leg.

#### **47. TADASANA**

Technique:

1. Stand on the floor with toes together, heels together, spinal column straight, chest forward but without hollowing the back, the arms hanging downwards with the palms touching the thighs.
2. While inhaling bring the arms with a circling movement about the shoulder joint in the plane of the body so that both palms touch each other overhead. The arms should be kept stretched throughout; about the shoulder level the arms should be twisted so that the palms are made to face upwards. While the arms are being raised, the body should be raised to stand up on the toes. The heels should be kept together throughout the movement. The body will be balanced on the toes with the body upright and the arms stretched overhead with the palms touching.
3. Take at least three deep breaths with rubbing sensation in the throat. The breaths should be even, deep and long.
4. While exhaling bring the arms, keeping them stretched, from the overhead position

to a horizontal position on either side of the body at the shoulder level, twist the arms, so that the palms face downwards; both the arms will not be in a straight line. The body should continue to be balanced on the toes.

5. Take at least three deep breaths in position (4).
6. Twist the arms to make the palms face upwards, and bring the arms keeping them stretched with a horizontal movement to the front. The heels should continue to be kept raised.
7. Take at least three deep breaths in position (6).
8. While exhaling, lower the heels, and bring down the arms, to the position in step (1).

Benefits:

The above asana is particularly beneficial when there is swelling or pain in the ankle, knee joints due to sluggish circulation.

This helps in restoring the circulation in the lower limbs and cures cases where there is swelling on the back of the feet, legs below the knee etc.

#### **48. EKAPADA SARVANGASANA**

Technique:

1. After reaching the position indicated as the second variation of Halasana, hold the toes with thumb and forefinger of the respective hands.
2. While inhaling raise any one of the legs to the upright position as in Sarvangasana. The palm of the hand on the same side as the leg raised is also lifted so that when the leg is upright, the palm of the hand rests on the thigh.
3. Do Pranayama.
4. While exhaling lower the leg and move back the hand to the same position as at the beginning.
5. Now repeat with the other leg.

Note: In the beginning the position described may not be possible. Some support to the back may be necessary at the beginning. The asana may therefore be done by starting with the first position in Sarvangasana when both legs are upright and the back supported by the palms and while exhaling slowly bring down one leg at a time, so that the leg reaches behind the head as in Halasana. The palms of the hands will still continue supporting the back. The necessary rounds of Pranayama are done in this position. Now repeat with the other leg. Bring the body to lie flat on the back with the usual rolling motion as described in Sarvangasana.

The pranayama in stage (3) will be done both holding in of breath after inhalation and holding out of breath after exhalation. The period of holding in of breath will be 4 seconds and the period of holding out of breath will be 2 seconds. The number of rounds of pranayama for each leg will be 3 rounds at the beginning which will be gradually raised as practice advances to six rounds.

#### **49. URDHVAKONASANA**

This asana has to be practised as a preliminary measure before taking up the practice of the next asana to be described - EKAPADA SARVANGASANA - side.

Technique:

1. Start with Sarvangasana, with the legs upright, stretched, knees together, the back supported by the palms.
2. Exhale and spread the legs still keeping them stretched, so that both legs spread equally on either side.
3. Inhale and bring the legs together.
4. Rest.

The number of turns should be only 2 rounds in the first week, and three rounds from the second week and four rounds after a month.



After this asana has been mastered, EKAPADA SARVANGASANA - side may be begun.

## **50. EKA PADA SARVANGASANA**

Technique:

1. Start with the Sarvangasana position where both the legs are upright, stretched, knees together, and the back supported by the palms.
2. While exhaling, bring one of the legs to the side. The left leg to the left side, and the right leg to the right side. The leg is kept stretched and leg lowered till the toe touches the ground and the leg is at right angles to the body. It will be necessary slightly to twist the leg for the toe to touch the ground. All this while the other leg should continue to be kept upright.
3. While inhaling the leg is brought back to the upright position.
4. Some deep inhalations and exhalations are made in this position to give some rest.
5. Repeat with the other leg. Each leg should be alternately exercised, and each leg moved the same alternatively exercised, and each leg moved the same number of times.
6. When both legs have come together after the necessary number of rounds, reach the lying flat on the back position with a rolling movement as in the case of Sarvangasana.
7. Rest.

Note: In the beginning it will not be possible to bring the leg down enough for the toes to reach the ground. No attempt should be made to force down the leg to reach this position. On the other hand effort should be made so that the leg does not sink down to a position so far down as to strain the muscles. It is important to see that the other leg is kept upright and stretched. As practice advances the final position will be reached.

## **51. HALASANA - PLOUGH POSE**

After Sarvangasana, Halasana has to be mastered before taking up the practice of Nirālamba Sarvangasana. Hence Halasana is being dealt with at this stage. The final posture

resembles the plough and hence the name.

Technique:

1. After coming to the Sarvangasana position, with the back upright, legs stretched and chin locked, Halasana is done as an extension.
2. The palms which support the back are brought down to touch the ground, so that the arms lie stretched with the palms down i.e., touching the ground, the fingers together and stretched. The distance between the palms should be about 12 to 18 inches.
3. While slowly exhaling, bring both the legs together slowly so that the toes touch the ground as far as possible. The back of the toes should touch the ground and not the tip of the fingers. This is done by bending at the hips, the back being as upright as possible and maintaining the chinlock. The legs have to be kept together straight and stretched, the knee together, the toes pointed and together, the thigh and calf muscles stretched.

Variation: There are a number of variations and these are given below. These are progressively more difficult.

1. In this variation the fingers of the outstretched arms are interlocked with the palms turned outwards and the thumbs touching the ground.
2. In the next variation the outstretched arms are brought behind the head, with a circular sweeping motion, the arms touching the ground till they are in a line with the shoulders. The palms are now upturned and the sweeping motion continued till the palms are near the toes.
3. After reaching the position in 2 above, the elbows are bent and the forearms are brought together to rest at the back of the top of the head. The right palm to catch the left elbow and the left palm catching the right elbow.
4. The next variation is where the forearms instead of being taken to the top of the head, are taken above the knees at the back of the legs. Thus the forearms are locked over

the legs above the knee joint. The knees should not be bent.

Note: The positions described above give the final positions to be reached. But this may not be possible at the beginning of the practice. No attempt should be made to reach these positions by force. The bending should be made to the extent conveniently possible. With the deep inhalations and exhalations, the abdominal muscles get toned up and the body becomes more and more supple as practice advances. It is important to watch that at no stage is the body strained which will be indicated by the breathing getting laboured. By aiming to lower the toes by not more than 2-4 inches a week there should be no strain and the final position will be attained as practice advances.

4. Slowly and deeply, inhale and exhale, through both nostrils with rubbing sensation in the throat. The number of these deep breaths should in no case exceed six times.
5. While slowly inhaling the legs are raised together and brought to the upright position.
6. The body is brought to the lying down position flat on the back, by a rolling movement as in the case of Salamba Sarvangasana.
7. Rest for at least a minute.

#### **A: PAROVA HALASANA - Section A.**

Technique:

1. Take the first three steps of Salamba Sarvangasana. The body is now resting on the nect, the legs are lifted in an upright position and the back is supported by the palms.
2. Lower the stretched legs by bending at the hips, and by giving a slight twist at the hips, so that the toes which should be pointed, touches the ground at a point 2½ feet to the right of the right ear. This movement is done while exhaling. The legs should be together and kept stretched throughout. The right palm should firmly support the body at the back, so that when the legs are lowered to the right of the body, the trunk of the body may not also

bend to the right side, the trunk should remain upright, and facing to the front.

Note: This asana should be done with the movement in step 2, always, first towards the right of the body.

3. Take three deep breaths. There should be no holding of breath.
4. Swing the stretched legs with the hips as centre, so that the toes describe an arc of a circle on the ground, at the back of the head, till the toes reach a position, 2½ feet to the left of the left ear.
5. While inhaling, lift the legs to the upright central position.
6. Take two deep breaths.
7. Now repeat the previous movements, by lowering the legs to the left of the body. This is steps 2 to 6 exclusive, except that “left” should be used wherever the word “right” has been used, and the word “right” where the word “left” has been used.
8. Do the normal Halasana, Central with the toes just behind the head.
9. Take three deep breaths.
10. While inhaling raise the legs to the right position.
11. Take two deep breaths.
12. Exhale, bend the knees, so that they approach the throat, remove the support of the palms, lower the hips so that the back rests on the ground, and then stretch the legs so that the whole forms a rolling movement.
13. Take rest.

Note: This asana can also be done as practice advances, without supporting the back with the palms. In this variation the arms are kept stretched as in step 1.

Benefits:

1. Tones up the liver and spleen. Prevents the disorder of these organs and effects a cure if these organs are disordered.

2. Reduces excessive urination.

### **PARSVA HALASANA Section - B.**

Though this is a variation of Parsva Halasana-A it is introduced only here, as there will be greater facility in doing this asana if the asana previously described viz., Suptha Konasana is practised first.

Technique:

The first two steps are the same as in the case of Parsva Halasana.

3. Move only the left leg in an arc, the toe always touching the ground, till the leg takes a position as far to the left of the body as is conveniently possible. The leg is moved while exhaling, and inhaling is done while the leg is at rest. The movement of the leg may be done by stages at first. As practice advances, the leg may be moved in a single movement.
4. Take six deep breaths.
5. Bring the left leg back to the right, till the two legs are together.
6. While inhaling, lift both the legs together, till they are upright and in the central position.
7. Repeat on the right side.
- 8-10. These steps are the same as in steps 11, 12 and 13 of Parsva Halasana.

Note: The palms of the hands support the hips throughout the asana.

### **52. UTTANA MAYURASANA**

This is the name given to this asana according to Raja Yoga. According to Hatha Yoga the same asana has been classed under Supthapada Angusta Asana.

This is closely related to Sarvangasana. It has a number of variations and some of them are given below.

1. Start with the first three steps of Salamba Sarvangasana.
2. Get into the position of Halasana variation 2.

3. Now bring the palms of the hand to support the hips. Note the position of the palms and the fingers in this asana carefully. The palms are at the hip level and the fingers are pointing to the front. The position of the palms and fingers therefore differ from these of Sarvangasana. The position is such that the body can effectively be supported when finally it takes a horizontal position. the elbows in this asana will be closer than in Sarvangasana.

4. While inhaling, lift both the legs together, so that the legs get to the vertical position and the movement continued till the heels touch the ground the body forming an arch, and is supported by the heels, elbows, shoulders and the back of the head.

Note: For beginners lifting the legs keeping them stretched may be difficult. For them to make the movement easier, the legs may be bent at the knees, the heels brought near the buttocks, and the bent legs now lifted so that the thighs occupy a vertical position. The movement is further continued by bending the body further at the hips, so that the body forms an arch. The legs are also somewhat straightened, so that the soles of the feet rest on the ground. Each leg is then straightened, till both of them are stretched, toes pointed and knees together. As practice advances, the position can be reached without bending the knees.

6. Lift the head and the shoulders, so that the body is supported only by the heels, and the two elbows.

Note: For beginners lifting both the head and the shoulders may not be possible. They should therefore try to lift only the head at first, so that the shoulders may act as supports. As practice advances, after the head has been lifted, and the body balanced, the shoulders should also be lifted and the final position reached.

7. In this final position not more than three deep breathings should be done. There should be no retention of breath.

8. Rest for some time.

### **53 A. EKAPADA UTTHANA MAYURASANA**

Stage A.

Technique:

1. Reach the Halasana, variation 2, position.
2. Place the palms of the hands to support the hips as in Uttana Mayurasana step 3.
3. While inhaling lift say the right leg to the upright position, the other leg to continue touching the ground behind the back.
4. While exhaling, continue to bend the right leg so that the heel of the right leg touches the ground away from the head. Simultaneously, the left leg is raised to occupy an upright position. Both the legs should be kept stretched throughout the movement of the legs and both the legs should move together so that the angle between the legs continues to remain unaltered.
5. Retrace the steps so that the legs are again in the Halasana position variation 2. Repeat with the other leg i.e., the left leg will be completely stretched and the right leg will reach the upright position.

Note: As practice advances, after step 4 and after step 5 both the head and shoulders are lifted from the ground so that the body is finally supported only on one of the heels and the two elbows.

6. In the final position, not more than three deep breathings should be done. There should be no retention of breath.
7. Take rest for some time.

53 B.

Stage B

Technique:

1. Get to the Salamba Sarvangasana position step 3.

2. Bend one of the legs, say the right, to the Padmasana position, i.e., the right leg is bent at the knee and the right foot placed on the left groin.
3. The left leg is taken backwards, to the Halasana position.
4. With the fingers of the right hand catch hold of the toes of the right leg by taking the hand round the back as in Ardha Baddha Padmasana.
5. Bring the left arm behind the head as in Halasana variation 2.
6. Release the toes of the right leg. Take the palms of the hands to support the hips as in step 3, of Uttana Mayurasana.
7. Lift the left leg, first to an upright position and continue the movement till the sole of the foot reaches the ground. The right leg should continue to remain as in Padmasana. The two knees should be on the same level as near as possible.
8. Lift the head and shoulders so that in the final position the body is supported by the heel of the left leg and the two elbows.
9. Retrace the steps till the Salamba Sarvangasana position in step 1, is reached. Repeat with the other leg.
10. After the final position has been reached, take not more than three deep breaths. There should be retention of breath.
11. Take rest for some time.

53 C.

Stage C.

Technique:

1. Get to the Salamba Sarvangasana position in step 3.
2. Cross the legs as in Padmasana.
3. Take the hands behind the back and catch hold of the toes of the feet by the fingers of the hand as in Baddha Padmasana.



4. While inhaling lower the crossed legs, so that the crossed portion touches the bridge of the nose of the forehead.
5. Move the palms to support the hips as in the Uttana Mayurasana position step 3.
6. Bend the body backwards, at the hips, the legs continuing to be kept in the Padmasana position till the knees touch the ground. The head and shoulders are also lifted from the ground. In this position the body is supported by the knees and the elbows. The eyes are kept either open or closed but with BRUMADHYA DRISHTI.
7. In the final position, not more than three deep breaths should be taken. There should be no retention of breath.
8. Take rest for some time.

#### **54. SUPTAPADA ANGUSHTASANA**

Those who find difficulty in doing EKAPADA SARVANGASANA-side, may get the same benefits by doing SUPTAPADAANGUSHTASANA.

Stage I Preliminary Technique:

1. Lie flat on the back with legs together, stretched, and hands stretched and close to the body, and palms open and touching the ground.
2. While inhaling spread both legs and hands as wide as possible on either side of the body to an equal degree. Both legs and arms will continue touching the ground and be kept stretched.
3. While exhaling bring back the legs and arms to the position as in the first step.
4. Repeat.

Stage II

Technique:

1. Lie flat on the back with the legs stretched arms stretched and by the side of the body as in the first step of Stage I.

2. While exhaling raise one of the legs to an upright position by bending at the hips. The knees should not be bent, and the leg should continue to be kept stretched. The other leg should continue to lie on the ground stretched. While the leg is raised to the upright position the arm on the same side is raised and the toe of the foot caught hold by the thumb and forefinger of the hand.

3. While exhaling turn the leg to touch the ground so that the leg now forms a right angle with the body on the ground. The thumb and the forefinger of the hand will continue to hold the toe. If it is the right leg, it is brought to the right side of the body.

4. While inhaling raise the leg with the toe still held by the thumb and forefinger to the position in step 2.

5. While inhaling release the toe and lower the leg, and come back to position in step 1.

6. Repeat with the other leg.

Note: It will be seen that steps 2 and 3 are done while exhaling, and steps 4 and 5 are done while inhaling. It does not mean that steps 2 and 3 are a continuous process done while exhaling. After steps 2, a few deep breaths may be taken. So also is the case after step 4. Movements are made while inhaling or exhaling, inhaling generally when the abdomen is not compressed by the movement. When a position, intermediate or final, has been reached deep breathings or the prescribed form of Pranayama is done. This observation generally applies to all asanas.

Stage III.

1. Lie flat on the back, both legs stretched knees together, arms stretched and by the side of the body, the palms open and touching the ground.

2. Bring the stretched left arm by a sweeping movement about the shoulder on the ground till it makes a right angle at the shoulder level with the body and the palm touching

the ground.

3. While exhaling, lift the leg without bending the knee to an upright position so that the leg now forms a right angle with the body.
4. Take one or two deep breaths if necessary.
5. Catch hold of the toe of the left leg with the thumb and forefinger of the right hand.
6. While exhaling, bring the left leg with the toe still held by the thumb and forefinger of the right hand to lie flat on the ground on the right side of the body, so that the two arms are now in a line at shoulder level at right angles to the body.

The head should be turned to the left, so that the left ear may touch the ground.

The knees should not bend and the leg should be kept stretched. The right leg should continue stretched and lie on the ground, with the toes pointing upward and the head touching the ground.

7. Inhalations and exhalations may be done in this position.
8. While exhaling, raise the left leg, with the toe still held by the right hand, to the position in step 5. Turn the head back to the correct position.
9. Release the toe, while inhaling, bring down the left leg to the original position as in step 1.
10. Bring the left arm to lie by the side of the body as in step 1.
11. Repeat with the other leg.

Note: In the case of males, proper suspension bandages or something equivalent should be used so that the organs are kept firmly in position.

In the case of females, the upper part of the body should have a close fitting jacket.

Especially in this asana, as considerable pressure is applied to the abdomen it is absolutely necessary to see that the bowels and bladder are clear before doing this asana.

Stage IV

1. Lie flat on the ground, on the back, both legs stretched, knees together, arms stretched and by the side of the body, the palms open and touching the ground.
2. While exhaling, bring both legs to an upright position by bending at the hips, keeping the knees together, and the legs stretched, the toes pointed.
3. Turn head to the left, so that the left ear touches the ground. Bring the left arm stretched, with a sweeping motion on the ground, to a position at right angles to the body.
4. Take one or two deep breaths.
5. While exhaling, bring both the legs together to lie on the ground, on the right side of the body. The knees should not be bent, but the legs kept stretched. The toes should now be at the level of the shoulders, so that when both the toes are caught hold by the thumb and forefinger of the out-stretched right arm, the right arm and the left arm may be in a straight line at the shoulder level and at right angles to the body. As far as possible, try to keep the left side of the back near the ground as possible.
6. Do not less than six rounds pranayama. The pranayama should be done with both Anchar and Bahya Kumbhakam of two to five seconds duration each, the period of Anchar Kumbhakam being kept equal to the period of Bahya Kumbhakam.
7. While inhaling, bring the legs to the upright position, after releasing the toes. Bring the head to the normal position.
8. Repeat on the left side. The legs are straight away brought from the upright position to lie on the left side of the body without taking the legs to the position in step 1.
9. Do the same number of rounds of pranayama as on the right side, the periods of Anchar and bahya kumbhakam being the same as on the right side.
10. While inhaling bring the legs to the upright position after releasing the toes.
11. Bring the head to the normal position, the arms to the normal position by the side of the body, and take one or two deep breaths.

12. While inhaling lower the legs to lie flat on the ground as in step one.

In some treatises on Yoga Stages II and III of Supthapadaangushta asana are called JATHARA PARIVRITTI though the asana affects other regions of the body besides the abdominal region.

## **55. NIRALAMBA SARVANGASANA - SHOULDER STAND WITHOUT SUPPORT**

Technique:

1. Take three steps of Salamba Sarvangasana, so that the body is now resting on the back of the neck.
2. Reach the halasana position variation 2.
3. While inhaling, raise both the legs together, legs being kept together and stretched, to an upright position, the arms still continuing to lie stretched behind the head.
4. Do deep breathing and try and balance the body so that the weight is supported by the shoulders. Try and lift the arms so that the palms rest on the thighs.
5. Take deep breaths.

Note: Start with 3 deep breaths. This number may slowly be increased by one round each week. Every care should be taken that there is no strain. The number of deep breaths can be increased to a maximum of 64.

6. Retrace the steps; the arms being taken to the position behind the head, the legs lowered to the Halasana position, then raised to the upright position and get to the Sarvangasana with support position. The body is brought to the lying down position flat on the back, by a rolling movement as in the case of Salamba sarvangasana.

Note: This asana should not be attempted before mastering the Salamba Sarvangasana, halasana, ekapada Sarvangasana.

Benefits: Of the various types of Sarvangasana this gives the maximum benefits. The

thyroid gets special benefits. The waist line is reduced. The liver is toned. This asana cures gastric troubles and piles. It also prevents these diseases.

## YAMA AND NIYAMA

### SALUTATION TO THE TEACHER AND TO THE ETERNAL ONE - PRAYER

The ideas of the practise of the Yoganga Sadhanas is to make use of the human body to contemplate on God-the human body being properly toned and tuned by the Sadhanas. The first two steps in bringing the instrument under control are:

YAMA and NIYAMA.

YAMA: Yama consists of five virtues:

1. Ahimsa (nonviolence)
2. Satyam (truthfulness)
3. Asteya (non stealing)
  1. DHARMASTEYAM (non performance of one's duties pertaining to one's caste, religion and place and
  2. DHRAVIYASTEYAM (stealing of wealth). Avoiding 1. and 2.
4. BRAHMACARYAM,
  1. control of the Indriyas-Bahya (outer) and
  2. Rahasya Indirya and
  3. study of the vedas.
5. APARIGRAHA (non acceptance of gifts given in expiation of one's sins or to get over one's sickness). These five virtues give a positive help to keep the mind in proper condition for practice of the YOGANGASADHANA.

NIYAMA: Niyama consists of five processes:

- i. Saucam
- ii. Santosham
- iii. Tapas
- iv. Svadhyayam

v. Isvarapranidhanam

1. Saucam (cleaning) is again of two kinds: Anthar the inner and Bahya, the outer. By avoiding bad and evil thoughts by not eating bad and unwholesome food and by avoiding intoxicating drinks we have ANTHAR SAUCAM. Oil bath, good hair bath, good smell etc. give us Bahya Saucam.

2. SANTOSHAM is contentment

3. Tapas is the control of the body from having excessive or unwanted fat and flesh by taking prescribed and restricted food or by fasting only on water. See Patanjali Yoga Darshana: section I chapter II.

4. SVADHYAYA: Japa for a prescribed time or a prescribed number of times of the mantras as taught by the Guru, and the study of the Vedas.

5. ISVARAPRANIDHANA is the worship of God with love. Refer to Patanjali Yoga Darshana for a full definition.

If these two steps of Yama and Niyama are well established the third step of ASANA will be easy of attainment. If one is indifferent or imperfect in the two steps then the third step becomes either too difficult or too dangerous.



## CLASSIFICATION OF ASANAS

The asanas are of different kinds:

1. Standing
2. Sitting
3. Lying down
  - i. Face upward
  - ii. Face downward
4. Sideways
5. Topsy-turvy or head-down
6. Turning
7. Jumping
8. Pumping
9. Weighing etc.

### 1. STANDING POSTURES:

Uttanasana

Utkatasana

Tadasana

Virabhadrasana

Trikonasana

Uttitha Parsvakonasan

Parsvottanasana

Prasarita Parsvottanasana etc.

### 2. SITTING POSTURES:

Paschimatanasana

Baddha Padmasana

Marिकासana

Baddhakonasana

Mulabandhasana

Karnapidasana etc.

### 3. LYING DOWN POSTURES:

Uttana padasana

Sethubandhdasana

Supta Padangushtasana

Jathara parivritti

Supta Vajrasana

Paryankasana

Yoganidrasana

Padangushtana

Dhanurasana

Bhujangasana

Mayurasana etc.

### FACE DOWNWARDS:

Kapotasana

Raja Kapotasana

Urdhva Dhanurasana

Uttana Mayurasana-single & double

Navasana etc.

### 4. SIDEWAYS:

Vasishtasana

Viswamitrasana

Bairavasana

Ardha Chakrasana etc.

5. TOPSY TURVY:

Sirshasana (with 16 subdivisions)

Sarvangasana (which is considered as a lying posture according to Hatha Yoga Pradipika III 79 not as a head down posture in Gerandasamhita, in Yoga Kurantam by Matsyendra and Gorakshanath)

Sirshasana has 64 moving postures. Sarvangasana has 48 moving postures. In this book we shall describe a few steady and a few moving postures.

6. TURNING:

Mandalasana etc.

7. JUMPING:

Bhujapeedasana

Kurmasana

Ashtavakrasana

Caturanga Dandasana

Nakrasana

Bakasana etc.

8. PUMPING:

Urdhvamukhasvanasana

Adhomukha Svanasana, etc.

9. WEIGHING:

Urdhva Kukkutasana

Kaundinyasana

Kukkutasana

Ekapada Bekasana

Ashtavakrasana etc.

A short description of each of these asanas and the distinctive curative effect of each will be given in the following chapters. All asanas are not necessary for a routine practice for everyone. Age, ailments, peculiarities and individual constitutions are to be considered to find out which asanas are to be practised and which should be avoided.

One important thing to be constantly kept in mind when doing the asanas is the regulation of breath. It should be slow thin, long and steady; breathing through both nostrils with rubbing sensation at the throat and through the esophagus inhaling when coming through the oesophagus inhaling when coming to the straight posture and exhaling when bending the body.

The asanas are best practised early in the morning on an empty stomach. Those who are weak may do asanas after lapse of an hour after taking light liquid diet like milk. The head down postures should be done only after the lapse of at least three hours after a meal and the CHURNING (NOULI) after the lapse of six hours.

We have already mentioned that all asanas are not necessary for each individual. But a few of us at least should learn all the asanas so that the art of Yoga may not be forgotten and lost. I can say with pardonable pride that people of all ages from young children up to adults 120 years old, men as well as women have practised Yoga under my instruction. Enthusiasts from foreign countries, English, French, Russian and American ladies have undergone systematic training under me and a few of them e.g. Mr. Evgenic Strakary (Indira Devi) of Russia, have published books giving a description of what they have learned. Mr. Therose Brosse of France, a heart specialist has made the following observations:

Health is the prime necessity for enjoyment of life in this world. There are many ways in

which health can be secured and of all the ways, the Yogic way is the best. The Yogic way gives you the maximum health with the minimum of expenditure. Yoga can be practised in all seasons and by all the several castes of people. This Yoga was discovered by our ancestors who practised it with great discipline and the secrets have been handed over to us in treatises on the science of Yoga.

The Yoga Asanas are not new inventions of the modern days propagated among the masses. Our religious books say that these Yoga practises were discovered thousands of years ago. The Bhagavad Gita which is accepted as one of the greatest scriptures all over the world is alone sufficient to testify to the greatness of Yoga. The connection between Yoga Asanas and Health is described in Chapter I Sloka 17 of Hathayoga Pradipika.

## **PRANA : THE VAYUS AND NADIS**

Longevity of life, strength of body and mind are the outcome of the free movement of the ten vayus.

PRANA, APANA, VYANA, UDANA, SAMANA, NAGA, KURMA, KRIKARA, DEVA DATTA and DANANJAYA.

- i. PRANA: Located in heart (HRIDAYA)
- ii. APANA: Below Navel (GUDHA)
- iii. VYANA: Whole body
- iv. UDANA Throat (KANTA)
- v. SAMANA Navel (NABHI)
- vi. NAGA Tongue
- vii. KURMA Eyelid (UNMEELANA)
- viii. KRIKARA Sneeze (KSHUTA)
- ix. DEVADATTA Yawn (VITHRAMBHA)
- x. DHANANJAYA All pervasive (only on body with life or without)

Yogic Anatomy says that the movement of these vayus are through the following NADIS (pipes):

IDA, PINGALA, POOSHA, YASASVINI, KUHU, RUDRA, SUSHUMNA (to be spoken of later) etc.

If the movement of the vayu through these Nadis is in any way disturbed, either by way of overgrowth of muscles or by some other causes, then we get disease. If the movement of the VAYU and the circulation of blood are to be in the right way, it is necessary that one should practise YOGAsanas as stated by SVATMARAMA YOGENDRA in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika. The original and most authoritative source for SVATMARAMA is Patanjali who says that he who practises Yogasanas according to the rules and regulations of

the Yogic system is not affected by heat or cold by joy or sorrow.

Thousands of years ago, the Yogasanas were practised by all the people as a matter of daily routine. But now the Yogic science has gone into hiding like a woman in purdah (veil) and it is out of place to enquire why and how the practice was given up. In the Patanjali Yoga Darshana, Chapter II Sutras 29, 32, 46 and 54 Chapter III Sutras 1,2,3 and in other Yoga Treatises they have described:

1. YAMA - 5 kinds
2. NIYAMA - 5 kinds
3. ASANA - countless (see DHYANABINDU UPANISHAD)
4. PRANAYAMA - 128 kinds
5. PRATYAHARA - 2 kinds
6. DHARANA - 2 kinds
7. DHYANA - 2 kinds
8. SAMADHI - 8 kinds

### **CONCEPT OF SAMYAMA:**

In these classifications, asanas occupy the third step. When DHARANA, DHYANA and SAMADHI are practised together then this practice is called SAMYAMA. The expert in the practice of SAMYAMA is called SAMYAMI. See Patanjala Yoga Darshana Chapter III Sutra 4. By practice of SAMYAMA, the SAMYAMI discovers the truths that are not known to others easily and is capable of accomplishing easily the things that are most difficult for others. See Patanjala Yoga Darshana. Lord Shiva has communicated to Mother Parvathi that the asanas are as numerous as the living species in the universe. Atmaram, the author of the HATHA YOGA PRADIPIKA says in chapter I verse 18 that he is going to deal with only a few of the asanas practised by the RISHIS like VASISHTA and MUNIS like MATSYENDRA and GORAKSHA. In spite of this there are people who say that there are only 84 asanas and we find it difficult to accept the correctness of the statement.

There are three kinds of YOGANGA SADHANA which are:

BAHIRANGA, ANтарANGA and PARAMANTARANGA.

See Patanjala Darshana Chapter III Sutras 7 and 8 for more details.

Of the eight steps, from Yama to Pratyahara is called BAHIRANGA SADHANA; the other three ANтарANGA SADHANA; - NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI, one of the eight kinds of SAMADHI is called PARAMANTARANGA SADHANA. Samyama comes under ANтарANGA SADHANA. BAHIRANGA SADHANA cures all the diseases of and affections to those parts of the body which are apparent to the senses of sight, hearing and smell. It is called BAHIRANGA SADHANA as the sadhana affects those parts which are apparent to the senses. ANтарANGA SADHANA applies to the mind, the brain and the heart, working of which are not directly visible to man and cures all the diseases relative to them.



The PARAMANTARANGA SADHANA teaches us the truth about the existence of God and the Soul in man and leads him in the way to realise the JIVATMA and PARAMATMA.

This way is called NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI. Heart is a mass of flesh of the size of the thumb from its extremity to its first joint. It is located 12 inches right above the navel. The heart is located above and below the NADI GRANTHIS or CAKRAS - seven in number. See NARAYANA UPANISHAD for more particulars.

It will be observed that this HRIDAYA which we shall call HEART is different from the heart as understood by the modern medical science which is situated in the left side of the body. MANAS - the mind - has its seat in a whole in the heart and it is in the shape of an effulgence only inferior to the PARAMATMA and the JIVATMA. The MANAS understands even things which are above the KARMENDRIYAS and the GNANENDRIYAS like joy, sorrow. Though limited by the physical body, it is capable of experiencing infinite joy and pain. In its proper working, distractions and serene rest has its above in the HEART. VISHISTADWAITAS and DWAITAS say that joy and sorrow are experienced by the Jivas. SANKHYAS, Yogis and ADWAITAS say that the reflection of the soul in the ANTAKARANA experiences pain and joy. It is beside our study whether PARAMATMA is capable of experiencing joy and sorrow. We have mentioned that there are seven CAKRAS supporting the HRIDAYA. They are:

1. MULADHARA CAKRA - between the root of the reproductory organs and anus.
2. SVADHISHTANA CAKRA - at the origin of the reproductory organ - between Muladhara and Manipura.
3. MANIPURA CAKRA - at the navel
4. ANAHATA CAKRA - at the heart
5. VISUDDHI CAKRA - at the base of the throat

6. AGNA CAKRA - between the two eyebrows  
7. SAHASRARA CAKRA - situated at the crown of the head.

The 7 Chakras are active in three ways.

AAVRITTI, PARIVRITTI, SAMVRITTI

AAVRITTI is due to Puraka, Rechaka and Kumbaka. PARIVRITTI is due to the proper control of the three Bandhas - MULA, JALANDHARA and UDDIYANA. SAMVRITTI is due to the variation in the length of the Rechaka and Kumbakha in Pranayama. The 7 Chakras mentioned above and the Manas are not visible to our naked eye. Joy and sorrow are feelings palpable only to the mind and for that reason, we do not deny their existence. So also certain changes inside our body have to be personally felt and they are not capable of physical demonstration. Even the modern advanced appliances like the x-ray can not reveal the existence of the feelings of the mind and the changes in the CAKRAS. But Samyamam mentioned in the Yoganga discovers the feelings and changes in one's own mind and in others.

This is known in three ways:

DIVYADRISHTI, ANTARDRISHTI, YOGADRISHTI

(See Patanjala Darshanam, Ch. III sutra 29).

Disease with which men are afflicted are countless and it is clear that they are the result of food habits, drink and work for the livelihood of the man.

For treatment of these disease, Yoga asanas and Pranayamas are useful and are prescribed according to the differing constitutions. It is to be understood that all asanas are not necessarily to be practised by all the people or that the asanas are so different that they cannot be done by any real aspirant. The Yoga asanas cure diseases, increase memory power and mental ability and bring about spiritual realisation (see Patanjala Darshana ch. II sutra 28) and their practice is not restricted by differences of caste creeds age and sex.

It is common experience that if one goes out of the way, one meets with danger. Some are of the opinion that the practice of Yoganga Sadhana leads one to madness. But how we do account for those people who are mad without the practice of Yoga? So it is very improper for one to criticise the Sadhana that it is either good or bad without actually putting it into practice oneself. The practice of asanas eliminates excessive fat, unwanted tissues faeces and urine without the aid of any surgical instrument. Hence the Rishis of old called it operation without instruments.

The ugliness of fleshy bodies vanish by the reduction of the unwanted flesh and the bodies which are thin and emaciated pick up flesh and strength by the practice of asanas. They get a certain lustre after some time. On account of these great efficacies, the MUNIS of the old have sung of the as “ ”. The beauty that comes to the man, both to his internal organs and to the external, is described in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika ch. II sloka 78:

1. Regular practice keeps the body away from becoming stout.
2. Lustre and peace are expressed in the face.
3. Speech is clear and heart is steady.
4. No diseases in the eyes.
5. Diseases of stomach are set right and stomach get normal.
6. Vital fluid is controlled.
7. Dyopepsia is cured and regular working of the liver is ensured.
8. The blood vessels are cleared every day.

For more particulars see Hatha Yoga Pradipika, ch. III slokas 45 to 48.

One who practices Yoganga Sadhana has no fear of disease and death. See SVETHASVARA UPANISHAD chapter II.

“He has no disease, does not become old, has no death, never feels lazy, has uniform health

throughout life, will never have bad desires, his body will have a certain KANTHI, will have powerful speech, there will be no odour in his perspirations and he will never have diabetes, dropsy and diarrhea.”

It is regrettable that the practice of Yoga Asanas with the help of the printed charts is on a large scale and it is dangerous. There is no doubt that for him who practices with the help of a proper Guru knowing its secrets, great benefits accrue. Propagandists of Yoga asanas are many nowadays and we have to choose one who is well-versed in the secrets of the science. The students of the modern medical science learn from direct contact with their masters. We want propagandists who can actually demonstrate what they teach and who know which asanas are good for which kind of ailments and how they are practised in relation to duration and breathing. We do require good demonstrations but without a knowledge of the secrets the people will not be benefitted and the science will not be revived. The secrets of Yoga, Raga, Sex and Statecraft are not easily communicated.

## **INTRODUCTION TO PRANAYAMA**

Breathing is sometimes to be done through the nostrils, sometimes through the throat, through the teeth and through the lips and tongue in the practice of Yoganga Sadhana, and the Pranayama Prakaranam describes the various methods of breathing. Ordinarily during the Yogasana practice, the breathing should be with a rubbing sensation at the throat, long and thin. See Hatha Yoga Pradipika, ch.III slokas 51-53. It is called ANULOMA UJJAYI. The benefit in this kind of breathing is that we overcome cough, have good appetite, improved circulation of blood in the lungs, liver, spleen and kidney, in the glands and in the joints of bones. The methods of breathing can be practised by all people at all times.

Every Yoga Asana has a counter pose and knowledge of such poses is essential; e.g., For Paschimatanasana - Purvatanasana is the counter pose.

Men and women shall learn only those asanas which are good according to their ages and which are applicable to certain diseases appearing at certain ages. It will not be too much to consider the following by way of instruction.

What was the longevity of life of the people of the older times, why the average life of the present times has become low, how to improve the average, thus leading to the classification of the asanas according to the ages and needs of the present day men and women. Without a proper classification of asanas, not only the illiterate folk in the villages but also the educated in the towns, would have serious doubts about the right way of practice with the result that none takes to Yoga.

### **59. PRANAYAMA**

According to the concept in the Upanishads and Yoga treatises, JIVATMA, a spark of the PARAMATMA is separate for each individual, and resides in a hollow space in the heart. The heart, mentioned here is not to be confused with the organ which pumps blood, but is a body a bit to its right and in the middle of chest. From this body emanate 101 principal

nerves, and each of these main nerves subdivides to 72,000 nerves each through which all sensations travel.

Thus in order, outwards from the hollow space in the heart where the JIVATMA resides we have, the PRANA, the MIND, the JNANA INDRIYAS and the KARMA INDRIYAS. Behind the JIVATMA we have the PARAMATMA. The nerves form the outward link. These nerves are of various colours, white, yellow, black etc. These paths are to be made clear for the passage of various forces emanating from JIVATMA and this cleansing is done by the practice of the proper types of pranayama. If the JIVATMA functions through the white (sattvic) nerves good deeds are accomplished. If through the others bad deeds result. So that the good nerves may be cleansed, it is emphasised in the Yoga and treatises that the pranayama practised should be of proper types.

In the practice of Pranayama there are three stages.

These are: MURCHA, MRITA and BADDHA.

**MURCHA AVASTHA:** This is the stage when prana functions without one's consciousness as in normal deep sleep. There are many ways in which consciousness could be lost, e.g., poisons, intoxicants, disease, normal deep sleep in a healthy body etc. That we are dealing with at present is the stage of normal deep sleep in a healthy body. In this stage of deep sleep, the energy which normally goes out from the JIVATMA in normal waking hours retreats back to its resting place in the hollow of the heart. The same stage can be reached when one is awake by the practice of Murcha pranayama. In this stage the JIVATMA gets absorbed in PARAMATMA.

**MRITA AVASTHA:** This is the stage in nadisothona pranayama when during Bahya kumbhakam, prana is raised through the sushumna and made to rest in the SAHASRARA. During such stopping of the prana, the mind concentrates on God, either in the gross form or in the subtle form. At first the concentration will be on God with form, in all his

splendour and as practice advances the mind concentrates on one definite portion of this form and finally the mind loses its consciousness. In this final stage the individual merges in God SATHSAMPATHI. In this stage the individual has conquered death.

**BADDHA AVASTHA:** In doing UJJAYI, NADISODHANA or SURYABHEDANA Pranayama when during ANTHAR kumbhakam the breath can be retained for more than 64 seconds, this stage is reached. The practice of this stage increases one's energy.

To summarise, MURCHA cures diseases, MRITHA conquers death and BADDHA increases one's energy.

## **12. PRANAYAMA**

Before dealing with the science of Pranayama, it is necessary to understand, what is meant by Prana in yogic science. According to yoga, 'PRANA' is a subtle form of energy, that exists for each individual, during his life time. It is neither the inert air that we breathe nor the ATMAN which is the observer of all actions. This PRANA which is separate for each individual, controls the actions of all our faculties, both external and internal, e.g., our power of seeing, hearing etc., understanding, willing etc. This PRANA by proper exercise can be strengthened and thus make our senses more acute, give long life, health and strength.

The science of Pranayama deals with the proper methods of exercising the Prana. The exercises consist in lengthening, controlling etc. of the Prana by regulated breathing. Thus normally, there is regulation during four stages: 1. Inhalation, 2. Retention of air inside, 3. Exhalation, and 4. retention of air outside. If the durations of these stages are equal, the Pranayama is called SAMAVRITTI, otherwise VISHAMAVRITTI. Samavritti pranayama leads to general health and well-being. When special results are necessary, vishamavritti pranayama has to be practised. Besides the four stages mentioned above there is a fifth stage called KEVALA KUMBHAKAM, but this stage can be practised only when a high

degree of proficiency has been attained.

Pranayama according Raja Yoga is of ten kinds. These are enumerated below:

1. SURYABHEDANA
2. UJJAYI
3. NADISODANA
4. SITKARI
5. SITALI
6. BHRAMARI
7. LAHARI or PLAVINI
8. KAPHALABHATI
9. BHASTRIKA
10. MURCHA

While Gorakshasamhitha and many other authorities accept all the ten kinds mentioned above, Svatomarama in his Hathayogapradipika accepts only eight, leaving out Lahari and Murcha. Of these the first three, improve the body, the mind and the spirit. The results are slow in manifesting themselves but are long lasting. The other seven are for the wellbeing of the body only. They produce results quickly, but are not longlasting.

For regulating the duration of the different stages of Pranayama, counting is done with the mental repetition of some MANTRAS. It is usual to adopt a mantra that is not too long. when no particular mantra is adopted the short syllable "AUM" or "RAM" is used as a measure of count. Pranayama done with the mental repetition of some mantra is called samanthrakam, that which is done otherwise is called AMANTHRAKAM or TANTRIKAM.

There are also three modes of doing Pranayama viz., Anuloma, Viloma and Pratiloma. These have to be prescribed by the teacher depending on the moral attainment of the pupil.



These modes control the mind and regulate it so that it progressively functions in a righteous path.

The practice of pranayama should not be begun without having attained, a fair proficiency in some, atleast of the sitting asanas, i.e., till it has become possible to sit in one of the asanas without discomfort for some appreciable time. This condition has been stressed by Patanjali in Chapter II verse 49 of his SUTRAS. So also has Svatmarama, in his book HATHAYOGADIPKA, second upadesa. Without mastering asanas, bandhas are not possible, and without bandhas pranayamas are not possible writes GORAKSHANATH.

Amongst asanas, padmasana is the best. Of the bandhas for the practice of Pranayama three bandhas are important. These are: JALANDHARA BANDHA: - Chin Lock - the chin presses against the chest bone as low as possible so that the thyroid gland is pressed. MULA BANDHA: Drawing back of the lower abdomen, UDDIYANA BANDHA: Drawing in of the lower and upper abdomen as far back and up as possible.

For regulating the breathing by one of the nostrils at a time the fingers are used to close the appropriate nostril they are also used for closing both the nostrils when holding the breath. The proper way of using the fingers, prescribed in the Yoga Treatises, is to bend the index and middle finger of the right hand to touch the palm leaving the other fingers extended. The thumb is placed on the right nostril and the other two extended fingers on the left nostril. These fingers should be placed near the middle of the nose, so that when pressed the inner bone may be felt by the fingers, and a slight downward pull is given to the nose, and the facial muscles below the eyes experience a slight pull. This way of holding the fingers is called MRIGI MUDRA.

### **SURYABHEDANA**

This Pranayama is so called as its practice eliminates all those obstructions in the body which hamper the proper regulation of heat and light in the body, heat and light which are

attributes of the sun. Unless this pranayama is practised, at first and mastered the other types of Pranayama will not give their full effect. So the practice of this pranayama is highly praised and stressed as the first important step by Svathmarana in the HATHA YOGA PRADIPIKA.

Technique: Place a soft cushion on the ground and sit on it. Sit on it in PADMASANA. Place the fingers of the right hand on the nostrils in the manner already described. Slightly press the right nostril by the thumb, the left nostril full pressed by the other two extended fingers and slowly draw in the breath. Inhale as slowly and for as long a time as possible. During the entire practice of pranayama MULA BANDHA should be maintained (ie) the lower abdomen should be drawn in. After the inhalation has been completed JALANDHARA BANDHAM is maintained. Both the nostrils are kept well pressed by the thumb and the other extended fingers with a slight downward pull to extend the facial muscles and the breath retained. The sastras enjoin that the breath should held till such time that the air breathed in, is able to spread and reach the ends of the hairs and the finger nails. But at the beginning stages this should not be attempted as it is very important to ensure that these delicate air vessels are not harmed. To preserve these delicate air tubes it is also important that both breathing in and breathing out are gentle and not forceful or violent. After the breath has been retained to the extent it has been possible without discomfort, the pressure by the fingers on the left nostril is released and the air is slowly - very slowly - breathed out. When the exhaling starts, UDDIYANABANDHA should be begun that is the lower abdomen should start being drawn in and as the exhaling progresses the upper abdomen should also be drawn backwards and upwards so that the completion of the breathing out and the completion of the BANDHA should coincide. During the early stages of practice, pain may be felt in the regions of navel, liver, spleen and solar plexus.

In this pranayama, inhalation is always through the right nostril and exhalation through the

left nostril.

Except for LAHARI and SITALI for the other types of pranayama the following Bandhas are to be observed: JALANDHARABANDHA, UDDIYANABANDHA, and MULABANDHA.

Mulabandham is maintained throughout the period pranayama is practised. Jalandhara Bandham is done after inhalation and maintained throughout. Uddiyanabandham is done during exhalation as already outlined by beginning the movement with the start of exhalation and completed with the end of exhalation.

### **UJJAYI - ANULOMA**

Sit in one of the asanas, padmasana, siddhasana in the case of recluse. There should be chin lock, and both the arms stretched with the palms on the knees. The palms should be open and the fingers together. The elbows should not be bent.

Inhalation: Breath is slowly and evenly drawn in through both nostrils, with a rubbing sensation in the throat. With practise, the rubbing sensation will be felt as low down as the diaphragm.

Holding in: The breath is held by constricting the throat and not by closing the nostrils by the fingers. The arms should continue to remain stretched.

Exhaling: right hand is now brought to the nose with the fingers in Mrigi Mudra and exhalation regulated, in the first round through the right nostril, in the next through the left nostril and so on alternately. The breathing out should be as slowly and as evenly as possible. After exhalation is completed the right arm is brought back to its original position of being stretched with the palm on the knee-cap.

In the initial stage of this pranayama as well as other pranayamas, BAHYA KUMBHAKAM or holding out of breath need not be practised. It is enough if the periods of breathing in, holding in the breath and breathing out are made of equal duration. After

sufficient ease of operation has been attained in practising pranayama with only these three stages, the fourth or BAHYA kumbhakam stage may be cautiously attempted.

As already mentioned this pranayama is to be done with the three bandhas - JALANDHARABANDHAM, MULABANDHAM and UDDIYANABANDHAM. Thus during the inhalation stage there is only one Bandham (jalandhara bandham), during the retention two (jalandhara bandham and mula bandham established during the previous exhalations), and during the exhalation stage all the three bandhas.

### **UJJAYI - VILOMA.**

This is a counter process to the ANULOMA pranayama, and should be practised immediately after anuloma pranayama. Here breathing-in is done through alternate nostrils, and breathing out through both nostrils, through throat and with rubbing sensation in the throat. In this process phlegm is brought out, and this should be spit out. The practice of anuloma and viloma ujjayi, cleans up the breathing passages, and the air vessels. As far as asana, mudra etc. are concerned the remarks made about anuloma ujjayi are equally applicable here.

### **PRATILOMA UJJAYI**

This combines both anuloma and viloma ujjayi pranayama. Before practising this, however, the following preliminary exercise should be done to clear the nasal and throat passages.

**PRELIMINARY EXERCISE.** Inhale through both nostrils open, mouth closed, retain and exhale through one of the nostrils, say the right, holding the nostrils in mrigi mudra. Repeat this process ten times always breathing in through the throat, retain and breathe out through the same nostril, the right. Now repeat ten times, breathing in through the throat, retaining and breathing out through the left nostril.

**PRATILOMA UJJAYI proper:**

Technique: Sit in a proper asana.

1. Inhale through throat, retain and exhale through right nostril. 2. Inhale through right nostril, retain and exhale through throat. 3. Inhale through throat, retain and exhale through left nostril. Inhale through left nostril, retain and exhale through throat. The above four steps together form one round of pranayama. The above describes the pranayama with only antar kumbhakam. After this type has been practised for some time and proficiency attained, the pranayama should be practised with only bahya kumbhakam but without antar kumbhakam. Bahya kumbhakam will be after the exhalation. When practice has sufficiently progressed, the pranayama can be done with both antar and bahya kumbhakam. The periods of kumbhakam should not be so long as to affect the normal slow, even and long and thin breathing in and breathing out. The periods of inhaling and exhaling should be as long as possible. The period of bhaya kumbhakam should be restricted to one-third the period of antar kumbhakam. It has been stated earlier that in the beginning stages the period of antar kumbhakam should not exceed six seconds. Thus in the beginning bahya kumbhakam should not exceed two seconds.

This pranayama should not be practiced without first mastering the Bandhas. Jalandhara bandha will not be possible if the region of the throat is fatty. This fat should first be reduced by practising the appropriate asanas. The following asanas help in reducing fat in the front and back of the neck.

SARVANGASANA, HALASANA, KARNAPIDASANA. For reducing the fat on the sides of the neck the following asanas should be practised. BHARADVAJASANA and ARDHA MATSYENDRASANA.

For properly doing Uddiyana bandham and Mula Bandham these should be practised while in SIRSHASANA.

The full benefits of this pranayama will result only when it is done with all the three bandhas and with both the kumbhakam.

BENEFITS: This cleans up all the air passages and air vessels. It cures cases of constant coughing sneezing and - . It is effective in curing those who breathe through the mouth as the nasal passages are blocked. Constant breathing through the mouth results in the mouth and tongue getting dry which is very bad for the health and shortens life. The regular practice of this pranayama, wards off all diseases affecting the nose, lungs and breathing passages. ANULOMA is effective in the case of diseases affecting the nasal passages and VILOMA those affecting the throat. VILOMA cures tonsils.

Ordinarily fat people and sedentary workers suffer from improper digestion and accumulation of gas in the stomach and intestines. This pranayama aids in the gas passing off and thus relieving the tension and discomfort.

It strengthens the heart and cures cases of intermittent pulse. Some restrictions regarding food should be observed when the pranayama is practiced to effect the cure of specific conditions.

In the case of those having breathing troubles and for those who are fat: Curds should be avoided. It is also better to avoid gummy substances like ladies fingers, etc.

In the case of those who have no trouble with their breathing but have some heart trouble e.g., a rapid or intermittent pulse, curds and buttermilk can be taken in moderation, but with salt and a few drops of ginger juice. They should however restrict the quantity of food to three fourths of the normal quantity and solids should not exceed half and liquids to the extent of a quarter.

In the case of those whose breathing is good, and heart is sound but are suffering from digestive troubles and gas formation, it is better that they undertake for the first five days to live on a liquid diet. They may take either buttermilk with a pinch of rock salt, ginger and milk with saffron and some ghee and sugar. In the early stages they should practice without kumbhakam.

In the case of gas formation a household remedy given below is effective in relieving the discomfort to the gas: A decoction in water of cumin and ginger to be taken at frequent intervals.

### **PRANAYAMA CAUTIONS:**

A few important warnings have to be given which apply not only to this pranayama but to all pranayamas and should be carefully noted and observed.

1. If any particular nostril is blocked, inhalation should not be done by the blocked nostril. There is, however, nothing against breathing out by that nostril.

2. The duration of the various stages of pranayama i.e., breathing in, retention of breath, breathing out, retaining out of breath, should so chosen that there is no strain. In the beginning it is better to make these periods equal i.e., practice the SAMAVRITTI type. It will be observed that normally the duration of these periods for which one is, for example, to hold breath comfortably, differs from that for which one can draw in the breath or breath out. The least of the periods for these four stages should be chosen. Again, as it is not a single round of pranayama that is to be done at a time but a few, allowance must be made for this so that even after the last round has been done one may not feel any strain. Thus the period should only be a fraction of the least of the durations for the four stages. The test to see whether there is any strain is as follows:

After retention of breath it should be possible to slowly and evenly breathe out normally for the same period without any discomfort. Similarly after holding out the breath it should be possible slowly and evenly to inhale for the same period without discomfort. It is better to choose the period on the low side and slowly and cautiously increase it as practice advances. Thus practised, there will be no danger and the full benefit will be realized. It is emphasized that strain spells danger.

3. As mentioned earlier it is better to regulate the duration by the mental repetition of

some MANTRA. If this method is adopted, at the beginning stage, the repetition of the mantra should only be during the inhalation and exhalation stages, and not during the retention stages, as concentrating on the mantra it may so happen that the periods of retention are lengthened with consequent possibility of strain and harm. There should, at the early stages, be conscious effort to watch that, especially during retentions the period fixed is not exceeded. After practice the four periods will automatically become equal and breathings normal and mantra could be used during all the four stages.

Bahya Kumbhakam (holding out of the breath) should not be practised in the beginning stages, but only after practice has sufficiently advanced. Even then the periods of Bahya Kumbhakam should be slowly increased. To get proper control during Bahya kumbhakam the pranayamas should be practised with Bahya Kumbhakam but omitting antar Kumbhakam (holding in of breath). After sometime, Bahya kumbhakam will not cause any strain when breathing in after Bahya Kumbhakam. As a matter of fact the test is whether breathing in can be done in a normal manner slowly, evenly and longer after Bahya Kumbhakam and breathing out can be done in a normal manner slowly evenly and longer after antar kumbhakam. If at any time the breathing in or out becomes uneven, it is a sign that the periods of bahya or antar kumbhakam should be reduced. These general remarks apply to all the different kinds of pranayama.

When Bahya kumbhakam has become sufficiently easy; the pranayama should be practiced with both Bahya and antar kumbhakams. In the beginning stages the period of Kumbhakam should not be more than six seconds. The period may be slowly and carefully increased by stages to one minute as practice advances.

All pranayama except kaphalabhati may be practiced by ladies during their period of pregnancy. Patanjali and Gorakshanath are against their doing the kumbhakam. They say that ladies should confine themselves during pregnancies to merely longer breathing in and



breathing out. But Svatmarama a later writer on Yogic science, writes that even they could practice the kumbhakam but limit the duration to not more than five seconds. There have been cases where the duration of kumbhakam has been increased to considerably longer periods during pregnancy with benefit but this was done under proper guidance and as a curative measure. Normally the period of five seconds given by Swathmarama may be taken as the maximum period allowable. The practice of pranayama during pregnancy benefits both the mother and the child to be born and is conducive in giving it long life.

#### KAPHALABHATI, and NADISODHANA Pranayama

Technique:

1. Sit in Padmasana - but not in Baddha Padmasana. Keep eyes closed. The knees should touch the ground. The arms should be stretched and the palms placed on the respective knees. The elbows should not be bent. Spine should be held stiffly erect.
2. Lower the head into the chin lock position.
3. Exhale and inhale rapidly by both the nostrils at the rate of one complete round of exhalation and inhalation per second. The chest, shoulder and the arms should not move, but only the stomach both the lower and upper portions should move in and out. In the beginning stages more than 12 rounds (exhalations and inhalation) should not be done.
4. Immediately after the last exhalation, without any pause an even slow deep breath should be drawn in through the left nostril. To enable this being done the nose should be held by the fingers of the right hand in mrigi mudra.
5. Close both the nostrils, and retain the air for five seconds.
6. Fully press the left nostril, with the little and fourth fingers and keep the right nostril slightly pressed by thumb, and exhale the air in an even manner slowly.
7. Slowly, evenly and deeply breathe in through the right nostril.
8. Close both the nostrils and retain the air for five seconds.

9. Press the right nostril with the thumb, release the pressure of the fingers on the left nostril and exhale through the left nostril slowly and evenly.

Steps 4 to 9 constitute one round of nadisodhana pranayama. It should be done immediately after Kaphalabhati without a pause. After 12 rounds of Kaphalabhati 6 rounds of nadisodhana pranayama should be done.

12 rounds of Kaphalabhati mentioned above is at the beginning stages, the number should slowly be increased as practice advances to a minimum of 48 rounds and a maximum of 128 rounds. Hatayogapradipika does not prescribe any maximum number but places the limit till such time as one feels exhausted and that immediately thereafter without a pause air should be slowly, evenly and deeply inhaled through the left nostril. But the maximum of 128 mentioned above is as high as one need go.

In NADISHODHANA pranayama breathing in and out is done only through the nostrils and not through the throat. This pranayama should be done only after Kaphalabhati or Bhastrika to be described later.

**BENEFITS:** Cleans up all the blood vessels proceeding from the heart.

#### **14. BHASTRIKA**

This is closely related to Kaphalabhati. Unlike Kaphalabhati where both nostrils are used for breathing in and breathing out only one nostril is used at a time. To enable this regulation the fingers of the right hand are used in Mrigi mudra. The Pranayamas are of two kinds - VILOMA and ANULOMA.

In the case of ANULOMA, the right nostril is closed and the air in the lungs forcefully expelled through the left. Without a pause breath is taken in by the same nostril. Now again without a pause the left nostril is closed and right opened and the air forcefully expelled through the right nostril. Without a pause air is drawn in through the same right nostril. This process of breathing in through alternate nostrils and expelling air with some

force through the other nostril is repeated. The same caution against use of excessive force in expelling the air applies here also.

In the case of VILOMA, breathing in is always through one nostril, and breathing out through the other. The blocked nostril is used for breathing out and the non-blocked nostril for inhaling.

In both cases the pranayama should be done in Padmasana. If sitting in this asana is difficult one of the other asanas mentioned under Kaphalabhati may be adopted. The important point to note is that the spine is kept erect, there is proper chin lock and the lungs are not constrained by an improper posture.

This practice cleanses the air passages in the nose and is also called VAYU NETI as distinguished from JALANETI and SUTRA NETI. In JALANETI and SUTRA NETI the nasal passages are cleaned by water and by soft thread. These two are termed KRIYAS and are prescribed curative measures in special cases. While the Pranayama is for all, these kriyas are applicable only in certain cases. These Kriyas may be necessary in certain cases for giving immediate relief, but these should not be practised as an everyday routine as they are sometimes habit forming. In the case of asanas and pranayamas however they are not habit forming and hence there is no danger in practicing BHASTRIKA daily though it has also an action to clean up the nasal passages. On the other hand the best results from pranayama are obtained if KAPHALABHATI or BHASTRIKA is done first.

BHASTRIKA pranayama has as its essential feature breathing out through alternate nostrils with some force. If, however, one nostril is heavily blocked, purely as a temporary curative measure, forcible exhalation and the inhalation may be made through the same unblocked nostril.

The same remarks regarding the number of rounds as made in the case of KAPHALABHATI are equally applicable here. It is equally important that immediately

after BHASTRIKA without a pause either NADISODHANA or SITALI pranayama is done.

Benefits:

Giddiness due to blood-pressure is reduced. For immediate relief, Bhastrika should be followed by SITALI. But for eradicating the complaint, Nadishodhana should be done. A general observation may be made here about the aims of Yoga. These practices are mainly intended for strengthening the body as far as the physical benefit is concerned, and the body's resistance to ward off diseases. No doubt these can be used for curative purposes. When thus used there are three stages. The first, to give immediate relief, the second, to cure the disease and the third to build up the bodily resistance to prevent the body getting diseased. Depending on the state of body's health the process of building up bodily resistance takes longer or shorter time. In all cases of Yogic treatment all the three stages are equally important.

Note: In the case of those who are not able to sit in Padmasana, they may sit in VAJRASANA, BRAHMASANA, SIDDHASANA or PRASARITA PADASANA. Siddhasana is not however recommended for married people. Padmasana is the best suited and the other asanas are arranged in their order of suitability. In all these cases the point to be carefully observed is that the spine is kept stiff and erect, there is chin lock and the arms are held stretched without the elbows being bent. During the breathing in and out only the stomach should move in and out but the other parts of the body should be kept steady. In VAJRASANA, BRAMHASANA and SIDDHASANA the knees should touch the ground. In the case of PRASARITA PADASANA where the legs are stretched in front, the knees should be together and the thighs and calves touching the ground.

KAPHALABHATI should not be done by ladies during pregnancy.

Too much force should not be used in breathing out either in kaphalabhati or in bhastrika. The fine air vessels may be ruptured and blood may come out which is harmful. The golden

rule is slowly to increase the force of breathing out as practice advances. This is all the more necessary in the case of those whose nose is blocked for some reason or the other.

A brief description of PRASARITA PADASANA is given below:

1. Sit on the ground with the back touching the wall and the buttocks as close to the wall as possible. The spine should be kept erect and in this position practically the entire back will be touching the wall. Keep the chest forward.
2. Stretch both the legs in front of the body, the legs together, toes pointed, and the back of the knees touching the ground.
3. Stretch the arms and place the palms on the respective thighs or knees as is possible.
4. Chin lock. The chin must be locked in the notch below the throat and as high as possible so that the neck is not bent too much. The chin should be exactly on the median line. In this position with the spine kept erect the lungs will not be constrained and will be free to fully fill up when inhaling.

Note: The above asana has been mentioned for those who are unable to sit in PADMASANA, VAJRASANA or BRAHMASANA.

## **15. SITKARI**

This pranayama is so called because of the hissing sound heard when air is drawn in.

Technique:

1. Sit in padmasana. This is the only asana in which this pranayama should be done.
2. Keep head erect. Slightly widen the lips, leaving a thin line of space between the lips, so that air can be drawn in through the inter space. The teeth will also be slightly apart. The tip of the tongue should be just inside the teeth. Slowly, evenly and as deeply as possible draw in the breath through the lips so that the air may move over the top and bottom sides of the tongue. Mulabandha should be observed throughout the Pranayama.
3. When the inhalation is complete, the chin should be lowered into the JALANDRA

position. The lips are closed and breath retained in antar kumbhakam. The tongue is kept in the normal position and not rolled in as in the case of SITALI.

4. When kumbhakam is complete, air is slowly, and evenly exhaled through alternate nostrils, and to regulate this, the fingers of the right hand are used in Mrigi Mudra. While exhaling, Uddiyana Bandha is observed.

5. There is no Bahya kumbhakam in this pranayama. After exhalation, the head is brought to the erect position as in step 2 to begin the next round of pranayama.

The duration of kumbhakam can be from 5 seconds to 64 seconds according to capacity and practice. One should be careful that there is no strain.

For better benefits, this pranayama should be preceded by Kaphalabhati or Bastrika.

It may be mentioned here that except SURYABEDHANA, NADISODHANA and UJJAYI the other types of pranayama are merely for the wellbeing of the body or for use as curative measure. For those in normal health it is merely enough to know these pranayama, but for daily practice one should concentrate on SURYABEDHANA, NADISODHANA or UJJAYI. These three ensure the wellbeing of the body, and in addition aid in the control of the mind and to reach the higher stages which are the real aim of Yoga. Thus the other types of pranayama do not find mention in Patanjali's Yoga-sutras. These others are however mentioned in the other works on Yoga e.g., HATHAYOGAPRADIPIKA, GHERANDA SAMHITA and some of the Upanishads.

Great moderation should be exercised in the matter of food. Those who practise pranayama for spiritual ends have to be very particular. They should completely avoid meat and such things as onions, asafoetida, and not take highly spiced things or preparations which are too hot sour or bitter. They should if possible restrict themselves to a few of the satvic things - rice, wheat, fruits, milk, ghee, butter, sugar candy, honey, ginger, snake-gourd, brinjals, some of the greens. Amongst these a few should be chosen and the diet restricted to only

those few. The food should be as simple as possible, the aim being to control the palate, which will in its turn help in controlling the mind.

In the case of those who practice pranayama mainly for physical benefits the food restrictions need not be so rigid. Meat may be used occasionally and with moderation.

## **17. SITALI**

The same remarks as for NADISHODHANA apply here also as far as the asana to be adopted is concerned.

Technique:

1. Sit in one of the asanas as for Nadishodhana.
2. Keep eyes closed.
3. Keep the spine erect, chest forward with Mula Bandha. The arms are kept stretched, the palms resting on the knees.
4. The head is kept level. The tongue is rolled into a U-channel and projects about a quarter of an inch beyond the lips. Slowly and deeply inhale through the mouth so that the air is drawn in through the U-shaped tongue and the air is thus moistened. Simultaneously the head is slowly thrown back till the inhalation is completed.
5. In the tongue, roll the tip inwards and upwards so that the tip touches the back of the soft pallet as far behind as possible. Lower the head into the chin lock position, Jalandhara banda. Hold the breath for 5, 8, or 12 seconds.
6. Breathe out through the throat, with rubbing sensation as in the case of UJJAYI, slowly and as long as possible. The tongue should continue to be in the rolled back position. During breathing out UDDIYANA bandha should be practised.
7. Keep out the breath for not more than four seconds.
8. Unroll the tongue, and roll it to U-shape for the inhalation. The head is also lifted to the level position. At this stage there will be only Mula Bandha.

The above completes one round of the pranayama. In the beginning stages not more than twelve rounds should be done. This pranayama may be done even when there is fever. This brings down the temperature.

Benefits: This brings immediate relief to those suffering from blood-pressure, giddiness, false hunger thirst, drowsiness, lassitude etc. The best results are obtained if done immediately after Kaphalabhati or Bhastrika. Greater benefits are obtained if practised with restriction of diet.

According to Yoga Sastra twenty one kinds of poisons are produced by the improper functioning of various indriyas, organs, mind, intellect etc. Thus poisons are produced not only by the wrong functioning of the physical organs but also by improper mental states. See Hathayogapradipika Chapter II 56-57. The presence of these poisons brings about diseases and such symptoms as low blood pressure or high blood pressure, indigestion giddiness, shallow breathing etc.

Sitali pranayama is very effective in throwing out the poisons, even if done by itself. The effect is greater if Sitali is immediately preceded by Kaphalabhati or Bhastrika.

This pranayama is very effective in curing stuttering, but a very strict restriction about diet has to be observed.

Anuloma, viloma and pratiloma methods of pranayama are described differently in Yogakurantam. In the anuloma method, breath instead of being taken in evenly throughout the inhalation, is taken in steps i.e., if for example the duration of inhalations is normally six seconds, the slow even inhalation is interrupted after 3 seconds, the breath retained for three seconds breath taken in for three seconds, retained for three seconds and then breathed out evenly for six seconds. At first the normal duration of inhalation is divided into 2 steps. As practice advances, the duration is broken up into more number of equal steps interspersed with retention of breath. Thus in this method inhalation and retention stages are combined,



broken up into a definite number of equal stages, so that each short stage of inhalation is followed by a short stage of retention, but the exhalation stage is even.

In viloma, the inhalation stage is even, but the exhalation stage is combined with the stage of retaining out of breath i.e., Bahya Kumbhakam, in equal number of steps.

The above methods can be done both in Samavritti and Vishamavritti pranayama. When the number of a steps has been decided upon, the normal periods of inhalation, retention in, exhalation, and retention out are divided by that number to give the periods of each step.

When both inhalation and exhalation are in steps the method is called PRATILOMA.

Thus each of the main types of pranayama can be done, 1. SAMANTRAKAM, 2. AMANTRAKAM, 3. SAMAVRITTI, 4. VISHAMAVRITTI, 5. ANULOMA, 6. VILOMA, 7. PRATILOMA. Under each type and mode, the basic duration and number are increased as practice advances.

The method of doing pranayama with anuloma, viloma or pratiloma as described above i.e., in steps, is highly beneficial, and as the mind has constantly to watch the steps, aids in the practice of concentration.

Note: It will be noticed that the more fully that inhalation is done the more easy will be the retention of breath, (antar kumbhakam), and the more fully that breath is exhaled out, will (bahya kumbhakam) be found easier.

Out of the ten types of pranayama, seven types have been dealt with leaving the three types - BHRAMARI, LAHARI and MURCHA. Their techniques and benefits are purely physical and even at that not long-lasting. These also have a tendency to retard spiritual progress, and as such do not fit in with the purposes of this book.

Out of the eight steps in Yoga, the first two, YAMA and NIYAMA, deal with the cleanliness, physical and moral for maintaining proper ethical standards. The next two steps are asanas and pranayamas and these have been dealt with in previous chapters. Four more

steps remain over - PRATYAHARA, DHARANA, DHYANA and SAMADHI. The last three mostly concern the training of the mind and the first four have a large physical basis. The fifth step Pratyahara forms a link between the steps having a physical basis of training and those which have a mental basis for training. In the first four steps the physical exercises help in calming the mind. After this we come to a stage where the mind itself has to be used in training and controlling it. In the case of physical exercises the onlooker is able to watch these exercises and see whether these have been properly done. In the case of the mental exercises, however, the progress cannot be watched externally but is to be watched and realised by the aspirant himself.

But the guidance of a guru is much more necessary in this case.

#### **18. YONI MUDRA or SAMBAVI MUDRA or SHANMUKHI MUDRA**

This mudra is so called, as in it, the JNANA INDRIYAS are sealed up. These are the external organs of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and speech, the ears, eyes, nose, and mouth.

Technique:

1. Sit in any one of the sitting postures - PADMASANA, SVASTIKASANA, VAJRASANA etc. Spine erect, shoulders in line.
2. Place the thumbs to close the openings of the ears, the first and second fingers on the closed eyelids, the first finger above the eyeball and the second finger below the eyeball, the pressure should be light, the ring fingers at the side of the nostrils but without closing them, and the little fingers at the outer corners of the closed lips. The upper arms should be horizontal and in line with the shoulders. Chest should be raised and the stomach drawn in.

Note: In the beginning of the practice, it is enough if the thumbs close the ear holds; at the next stage of the practice, the small flaps over the ear holds, Tragees (?), should be pressed over the ear holds by the thumbs; and at the stage of advanced practice, the lobes of the ear should be folded over the flaps and both pressed over the ear holds by the thumbs, so as

effectively to exclude all external noise.

The mudra should preferably be done in a dark room. The room should be pleasant and cool and sweet smelling. A few incense sticks may be kept burning. One should sit facing in such a manner that at the end of the Mudra, when the eyes are slowly opened, cool breeze lays on the eyes.

Pranayama siddhi is to be attained before starting on the practice of this mudra.

The order in which the fingers are placed on the various organs is given below. First ears holes are closed, then the first and second fingers placed gently on the closed eyelids, then the ring fingers on the sides of the nostrils, and lastly the little fingers at the corners of the mouth. The eyes should internally gaze at a point midway between the eyebrows, and imagine and concentrate on a spot of light there.

5. Take long deep breaths, with hissing sound in the throat.

Note: During the first week practice for a minute, the second week for two minutes and slowly raise the duration to a maximum of five minutes. More than this period of 5 minutes can be practiced only by recluses, it is not for those in ordinary life.

There is also a variation of this mudra where the fingers are not used for closing the organs to exclude external stimuli, but this is for advanced students.

It gives additional benefit if the eyes are washed before the exercise with a slightly warm lotion made of water in which a very small crystal of refined camphor is dissolved.

4. The fingers are removed in the reverse order. First the little fingers then the ring fingers then the first and second fingers and last the thumbs. The eyes are very slowly opened, the internal gaze brought down to gaze at the tip of the nose, and the gaze slowly raised to the middle distance and then to the level as the eyes are fully opened. As mentioned in the second note under step 2, it should be arranged for cool breeze to play on the open eyes at this time. It is important that there should be no abrupt opening of the eyes,

as this is extremely harmful.

Note: Those suffering from asthma should not practice this mudra. The transition from the concentration during the mudra to external awareness should be gentle; this will not be possible for those suffering from asthma.

Tadasana and Vajrasana should be practiced before this Mudra.

Benefits: It is good for all ailments of the JNANA INDRIYAS, especially the eyes. It takes about two months before the benefits become noticeable, but after that the improvement is rapid. This can be practiced even when there is headache, giddiness etc. According to Yoga all diseases have their origin in the weakness of the JNANA INDRIYAS and as this mudra rapidly strengthens these indriyas, diseases are cured and the general health improves.

A very good practice for those suffering from eye diseases is to stand in waist deep water at mid-day with the sun overhead, bend at the hips, place the face in the water, and slowly wink the eyes under water so that the eyes are washed in the clear water. After some days of the practice the back of the head will feel cool and this is an indication of improvement in the condition of the eyes.

As the practice of Yoni Mudra advances, concentration develops, the mind withdraws from external stimuli and internal sounds, smells, lights become manifest.

For those whose eyes are very bad or for those who get puss in the eyes, ears, nose or mouth, use of kayakalpa eye drops is highly beneficial.

## **DHYANA or MEDITATION**

This forms the seventh step in ASHTANGA YOGA. It has advisedly been placed thus, as a proper practice. Progress and benefit in this step is ensured only by systematically following the previous steps: YAMA, NIYAMA, ASANA, PRANAYAMA, etc.

It is futile to attempt the practice of DHYANA without first strengthening the JNANA-INDRIYAS or higher organs of perception which are to be used in this practice. In its turn the strengthening of the higher organs of perception requires a healthy body capable of proper circulation of rich blood and pure air in these organs and of healthy nerves. This can be achieved only by the regular and systematic practice of asana, PRANAYAMA, wholesome and bland food (SATVIC FOOD) taken in moderation, proper frame of mind (NIYAMA), proper practices in physical cleanliness (YAMA), and preservation of vitality (BRAHMACARYA).

When once a fair proficiency has been attained in asana and pranayama, the aspirant to dhyana has to regulate the time to be spent on each and choose the particular asanas and pranayama which will have the most effect in strengthening the higher organs and centres of perception and thus aid him in attaining dhyana.

The best asanas to choose for this purpose are SIRSHASANA and SARVANGASANA. These are to be done with proper regulated breathing and with bandhas. The eyes should be kept closed and the eye balls rolled as if they are gazing at the space between the eyebrows. It is enough if 16 to 24 rounds of each are done at each sitting.

As DHYANA is practiced in one of the following sitting postures, these asanas should also be practiced, to strengthen the muscles that come into play in keeping these postures steady. The eyes are kept closed and the eyeballs turned internally to gaze at the space between the eyebrows. If the eyes are kept open, the gaze is directed to the tip of the nose. It is enough if 12 rounds of each asana is done.

Amongst PRANAYAMA, NADISODHANAM and UJJAYI should be practiced regularly with BANDHA TRAYAM i.e. JALANDHARA, UDDIYANA and MULA BANDHAM and with retention of breath after inhalation (ANTAR kumbhakam) of five to ten seconds each round, but without BAHYA kumbhakam. It is enough if 24 rounds of each is done at each sitting. BHASTRIKA and KAPHALABHATI of 150 rounds should be done before the pranayama to enrich the blood with oxygen. After some practice the pranayama could be done with BAHYA kumbhakam also of not more than five seconds each round. The eyes should be kept closed during the practice.

The mind follows the breath during inhalations and exhalations, but during the kumbhakam, mental images appear both good and bad, depending on our actions and environment, but during BAHYA kumbhakam the mind is more traceable. Pleasant and soothing images occur if one follows daily worship, has a reverent frame of mind, practices the moral virtues, and keeps his body clean. As practice advances the pleasant and soothing images predominate and the images become more controllable.

### **INNER GAZING - ANTAR THRATAKAM**

When necessary proficiency has been attained in doing the above asanas and pranayama the next step of practicing YONIMUDRA may be begun. The technique of this MUDRA is given elsewhere. It is better to practice this in a dark and quite place. This practice should be continued daily till this can be done for at least five minutes. During this practice advances, the space between the eyebrows becomes clear of passing images then becomes dark and blank and then later a bright star of intense light appears in the middle of the blackness surrounded by bright colours. The preliminary period before the appearance of the bright light gradually shortens and the period the bright light persists gradually lengthens.

When a stage is reached where the bright light is uninterrupted for ten minutes the next

practice may be begun.

### **OUTER GAZING - BAHYA THRATAKAM**

This is done in one of the sitting posture, with ANJALI MUDRA and the eyes kept open gazing without winking at the tip of a bright flame, spot of light or the picture of a Deity etc. Tears start coming after a short time but as practice advances the period of gazing before the appearance of tears lengthens.

When the eyes are now closed, the image at which one has been gazing appears at the space between the eyebrows. The period for which the image persists uninterrupted gradually lengthens.

The aspirant is now on his first step to develop concentration and practice increases his powers. Morning is the best time for the practice. This may also be practiced with advantage in bed just before going to bed for the night.

**BENEFITS:** Mental powers increase and this is reflected in the quick grasp of subjects and the speed with which one is able to get through one's work. An inner light guides us and an inner voice speaks and regulates one's actions and conduct on right lines, in one's daily life.

**NOTE:** There are also other variations of this practice of holding the image at other nerve centres eg. uvula, neck-pit below the thyroid gland, heart (centre of the chest), navel, root of the generative organs, rectum etc. These variations are for curative purposes and the practice should be learnt under the personal guidance of guru.

**THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF DISEASES ARE MENTIONED IN YOGA TREATISES AS AMENABLE TO YOGIC TREATMENT**

1. DISEASES OF THE HEAD : Headache, giddiness, etc
2. PREENASA (NOSE) : Running in the nose, not cold but where essence of fat runs out through the nose.
3. SULAM : Shooting pains in the eyes, ears teeth
4. BHAGANDHARAM : Splits in the skin, round the anus
5. GULMAN : Enlargement of spleen
6. PLEEHAM : Enlargement of liver
7. JVARA : Fevers
8. ARASAM : Piles both bleeding and non-bleeding
9. SVAYATHU : Swelling the legs etc. oedema
10. SVASAKA : Diseases connected with breathing like cold, asthma etc.
11. PRACHARDI : Vomiting other than that connected with morning sickness
12. AKSHI : Diseases of the eye
13. KUKSHI : Diseases of the stomach
14. KARNA : Diseases of the ear-deafness etc.
15. NASA : Diseases of the nostril-constant sneezing, blocking of the nostrils
16. JHIVA : Diseases of the tongue-drying up frequent ulceration etc.
17. YONI : Diseases of the generative organs
18. GUDA : Diseases of the rectum



19.	ATHISARAM	:	Diseases of the rectum
20.	KUSHTAM	:	Leprosy
21.	KAMPANAM	:	Palsy, shivering, trembling of the limb
22.	HRIDI	:	Diseases of the chest
23.	HRIDAYA	:	Diseases of the heart
24.	MEHA	:	Diabetes, copious urination etc.
25.	SONITA	:	Venereal diseases
26.	CHARMA	:	Diseases of the skin
27.	NAKHA	:	Diseases of the fingers & nails
28.	ROMA-KUPA	:	Diseases of the hair roots
29.	KANTHA	:	Diseases of the vocal chords
30.	ASTI or KSHAYAM	:	Consumption
31.	SANDHI	:	Rheumatism
32.	GARBHA	:	Diseases of the womb - frequent abortion, non-contraction of the womb, profuse bleeding etc.
33.	BRANA	:	Boils scrofula etc.
34.	MANO	:	Diseases of the mind (14 kinds : lust, atheism etc)
35.	MURCHA	:	Epilepsy

## YOGIC TREATMENT FOR SOME DISEASES

1. Diseases of the head, the eyes, the ears, speech, the spine and the joints are generally benefitted by the following asanas:

SIRSHASANA

SALABASANA

DHANURASANA

MAHAMUDRA

For those in middle age affected by the above diseases SIRSHASANA AND DHANURASANA are contra indicated. They can only do SALABHASANA and MAHAMUDRA.

2. For those suffering from the diseases of the heart stomach, piles, enlargement of the spleen, liver kidneys etc. the following asanas are beneficial: SARVANGASANA, JATHARAPARIVRITTI, a, b, & c, MAHAMUDRA, PASCHIMATANASANA, BADDHAKONASANA combined with any pranayama NADISODHANA, SITALI or UJJAYI will be found effective. At the beginning the pranayama should be done with kumbhakam i.e., retention of the breath and all anuloma.

3. For relief from Rheumatism the following asanas are effective:

AKUNCHANASANA

SARVANGASANA

VAJRASANA

MARICASANA

UTTANAMAYURASANA

KRAUNCASANA

BHARADVAJASANA

ARDHAMATSYENDRASANA section A.

Those with a fatty body should practice these asanas only under the guidance of a proper guru.

4. In the case of breathing troubles, ear troubles watering in the eyes, the following asanas combined with KAPHALABHATI AND NADISODANA are beneficial.

KARNAPIDASANA

HALASANA

SUPTAKONASANA

UPAVISHTAKONASANA

ARDHAMATSYENDRASANA - section B

ARDHABADDHA-PASCHIMATANA-ASANA.

For those with fatty bodies ARDHA-BADDHA-PASCHIMATHANASANA, KARNAPIDASANA, SUPTAKONASANA, and HALASANA are contra-indicated.

When these asanas are done for the purpose of treatment of diseases, restrictions regarding the diet should be scrupulously observed. Curds should not be used at all. Each of these asanas has to be combined with the proper pranayama and the duration of the intake, retention and breathing out and the number of rounds of each breath etc, will have to be properly regulated for maximum benefit.

## 5. DISEASES REGARDING MENSTRUATION:

Due to the climate, the food taken, heredity etc., the proper age for the appearance of menses varies. Between the ages of 12 to 20 it may be taken as normal. In some cases it may be as late 28 years as early as 10 or 11 years. These cases should be considered as abnormal. 14 to 20 may be considered as a proper age when the organs reasonably mature.

There are a number of diseases connected with menses but they respond well to Yogic treatment. The particular course of treatment has naturally to be modified according to the symptoms that are present. Answers to the following questions will be necessary:

1. What type of pain occurs? Shooting pain, bleeding pain, when it occurs, duration etc.
2. What is the nature of discharge? Is it scanty or copious? How long does it last? Does it smell badly?
3. General: How is the sleep during the periods? Does urine pass freely during these days? Is there constipation? State of general health.

The following is the general outline of treatment:

VAJRASANA: Twelve deep breaths, with retention of breath after inhalation, ANTAR kumbhakam, and retention out of breath, BAHYA kumbhakam, one second each round.

MAHAMUDRA: Twelve rounds each side. First begin with the right leg stretched and the left leg bent.

BADDHA-KONASANA: Sixteen rounds.

UPAVISHTAKONASANA: Three rounds, with central and side bending.

BHUJANGASANA: Three rounds. The navel should not be raised above the ground when the trunk is raised.

SALABHASANA: All types; three rounds each. Here again it should be watched that the navel is not raised from the ground.

Note: In all the cases the breathing should be deep, even and long and with rubbing sensation in the throat. Antar and Bahya kumbhakam one second per round.

Pranayama: UJJAYI and SITALI: Eight rounds each, with ANTAR kumbhakam three seconds each round. No BAHYA kumbhakam.

Note: If at any time there is a feeling of strain, sufficient rest should be taken before continuing the pranayama. Pranayama (with undue strain) should not be done during menses period.

BADDHAKONASANA and UPAVISHTAKONASANA may be done during the periods.

This gives considerable benefit. Other asanas should not be done.

If possible SARVANGASANA and SIRSHASANA may be learnt as these are beneficial.

For the first ten days there may be feeling of weakness but this will soon go and one need not feel alarmed. The Yogic exercises need not be done for more than half an hour each day. Pranayama should be done each day, preferably twice a day, one in the morning and once in the evening. The asanas may be taken by turns.

Do some meditation each day after the Yogic exercises, except during the days of the periods.

Diet Restrictions: During the four days of the periods, only ven-pongal with Payatham paruppu,(moong dhal) can use Jeerakam, but milagu, pepper should not be used. Ghee should be used in a fairly liberal measure. For the first two months of the treatment avoid the use of tamarind, curds and butter-milk. Plenty of milk may be used. Reduce salt, condiments, and hot condiments (pepper and chilly) during the treatment.

## 6. YOGIC PRACTICES DURING PREGNANCY.

Whatever be the stage of pregnancy there is absolutely no danger in practicing Yogic asanas and Pranayamas with proper precautions. On the other hand there will be considerable benefit, the health will improve and the delivery will be easy, and the child will be healthy and strong. The main object of these exercises is to strengthen those parts of the body which will later have to bear the strains of childbirth, at the same time ensuring that the muscles do not become stiff and compress the womb and thus harm the proper development of the child.

In the case of those who have been practicing before the conception and in the case of those who have started the exercises before the third month the restrictions may be relaxed to some extent. Those who start the exercises after the third month should scrupulously observe the restrictions. The outline given below is for those in normal health. In the case of those who have any complaints it is better to get guidance of a Yogic teacher. After the third month of pregnancy, Sirshasana and Sarvangasana should not be done.

Food restrictions should also be observed so that they do not catch cold or get cough.

Those who start on Yogic exercises for the first time after conception, should start with the preliminary exercise given below. This consists of doing breathing exercises in either the SVASTIKASANA or in BRAHMASANA or the LAGHU SVASTIKASANA. Best results are obtained in SVASTIKASANA and the other two are for those who cannot sit in SVASTIKASANA.

SVASTIKASANA:

Technique:

1. Spread something on the ground, for example, a folded blanket to have something soft and fairly firm to sit on. Sit on it cross legged, with the left leg bent at the knee, and the toes placed between the thigh and calf of the right leg. The right leg is bent at the knee and

leg crossed over the left leg and the toes of the right foot placed between the thigh and the calf of the left leg. The right leg will have to be slightly twisted to admit the toes of the right foot being placed as above between the thigh and the calf of the left leg. Both the shins should touch the blanket. This way the sides of the body above the hips are spread out. Sit erect with the head erect facing to the front and with the chin slightly lowered but without chin lock.

2. Stretch the arms so that the wrists rest on the respective knees. Palms should face downwards and the fingers kept close together and stretched.

3. Take long, deep, even inhalations and exhalations through the nose but with a hissing sound and rubbing sensation in the throat.

Kumbhakam i.e. retention of breath after inhalation should not be for more than a second each per round. The number of rounds of breathing to be done is discussed later.

There may be cases where the thighs and the calves are overweight that the above asana is not possible. In such cases Brahmasana may be tried. This is similar to the above but the toes of the feet are not placed between the thigh and the calf. The sole of the left foot is placed below the right thigh touching it. The sole of back of the right foot is placed on the left thigh, with the sole facing upwards. Both the knees should be touching the blanket. The rest of the steps are the same as SVASTIKASANA.

The eyes should be kept closed, so that the mind may not be distracted. Making a mental picture of an effulgent light in the centre of the chest (not in the region of the heart) is beneficial. The mouth is kept closed and the breathing is through the nose.

If Yogic asanas have been practiced even before conception or are begun within three months of pregnancy the number of rounds of breath could safely be as many as can conveniently be done without strain. However in the case of those who start practicing after the third month of pregnancy the number of rounds of deep breaths should be limited to six

or at the most eight in this asana. If at any time there is a feeling to gasp or to take a quick intake of breath, disturbing the even rhythm of breathing, rest should be taken by lying on the back with the head facing upwards for at least three minutes.

This preliminary exercise should be done in the morning and evening.

In the same sitting posture as the above, the following movements are done to strengthen the arms and the upper parts of the body.

1. Stretch arms horizontally to the sides of the body with the palms facing upwards. While inhaling, lift the arms upward, the palms to face each other. Interlock the fingers and turn the palms upwards.
2. While exhaling bend the elbows and bring the interlocked fingers behind the neck keeping the palms facing upwards.
3. While inhaling straighten the arms keeping the fingers interlocked and palms upwards.
4. While exhaling bring the stretched arms to the horizontal position in front of the body, the fingers continuing throughout to be interlocked and the palms facing upwards.
5. While inhaling, bend the elbows and make the back of the palms to touch the chest just below the chin, the elbows taken as far back as possible.
6. While exhaling, straighten the elbows and bring the arms to the position in step (4).
7. While inhaling, move the arms to the upright position overhead as in step (3).
8. While exhaling, unlock the fingers and bring down the stretched arms to the horizontal position as in step (1).

In the first week of practice two rounds of the movement may be done, in the second three rounds. No further increase in the subsequent weeks.

The movements should be slow and steady and not jerky. The muscles should not be in tension during the movements. The breathing should be long even and deep and not jerky



or violent.

These arm movements should be practised in any of the following asanas each day:

DANDASANA

VAJRASANA

TADASAMA

PADMASANA (but not in BADDHA PADMASANA)

BADDHA KONASANA

This is of special benefit in strengthening the pelvic region, and it is important to practice this asana regularly.

Technique:

1. Spread something on the ground to form a comfortable seat. Sit erect, with the legs bent at the knees, the edges of the feet touching each other, the soles facing upwards, the heels placed below the generating organs, (if this position is not possible as near this position as possible but not more than four inches away), the two thighs touching the seat and in a straight line.

2. Hold the feet by the palms of the respective hands. Keep spine erect and stretched. Form chin-lock, as mentioned in step (1) of SVASTIKASANA.

3. Close the eyes, so that the mind may not get distracted. Do deep inhalations and exhalations. These have to be even, slow and as long as possible with rubbing sensation in the throat. As many rounds of deep breathing can be taken as can be done without strain.

Exercises which involve twisting of the trunk or bending should be avoided if the Yogic practices have begun after pregnancy.

PRANAYAMAS

The following types of pranayamas may be practised.

ANULOMA UJJAYI

## NADISODHANA

### SITALI

The number of rounds should be restricted to eight rounds. A minimum of six rounds at least should be practiced. Retention of breath after inhalation should not exceed three seconds. There should be no keeping out the breath after exhalation. If at any time there is a feeling of gasping and even rhythm is likely to be upset, rest at least for three minutes by lying on the back with the head facing upwards.

At the end of the breathing exercises sit in meditation for some time.

## 7. YOGIC EXERCISES AFTER DELIVERY FOR THOSE IN NORMAL HEALTH

The following outline is intended for those who have been practicing Yoga asanas during pregnancy and who have had normal delivery. For others specific advice should be taken from a Yoga teacher before starting on Yoga practices. The outline given below covers the period after delivery to the first appearance of menstrual cycle.

In the Vedic times evidently people were living a much simpler and healthier life and there are mantras which show that Jathakarma ceremony in which the woman (mother) participated was to be done soon after childbirth. It was then laid down that without such a ceremony no breast feeding should be given. There were mantras for the beginning of the breast feeding. But these restrictions have been gradually relaxed and at present Jathakarma and other purification ceremonies are done only on the eleventh day after childbirth.

Till three days after the discharge of the afterbirth-No exercises.

For the next three days-only breathing exercises: These are to be done in semi-reclined posture with pillows supporting the back. Six deep inhalations and exhalations may be done at a time interval of an hour. ANTAR KUMBHAKAM or retaining of breath after inhalation and BAHYA KUMBHAKAM i.e. retaining of breath after exhalation may be for one second each round. The inhalation and exhalation should be done with rubbing sensation in the throat. This exercise may be done twice in the morning and twice in the evening with an hour interval.

Note: In the case of those where the contractions are weak and there is difficulty in the discharge of the afterbirth, breathing exercises will have to be done in a semi reclining posture, but with ANTAR KUMHBAKAM of two seconds and BAHYA KUMBHAKAM of one second each round, twice in the morning and twice in the evening six rounds each time with an interval of an hour between each practice. This will facilitate the discharge of the afterbirth.

For the next ten days: A few simple asanas and pranayamas.

DANDASANA: With the arms stretched and the palms flat on the ground by the side of the body. Six rounds of deep breathing with ANTAR and BAHYA kumbhakam of one second each, each round.

ARDHA-PADMA-PASCHIMATHANASANA: With forward bending. This replaces the organs in their place. Six rounds each side.

Next ten days: Slightly more difficult asanas and pranayamas.

PARVATASANA: In a sitting posture, with arm movements-three rounds.

BADDHA PADMASANA: Longer inhalations and exhalations with ANTAR and BAHYA kumbhakam of one second each per round. Six rounds.

PASCHIMATANASANA: With regulated breathing and forward bending. Six rounds.

KUMBHAKAM one second each per round.

NADISODHANA PRANAYAMA: Six to sixteen rounds as is possible without strain.

ANTAR KUMBHAKAM five seconds each round. No BAHYA KUMBHAKAM.

till the appearance of the first menses:

Some of the following asanas may be done once during the day. The number of rounds, duration of exercise etc. is best prescribed by the Yoga teacher, who will no doubt take into consideration the individual's condition.

ASANAS:

BHARADWAJASANA

VAJRASANA

SARVANGASANA

HALASANA

SIRSHASANA

BHEKASANA

BHUJANGASANA

PRANAYAMAS:

NADISODHANA

SITALI

Six rounds each. To be done twice a day.

DHYANAM: After the PRANAYAMA sit in meditation for some time. Thus the practice of meditation will be twice each day.

8. AN OUTLINE OF TREATMENT IN THE CASE OF CHRONIC HEADACHE,  
one side or both sides AND BACKACHE, AROUND THE KIDNEY REGION.

This according to the Yogic theory is attributed to defective circulation in the back parts of the neck, and the kidneys. The treatment aims at increasing the circulation in these regions.

Asanas:

In any of the sitting postures or in TADASANA, the arms are stretched upwards, fingers interlocked, palms turned outwards. Chin locked. Six deep, slow and even inhalations and exhalations are done through both nostrils. ANTAR and BAHYA kumbhakam one second each. Take some rest.

In any of the sitting asanas, stretch the arms and place the wrist on the respective knees palms turned downwards, fingers together and stretched, chin locked. Take six deep slow and even inhalations and exhalations through both nostrils. ANTAR & BAHYA kumbhakam one second each round.

Take rest for three to five minutes.

SIMPLIFIED EXERCISES:

1. Lie flat on the back, arms outstretched in line with the shoulders, palms downward, fingers together and stretched.
2. Both legs are moved to the right, the head turned to the left so that the left ear touches the ground. Take 2 to 6 deep slow and even breaths.
3. Repeat on the other side and take the same number of breaths.
1. Lie flat on the back, with arms stretched overhead fingers interlocked and palms turned outwards.
2. Move both the stretched legs as far to the right as possible, without moving the trunk. Turn the head to the left. Take 2 to 6 deep slow and even breaths. Bring the legs and head to the position as at the start of the exercise.

3. Repeat on the other side and take the same number of deep breaths.

Take some rest.

The above simplified exercises are for practice during first one or two weeks. After this instead of the simplified exercise, JATARAPARIVRITTI stages two and three should be done.

PRANAYAMA: Twelve rounds of any one of the following pranayamas, viz., UJJAYI, NADISODHANA or SITALI should be done at each sitting. ANTAR kumbhakam not more than 5 seconds and BAHYA kumbhakam not more than three seconds each round.

The asanas and the pranayama should be done both in the morning and in the evening.

Diet: No special restriction. Simple wholesome food without too much spices is beneficial.

Note: When continence is observed, the complaints are eradicated earlier.

One need not get alarmed if in the earlier stages of practice one gets loose motions.

9. AN OUTLINE OF TREATMENT BY YOGIC METHODS IN THE CASE OF HERNIA, PARTIAL HEAD-ACHE, STOMACH-ACHE, JAUNDICE AND INSOMNIA.

The following are the asanas and pranayamas which are beneficial. The time to be devoted to each asana and the number of rounds of pranayama to be practiced differ according to the disease to be treated and the state of health of the individual to be treated. Generally those suffering from the above diseases have constipation and gas trouble. This should be addressed first before starting on the treatment for the main disease. Practice of the asanas mentioned below would give relief. VIPARITAKARANI, AKUNCANASANA, double and single, UPAVISHTAKONASANA, side and centre, BADDHAKONASANA with sufficient rest between the asanas.

STOMACH-ACHE, HERNIA: SIRSHASANA, SARVANGASANA, and HALASANA are important. As practice advances, the duration of each asana should slowly be lengthened, to ten minutes in the case of SIRSHASANA and SARVANGASANA and in the case of HALASANA to two minutes. Three minutes of complete rest and relaxation should be allowed between the asanas. Before the next asana is begun, breathing should have become normal; if it is not so, the period of rest should be increased till breathing becomes normal. In the case of all these three asanas, retention of breath after inhalation, ANTAR kumbhakam, should not be more than one second; and in the case of keeping out the breath after exhalation, BAHYA kumbhakam, should not be more than three seconds. Inhalation and exhalation should be thin and even.

Note: There is one type of stomach-ache in which there is a feeling of the intestines being twisted and pulled-PARINAMASULAI-in which case liquid diet is beneficial.



INSOMNIA: In addition to the above three asanas, MAHAMUDRA, VAJRASANA and PASCHIMATANASANA should be practiced. Purvatanasana should be practiced if the patient has not undergone any abdominal operation. Six rounds of inhalations and exhalations in each asana. BAHYA kumbhakam up to a maximum of three seconds but no ANTAR kumbhakam.

JAUNDICE: In addition to the above, VASISHTASANA left and right, SALABHASANA and BHUJANGASANA. Not more than three seconds in each and with no kumbhakam.

PARTIAL HEAD-ACHE: All the above asana should be practiced. After SIRSHASANA, NADISODHANA pranayama should be done. Then SARVANGASANA, followed by UJJAYI pranayama. These asanas and pranayama should be for the same duration say one minute at the beginning and gradually raised to six minutes each as practice advances. There should be adequate rest between each asana and pranayama. The pranayama should be done in sitting postures. Then the other asanas are to be done.

PRANAYAMA: In all these cases practice of NADISODHANA and UJJAYI pranayama are important and these are done in sitting postures say, SIDDHASANA. Not more than twelve rounds of each pranayama. The maximum duration of ANTAR and BAHYA kumbhakam is five and two seconds respectively in each round.

Diet restriction: The following should be avoided: onions, meat, tubers like, potato, beetroot

etc., curds (butter milk may be used). Use fresh vegetables. Condiments and chilly should be reduced. The full course of treatment will take a minimum of three months, and the

practice at each sitting may take about forty minutes. After the cure is effected, the asanas and pranayamas may be done to maintain one's health. For this purpose, the time spent each day could be made shorter by reducing the duration of each asana, or by practicing some asanas on one day and the rest the next day, and so on.

#### 10. AN OUTLINE OF YOGIC TREATMENT FOR INTERMITTENT PULSE

This occurs in patients of either sex, and at all ages: young, middle or old age. In the case of those with fatty bodies, this symptom is due to over development of muscles and pressure on blood and air vessels, and in the case of those with lean bodies obstruction and absence of free circulation of blood and air through the blood and air channels. Other concomitant symptoms are feeling of dryness in the throat and esophagus on taking 5 or 6 deep breaths, reduced chest girth, spreading of the middle, constipation and gas formation. Though this may not be present in the early stages, later, the urine becomes thick and oily with thread like bodies of fat. This is especially noticeable in the first passing of urine in the morning on getting up and the urine has a very bad smell. Giddiness is felt on the slightest exertion, even when riding in a carriage. Besides the above symptoms, in the case of those who are obese, they may have high or low blood pressure, chest pain, shooting pains in the umbilical region, breathing trouble, asthma, dry cough, indigestion acid eructation, insomnia, headache, pain in the eye-balls etc. If not attended to early, it may lead to tuberculosis, diabetes etc. The dryness in the throat leads to a false feeling of thirst and results in drinking copious amounts of water, buttermilk or other liquids. But this does not relieve the false thirst and has the effect of overworking the kidneys and weakening them and eventually to loss of brain and memory power.

The root cause of the disease are over indulgence in sex, sexual intercourse during the five days after the beginning of monthly periods, reading of pornographic books and consequent

wet dreams, loss of sleep, sluggish liver etc.

Under the Yogic treatment the patient is prescribed the practice of NADISODHANA pranayama to begin with. He is not started on asanas. Any easy posture can be adopted even sitting in a chair. The important point to note is that the spine should be kept erect during the practice of pranayama. This should be done three times a day 24 rounds on each occasion. These 24 rounds cannot all be done at a stretch, and should be done with suitable rests. As soon as it feels that there is strain in keeping the spine erect, some rest should be taken and the pranayama continued when again it is easy to hold the spine erect. There is no exhalation through the throat as there is a feeling of dryness in the throat, and the throat should not be allowed to dry up. The holding in of breath, ANTAR kumbhakam, should not be more than a second in each round, and there should be no holding out of breath, BAHYA kumbhakam. The above is to be practiced for 15 days. It should be specially watched that there is no strain. The missing of the pulse comes after longer and longer intervals and improvement will be noticed. When the missing of the pulse has thus been reduced SALAMBA SARVANGASANA can be introduced. The teacher has to be particularly careful in supporting the patient and to watch that there is no strain. Not more than six deep breaths should be taken. As the arms support the back, there is a certain amount of constriction in the blood vessels in the arms and soon after Sarvangasana the frequency of missed pulses may apparently be as it was earlier. One need not be alarmed, as this phase soon passes off. After about 15 days of practice the missed pulse occurs only after longer and longer intervals even after doing the asana.

After 15 days, of practice of SALAMBA SARVANGASANA, EKAPADA SARVANGASANA may be introduced with not more than three rounds of HALASANA. These new asanas should be introduced gradually, the important consideration is that there should be no strain. The dry feeling in the throat and esophagus is relieved and the thyroid

and liver begin to function better.

Depending on the progress made the practice of the following asanas may be introduced:

SALABHASANA, BHUJANGASANA, MAHAMUDRA, BADDHAKONASANA, PASCHIMATANASANA and PURVATANASANA.

Not more than two of these asanas should be practiced on any day. They may be taken in rotation. At no time should asanas be practiced for more than thirty minutes in a day. This however does not apply to NADISODHANA pranayama which should be done three times a day to the extent this can conveniently be done without strain.

By the time the patient is able to do the asanas without strain all the symptoms except those of urine, diabetes, chest pain and cough would have been relieved. The stage is now reached for starting the practice of SIRSHASANA. Here again go slow and avoid strain. As practice advances, the other symptoms will be relieved and the pulse also will become quite steady. When SIRSHASANA can be done for 6-8 minutes, and this continued for 40 days, the urinary symptoms, diabetes etc., will also be cured. After 8 days of practice of SHIRSHASANA, KAPHALABHATI pranayama should be started. By easy weekly stages the number of rounds of KAPHALABHATI should be raised from 12 to 16, 24, 32, 48, 54, 84, 100, 128 rounds. KAPHALABHATI should be followed immediately by NADHISODHANA pranayama to the extent of one third the number of rounds of KAPHALABHATI. Breath is to be retained, ANTAR kumbhakam, for not more than 5 seconds each round. In the case of obese people breath should be kept out, BAHYA kumbhakam, for not more than two seconds each round in addition to retaining of breath of not more than 5 seconds each round. In the case of lean people BAHYA kumbhakam is not to be practiced.

Diet restrictions:

Can use: old rice, wheat in the form of puris or chapatis, moong-dhal, all vegetables except

tubers. All fruits except pine apple, and plantains. Fresh cow's milk, butter and fresh buttermilk to a limited extent. Wheat can be used as halva.

Avoid use of: wheat in the form of bread, Tubers, pine apple, bananas, dried fruits, cold drinks, eggs, meat, onions, tomatoes, lemon juice, soda, curds, tamarind.

The best time to practice is on an empty stomach. It can be practiced in the evening if an hour and a half has elapsed after a light snack. If the snack has been heavy, better avoid doing asanas in the evening, but pranayama may be practiced after allowing two to three hours after the snack.

Note: UJJAYI and SITALI pranayama should be practiced after the symptom of dryness in the throat has gone.

Sexual intercourse should be avoided during treatment. An attitude of firm faith in God, and devotion to Him is essential.

11. OUTLINE OF YOGIC TREATMENT IN THE CASE OF THOSE SUFFERING FROM AILMENTS OF THE OESOPHAGUS WHERE THERE IS DIFFICULTY IN SWALLOWING FOOD.

The same pattern of treatment is followed as that outlined above, except that instead of starting on NADISODHANA pranayama the patient starts on UJJAYI pranayama.

12. ASTHMA - AN OUTLINE OF YOGIC TREATMENT

Asthmatic sufferers may be broadly be divided into four classes:

1. With diabetes,
2. With obesity,
3. With lean body
4. With attacks at night and normal during the day.

The following asanas and pranayamas give them benefit and effect a cure:

ASANAS

1. DANDASANA
2. PURVATANASANA
3. VAJRASANA
4. MAHAMUDRA
5. SALAMBA SARVANGASANA
6. SIRSHASANA, and
7. HALASANA

PRANAYAMA

1. ANULOMA UJJAYI
2. VILOMA UJJAYI
3. PRATILOMA UJJAYI
4. NADISODANAM with KAPHALABHATI

Technique of doing the above asanas and pranayamas are given separately but the instructions regarding breathing given therein have to be modified as given below. When Asthma has been cured the instructions given can be followed for maintaining good health.

1. Those with Diabetes: The duration of inhalation and exhalation depends on the

individuals capacity; no attempt should be made to make the duration long and thus strain the respiratory muscles. As practice advances the duration progressively becomes longer without strain. It is important that there is retention of breath without inhalation (ANTAR KUMBHAKAM) and keeping out the breath after exhalation (BAHYA KUMBHAKAM) when doing the exercises at the appropriate stages. At the beginning Kumbhakam should be only for a second, this could be increased to two seconds the second week, and thus slowly lengthened to a maximum of five seconds. The number of rounds in each asana should not exceed six. As practice advances the number of rounds will still continue to be six, but the duration will increase as the breathing becomes longer. As indication has been given of increasing kumbhakam each week, but this should not be taken as a rigid program, the increase might have to be postponed to avoid strain. Better go slow.

2. Those with obese body will find it difficult to do the asanas at the beginning. These will have to be practiced in easy stages. For example in DANDASANA it will not be possible for them to sit upright with the legs stretched in front. It is enough for them to sit half reclined by having a bedroll behind their back as a support, but it is important to see that the legs are stretched in front, knees together, legs are kept rigid, thigh and calf muscles touching the ground. No attempt should be made for doing kumbhakam for a month. They should merely practice the asana with long inhalations and exhalations and even here they should go slow and the durations should be such as not to cause strain. After a month kumbhakam could be introduced, and slowly increased by easy stages up to a maximum of five seconds. The number of rounds should not exceed six.

3. Those with lean body: They should do the asanas with both ANTAR and BAHYA kumbhakam. For them during the first week ANTAR kumbhakam will be two seconds and BAHYA kumbhakam only one second; in the second week three and one second; third week four seconds and one second; fourth week five seconds and one second; from the next

week for a month, six seconds and two seconds; and thereafter six seconds and three seconds which will be the maximum for them. The maximum number of rounds in each asana will be six in the case of the others.

4. Those who get attacks only at night: The general directions are the same as under category one. The periods of ANTAR and BAHYA kumbhakam will be one second each during the first week, two seconds during the second week; three seconds during the third week; four seconds during the fourth week; and five seconds will be the maximum. Diet restrictions are especially important in their case. Intake of solid diet should be reduced, avoid the night meals, but take a light liquid meal in the evening and take a cup of cow's milk with saffron at night.

Diet: In general heavy meals should be avoided. The meals should be light and nourishing.

Asanas: During the first month the asanas should be restricted to the first four: DANDASANA, PURVATANASANA, VAJRASANA and MAHAMUDRA. Except in the case of PURVATANASANA the number of rounds will be restricted to three.

Sufficient rest should be taken between asanas; this is important. The pulse should have got back to what it was at the beginning before each asana is begun. The number of rounds should not be increased, but the duration of each asana will gradually increase as with practice the time taken for each breath lengthens.

Till sufficient mastery in the above asanas is obtained the next two asanas should not be introduced. This would normally take about a month of daily practice.

So, from the second month, the practice of SARVANGASANA and HALASANA may be introduced. The necessity of sufficient rest between asanas is equally important. These asanas should be done with sufficient care that undue strain is avoided. For example in attempting Halasana, no force should be applied in trying to bring the toes to the ground. The legs should not be bent at the knees; it does not matter if the toes are away from the



ground; as practice advance the toes will without much effort get lower and lower. At the beginning the number of rounds in HALASANA may be restricted to one, or two and slowly increased weekly stages to the maximum of six. This may take about two to three weeks of daily practice. Till mastery is attained in doing six rounds each of SARVANGA ASANA and HALASANA without discomfort, practice of SIRSHASANA should not be attempted. Maximum rounds during the first week will be six, second week eight, third week twelve, fourth week sixteen rounds, sixteen rounds will be the maximum. At this stage SIRSHASANA should be practiced first, and after taking some rest SARVANGASANA should be practiced: the duration and the number of rounds should be the same as in SIRSHASANA.

Note: If there is weakness in the wrist, elbow or shoulder or any other part of the body, due to fractures, surgical operations etc. the above asanas may require some modification, so that these weak parts may not be unduly strained. For example in the case of DANDASANA if the hands are weak, pressure may not be put on it, and the asana may have to be modified by requiring that the hands be folded either in front of the body or behind the back, but keep the spine erect and stretched.

PRANAYAMA: Practice of PRANAYAMA is to be begun only after two months, by which time we may expect sufficient proficiency to have been reached in doing the asanas. Begin with UJJAYI-ANULOMA and VILOMA with both ANTAR and BAHYA kumbhakam. Two weeks after UJJAYI-PRATILOMA can be practiced. A month afterwards the practice of KAPHALABHATI with NADISODHANA pranayama may be begun.

After Asthma has been cured the above asanas and pranayama may continue to be practiced for general benefit. The order of doing these will be to start with SIRSHASANA followed by SARVANGASANA, then by two of the sitting postures and then by pranayama. The

time taken and the number of rounds should be the same as in SHIRSHASANA and SARVANGASANA. The same time and number of rounds should be devoted to each of the sitting asanas. Two out of the four sitting asanas mentioned above may be chosen each day. The time taken and the number of rounds of pranayama should be twice those taken for doing SIRSHASANA and SARVANGASANA. In planning out a program the above proportions are to be taken and due allowance made for the rests to be taken in between asanas and pranayamas. A pious attitude of mind while practicing brings about quicker results. With advantage the above practices can be followed with DHYANA (contemplation on God) and the time taken be made equal to that devoted to the practice of pranayama.

The above gives an outline of the treatment, which however may have to be modified in individual cases according to their condition, their age, previous history and progress during treatment.