ASANA AND MUDRA

by Swami Kripalvananda
Guidance to Asana Students

Asanas benefit men and women, young and old, and sick and healthy equally. Practice them under the strict guidance of an expert. Study and perform asanas in a pure and peaceful environment, facing north or east while sitting in padmasana. Practice in a clear, level place on a thick blanket or mat. Perform asanas where there is no strong breeze, and set up fragrant flowers or burn incense to calm the mind.

Take a cold bath or shower before practicing asanas, and empty the bowels and bladder. (Advanced students should not take cold baths.) If constipated, relieve the constipation by doing abdominal asanas before bathing, and then continue with other asanas after bathing. Asanas should be done on an empty stomach, at least four hours after a heavy meal. After practicing asanas, wait one hour before eating.

Practice pranayama (breath control) for at least one month before practicing asanas. Start with easy asanas, then go on to more complicated asanas after your strength and endurance increase. For each asana, study the picture carefully, read the description well, then gently and slowly perform the asana. The body benefits most when the asanas are performed with full understanding; otherwise, the body can be harmed.

Avoid straining the body through over-enthusiastic practice. Stop as soon as you feel tired. Perform asanas only within the limits of time and strength. If you are sick or have had an operation, perform asanas only after getting medical advice.

It takes time to accomplish difficult asanas, so avoid forcing the body into them prematurely. Gradually work on them until perfection is attained. Begin by performing and holding the easier asanas at length, then after achieving the more difficult asanas, increase your endurance by holding them longer as well.

If you strain a limb or muscle due to forcing an asana, don't be alarmed. If the injury is
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minor it will correct itself within two to four days, during which time you should refrain from asana practice. If the injury seems to be major, consult a yoga therapist.

Do not use tribandha (triple lock), dvibandha (double lock), or ekabandha (single lock) with asanas until you have mastered pranayama. The three bandhas are mulabandha ("root" or anal lock), jalandhara bandha ("water holder" or chin lock), and uddiyana bandha ("flying up" or abdominal lock). The contraction of the anus after exhalation and inhalation is mulabandha. It raises the apana (energy of elimination).

Jalandhara bandha is performed by raising the prana (inflowing life energy) and apana (eliminative energy) to the head and pressing the chin against the chest. This concentrates the senses in the spinal cord instead of the sensory and motor nerves.

To do uddiyana bandha, one exhales, then contracts the abdominal muscles to touch the spinal column. This causes the senses to reach the brahmarandhra (aperture of the Absolute).

The performance of all three of the above locks simultaneously is called tribandha (triple lock), and should not be attempted without the guidance of an expert yogi.

Many asanas have two complementary forms, in which the position of the right and left limbs are reversed. These can be considered as two different asanas. For example, padmasana (lotus asana) can be performed with either the right leg on top or the left leg on top. Such complementary asanas rest the alternate limbs (if the right leg is on top, the left leg is rested), and therefore allow the student to do more asanas.

There are also other types of complementary asanas. Forward-bending asanas are
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complementary to backward-bending asanas. For example, bhunamana padmasana (bowing-to-the-earth lotus asana) is complementary to matsyasana (fish asana). Also, standing asanas are complementary to sitting asanas.

Perform complementary asanas to maintain balance and exercise the entire body. Choose asanas for the head, neck, chest, abdomen, spine, and limbs according to your liking, strength, and understanding. If you can get an expert to prescribe asanas for you, follow his advice, rather than insisting on choosing the asanas yourself.

Notice how long you can comfortably remain in a new asana. Then gradually increase the time up to the maximum limit given in the asana description. The amount of time and degree of flexibility possible in an asana vary with each individual practicing the asana.

Work to your own limit, and do not judge your progress by the progress of another person.

Asanas can begin with exhalation, inhalation, then retention of breath. The breath can be held after either inhalation or exhalation. It is best to follow the guidance of an expert in breathing with asanas, but here are some general guidelines: exhale when bending forward, inhale when bending backward, and hold the breath when it is necessary to exert energy to raise the body. While performing an asana, one usually instinctively senses whether inhalation, exhalation, or retention is appropriate. Perform a few asanas while watching the natural flow of the breath, and learn from that when to inhale, exhale, or hold the breath. Once you are in an asana, only normal respiration is required.

Women should not practice asanas during menstruation. Pregnant women should not perform asanas after the fourth month of pregnancy, and should not resume the practice of asanas until three months after delivery.
If you are a sincere student of asanas, do not waste time in idle talk, and avoid the company of the opposite sex, evil people, and vices. Retire early and refrain from taking medicines. Follow a regular schedule, avoiding disruptions such as traveling. Wear only loose fitting clothing.

Performance of asanas with proper breathing gives maximum benefits, the power of concentration, pleasure, and faith in the science of yoga. To perform yoga scientifically, it is absolutely essential that you receive the guidance of an expert yogi.

If you want to be a true yogi, live at the lotus feet of your guru. Serve your guru and perform your sadhana while serving the ashram. Voluntary service protects and strengthens virtues and destroys vices. It is only by service that you can receive the blessings of Guru. It is only Guru's grace that makes the practice of yoga a success.
A Program of Asana Practice

Thousands of asanas and mudras have come my way during my practice of yoga. I originally planned to include photographs of 500 asanas and mudras in this book. This first edition contains only 277 photographs, yet people were discouraged, and asked how and when they could possibly do all these asanas and mudras. When I heard that, I forever gave up my idea of a book encompassing a detailed collection of asanas and mudras.

The ancient teachers of yoga did not have cameras, so carved their teachings in rock sculptures. This method of expressing their profound knowledge is responsible for the preservation of the Aryan culture. Some modern scholars say that such carvings had been intended only to pass on the art of dancing. While there is some truth in this inference, yogic sculpture has much deeper mysteries to reveal. The purposeful statues of goddesses and gods parallel the esoteric scriptures of yoga. The advanced yogi derives continual inspiration from them. Wherever such statues exist, we find the source of Aryan culture. In other words, the purna (perfect) yogi have given guidance to future yogis through these sculptures.

By drinking a glass of water a day, one drinks hundreds of gallons in a few years, and by eating a few ounces of food each day, one eventually assimilates hundreds of pounds of food. Similarly, by learning a new asana every day, one can learn hundreds of asanas in five years.

Physical exercise is as necessary for life as water and food. The invalid, the healthy person, and the yogi should not be upset on seeing the number of asanas and mudras illustrated here.

All of the asanas and mudras will become easy with practice. You may complain that you do not have enough time to do these asanas and mudras, but they can be done if you persist in a regular schedule for learning them.
A Program of Asana Practice

I have divided the *asanas* in this book into eleven groups of twenty-five *asanas* each. These eleven groups correspond to the eleven *rudras* (purification energies associated with Siva). Each *rudra* contains representative *asanas* that exercise all parts of the body, as well as complementary *asanas* that rest the body. You should learn these *asanas* by *rudra*.

For example, to learn twenty-five *asanas* a week, you would study the first *rudra* the first week, the second *rudra* the second week, and so on. If you continue such a program for three months, you would learn all 277 *asanas* in this book. You should, of course, work patiently at your own pace, gradually progressing from easy to more difficult *asanas*. An appendix lists the *asanas* that belong to each *rudra*.

Every *rudra* contains *asanas* for each part of the body, classified as follows:

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<td>neck</td>
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<td>arms</td>
<td>spine</td>
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The arms can further be divided into upper arm, forearm, and hand, and the legs into thigh, calf, and foot. The appendices contain a list of the *asanas* that exercise each of these body parts.

If necessary, you can study the correspondence of *asanas* to body parts and adjust your practice accordingly. If you find an *asana* in one *rudra* difficult, you can substitute a similar *asana* for the same body part from a different *rudra*. You should keep a balance of *asanas* for the various body parts, so that the body is not damaged by excessive exercise of a particular part. Therefore, follow a schedule of *asana* practice that gives equal exercise to all parts of the body, such as the *rudras* described here.
A Program of Asana Practice

You should learn as many asanas and mudras as possible. But for daily practice one rudra (25 asanas) is sufficient. Normally, you should perform each asana with three variations in the beginning, increasing the number of variations to five or six over a period of time.

The invalid should devote two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening to the practice of asanas and mudras, reaching this limit gradually. At first, he should start with fifteen minutes in the morning and evening, and then increase the amount of time according to his energy. One should practice moderately, and not be too enthusiastic or too slow in increasing the time. The invalid should practice pranayama (breath control) in savasana or matsyasana.

The arms can further be divided into upper arm, forearm, and hand, and the legs into thigh, calf, and foot. The appendices contain a list of the asanas that exercise each of these body parts.
Description

Sit down, extending your legs straight out in front of you. While exhaling, bend your right knee and place it on your left thigh. Then bend your left knee and place it on your right thigh. You may find it easier to start with the left leg first. Your heels should be below your navel. Your spine and your head should be in a straight line. Place your right hand, fingers touching, palm up in your lap. Place your left hand, fingers touching, palm up in your right hand. After exhaling, hold your breath out.
The Domain of Hatha (sun-moon) and Raja (Royal) Yoga

It is not difficult to steady your gaze on the bhrumadhya (eyebrow center) once you have been able to steady it on the tip of your nose. Your gaze goes towards your forehead of its own accord because the prana (breath, life energy), which is under your control, is also traveling upwards. Steadying the gaze on the tip of the nose is part of hatha yoga, and steadying the gaze between the eyebrows is part of raja yoga. The six cakras (energy centers) - muladhara (root), svadhisthana (sex), manipura (navel), anahata (heart), visuddhakhyā (throat), and ajna (eyebrow) - are deflowered only by hatha yoga. One cannot practice raja yoga without the deflowering of these cakras.

The yogi who abandons hatha (sun-moon) yoga to practice raja (royal) yoga does make spiritual progress, but he cannot maintain his elevated position for long. Such yogis have been described as the travelers of the daksinayana (southern way) path in the Śrimad Bhagavad-Gītā. The daksinayana path is easier than the uttarayana (northern way) path; but it is incomplete. In the former there are not many obstructions. Every two hundred or two hundred and fifty years we find a traveler of the daksinayana path, while a traveler of the uttarayana path is only found once in five hundred or maybe a thousand years. He has to fight death to make progress. His path is strewn with obstacles. Yet only he is the real yogi.

The area below the bhrumadhya (eyebrow center) is the area of prakṛti (nature). This is the domain of the hatha yogi. If you draw a straight line connecting the eyebrows, the area of the head above this line can be called the area of God. This is the domain of the raja yogi.

Affirmation

After having achieved the right stage, sit in padmasana, concentrate on the muladhara (root) cakra (energy center), and make this affirmation: "I am opening up the reservoir of
Padmasana or Kamalasana (#1)

power and am changing my sexual fluid into ojas (power, light). Om santih, santih, santih! (Peace, peace, peace)!

This dharana (concentration) is not just imagination. It is true. You have bound your legs, so the blood circulation has decreased in the lower part of your body. You have established your attention and gaze on the muladhara (root) cakra (energy center). You are also sitting upright, so you are acting in accordance with your thoughts. The prana (breath, life energy) will flow and become steady in the part of the body on which you concentrate. This posture connects the respiratory system, nervous system, and circulatory system, so the vitality of the individual is developed. Thus, the shallowness of man’s ignorance decreases, giving way to the real depth which leads to greatness.

It is only this asana that has helped great men all over the world to achieve greatness. It is this asana that makes the achievement of God possible. After some practice and your interest in this subject is aroused, you will experience an exuberance of energy all over your body. Your face will light up with pleasure. Your intelligence will achieve brilliance and your mind will become sharp. You will find life worth living. This is the secret of this asana.

The Dictates of Prana (Breath, Life Energy)
The photographer took the photographs while I was performing dhyana (meditation) and had released my control over the prana.

The asanas took place according to the dictates of the prana. All asanas and mudras originated involuntarily. I did not voluntarily or consciously perform any asana. The prana directed the asanas that were necessary for the conditioning of the body. A close examination of the mudras will reveal that the power of sattvaguna (tranquil quality) created serene mudras; rajoguna (passionate quality) created unstable mudras, and
Padmasana or Kamalasana (#1)

tamoguna (heavy quality) created passionate mudras. There are innumerable asanas and mudras concealed in each person's body. Only when one has resorted to yoga is the truth of these asanas and mudras revealed. To attain the asana shown in the picture you should bend your arms at the elbow and bring your palms near your shoulders, inhaling all the while through both nostrils. Let your forefingers and thumbs touch each other, keeping them straight. Then tilt your head slightly and keep your gaze to the right. Retain your breath. Thus, the mudra shown in the picture will be achieved.

Practice

Padmasana or kamalasana is easy, but cannot be performed by everyone. Some persons can put only one foot in the right position. They should not be disappointed. They should practice daily and tirelessly. In a short while, they will be able to perform this asana without effort. In the beginning some persons may experience cramps or pain while performing this asana with a conscious effort. But they need not fear. Obstacles will vanish by practice. The diseased, the weak, or the extremely emotional man or woman, however, will not be able to maintain this asana. The weak or diseased person should not attempt to perform this asana. It is meant only for healthy and strong individuals. Every student should notice how long (in minutes or even seconds) he can sustain a new asana. Then he can decide upon the asana he wishes to maintain during dhyana (meditation). Every alternate day he should increase the time limit by one or two minutes until the maximum limit (one hour for padmasana) is reached and maintained.

Benefits

Padmasana can be used effectively to control worry, grief, misery, and physical ailments. As soon as the sadhaka attains an upright posture, bad thoughts will be controlled. Rajoguna (passionate quality), tamoguna (heavy quality), and sattvaguna (tranquil quality) are present for everybody’ but padmasana brings about the birth of sattvaguna.
Padmasana or Kamalasana (#1)

Therefore the mind, perplexed by the influence of tamoguna and rajoguna, is calmed down by the practice of this asana.

The endocrine glands control all secretions. If these glands are weak, they make one inferior or ordinary. If they are somewhat strong, one is of medium type; and if they are quite strong, one is among the supermen. By pranayama (breath control), by wholesome food and moderate diet, by the practice of restraint of the senses, and by the practice of padmasana, pure blood is supplied to these glands. As a result, the maximum development of the individual is achieved in both the spiritual and the worldly fields. The superman emerges from the man.

An individual who is able to maintain this asana effortlessly and painlessly for one hour attains self-confidence. If a man addicted to drugs, alcohol, or tobacco abandons his bad habit and practices this asana, slowly reaching the one-hour limit, he can easily be relieved of his addiction. The youth given to masturbation, the thief, the gambler, and the debauched can, by the help of this asana, shed their bad habits like snakes shedding their skins.

Diseases like leprosy, paralysis, diseases arising from constipation, tuberculosis, asthma, insomnia, hysteria, leucorrhea, cancer, worms, skin diseases, enlargement of the spleen, rheumatism, cough, impotence, and inability to bear children can be cured by the practice of this asana. It is invaluable for the insomniac. It is also effective in cases of obesity.

Diet and Pranayama

In order to get rid of addictions, bad habits, and incurable diseases, the individual should follow a moderate diet of milk, yogurt, and fruit, or some other wholesome foods, for one full month. During this time and afterwards, he should sit everyday in a place where the rays of the rising sun fall on him, and should chant the Rama mantra. He should also do surya bhedana (sun-piercing) or anuloma-viloma (with the grain-against the grain)
Padmasana or Kamalasana (#1)

*pranayama* daily for fifteen minutes in the morning and fifteen minutes in the evening. The perspiration resulting from the heat of the sun or from *pranayama* should be wiped off with a clean towel. He should bathe after thirty or forty minutes.

**Characteristics**

This *asana* is best for the protection of one's physical and mental health. The yogis use this *asana* for their *mantra* (repeated prayer), *pranayama*, *dharana* (concentration), *dhyana*, *samadhi*, and other practices. Even the chanting of *mantra* given for *japa* brings about a wonderful change in the body and the mind. Certain divine *mantras* create *sattvaguna*, and certain other *mantras* create *rajoguna* and *tamoguna*. The *Rama mantra* and the *Om mantra* are the divine *mantras*.

By regular chanting of these *mantras*, a *sadhaka’s* spiritual and worldly powers are strengthened. *Japa* is invaluable for controlling incurable diseases. The weakness of the endocrine glands vanishes with *Japa*. When this happens, health improves.

When one attains this *asana* or a similar *asana* (in which the spine remains perpendicular) and contracts and expands the reproductive aperture, the *apana vayu* (eliminative energy) enters the *susumna* (central energy channel). This results in a decrease of passion. *Yoni* (drawing in, womb) *mudra* is also called *vajroli* (hard and drawn in) *mudra*. During sexual intercourse the expansion of the penis or vagina takes place; but in practicing *yoga* one contracts the sexual organs. By contraction, the sexual fluid is withdrawn. Thus, by self-control one can prevent wastage of the sexual fluid. One can also practice *uddiyana bandha* ("flying up," or abdominal lock), *jalandhara bandha* ("water holder," or chin lock) and *kumbhaka* (breath holding) and expand one's chest and abdomen easily. This results in the purification of the abdominal glands, thorax, and throat. The appetite and digestion improve.
Padmasana or Kamalasana (#1)

Padmasana, which destroys all diseases in this way, is described as follows. This rare asana can be achieved by a very few individuals.

idam padmasanam proktarn sarvavyadhivasanam,
durlabham yena kenapi dhimata labyhate bhuvi.

This is called padmasana; it destroys all diseases.
It cannot be attained by ordinary persons, but only by the intelligent on earth.
(Hatha Yoga Pradipika, 1:47)

It is natural that one should ask why it is said thus in the scriptures since the asana seems to be easy. But this curiosity can be satisfied only by the practice of yoga. Without knowing the secret, one can never understand the importance of this asana.

After long practice of padmasana, heat is produced and one experiences the movement of the apana (eliminative energy) in the muladhara cakra. The dormant kundalini (female coiled one, the evolutionary energy) is awakened, and this is what places this simple asana on the same elevated level as siddhasana, bhadrasana, vajrasana, muktasana, mulabandha and other such asanas. This asana is also complementary to sakticalana (power activating) mudra. Thus it is called the best of all asanas by the siddha (adept) yogis. There are forty-three main variations to this asana with many minor variations; thus can its importance be gauged.
Ardha Padmasana or Surya Bhedanasana (#2)
(Half Lotus Asana or Sun-Piercing Asana)

**Description**

Sit in *padmasana*. While exhaling through both nostrils, place your right hand, palm upwards, in front of your navel. Place your left wrist on your right palm, with the left palm upwards. During this movement, constrict your neck muscles and bend your chin, pressing it against your chest. Fix your gaze on your navel. Hold your breath out.
**Affirmation**

Concentrate as follows: "I am clearing the obstructions from my abdominal organs. By means of a moderate diet of wholesome food I am removing the obstructions that keep the small and large intestines from functioning properly. I see that the liver and small intestine are not displaced or weak. I observe that my diaphragm is functioning properly. I see that my stomach, gall bladder, and bladder are not stressed. I tell my abdominal organs that I have subjected them to a lot of stress due to my ignorance, and ask them to forgive me. I promise never to abuse them in the future.  

Oh santih, santih, santih! (Peace, peace, peace!)" The organs are overjoyed by this promise. And as a result, I feel a sense of buoyancy and good health.

**Hatha Yoga, the Basis of All Yoga**

The illustration of this asana shows that all three bandhas (locks) mulabandha ("root" or anal lock), uddiyana bandha ("flying up" or abdominal lock), and jalandhara bandha ("water holder" or chin lock) - take place automatically. The yoga that I practice is anugraha (grace) yoga or saranagati (surrender) yoga. This yoga is also called buddhi (consciousness) yoga, purna (complete) yoga, raja yoga, mantra yoga, laya (dissolution) yoga, and nada (divine sound) yoga. Hatha yoga is the basis of all yoga. No yoga can be realized without it. Anugraha yoga is considered to be the greatest yoga. In the end, all yogas lead to this great yoga. Because I have attained hatha yoga, asanas and pranayamas take place automatically. This explains the automatic occurrence of the three bandhas.

**Characteristics**

The name ardha padmasana would have been more appropriate if one foot were touching the ground. In baddha padmasana one takes hold of the right toe with the left hand. Considering baddha padmasana to be the complete padmasana, this asana may have been called ardha (half) padmasana. The other name for this asana is surya bhedanasana.
Ardha Padmasana or Surya Bhedanasana (#2)

This is an apt name because both palms are kept in front of the navel. In this way one naturally performs the dharana (concentration) of the manipura (navel) cakra. Surya bhedana (sun-piercing) means the piercing of the manipura cakra.

Constipation, enlarged or weak spleen, diabetes, loss of appetite, worms, indigestion, a burning sensation in the eyes, and discomforts such as itching can be cured by this asana. Digestion improves. The mind becomes calm due to the prana taking the upward course. One's intelligence is sharpened.

Purification of the Manipura (Navel) Cakra

Maharsi Patanjali says in the Yoga Sutra:

\[ \text{nabhicakre kayavyuha jnanam.} \]

On the navel cakra,
knowledge of the organization of the body.
(Yoga Sutra, Vibhutipada, Sutra 30)

Patanjali tells us that by samyama (the process of dharana, dhyana, and samadhi) on the organs of the third (navel) cakra, one attains the knowledge of one's body. When the sadhaka yogi strictly follows the instructions of his sadguru and performs asana, pranayama, pratyahara (withdrawal), dharana (concentration), dhyana, and samadhi, he gradually achieves the knowledge of the constitution of his body. One comes to know the secrets of yogic scripture not by reading, studying, hearing, or arguing about them, but only by constant and long practice and by the support of yoga itself. As soon as the power of kundalini (female coiled one, the evolutionary energy) is awakened, the sadhaka (aspirant) starts attaining knowledge of his body. In this way, the sadhaka develops faith and strives hard for his goal. He also surrenders his life at the holy feet of his sadguru.

The scholars of yoga call the navel cakra the manipura cakra. By allowing the prana to
Ardha Padmasana or Surya Bhedanasana (#2)

flow in this area and by dharana and dhyana, one attains uddiyana bandha ("flying up" or abdominal lock). Pratyahara (withdrawal) cannot be achieved unless one achieves mulabandha ("root" or anal lock), uddiyana bandha, and jalandhara bandha ("water holder" or chin lock). The mind craves sensual achievements. This unsteadiness does not disappear unless the three bandhas (locks) are spontaneously achieved. Only then is the sadhaka released from the slavery of the senses; and only then is there a decrease in lust. In the end when samadhi is achieved, the yogi becomes mentally and physically devoid of lust. Disease, old age, or death cannot approach the body of such a yogi.

Bodily weakness leads to physical diseases, and mental weakness to mental diseases. Healthy endocrine glands give rise to sattvaguna (tranquil quality); and diseased or weak glands give rise to rajoguna (passionate quality) and tamoguna (heavy quality). One earns the right to follow the path of the raja yogi only after achieving pratyahara.

Mahasi Patanjai says in the Yoga Sutra:

samanajayajjvalanam.

By achieving control over the samana (energy of digestion) in the navel, the yogi becomes lustrous.
(Yoga Sutra, Vibhutipada, Sutra 41)

Lord Krsna says in the Bhagavadgita:

pranapana samayuktah pacamyannam caturvidham.

Joined together with prana and apana (eliminative energy),
I digest the four kinds of food.
(Bhagavadgita 15:14)
*Ardha Padmasana or Surya Bhedanasana (#2)*

*Prana* resides in the heart, *samana* (energy of digestion) in the navel, and the *apana* in the sexual organs. By *mulabandha* ("root" or anal lock), the *apana* rises and enters the navel. It unites with *samana* and attracts the *prana* which resides in the heart. By this process, food is digested. By becoming victorious over the *samana*, the *yogi* achieves the power of digestion. The food in his digestive tract is completely digested.

Diseases of the digestive tract are cured permanently. In this state, the self-confidence of the *sadhaka* increases greatly. He is then sure that he will attain the higher stages of *yoga*. When this happens the *sadhaka* becomes a monument of luster, patience, and enthusiasm.

**Practice**

One can perform *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi* with this *asana*. Gradually increase the time limit until you can sit in this *asana* for half an hour. Persons who perform the *asanas* which include *tribandha* (the three locks) should first practice *anuloma-viloma* (with the grain - against the grain) *pranayama* for fifteen minutes daily in the morning and in the evening, and continue this *pranayama* as long as they continue practicing this *asana*. Weak individuals should not practice this *asana*. 
Virasana-1 or Bhasrikasana (#3)
(Hero Asana or Bellows Asana)

**Description**

Sit in *padmasana*. Firmly place the palms of the right hand and the left hand, palms downward, on the bottom of the left foot and the right foot respectively. Bend your body forward, exhaling through both nostrils. Contract your sexual organ and raise the *apana* and *samana* (energy of digestion) into the navel. Then contract the abdominal wall, raising the *vayu* (vital air) through the nasal orifice into the head. Bend your head and press your chin firmly against your chest. Regain your upright posture. Fix your gaze and attention on the *muladhara cakra*. 
Affirmation
Concentrate as follows: "By the definite observance of yama and niyama, I have expelled all animality from my body. Lust, anger, and other evils no longer trouble me. My good resolutions, which used to forsake me, are now under my control. They have accepted my companionship. I was afraid of disease; now disease is afraid of me. Health had forsaken me in anger; now it is pleased with me and remains always with me. I was ignorant because of tamoguna; but now the fountains of deep knowledge are bursting forth. The organs have accepted the path of restraint; the mind has accepted the path of godliness; the dark shadow of downfall is receding; and the bright light of prosperity illuminates the path of my life. Om santi, santi, santi! (Peace, peace, peace!) This is not mere imagination; it is the description of a stage born out of the continued practice of pranayama.

Characteristics
This asana is known as virasana or bhasrikasana. There is another asana also called virasana (#72). Both asanas are the best of their kind. The only difference between them is that in this asana one practices pranayama, and in the other, one practices anahata nada (music of the heart). It is pranayama which gives rise to anahata nada. Virasana is attained as a gift only after the vision of the valor of yoga kriyas (purifying activities). On attaining this asana, many diseases of the body are destroyed. Some diseases hide themselves due to fear. A few malignant diseases fight with the sadhaka and destroy themselves.

Only individuals who can easily practice tribandha (the three locks) should perform asanas that include tribandha. Gradually increase the practice of tribandha to the maximum limit of fifteen minutes. Do not practice tribandha for more than fifteen minutes.
**Virasana-1 or Bhastrikasana (#3)**

The location at which one should establish and steady his gaze is indicated for each *asana*. By keeping the gaze steady, one can overcome drowsiness, diseases of the eyes, lethargy, and oversleeping.

When this *asana* occurs automatically, the advanced *sadhaka* spontaneously achieves the retention of breath called *bhastrika kumbhaka* (bellows breath holding). As a result, the lungs become strong. By *kumbhaka* (breath holding), one's strength increases. The blood is purified more quickly, and the elements that molest the body are expelled. As one practices this *asana*, diseases caused by the elements disappear. By the decrease of lust, the body becomes lustrous and active. Intelligence becomes sharp and the power of memory increases.

Paralysis, constipation, loss of appetite, and other numerous disorders are eliminated. Tired nerves are rejuvenated. Sluggish limbs become active. Mental and physical weaknesses disappear. Masturbation, leukoderma, worms, indigestion, diabetes, and other similar diseases are destroyed. The *kundalini* (female coiled one, the evolutionary energy) is aroused, and the closed entrance to the *susumna* (central energy channel) starts to open.

**Practice**

Before practicing this *asana*, perform *anuloma-viloma pranayama* for fifteen minutes at sunrise and fifteen minutes at sunset.
Description

Sit in *padmasana*. Place the right and left hands, palms up, on the right and left knees respectively. The fingers should be touching each other. Then, exhaling through both nostrils, move your hands along your thighs. When your hands come in line with the body, place them firmly on the floor, palms up, and hold the breath out. Then inhale, contract the sexual organ, and raise the *apana vayu* (eliminative energy) into the navel. Contract the abdomen and raise the *vayu* (vital air) through the pharynx into the head, then lower the neck and press the chin onto the chest. Fix your gaze and attention on the *muladhara cakra*. 
Affirmation
Concentrate as follows: I am opening the reservoir of power in the muladhara cakra and am changing the sexual fluid into ojas (power, light). Om santih, santih, santih! (Peace, peace, peace!)

Yoga
Actually, all asanas are yoga asanas. But since this asana is a special one, it is specifically termed yogasana. It is done with a specific purpose. By its practice, the body, organs, prana, and mind become independent of each other. Whatever kind of yoga one practices, the aim should be the cessation of the modifications of citta (mindstuff). Then only does the term yoga apply.

Characteristics
Only healthy sadhakas should practice this asana. Mental and physical illnesses, weakness of the sexual organs and reproductive system, piles, diseases of the urinary tract, masturbation, leukorrhea, fever, indigestion, lethargy, laziness, fear, constipation, diabetes, loss of appetite, and other innumerable diseases can be cured by this asana. The kundalini is aroused and the entrance to the susumna (central energy channel) starts to open.

Practice
Before starting to practice this asana, both diseased and healthy sadhakas should practice surya bhedana (sun-piercing) pranayama or anuloma-viloma pranayama daily for fifteen minutes at sunrise and fifteen minutes at sunset. The healthy sadhaka should practice pranayama for one month before starting to practice this asana. The diseased sadhaka should practice this asana only after two months of regular pranayama and moderate diet. One should gradually increase the duration of this asana up to the limit of fifteen minutes. Pranayama and moderate diet should be continued during the practice of this asana.
Parvatasana or Viyogasana (#5)
(Mountain Asana or Separation Asana)

Description

Sit in padmasana. While exhaling, raise your arms over your head and bring your palms together, keeping your fingers straight. Then perform virasana (#3). Fix your gaze and attention on the muladhara cakra.
Circulatory System
Concentrate as follows: I travel upward from the _muladhara cakra_ to the _svadhisthana_ (sex) _cakra_, then to the _manipura cakra_ and onward to the _anahata cakra_. What do I see here? Here I see my heart working away pleasantly between the two lungs.

The heart is divided into two chambers by a tough muscular wall. Each chamber is again divided into two more chambers. The upper chambers are known as the right and left auricles, and the two lower chambers are known as the right and left ventricles. The two auricles constantly pump blood into the blood vessels. They are intent on their work. I am amazed at their deep interest in their work. The auricles are smaller than the ventricles.

Then my gaze travels to the aorta emerging from the left ventricle. I see that it bifurcates and continues to branch out allover the body. It branches out at the collarbone. One branch descends with the spinal column. A branch known as the right common carotid artery goes up the right side of the neck and supplies pure blood to the right side of the head. Another branch goes from below the right clavicle and supplies pure blood to the right arm. The branch that supplies blood to the left side of the head is known as the left common carotid artery. The branch known as the left subclavian artery supplies blood to the left arm. The descending branch of the aorta supplies pure blood to the chest and subdivides into the gastric, the hepatic, the splenic, the intestinal, the renal, the pelvic, and the femoral arteries, which supply blood to the small intestine, liver, spleen, large intestine, kidney, pelvis, and legs respectively.

I can see clearly that the superior vena cava brings impure blood from the upper part of the body and the inferior vena cava brings impure blood from the lower part of the body. They collect the impure blood from the body and empty it into the right auricle. From the right auricle the impure blood goes into the right ventricle. From the right ventricle, it goes into the pulmonary artery which conveys the impure blood from the heart to the lungs for purification. In this manner, the impurities in the blood are expelled. Carbon
Parvatasana or Vigogasana (#5)

dioxide is expelled by exhalation; water, urea, and impure minerals are expelled through the urinary tract; and water, carbon dioxide, urea and other impurities are expelled by perspiration.

The capillaries are the minute blood vessels present in all parts of the body. They supply pure blood to all the body tissues. These capillaries feed the tissues with oxygen and nutrition. The walls of the capillaries are thin, and the lymph oozes through them. The diffusion of gases also takes place. Carbon dioxide and other impurities from the tissues enter the capillaries and mix with the blood flowing into the thin blood vessels.

The blood vessels continue to unite and carry the blood towards the heart. Eventually the blood flows into one of the vena cavas. The veins that emerge from the intestine are known as lacteals. The content of these vessels is known as chyle. Seeing all this, I say with deep feeling: 'Dear heart, Oh arteries and veins, today I have made my acquaintance with you. I have never tried to cultivate your acquaintance in spite of the fact that you are working incessantly for my welfare. Please forgive me for this great folly. You are mine; I am yours. Please consider me your property and protect me. Om santih santih santih!

The prana has taken an upward course in this asana, so both arms are automatically raised above the head. The condition of the body of the yogi is described beautifully in the Bhagavad-Gita:

\[
\begin{align*}
nai 'va kirncit karomi 'ti yukto manyeta tattvavit \\
pasyan srnvan sprsan jighrann asnan gacchan svapan svasan \\
pralapan visrjan grhnann unmisan nimisann api, \\
indriyani 'ndriyarthesu vartanta iti dharayan. (8, 9)
\end{align*}
\]

The yogi, the knower of Truth thinks, "I do nothing at all"- though seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going, sleeping, breathing, speaking,
emptying, grasping, opening and closing the eyes -- firm in the thought that the senses move among sense objects. (*Bhagavad-Gita* 5:8-9)

Have you seen water boiling in a vessel? The steam created can easily throw off the lid though the water itself cannot do this. The power of the heat that has entered the water has given the steam this strength. One realizes the strength of the water only when it boils. In the same way, when the yoga sadhaka achieves control over the prana in his body, it becomes mechanical and starts acting involuntarily. After attaining this condition, innumerable asanas and mudras spontaneously emerge from the body. At this time the mental and physical bodies of the sadhaka are purified very quickly. The body performs hard labor for hours. In this condition the yogi feels that his body is like a mechanism; and he is just the mechanic who is working the mechanism effortlessly.

**Kundalini**

Only after the kundalini is awakened does the purna (perfect, complete) yogi surrender completely to Sri Sadasiva. This is because the aroused kundalini creates many physical and mental problems. One can save himself only by complete surrender to Sri Sadasiva. The outward appearance of the aroused kundalini is so terrible that only one out of one hundred thousand yogis can gather up enough courage to continue. The internal appearance of the kundalini is very calm and indulgent. The sadhaka who is never afraid of the terrible appearance of kundalini which looks like the fearful Mahakali, is the person who has gained the indulgence of Sri Sadasiva. Mahakali Kundalini definitely takes him to the holy feet of Sadasiva. Very few devotees can adopt this uttarayana (northern way) path. The upasaka (worshipper) who is afraid of the kundalini and adopts the daksinayana (southern way) path is called a bhakti yogi, but never reaches the pinnacle of bhakti.

**Amrta (Nectar)**

Both types of yogis drink the amrta which is in the body. The daksinayana yogi is able to
Parvatasana or Viyogasana (#5)

do this for only a limited time, and he gets a limited quantity. The yogi who follows the uttarayapa (northern way) path drinks this fount of amrta for a longer period; therefore, each and every atom of his body is rejuvenated. Only such a maha (great) yogi is able to achieve real samadhi. The correct indication of a maha yogi is a divine body. The divine body is attained only after one becomes an urdhvareta (one with a permanent upward flow of sexual fluids). Sanat Kumara, Devarsi, Narada, Sukadeva, Yajhavalkya, Bhagavan Buddha, Bhagavan Sankaracarya, Bhagavan Lakulisa and other such sages were urdhvaretas (individuals with a permanent upward flow of sexual fluids), and had thus attained permanent youth. Sri Krsna, Sri Rama, and Sri Siva also attained this permanent youth. The most recent maha yogi was Sri Jnanesvara Maharaja. Since then there have been no maha yogis. Amrta transforms the body. The urdhvareta yogi drinks this amrta.

Characteristics
Parvatasana or viyogasana leads us into the deep secrets of yoga. Only healthy individuals should perform this asana. The diseases which are cured by virasana are also cured by the performance of this asana. The benefits gained by virasana are also gained by performing this asana. The prana becomes strong by the performance of virasana and leads to the performance of viyogasana. Viyogasana, therefore, is superior to virasana.

The air which is exhaled by a human being normally travels as a current for nine inches before dissolving into the surrounding air. During movement the length increases to twelve inches, while eating to fifteen inches, during sleep to twenty-two and one-half inches, during sexual intercourse to twenty-seven inches, and during physical exercise it increases even more. As the inhalation of breath increases, the blood moves more quickly and metabolism increases. At the same time, the mental balance is upset and the heart has to work harder to meet the demands. Ordinarily, the heart beats seventy-two times per minute. Thus, it beats about one hundred thousand times per day. This working heart
Parvatasana or Viyogasana (#5)

does not get a rest unless the person dies. The respiratory organs, being strong in a healthy person, work uniformly under any conditions.

The regular practice of dhyana decreases the length of the breath current. But it decreases only when the path of the susumna has been purified. Unless the susumna is purified, the air does not rise in its center; and unless the air can travel through the center, one cannot perform dhyana successfully. One's life span increases by the shortening of the breath current and decreases by the lengthening of the breath current. The heart is rested by dhyana. When one has progressed completely on this path, the length of the breath current is diminished completely because the breath is stilled. This still samadhi is just like death. When one is awake and resting, the organs of the body have to work hard. Only yogis can give complete rest to their internal organs. The blood supply to the head flows easily only in a healthy person because he can take deep breaths. Since weak and diseased persons do not have the strength to take deep breaths, the blood travels slowly and laboriously to the head. The head gets a supply of pure blood when one does virasana. This also occurs in viyogasana when the prana of the sadhaka has attained an ascendant course.

Practice
Before practicing this asana, the sadhaka should practice anuloma-viloma pranayama for fifteen minutes at sunrise and sunset and continue practicing this pranayama after he begins practicing this asana. This asana may be practiced for a maximum of fifteen minutes.
Description

Sit in *padmasana*. While exhaling, raise your arms over your head. Bend your arms and hold the right and left upper arms with your left and right hands, keeping your neck and head straight. This will put some pressure on your neck. After exhaling, hold your breath out. You will also feel a pull or pressure on your vertebral column.
The Upper Cakras

Fix your gaze on the tip of your nose and concentrate as follows: My nadi cakras (energy channel centers) are being purified by means of pranayama. I am wandering among the seven cakras and the two subsidiary cakras in my body. The apana (eliminative energy) rises from the muladhara cakra, enters the anahata (heart) cakra, and mixes with the prana. The prana and apana then progress to the visuddhakhya (throat cakra). They are now separate only in name. They enter the sahasradala (thousand-petalled, crown) cakra. They cannot remain steady in the sahasradala cakra, but they can definitely go there.

"The yogis call the pharynx the vyoma (space) cakra or the kapalakuha (skull cavity) bhammaruguha. (eyebrow cave). It is called bhammaruguha because its boundary overlaps the bhrukuti (brow dwelling cakra). Some call it the inverted well. An experienced yogiraja (yogi king) says:

In the dome of the sky is a blind well.
In that well is a reservoir of amrta (nectar).

One with a guru drinks it quickly.
One without a guru remains thirsty.

"The uvula is located near the tonsils. There is an orifice near the uvula called the tenth orifice. The yogi, with the help of vayu, makes his tongue stand and drink amrta (nectar). The erection of the tongue takes place through a secret yogic technique, and may be compared to the erection of the penis. By the constant practice of sakticalana (power activating) mudra, the vein under the tongue wears away. Then the tongue attempts to stand erect in the pharynx. After several years of practice, when nirbija (without seed) samadhi is about to be achieved, the tongue becomes as sensitive and lively as the penis
Uttana Padmasana (#6)

and remains 'erect after entering the pharynx. This erection makes the sexual fluid flow upward. There is a store of *candra* (moon) *amrta* in the *bhrukuti* (brow dwelling) cakra. Its taste is indescribable. Yet Sant Kabir has described it as neither salty nor sweet. All the other sixteen secretions are nothing compared to this amrta. Bhagavati Sruti has termed this secretion as nectar.

"Now I gaze at the uvula. Due to guru's grace I know it well. This uvula is known as the *rudra granthi* (knot of destruction) in yogic terminology. Without its being pierced, the tongue cannot stand erect in the tenth orifice. The entrance to the tenth orifice is narrow and hard. It can be widened only by *anahata nada* (music of the heart). The pharynx of a master Indian classical singer is wide and tender due to constant practice. Therefore, such a singer can concentrate easily. *Anahata nada* can be achieved easily by Indian classical singers. God is not far from the *nada upasaka* (worshipper of the divine sound).

"The origin of Indian classical vocal music is *anahata nada* (music of the heart). Indian classical dancing has its origin in the involuntary dance of the yogi. The *brahma granthi* (knot of creation) lies in the *svadhisthana* (sex) cakra. The *maha* (great) yogis regard the male or female sexual organ as the *brahma granthi*. *Amrta* (nectar) is produced only when the *brahma granthi* is pierced. The place of the *vishnu granthi* (knot of sustenance) is in the *visuddhakhya* (throat) cakra where the tongue is situated. *Maha yogis* believe the tongue to be the *vishnu granthi*. By *dharana*, the vein beneath the tongue is cut. Then the tongue becomes lively, stands erect in the tenth orifice, and drinks the *amrta*. As the *nadi cakras* begin to be purified, they develop - that is, they open out or bloom. The three *granthis* (knots) are also pierced as the *granthis* are purified. In the beginning, the piercing of the *brahma granthi* starts. As this action gathers strength, the piercing of the other *granthis* starts gradually. The *prana* and *apana* carry on the work of purifying the *nadi cakras* and piercing the *granthis*. They gain strength and move toward the *bhrtikutti* (brow dwelling) cakra. At this juncture they take the appearance of *nada* (divine sound) and pierce the *rudra granthi* (knot of destruction).
"A few months' practice is not enough for the piercing of the granthis. The yoga sastras (scriptures) indicate at least twelve years. For certain upasakas (worshippers), it takes from fourteen to twenty years. I am a twenty-two year old upasaka. This path is the path of God and Sadguru’s grace, so the result depends on God's goodness and not on the upasaka’s hard and consistent labor.

"In the end, I pray to my nadi cakras and granthis (knots): 'I want to enter the region of brilliance and leave that of darkness. I will be able to traverse the path only with your help. Please have mercy on me. This is my humble prayer. Om santi, santi, santi.

Characteristics

When uttana padmasana is practiced, there is a pull on the vertebral column. The vertebral column then becomes strong. Slipped discs, weakness of the vertebral column, breathing irregularities, nervous disorders, lack of appetite, insomnia, indigestion, leucorrhea, masturbation, asthma, tuberculosis, and loss of memory are cured by the practice of this asana.

Practice

Gradually increase the practice of this asana to the maximum limit of fifteen minutes.
Description

Sit in *padmasana*. Inhaling, grasp the big toe of your right foot with your right thumb and index finger and grasp the big toe of your left foot with your left thumb and index finger. The palms should be facing up. Hold your breath. Fix your gaze and attention on the *muladhara cakra*. 
**Affirmation**
Concentrate as follows: "I am opening the reservoir of power which lies in the *muladhara cakra* situated between the genital organ and the anus. I am transforming the sexual fluid into *ojas* (power, light). *Om santih, santih, santih!* 

**The Meaning of this Asana**
This asana is known as *karmukasana* or *atmaramasana*. *Karmuk* means bow. The choice of limbs used to form the shape of a bow is of secondary importance. The primary consideration is that this asana releases an arrow. The *apana* rises like an arrow from the *muladhara cakra*. The *prana* joins the *apana* at the *anahata* (heart) *cakra*, both reaching the *sahasradala* (thousand petalled, crown) *cakra*. Therefore, *karmukasana* is an apt name. *Karmuk* also means reservoir of wealth, since the wealth of power which lies in the *muladhara cakra* is achieved by this asana.

A yogi who is the beloved of the *Atman* (core of being) is called *Atmarama*--the yogi who is in quest of the knowledge of *Atman*. This is also an appropriate name for this asana. When this stage of the asana is reached, the sensuous inclinations in the *sadhaka yogi* gradually subside. He becomes inclined toward worship. At this juncture, he likes solitude and does not want contact with people.

**The Stages of an Asana**
Every asana has three stages--primary, secondary, and final. The asana in the primary stage is unsteady. In the secondary stage, it is somewhat steady. The asana in the final stage attains steadiness.

This condition of the body is connected with the condition of prana and *citta* (mindstuff). The stages of an asana are linked to each other. In the primary stage of an asana hatha yoga occurs; in the secondary stage *mantra yoga* and *nada* (divine sound) *yoga* occur; in
Karmukasana or Atmaramasana (#7)

the final stage, raja yoga, purna yoga, or maha (great) yoga occur. It can be said that the fourth component of an asana is pranayama. When pranayama starts, the asana is difficult to master. Pratyahara is the fifth component of an asana. When it starts, the task of mastering the asana becomes easy; and when dharana, the sixth component of an asana, starts, one reaches the final stage of the asana and mastery is within one's reach.

Characteristics
The diseases which are cured by padmasana or kamalasana can be cured by this asana. The benefits are also identical.

In this asana, the prana and apana rise in the sahasradala (thousand petalled, crown) cakra; therefore, the doubts and misgivings in the mind disappear. But this stage does not last long, because the prana and apana soon descend. The activity of one's mind is correlated to the activity of the prana. When the prana becomes less powerful, the mind becomes calm; when the mind becomes calm, the power of the prana decreases. When the prana and the mind remain still, sexual fluid does not tend to flow. Active sexual fluid indicates unsteadiness of the prana and the mind.

Practice
Gradually increase the time you practice this asana until you reach the maximum limit of thirty minutes.
Description

Sit in *karmukasana*. While exhaling, bend forward until your elbows touch the ground near your knees. Keep your head up. Hold your breath out. Fix your gaze and attention on the tip of your nose. You will feel the weight of your body on your elbows. You will also feel a pull at your waist.
Affirmation

Concentrate as follows: "The mouth of the susumna, which is located at the muladhara cakra, has not opened completely. The kundalini is, therefore, trying to open this mouth. My mind is attracted naturally towards the coccyx. This is why I invoke Bhagavati Sakti to rise and release this lowly child from bondage. It is the duty of the mother to look after the well-being of the child. You are well aware of this duty. Oh Mother! Mother! Mother! Om santih, santih, santih!"

Mother Kundalini

In India, innumerable sadhakas resort to many types of sadhana to rouse the power of kundalini. They do not consider whether or not they are fit for the awakening of this power. There are many sadhakas who proclaim that their kundalini has been roused. People have various incorrect ideas about the power of kundalini. It is very difficult to rid them of these notions. If they are asked about the appearance of kundalini, they repeat what they have read in ancient texts on yoga. The genuine, experienced yogi says, "Except for the real yoga sadhaka who is already on the path of purna yoga, no one knows the real meaning or the real appearance of kundalini." Only people possessed of knowledge, renunciation, devotion, and yoga and who crave salvation know its true meaning. Moreover, Sri Sadguru takes such an individual on that path only if he is qualified. Otherwise it will take him several births before he can go on this path. The sadhaka can rouse kundalini and make it urdhvamukhi (upward-facing) only with the help of his sadguru who has attained divine body, or with the help of the great Lord Sri Hari. Sri Hari’s grace is given very sparingly only to certain very devotional yogis. The sadguru of this fortunate great man is the incarnation of Sri Hari. On the other hand, a very deeply faithful disciple is enlightened by his sadguru. Thus, these two conditions lead to the making of a maha yogi.

Some sadhakas who have attained great power from their sadhana do come close to discovering the power of kundalini. But their first acquaintance with this power frightens them. Due to this, such sadhakas go insane, give up their sadhana, or are driven from the
true path. Some give up yoga and lead a sensual life. Certain philosophers say boldly that there is no such power as kundalini in one’s body. It is cited in *Goraksa Paddhati* and other texts on yoga that the kundalini power lies within the body itself.

\[
\text{kandordhve kundalisakti subhamoksa pradayini,} \\
\text{bandhanaya ca mudhanam yastam vetti sa vedavit.}
\]

The kundalini sakti, located above the bulb, makes one fit for liberation, and binds the ignorant. He who knows kundalini knows all knowledge.  

(*Goraksa Paddhati* 1:56)

The root of the penis is situated above the anus and below the navel. Here lies the kundalini power, which releases man from the cycle of birth and death. It binds the ignorant to the cycle of life and death, and releases the clever and persevering yogi from this cycle. Only the individual who knows the power of kundalini has true mastery of all knowledge. Since complete knowledge of kundalini never achieved without profound study, the knower of kundalini is said to be the master of all knowledge. The boundary of kundalini encompasses the muladhar, svadhisthana, and manipura (navel) cakras. In physiological terms it encompasses the reproductive and excretory systems.

In yoga texts, kundalini is described as having various forms. There are two main forms--the *sthula* (gross) and the *suksma* (subtle). *Sthula* kundalini is located at the top of the root of the male or female sexual organ. *Suksma* kundalini is in the form of prana. Only after the achievement of *sabija* (with seed) samadhi is the function of *sthula* kundalini complete. Then the kundalini takes the form of prana and strives for the achievement of *nirbiija* (without seed) samadhi. *Sthula* kundalini pierces the svadhisthana, manipura, anahata, visuddhakhya, and *vyoma* (space) cakras in the *brahma granthi* (knot of creation), *visnu granthi* (knot of sustenance), and *rudra granthi* (knot of destruction),
leading the sadhaka from the boundaries of hatha yoga into the boundaries of raja yoga and the *ajna* (eyebrow) cakra. Then kundalini in the form of *suksma* prana leads the sadhaka into raja yoga, makes him an *urdhvareta* (one with a permanent upward flow of sexual fluids), and gives him divinity.

The *sthula* (gross) kundalini is dormant and inverted. It can be aroused easily by knowledge, yoga, or devotion. A maximum of six months of yoga practice are needed to rouse it. This roused kundalini power resorts to angry molestations, and then returns to its original state. After two or three repetitions of these disturbances the sadhaka becomes frightened, and stops rousing the kundalini. This task is very difficult and cannot be performed without the kind grace of the great Lord Hari. The sadhaka must remain very alert and strive hard not to be swept away into the strong current of tamoguna and rajoguna. This is the first stage of *sabija* (with seed) or *savikalpa* (with fluctuation) samadhi. The sadhaka’s mind slips into the *ksipta* (disturbed), *mudha* (stupefied), and *viksipta* (peaceful) states. Devarsi Narada has cited these states in the *Bhakti Sutra*, Bhagavan Vyasa in the *Bhagavata Purana*, and Yajnavalkya in the *Mandala Brahmapa Upanisad*.

The person who knows this stage roams among people like a child, monster, or lunatic. A sadhaka who yearns for material gains cannot tread this path for long. This path can only be traversed by a sadhaka who seeks liberation and has discarded the world. A yogi who has attained *sabija* (with seed) or *savikalpa* (with fluctuation) samadhi is lean, pale, and extremely angry. He seems to be a lunatic, but after he passes this stage, he is entitled to practice raja yoga. Upon entering raja yoga, the physical kundalini remains awakened permanently and becomes *urdhvamukhi* (upward-facing). Prana in the form of kundalini becomes engrossed in the performance of its own task. As a result, the *citta* (mindstuff) of the sadhaka attains a concentrated and elevated state. The sadhaka becomes an *urdhvareta* (one with a permanent upward flow of sexual fluids). Here it should be born in mind that the modern yogis who give *saktipata* (energy gift) initiation call the
Kokilasana (#8)

awakening of the vital force the awakening of kundalini. This is their misconception. It is true that kundalini is awakened by the awakening of the vital force, but the prana of the sadhaka which has been made to flow upward by the grace of Guru or God is not kundalini. The prana is a friend who awakens the gross kundalini. The function of the gross kundalini is the piercing of the cakras and the granthis. It is only after they are pierced that the prana flows freely in the susumna. At this stage the function of the gross kundalini is taken up by the ascending vital force. It is then that sakti calana (power activating) mudra gives up its original form and takes up the form of yoni (drawing in, womb) mudra.

On stepping into raja yoga the sadhaka yogi is transformed into a siddha (adept) yogi. All the impurities of his body, mind, and prana are burned to ashes by the heat of yoga. He attains a divine body. King Janaka was called Videha after attaining a divine body. Videha means special body. One reaches divinity only when this purified body is attained. Then one becomes omniscient. He need not go in search of knowledge. Here one should remember that the attainment of a divine body is not the last state of yoga. Yoga sadhana continues. Yoga sadhana is complete after one attains the final state.

Characteristics and Practice

The abdomen is contracted by this asana. The chest and the waist expand. When the abdomen contracts, the stool in the large intestine is broken up and pushed forward. This asana is invaluable for the constipated sadhaka. He should practice this asana for five minutes in the beginning, and then increase the time to fifteen minutes. A patient suffering from constipation should drink one to two glasses of water ten minutes before performing this asana. The fat accumulated on the waist and abdomen decreases and one becomes lean. Indigestion and loss of appetite disappear. This asana helps in the cure of kidney stones, anal fistula, tuberculosis, asthma, varicose veins, and gastritis. The disorders of the vital forces disappear.
Baddha Padmasana (#9)
(Bound Lotus Asana)

Description

Sit in padmasana. While exhaling, bring your right hand behind you and then forward to hold the big toe of your right foot with the fingers and thumb. In the same way, grasp the toe of your left foot with the fingers and thumb of your left hand. If you find this difficult, you may bend forward, but while bending forward your breath should be held out. Sit in a straight posture after grasping the toes. You can also perform this posture by moving both hands simultaneously. This posture can be done more easily by keeping your legs close together bending your feet toward your body and raising your legs off the ground. Once you are holding your toes, make sure your legs are touching the floor. After exhalation, inhale, bend your head and press your chin to your chest. Fix your gaze and attention on the muladhar a cakra.
The Spinal Column
Concentrate as follows: "I am descending into the muladhara cakra. From there I travel toward my vertebral column which is the main support of my body. The vertebral column is the axis of the human skeleton. All the bones are directly or indirectly connected to it. By looking carefully, I count the vertebrae which are placed one on top of the other. They are thirty-three in number. There is a cartilage between each vertebra, which acts as a shock absorber when the vertebrae change positions. Again I count the vertebrae. There are seven cervical vertebrae, twelve dorsal or thoracic vertebrae, and five lumbar vertebrae. Five vertebrae make up the sacrum, and four join to form the coccyx which resembles a tail. There is a hollow nerve, the susumna, in the spinal cord which emerges from the brain and goes down the vertebral column. When kundalini starts its ascent from the tip of the coccyx, the mental awareness of the yogi is, on the coccyx. The mouth of the susumna is in the muladhara and the root of the susumna is in the brain.

I pray to Mother Kundalini, ‘Oh, Mother, I am your child; I have come in search of you. If you hide, I will be confused. My confusion will hurt you. We have been separated for many lifetimes. We shall be united in this birth. I will get back my affectionate mother. Imagining thus, my soul is both pleased and upset at the separation. Oh Ma, please let me have your holy vision soon. Ma, Ma, Ma!’ Om santih, santih, santih!

The Susumna
The coil-shaped kundalini obstructs the entrance to the susumna. It lies with its head lowered in constant slumber. The entrance of the susumna is called brahmadvara (entrance of the Absolute). This entrance is also called the brahmarandhra (aperture of the Absolute). Yet the tenth door, the sahasradala, is also called the brahmarandhra. The path starting from the muladhara cakra and ending at the sahasradala is called the purva madhya marga (anterior median path). It is only when the kundalini moves away from the brahmadvara that the path of salvation widens, and the yogi achieves realization and becomes one with God. Sunya padavi (void path), brahmarandhra, mahapatha (great
Baddha Padmasana (#9)

Pilgrimage), smasana (crematorium), sambhavi (the place of cessation), and madhya marga (middle path) are synonymous with susumna. Since the soul descends by this path, it can ascend only by this path.

A good disciple awakens kundalini and makes it ascend by the yoga of devotion when the sadguru very kindly bestows the knowledge of yoga on him. It is easy to awaken kundalini but it is very difficult to make it flow upward. Therefore, this task requires many lifetimes of devotion. There are various methods of awakening kundalini; but directly or indirectly they all are connected with hatha yoga. People’s different natures lead them to have faith in knowledge, yoga, or devotion.

The susumna is one of the most important nadis (energy channels) of the human body. It is situated in the middle of the body. There are several nadi in the body, but the ida (left-hand, downward flowing energy channel), pingala (right-hand, upward flowing energy channel), and susumna are the most important. The ida is situated on the left and the pingala on the right side of the body. The ida and pingala unite in the middle of the body to form the susumna. When the prana becomes strong, it attracts the apana which starts ascending. The apana enters the susumna and ascends, developing the cakras and granthis. Thus, the path becomes accessible. As the ascending apana vayu becomes strong, the yogi achieves steadiness of mind. In the end, he achieves a sublime state and becomes one with God. The prana and apana have become one in this state.

Characteristics
The practice of this asana brings the weight of the body on the knee and ankle joints, which are therefore strengthened. Both feet are also exercised. New life permeates through every cell of the body as the nervous system functions properly. The practice of this asana cures the disorders of the heart, lungs, stomach, liver, and spine. Diseases such as painful knee joints, indigestion, flatulence, abdominal discomfort, and gastritis disappear.

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Baddha Padmasana (#9)

Practice
One should practice this asana for a maximum of fifteen minutes, gradually working up to this limit. During the practice of this asana, deep inhalation, exhalation, and breath restraint should be practiced according to the sadhaka's capacity. Patience and perseverance should be the motto to win over the vital force and make progress.
Lolasana, Dolasana, or Utthita Padmasana (#10)
(Swing Asana or Raised Lotus Asana)

Description

Sit in padmasana. Keeping the fingers of the right and left hands wide apart, place the palms on the ground, outside of the legs, behind the knees and in front of the feet. While exhaling, lift the body off the floor placing all your weight on the hands. Fix your gaze and attention on the muladhara cakra. After exhaling hold your breath out.
The Process of Digestion

Concentrate as follows: "The apana vayu (eliminative energy) is now ascending. It passes through the intestines and enters the stomach. I also go there. I imagine a conversation with the stomach. It tells me how the food is digested. It says, ‘This muscular tube is called the alimentary canal. It starts from the mouth and ends at the anus. It passes through the thorax and the chest. It is narrow at some places and broad at others. The mouth, the pharynx, the esophagus, the stomach, the small intestine, the large intestine and the anal canal are parts of the alimentary canal. The salivary glands on both sides of the mouth, the liver situated opposite me, and the pancreas convey various digestive juices by means of ducts to the alimentary canal.’

Once you chew a morsel of food, saliva is produced and is conveyed to the mouth to mix with the food. The salivary glands are situated on both sides of the mouth. The parotid gland is situated in the cheeks, the submaxillary gland at the base of the chin, and the sublingual gland beneath the tongue. If the food is chewed properly, malt sugar is produced by the mixing of saliva with the carbohydrate. The morsel then goes on to the throat, passes through the esophagus and reaches the stomach, a muscular bag situated at the left side of the abdominal cavity.

As soon as food reaches me, my walls start contracting and expanding, thus churning the food and mixing it with the digestive juices. Before digestive juices are secreted, blood is supplied to me by the gastric artery. Tiny glands in my inner walls secrete the gastric juice. The food remains in me for three to four hours. The digested food is absorbed by tiny capillaries into the blood vessels. The small intestine is like a center of absorption. A large part of the absorption takes place in the small intestine and in the liver.

The food in the stomach becomes completely liquid. After it undergoes chemical processes, a pink and blue colored sticky substance called chyme is formed. When the chyme enters the small intestine, bile is added to it. Bile is secreted in the liver and is
stored in the gall bladder. It pours out when it is needed. Pancreatic juice from the pancreas also mixes with food in the beginning of the small intestine. It helps in the digestion of fat contained in the food.

"The intestine secretes intestinal juices which further help the process of digestion. The small intestine consists of four layers. The inner-most layer has a furry velvet-like coating. The small capillaries in it absorb water, minerals, glucose, peptides, and amino acids. The capillaries unite with the capillaries from the stomach and from the portal vein. The portal vein conveys the absorbed food to the liver. It is there turned to glycogen and stored. The fat particles are digested only in the small intestine. The lipase in the pancreas forms lactose. The digestive juice produced by the mucosa of the small intestine gives the tiny capillaries a whitish color. The capillaries are therefore called lacteals. The white fluid substance is known as chyle. All the tiny capillaries unite to form larger capillaries, and then unite into the thoracic duct. The chyle is poured into the jugular vein and mixed with the blood.

"The stomach is no longer afraid of me. It says I Formerly you never used to chew your food; therefore, the food never got full chemical treatment. This made my work and that of the small intestine more difficult. We would be tired and could not do full justice to our function. But now that you masticate properly and eat moderately, I am happy. Due to overeating, my condition was like that of a dirty sewer. This was the cause of diseases like indigestion and loss of appetite. You never did any physical exercise, so the circulatory system did not function properly. You were not happy and we were always in difficulties. But God gave you the strength to make good resolutions, and now both of us are saved.' I repented on hearing the stomach's miserable tale and resolved to behave myself. Om santih, santih, santih!"
Lolasana, Dolasana, or Uthita Padmasana (#10)

The Bones of the Arms and Upper Trunk
This asana is called lolasana, dolasana, or utthita padmasana. The arms of some persons shiver due to weakness while performing this asana. Such people should perform the asana patiently. The bones and muscles of the arms become strong by the practice of this asana. According to anatomy there are thirty-two bones in each arm. The bones of the upper arm and trunk are as follows: the scapula, the collarbone or clavicle, and the humerus. The radius, the ulna, the carpal bones, the metacarpal bones, and phalanges are the main bones of the lower arm and hand.

Characteristics
Practice of this asana cures

Practice
Practice this asana for a maximum of fifteen minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Kukutasana (#11)
(Cock Asana)

Description

Sit in padmasana. Place each arm through the gap between the thigh and calf of the same leg, and rest your open palms firmly on the floor. Then while exhaling lift your body off the floor, supporting it with your arms. Your arms should be through the legs up to the elbows. Fix your gaze and attention on the bhramadhya (eyebrow center). Hold your breath out.
Affirmation
Concentrate as follows: The apana and prana merge and rise into the sahasradala cakra. My ignorance disappears and is replaced by the illumination of knowledge. The flow of sattvaguna reaches the precincts of God. The mind is dragged away by the strength of vayu (vital air). Worldliness decreases and disappears. Om santi, santih, santih!

Yogic Experiences of the Fit and Unfit Sadhaka
If a sadhaka's practice proceeds properly, then he has many experiences. This encourages him to continue to practice yoga. He becomes a true yoga student and continues to have experiences. He becomes virtuous. Only then does he start to attain true yogic experiences. The virtuous sadhaka is faithful and rational, which brings him experiences more quickly. The sadhaka who is overridden by vices cannot inculcate faith, and is unsteady, irrational and dull, which delays his experiences. They come to him only after much effort. Many such sadhakas cannot recognize yogic experiences nor interpret them, and therefore say that they have had no experiences. They can only remain faithful and logical for a short time, and then they lose faith and fall prey to false reasoning. They also do not give much importance to yama and niyama. They bypass them and often do not heed them at all. They do not practice meditation steadily. They follow one god, one guru, and one scripture on one day, and on the next day they skip on to other gods, gurus, and scriptures according to the dictates of their minds. In the end, they begin to hate God, Guru, and Scripture. Only the fit sadhaka attains experiences. The sadhaka who is unfit gains nothing.

When the ordinary sadhaka says his kundalini has awakened he is mistaken. If a sadhaka concentrates with full faith he experiences the extraordinary touch of his guru. If faith is absent or divided, then the guru's touch does not impress the sadhaka. Even if he is impressed it does not last. When we are somewhat impressed by the speech and behavior of a well-wisher, we do not take it as a sign of the awakening of the kundalini. Even though affectionate speech and loving behavior may create faith in the disciple, that does
not necessarily mean that his kundalini has been awakened. It is an error to think so. The selfless love bestowed by Sri Sadguru on the disciple is itself the indulgence, favor, or saktipata. The selfless love of Sri Sadguru is forever present in the heart of the worthy disciple, giving him inspiration and leading him on the path of meditation. Sri Sadguru puts his pure hands on the head of the disciple with love in his eyes. This expression of love is powerful. With its help the worthy disciple breaks the bonds of illusion and enters the realm of worship, starts the practice of yoga with the guidance and teaching of the Sadguru, then awakens his kundalini and makes an effort to become a perfect yogi. This is the result of saktipata. The scriptures dictate that only those who seek salvation are entitled to awaken the kundalini. Ordinary sadhakas and ordinary gurus who desire worldly happiness are not entitled to salvation.

When the sadhaka's kundalini is first awakened, he experiences strong sexual desires. His whole body craves sex. If Sri Sadguru is indulgent to his disciple, the disciple can quiet his sexual cravings with yogic techniques and tread the path of yoga. The life force has descended by the path of the sexual organs and so it must ascend by the same path. Sant Kabir has also stated this: "The water of *moha* (delusion) has descended deep down."

**Characteristics**

Lolasana, dolasana, utthita padmasana, and kukkutasana do not differ much. The arms are not enclosed in the folds of the legs in kukkutasana, while the arms pass through the folds of the legs in kukkutasana. One's gaze is fixed on the muladhara cakra in lolasana, while in kukkutasana, it is fixed on the bhrumadhyya. The main feature of both asanas is that the arms and their three main joints (the wrist, elbow, and shoulder) are exercised. Similarly, while standing, the legs and the leg joints (ankle, knee, and thigh) are exercised and strengthened. The muscles of the legs, abdomen, chest, spine, and neck are also brought into action and exercised. The gaze is fixed on the muladhara cakra when performing lolasana, so the path of prana is steadied in this area. In kukkutasana the gaze is fixed on the *ajna* (eyebrow) cakra, so the path of prana is steadied in that particular area. The
practice of these two and other such asanas makes the body active and the mind happy. This state of body and mind keeps one healthy. If illness occurs due to environmental circumstances, it is easily overridden.

The diseases which are cured by lolasana, dolasana, or utthita padmasana are cured by the practice of kukkutasana. The benefits are also identical.

**Practice**
One should practice this asana for a maximum of fifteen minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
**Garbhasana #12**  
(Embryo Asana)

**Description**

Sit in kukkutasana. Instead of raising the body off the floor, exhale while you hold the lobes of the right and left ears with the forefingers and thumbs of the right and left hands respectively. Hold your breath out. Fix your gaze and your attention on the bhrumadhya.
Affirmation
Concentrate as follows: The prana and apana mingle with each other and enter the sahasradala. The purified blood is rushing toward the head. Just as sugar dissolves in milk, the mind is dissolving in the *Atman* (core of being). Feelings of happiness, misery, joy, unhappiness, anger, and jealousy cease. I am eager to reach the lotus feet of God. Tears of repentance flow readily and wash away all my sins. *Om santih, santih, santih!*

Characteristics
Garbhasana gives the sadhaka a glimpse of the path of yoga. It should be performed carefully. If the sadhaka’s balance is not maintained, he will fall. Keeping the thighs raised and the rectum pressed against the ground facilitates the rising of the apana vayu. The vayu enters the susumna effortlessly. As the various parts of the abdomen, chest and limbs are exercised, minor obstructions disappear. By holding the ear lobes, touching the tongue to the palate, and concentrating on bhrumadhya, the movement of the prana through the sahasradala is not obstructed. The semen is automatically withheld, and the attention becomes steadied on the *Atman* (core of being).

Colic, gastritis, swelling of the intestines, slow fever, defects of the liver, enlargement of the spleen, constipation, and other such diseases are cured.

Practice
One should practice this asana for a maximum of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Description

Sit in kikkutasana. Instead of lifting your body off the ground, raise your hands and place your right and left palms on the right and left sides of your neck, respectively. Hold your breath. Fix your gaze and your attention on the muladhara cakra.
Affirmation
Concentrate as follows: I am separating my senses from my mind and making them independent of each other. This is my natural behavior, my spontaneous action. My senses and my mind are both pleased at my effort. They happily seek intimacy with me. Om santih, santih, santih!

Separation of Body and Mind
Sadhakas dominated by rajoguna and tamoguna sometimes, not restraining their anger at all, make an unhealthy effort to separate which does not help them to progress in their sadhana. Under such circumstances, good feelings are not created. Only a calm body and mind can help the creation of good feelings, which in turn sublimate tamoguna and rajoguna, which are replaced by sattvaguna.

An agitated mind is useless for _upasana_ (worship); only a healthy mind is useful for _upasana_.

Characteristics
This asana is called _uttana kurmasana_. Kurma means tortoise. Just as a tortoise withdraws into its shell to avoid calamities, so also the self-controlled man, like the tortoise, withdraws into his shell to avoid calamities in the form of sensuality. This asana helps one gain easy control over his mind and senses.

As the blood circulates quickly in the lower region of the body below the neck, all parts of the body are rejuvenated. The blood flows slowly in the head as the palms press down on the neck.

In garbhasana, the sadhaka holds his earlobes with his respective hands. While in uttana kurmasana, the sadhaka presses the left and right sides of his neck with his left and right hands. In garbhasana one keeps his eyes closed and fixes his gaze on the bhrumadhya;
while in uttana kurmasana, he fixes his gaze on the muladhara cakra. These are the only contrasting features of the two asanas. When any other color is added to white, a new shade is produced. In the same way, slight changes in an asana produce a new variation which differentiates the new asana and makes it original, effective, and complementary. The bhrumadhya plays an important part in garbhasana, while the lower cakras are made active in uttana kurmasana. Garbhasana activates the senses of perception, while uttana kurmasana activates the organs of action. The advanced sadhaka of garbhasana performs mulabandha mudra, while the sadhaka who practices uttana kurmasana performs *vajroli* (hard and drawn in) mudra.

The diseases which are cured by the practice of garbhasana are also cured by uttana kurmasana. The benefits are also identical.

**Practice**
One should practice this asana for a maximum of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
**Baddha Hasta Padmasana (#14)**

(Joined Hands Lotus Asana)

**Description**

Sit in padmasana. Lift both legs, still folded, towards the chest. Place your arms in front of your locked legs and bringing them around, clasp your palms behind your back. Fix your gaze and your attention on the muladhara cakra. After exhaling hold your breath out.
Affirmation
Concentrate as follows: "I chew my food properly and eat only wholesome food in moderation. I practice celibacy and the yamas and niyamas set down for the effective practice of yoga. I read the scriptures and listen to the advice of saints. In this way I become fearless, healthy, and enthusiastic. God has indeed blessed me. Rama, Rama, Rama. Om santih, santih, santih!"

Perfecting Baddha Hasta Padmasana
Baddha hasta padmasana is very difficult and calls for much effort. One falls if balance is not maintained. It is difficult to keep the hands in front of the legs; therefore, it is obviously even more difficult to take the hands and clasp them behind one’s back. Frustration or haste does not help. Perfection can be achieved in the first part by learning to keep the hands in front of the legs. Then one may try to put his hands behind his back. To clasp the hands behind the back is extremely difficult in this posture. Even if the palms of the hands do not meet, they should be brought as close to each other as possible.

Ductless Glands
The pituitary gland, a ductless gland which lies at the base of the brain, functions properly by the practice of this asana, producing the necessary amount of pituitrin. This corrects the functions of the kidneys, intestines, heart, and uterus. It keeps one from gaining weight.

Another set of ductless glands is made up of the reproductive glands of the female, the ovaries; they are situated on both sides of the uterus which lies in the pelvis. The practice of this asana cures diseases of the uterus and sterility in the female.

The largest ductless gland is the spleen. It is situated to the left of the stomach and the pancreas. It destroys the dead red blood corpuscles and produces new white blood
Baddha Hasta Padmasana (#14)

corpuscles. It also destroys the germs of disease and prevents them from entering the blood stream. The spleen becomes powerful by the practice of this asana and increases a person's power of resistance to diseases.

Characteristics

This asana cures constipation, piles, loss of appetite, diarrhea, indigestion, diabetes, miscarriage during pregnancy, irregular menstruation, sterility, enlargement of the spleen, nervous disorders, anal fistula, dropsy, swelling of the intestines, worms, rheumatism, cold, cough, obesity and many other diseases. The appetite improves; the sluggishness of the liver disappears. If the liver is hard and weak, it becomes healthy. If it is, enlarged, it regains its original size.

Practice

One fact should be borne in mind. The person suffering from incurable diseases should start with the practice of simple asanas; then as he gains his health and strength he should go on to the more difficult and complicated asanas like baddha hasta padmasana. To gain strength and vitality, one should start with some of the easier asanas like the three variations of bhunamana padmasana, pascimottanasana, the three variations of bhunamana visesasana, ardha kurmasana, bhunamana vajrasana, ardha padma ugrasana, ardha ugrasana, udara hasta ardha padmasana, janu sirasana, baddha ardha vrsa ugrasana, the three variations of supta pavana muktasana, prsthasana, ardha cakrasana, mahamudrasana, supta mahamudra. Only when one has become strong can asanas help in curing diseases.

One should practice this asana for a maximum limit of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Description

Place the right foot on the left thigh. Raise the bent right leg so that the knee reaches the shoulder. Then place your right hand on the floor, positioning your arm in front of your right ankle and pressing it down. With your left hand, place the lower left leg on the back of your neck. Then exhale as you bring your arms around your legs, and join your hands behind your back. After exhaling hold your breath. Fix your gaze and attention on the muladhara cakra.
**Baddha Hasta Padma Sirasana (#15)**

**Affirmations**
Concentrate as follows: "I am observing the yamas and niyamas, and am practicing asana and pranayama regularly. My lungs are gaining strength. My whole body is becoming healthy and sattvaguna is becoming stronger. I also experience a strange change in my mind. Anger is replaced by calmness, desire by desirelessness, greed by lack of greed, fear by fearlessness, infatuation by love, miserliness by charity, ego-centered activity by devotion, and complication by simplicity. My elevated consciousness is changing me from an animal into a real human being. *Om santih, santih, santih!*"

**Characteristics**
Due to the pressure of the right leg on the abdomen, the circulation of blood decreases in the lower part of the body; and due to the pressure of the left leg on the neck, the circulation of blood in the head also decreases. The circulation is only properly maintained in the lungs, which are benefited. The thyroid gland is also benefited, in spite of the obstruction of the circulation in this area. The abdominal area also gets full benefit. The practice of this asana deflowers the anahata cakra when one frequently practices long breath retentions. This slows and finally stops the function of the heart. Stopping the heartbeat is child's play for the yogi. But the yogi who thirsts for salvation does not enjoy this development. He does not, therefore, indulge in showing it off to people. His primary aim is the restraint of the mind. Though restraint of the senses is important, it holds a secondary place in yoga.

Baddha hasta padma sirasana is a laborious and difficult asana. If balance is not maintained, one will fall. The other variation of this asana is performed by changing the position of the legs.

Dropsy, anal fistula, diseases of the gonads, heart attack, asthma, fainting, cancer, appendicitis, tuberculosis, constipation, piles, loss of appetite, edema of the hands and feet, diseases of the uterus, and many other diseases are cured by this asana. It
**Baddha Hasta Padma Sirasana (#15)**

strengthens the knee joints and the muscles of the limbs. It develops the chest and stimulates one's appetite.

**Practice**
One should practice this asana for a maximum of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
**Uttanasana (#16)**

(Highest Limbs Asana)

**Description**

Sit in padmasana, placing the palms of the hands on the floor in front of your legs. Raise both knees and press them against the chest. While exhaling, raise your body so that the weight of the body rests on your arms, then hold your breath. Fix your gaze and your attention on the bhrumadhya.
Affirmation
Concentrate as follows: "Omnipresent Sri Hari is everywhere, but I cannot see him physically. The saints and scriptures say that one should search for God within himself. I am trying to do so, as one sifts through a heap of dust in search of gold. The body is the dust, and one's discretion is the sieve. Saint Narsinha said that one cannot get at the core without the purification of one's body. The learned scholar will not find this in books.

"The mind is made impure through many births, and the body is made impure in this birth. Physical impurities produced in the body are not excreted completely. They go on collecting in the body. In the same way, negative ideas accumulate in the mind. Therefore, the purification of the body and the mind is not as easy as one thinks. It is necessary for one to become very patient. Only self-restraint, good conduct, good thoughts, firm resolve, regularity, deep ambition to rise above all, good knowledge, and pure sadhana can lead to perfection. A compassionate adept gives one enthusiasm, which makes one’s labor easy. The religion of yoga is the seed of all religions. One can achieve wealth, pleasure, and liberation by the practice of yoga. A purified body and a purified mind are entitled to health and divine treasure. Om santih, santih, santih!

Characteristics
Uttamangasana is not as easy as lolasana or kukkutasana. It is difficult. The performance of this asana strengthens the joints. It also strengthens the internal organs of the chest and the abdomen. Therefore, this asana is more significant than lolasana and kukkutasana.

The diseases which are cured by the practice of lolasana and kukkutasana are also cured by this asana. The benefits are also the same. Asthma and tuberculosis are cured completely. But before practicing this asana, one should gain strength and endurance by practicing simpler asanas.
Uttanasana (#16)

Practice
One should perform this asana for a maximum of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Description

Sit in padmasana. With the right and left hands hold the left and right elbows respectively. Using all your strength, press the abdomen with the arms. While exhaling, bend the body forward and rest your chin on the floor. After exhaling, hold your breath out. Fix your gaze and your attention on the tip of your nose.
Affirmation
Concentrate as follows: "Mother Kundalini has become active. The entrance to the susumna has opened. Ascend, ascend, Oh, loving mother. Who will bless me if not you? Only you can lead me to the lotus feet of the great Lord Siva. Mother, you are my only salvation. My life depends on your blessings. Oh, benevolent mother, save me. Om santih, santih, santih!"

Yoga Nidra (Yogic Sleep)
When the sadhaka sits in padmasana or any other such asana, he strains himself, but then slowly his muscles become relaxed. He achieves dhyana. The body bends either towards the front or the back. If the body bends towards the front, the vayu goes into the posterior median path and if it bends towards the back, the vayu goes into the anterior median path. At the stage during which this asana occurs, these asanas take place automatically: bhunamana padmasana, matsyasana, savasana, daksina parsvasana, argha kurmasana, bhunamana visesasana, supta vajrasana, makarasana, pranipatasana, adhvasana, yoga nidrasana, supta padmasana, etc. The sadhaka goes into yoga nidra during this stage. Also, when the sadhaka practices pranayama with mantra, he slips into yoga nidra if he is tired. After dancing, after the fricative action of cutting the tendon under the tongue, and after sakti calana (power activating) mudra, the sadhaka enjoys yoga nidra. This yoga nidra is ordinary. It achieves significance only when it occurs after the dhyana of the bhrumadhya along with khecari (walking in the sky) mudra. This condition strengthens the sabija samadhi of the yogi and entitles him to achieve nirbija samadhi.

One can be an urdhvareta only after one is qualified for nirbija samadhi. One can practice dhyana after taking up any of the 8,400,000 asanas. The sadhaka who has made progress in sahaja yoga does not need to think about which asanas he should perform. The different asanas occur by themselves one after the other. Yet his dhyana is undisturbed. Asanas are related to the body and dhyana is related to the mind. As one becomes familiar with dhyana, he spends more time in the same asana. In the end, the dhyana
which brought about many asanas is performed in a single asana. This whole sequence of perfect sadhana occurs involuntarily, and not because one wishes it.

When the sadhaka has been practicing meditation for several years after pranotthana (release of prana) and experiences only physical movements, he is extremely depressed. But this is not cause for disappointment. It is very true that one goes on experiencing physical movements continuously for many years, but there is a great diversity in the speed of the movement. It continues to change. In the beginning, the movement is very fast, almost violent; then it slows down as time goes on. At the end, the speed of movement is very slow. Thus, there is definitely some progress. The sadhaka should always remember this.

Some people define hypnotic trance as yoga nidra (yogic sleep), but this is a false conception. This trance or sleep may be defined as inspired sleep. Hypnotists can experiment on an invalid or a mentally weak person. However, yoga nidra cannot be brought on by oneself or by others. It is the result of the continued practice of yoga and occurs spontaneously. There is a vast difference between yoga nidra and ordinary sleep which occurs spontaneously when the mind is influenced by indolence. Everyone can sleep, and inspired sleep can be brought on by hypnotism, but only the sadhaka in the highest stage of yoga can enjoy yoga nidra.

Certain people think that the trance brought on by hypnotism causes one to lose consciousness of the world around him. But his internal consciousness is not lost. This state is not samadhi. The hypnotized subject is conscious internally, though his external appearance may be trancelike. Because of this, he hears and obeys the instructions of the hypnotist. During samprajnata (with discrimination), sabija, savikalpa (with fluctuation), or salamba (with support) samadhi, the sadhaka is in a state of concentration; that is, the flow of thoughts is centered around a single goal. This enlightened state is not a state of complete consciousness, as the consciousness is singular.
and does not include everything. For the yogi in this state, consciousness of the outside world is only a distraction.

In *asamprajhata* (without discrimination), *nirbija* (without seed), *nirvikalpa* (without fluctuation), or *niralamba* (without support) samadhi, the whole mental inclination of the sadhaka mixes with *prakrti* (nature). In this state, the mind does not exist as a separate entity, so how can one talk of consciousness? The subject who is in a trance or asleep reaches the mind and is conscious. By *yoga nidra* (yogic sleep), the yogi reaches a state where there is the absence of the inclination of the senses. If the inclination of the senses does emerge, then it is included in *yoga nidra* in the form of a dream. The *yoga nidra* which includes dreams is called *ardha* (half) *yoga nidra*.

When the perfect yogi who has achieved sabija samadhi steadies his mind on any subject, he realizes the true knowledge of that subject. As his mind is very pure, there is no trace of ignorance in his acquisition of knowledge. His knowledge could be said to be perfect. The hypnotist is weak and of impure mind; and his knowledge is adulterated by ignorance. We could not call his type of knowledge perfect because whatever he has acquired has been done in a state of ignorance.

There are three types of yogic sleep -- primary, medium, and perfect. In the primary type of yogic sleep, tamoguna predominates. The medium type of yogic sleep is dominated by rajoguna. In the perfect type of yogic sleep, there is a dominance of sattvaguna. The yogic sleep with dreams results in samadhi containing thought elements; the yogic sleep without dreams leads to a thoughtless samadhi. The state of faint brought on by yoga is included in the samadhi without the presence of thoughts.

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* acquaints us with perfect *yoga nidra* thus:

> *bhruvormadhye sivasthanam manastatra villyate, jhatavyarn tatpadam turyam tatra kalo na vidyate.* (48)
Bhunamana Padmasana-1 (#17)

\[ abhyaset khecari tavad yavat syad yoganidritah, \\
\text{samprapta yoganidrasya kalo nasti kadacana. (49) } \]

The part of the forehead between the two eyebrows is the abode of Lord Siva. Here the flow of the senses is sublimated. This state (something different from waking, sleeping, and dormancy) is that of \textit{turya} (the fourth state). This stage is timeless. (48)

The yogi should practice \textit{khecari} (walking in the sky) until he achieves \textit{yoga} nidra. For the yogi in yoga nidra, time does not exist. (49)  
(\textit{Hatha Yoga Pradipika} 4:48-49)

The \textit{Mandala Brahmana Upanisad} discusses this subject as follows:

\[
\text{sarvaparipurnatitabrahmabhuto yogi bhavati.} \\
\text{tam brahmeti stuvanti.} \\
\text{sarvalokastipatrah sarvadesamasparasilah} \\
\text{paramatmagagane bindum niksipyah} \\
\text{suddhadvaitajadhahajamanaska yoganidra khandananda} \\
\text{padanuvrtya jivanamukto bhavati.} \\
\text{taccananda samudramagna yogino bhavanti.} \\
\text{tadapeksaya inradayah svalpanandah evam praptanandah} \\
\text{paramayogi bhavatityupanisat.} \\
\]

Such a yogi becomes perfect, and becomes Brahma incarnate. People sing his praises by calling him Brahma. He tries to spread virtue everywhere. He makes God his goal and achieves salvation by yoga nidra which is unhindered by the mind and is pure, unique, and unorthodox. Such yogis become engrossed in their
pleasure of seeking God. Compared to them even Indra is less happy. The yogi who has found such pleasure becomes a great yogi. That is the secret. (Mandala Brahmana Upanisad 2:6)

In order to practice yoga nidra independently, the sadhaka should perform anulomaviloma pranayama or ajapajapa (silent prayer) dhyana. In ajapajapa the sadhaka observes his breath. One can perform ajapajapa dhyana continually for an hour and a half, then he performs the same dhyana in savasana. The technique to be performed during ajapajapa in savasana is something like layacintana (reflecting on dissolution). This yoga nidra is an ordinary type of yoga nidra. The yoga nidra brought on automatically by sakti calana mudra or khecari (walking in the sky) mudra is the superior type of yoga nidra. It is necessary that this practice be carried out under the strict surveillance of one’s sadguru. It is best if it is practiced after the sadguru has bestowed his benevolent blessings.

The place for performing dhyana should be wide and as long as a bed so that the sadhaka can perform asanas like savasana and can also go into yoga nidra.

Characteristics
Bhunamana padmasana cures weakness of the intestines, the stomach, and sluggish liver; and the pancreas is made active. The spine becomes strong. The thoracic and abdominal muscles become fit. Diseases of the spleen, kidney, and uterus are cured. The asana cures diabetes, worms, abdominal diseases, cold, rheumatism, loss of appetite, constipation, nocturnal emission, leucorrhea, insomnia, asthma, dysentery, and indigestion. Fat, phlegm, and mucus are burned by this asana. It stimulates the appetite. This asana is invaluable for the cure of constipation.

The three variations of bhunamana padmasana occur during the performance of sthirasana. If the sadhaka finds it difficult to perform the three variations of bhunamana
padmasana, he should practice the variations of sthirasana. The last variation is similar to bhunamana padmasana.

Practice
One should perform this asana for a maximum of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Bhunamana Padmasana-2 (#18)
(Bowing to the Earth Lotus Asana)

Description

Sit in padmasana. Place both arms behind your back, holding one wrist with the other hand. While exhaling, bend your body forward and rest your chin on the floor. After exhaling, hold your breath out. Fix your attention and your gaze on the tip of your nose.
Affirmation
Concentrate as follows: "The entrance of the susumna has opened. The prana is ascending the path of the spine. This is the yogi's darsana (vision) of the pascima marga (western path). This path can be reached only with the grace of God or Sadguru. There is no other way to reach this goal, because with other methods the mind does not become steady, and passions are not sublimated. When such a state of affairs prevails, how can one acquire discrimination or renunciation; how can one aspire to God? It is only because I have the blessings of Sri Sadguru and Sri Hari that I am traversing this path. Om santih, santih, santih!"

Characteristics
When the necessary production of bile juice does not take place in the body, constipation is created by hardening of the fecal matter. Due to the lack of bile juice, the peristaltic movement of the intestines is not stimulated. The liver is strengthened by the performance of kokilasana, the three variations of bhunamana padmasana, pascimottanasana, mahamudra, and other such asanas, and produces enough bile juice to cure one's tendency toward constipation. The patient suffering from constipation should drink a glass or two of water ten minutes before performing this asana.

The pancreas does not function properly in the obese patient, so there is not enough pancreatic juice produced. This causes obesity. The performance of asanas like kokilasana, the three variations of bhunamana padmasana, pascimottanasana, and mahamudra strengthens the pancreas and increases the secretion of pancreatic juices. Lipase is one of the ingredients of the pancreatic juice that along with bile helps to digest fat in food. The rear section of the pituitary gland of the obese patient is also weak, so there is not enough pituitrin secreted. The activeness of the pancreas also affects the pituitary gland, which in turn becomes active, secretes enough pituitrin, and reduces obesity.
Bhunamana Padmasana-2 (#18)

The pancreas is also weak in the case of the diabetic patient. The pancreatic juice is conveyed to the alimentary canal by the pancreatic duct. The pancreatic juice is absorbed into the blood stream by minute capillaries. Insulin is also secreted by cells in the pancreas. By the performance of the above-mentioned asanas, enough insulin is produced to decrease the proportion of sugar in the blood and cure diabetes.

This second variation of bhunamana padmasana is easier than the first. The curing effect of this asana is the same as that of the first variation. The benefits are also the same. Thus these two variations may be said to be complementary.

Practice
This asana should be performed for a maximum of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Description

Sit in padmasana. Hold each wrist with the opposite hand. While exhaling, bend your body forward, placing your locked hands on the ground in front of you. Rest your chin on the floor between your outstretched hands and your body. After exhaling, hold your breath out. Fix your gaze and attention on the tip of your nose.
Kundalini is the base of all yoga.

Concentrate as follows: The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* states:

\[
\text{sasolavanadhatripam yathadharo'hinayahak,}
\]
\[
\text{sarvesam yogatantravam tathadharo hi kundali.}
\]

Kundalini is the base of all yoga. As the earth is the base of the mountains and deserts, and sesanaga is the leader of all serpents, kundalini is the base of all yoga.

The seeker of knowledge, the yogi, and the bhakta all have to traverse this path. This is the raja *marga* (path). Bhoga is the tearing asunder of the mind and the passions. Yoga is the development of the mind and the passions, leading to sublimation.

It is said in the Upanishads that the weak cannot attain God. When the weak cannot even attain worldly goods, how can they reach God? Therefore, it is necessary to be healthy and lustrous. A healthy body is the only way to attain God. The mind that lives in an impure body is always impure. One must seek the grace of Mother Kundalini for the purification of the mind and body. *Om santih, santih, santih!*

*Saktipata (Energy Gift)*

It is true that yogis make the path of one who seeks liberation easy by giving him saktipata initiation, but this initiation cannot be bestowed on the sakama (with desire) seeker. Another kind of initiation is given to the sakama seeker. This fact is not acceptable to all yogis. Some yogis say that everyone, without exception, is entitled to the truth. This argument contains some truth, but merely being a human does not qualify an individual to receive saktipata initiation; one must also have a burning desire for liberation. This is a controversial topic. Only the complete, perfect yogi, not a mere seeker, can be the true judge of this. Of course, the yogi who gives saktipata initiation...
impresses society. He is greatly honored and becomes famous. It may be that the desire for fame and honor leads him to initiate people.

If a sadhaka is graced by his guru, he can himself initiate millions of people three days after his own prana awakens. The ordinary sadhaka can give this kind of saktipata initiation, but because his experience in the practice of yoga is so little, he cannot guide his followers. People believe that a doctor should be old in age, an astrologer should be young, and a yogi should he old in experience. Why should people ask for an experienced yogi? The inexperienced yogi craves siddhis (powers). He is not very renounced in his attitude toward life, and has limited experience in yogic practice. His knowledge is adulterated with ignorance. The experienced yogi does not want siddhis. He is a complete renunciate, has extensive yogic experience, and his knowledge contains no ignorance.

In ancient times disciples were given saktipata initiation only after their fitness had been tested. Just as a discriminating teacher at school does not tax the mentally retarded child beyond his capacity, so the yogi does not give saktipata initiation to the sakama (with desire) sadhaka who cannot control his initiation, and is unstable, greedy, and full of bad qualities. This is because saktipata initiation is only meant for the niskama (without desire) sadhaka. This sadhaka abandons even the material success he has achieved in life. Under these circumstances, how can he harbor the desire to achieve new siddhis? Sakama sadhana creates good sadhakas, and niskama sadhana yields good teachers. Thus sakama sadhana fills a person with desires, and niskama sadhana fills one with renunciation. Only after testing the fitness of the individual should he be initiated into the appropriate sadhana. In other words, we may say that only after the sadhaka has gone through all the stages of sakama sadhana successfully should he be given saktipata initiation and be made a teacher.
"What does the teacher say when he gives the seeker saktipata initiation by placing his hand on the seeker's head?"

"The teacher says nothing. The seeker receives only grace. By touching his disciples the teacher showers his grace. He only blesses the seeker; his efforts are the efforts of love. Saktipata initiation can be given by word, touch, thought, or glance. Even if the disciple is thousands of miles away, he can be initiated. One can receive saktipata initiation by reading the directions given for meditation in scripture written by the guru. This can result in pranotthana (release of energy) or saktipata. Saktipata is the technical term used in the tantra teachings. In the path of knowledge, yoga, and devotion, it is called grace.

"After pranotthana (release of energy) has taken place following saktipata initiation, the seeker must meditate regularly for years. Not all seekers who have been initiated achieve their goal in one lifetime. Only the brave seeker who has reached the highest stage can achieve perfection in his present birth. Perfection can be attained because of the accumulation of the good karma of many lifetimes of practicing austerities."

"What is the seeker’s final experience when his kundalini power has been aroused?"

"First of all, he faces strong sensual desires, both physically and mentally; his whole body is set alight. Only the seeker who is fit to receive grace of Guru or God uses yogic techniques to enter the realms of enjoyment and make progress.

"The life energy descended through the susumna, and it must make its ascent along the same path. Saint Kabir has said:

It has gone very deep into the realms of great desires. It is only the strong fish which can come up the river against the flowing current of water."
"This is called niskama (without desire) karma yoga. One must practice yoga while remaining in the midst of desires. It is a formidable task. Even great yogis have met with severe downfall because they submitted to their desires. It takes a very brave yogi to use yogic techniques to his advantage to confront his desires and climb to the peak of success. Just as it is very difficult to swim up to the source of a river against a strong current, so it is very difficult to swim against the strong current of desires to reach God. The enjoyment of sex leads to the downward flow of sexual fluids, whereas yoga leads to the upward flow of sexual fluids."

"I have heard that after the awakening of the kundalini, the kundalini itself reveals the deep secrets of yoga and leads the seeker in the correct direction."

"Right."

"Is it true that such a seeker is inspired by the kundalini to practice asanas, mudras, pranayamas, pratyaharas, dharanas, and various kinds of meditation? Does such a seeker need no one's guidance? Do the different yogic techniques occur automatically?"

"Yes, the kundalini can be awakened without a guru. It can be awakened by the grace of God. The seeker practices the techniques as described in scripture. This leads to pranotthana. But when the desires are aroused in full force, he cannot find a way out, and becomes very afraid. At this point, only the inspiration and grace of God, Guru, and scripture can help him; otherwise, progress becomes impossible.

"The seeker whose kundalini has been aroused faces a raging onslaught of sexual desires, and he is afraid to embark on the path of yoga; but if he acquires the knowledge of yogic techniques, he can fearlessly tread the yogic path."

"What are his experiences?"
"In the beginning he becomes aware of the various cakras and granthis that exist in his body. He then experiences the slow process of the blooming or flowering of the cakras and granthis. Anahata nada has its source in the anahata cakra, but it cannot be manifested there. When the kundalini rises to the visuddhakhyaka cakra, the Rama and Om chants manifest. Rama is the sound of Brahman (the Absolute), Om of imperishable Brahman, and the unpronounced am, the pranava, manifests not in the tongue, but in the throat. The pranava is a special manifestation of nada, and is a different form of Om. Om creates fifty-two syllables. Moreover, the seeker performs asanas, mudras, and pranayamas automatically. He recites the Vedas, circumambulates, rocks, dances, laughs raucously, weeps uncontrollably, sings the various ragas, and thus experiences many yogic rituals and techniques."

"What is this path called?"

"The uttarayana (northern path). It leads to liberation. There is another path which leads to the acquisition of riches, virtuousness, and worldly pleasures. It is called the daksipayana (southern path). The seeker who follows this path can become a celibate, but not an urdhvareta. The yogi of the daksinayana acquires material siddhis. He can rule the whole world, but because all his desires have roots, he cannot break the bondage of the life and death cycle. He does not achieve liberation."

Characteristics
This is the third variation of bhunamana padmasana. Practice of this asana cures the same diseases as practice of the other two variations. The benefits are also the same.

Practice
This asana should be practiced for a maximum of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Praudhasana or Santipriyasana (#20)
(Proud Asana or Beloved of Peace Asana)

Description

Place your right ankle under your left thigh and your left ankle on your right thigh in such a way that each ankle is about three inches away from the knee. While inhaling, bring your hands together in front of your chest over the heart, and join the tips of your fingers. The heels of your hands should touch, but the palms should not. While doing this, your gaze and attention will be fixed naturally on the anahata cakra.
Affirmation
Concentrate as follows: "I have observed all the yamas and niyamas. I have performed asanas, pranayamas, and mudras, so my kundalini force has become active. All the cakras have flowered and the brahma granthi, visnu granthi and rudra granthi have opened up. This has been possible only by the grace of Guruji. Jaya Gurudeva, Jaya Gurudeva, Jaya Gurudeva! Om santih, santih, santih!"

Origin of this Asana
This asana is very easy. Anyone can do it, and it is used by many people. It is the asana of the raja yogi. Ordinary people use this asana for comfort. The yogi uses this posture to meditate comfortably. This asana originates when prana becomes ascendant and goes towards the sahasradala cakra. There is a feeling of lightness, and one has an illusion that one's body will be elevated above the ground.

Only when the nadi cakras are purified by the practice of asanas, mudras, and pranayamas does the prana become ascendant. The ascendant prana becomes centralized, rises through the other cakras into the visuddhakhya cakra, enters the bhammaraguha (eyebrow cave) or vyoma (space) cakra, and, going through the bhrumadhya, ascends into the sahasradala cakra. At this point, the sadhaka performs khecari mudra. Just as water gushes up when a one-inch diameter tap is opened, so also does one experience the rising of the prana. If the position of the legs are reversed, the second variation of the asana takes place.

The Anahata and Visuddhakhya Cakras
The respiratory system and the digestive system are associated with the anahata cakra and visuddhakhya cakra. When the prana leads the apana into the anahata cakra, the apana uses all its force to descend back into its place. At this point, the kundalini also supports the apana. In the beginning, apana is often victorious. The sadhaka is disturbed in his mind and body, but then the disturbance calms down because the prana does not abandon its efforts. At last it pulls the apana up to the visuddhakhya cakra, where the sadhaka is able to retain the vayu. His apana is rarely able to descend, so he is pleased with his
Praudhasana or Santipriyasana (#20)

success. In the beginning the prana dominates the lower parts of the body, and various pranayamas, pratyaharas, dharanas, dhyanas, and samadhis take place, but the prana is not able to stay for long in the upper cakras. As perfection is achieved, the prana becomes steady in the upper cakras. After the prana has become steady in the respiratory system, the sadhaka finds his sadhana easy.

Characteristics
This asana is comparable to kamalasana or padmasana, and the diseases cured by the practice of those asanas are also cured by this asana. The benefits of this asana are also similar to those of padmasana or kamalasana.

Practice
The seeker should take moderate, wholesome food (fruits and milk) for a month before sitting in this asana. He should chant the Rama and Om mantras regularly. He should perform anuloma-viloma pranayama at sunset. This asana should be practiced for a maximum of one hour at a time reaching this limit gradually.
Description

Stretch out your right leg. Fold your left leg at the knee and place it on your right thigh, close to the abdomen. Place your left hand on your left knee. Bring your right knee toward your right shoulder. Put your right arm through the gap between your right thigh and calf, and hold your foot with your right hand. While inhaling, try to bring your right foot closer to your body. Meanwhile, straighten your left arm and press your left knee down. Putting pressure on your hands, hold your breath in. Fix your gaze and attention on the tip of your nose.
The Relationship between Prana and Citta

Concentrate as follows: When prana is unsteady, citta is also unsteady. When prana is steady, citta becomes steady. When both prana and citta become steady, the body of the yogi adjusts itself to dhyana, dharana, and samadhi.

The success of pratyahara indicates the steadiness of prana. When the yogi achieves pratyahara, mental and physical vices forsake him. Raja yoga cannot begin unless there is pratyahara.

The practice of hatha yoga is absolutely necessary for the achievement of raja yoga. Yogi Svatmaramji has said in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika:

(Hatha Yoga Pradipika, 1:3)

Without achieving hatha yoga, pratyahara is impossible, and pratyahara is the entrance gate to raja yoga. People who neglect or laugh at hatha yoga are making an error. Hatha yoga and raja yoga are complementary to each other. Hatha yoga is the basis of all yoga.

The intelligent believe that one can control one’s mind by controlling one's thoughts. This is not false; it is necessary to do so. But it should be remembered that thoughts arise from one’s senses. As long as sensuality is present, one cannot control his thoughts. Sensuality misleads many an intelligent person, so it is necessary to control prana before controlling citta. Yoga prescribes pranayama for the control of citta, and the practice of samyama (the process of dharana, dhyana, and samadhi) for the control of prana. It is with the help of these two elements that one can successfully practice yoga.

It is said very aptly in Yoga Bija:

nanavidhairvicarastu na sadhyam jayate manah
Daksina Pada Pranasana or Pranayamasana (#21)

\[ \text{tasmat tatha jayah prayah pranasya jaya eva hi.} \]

One cannot wean the mind away from the many kinds of thoughts. Therefore, one must first control the prana because the victory of prana is the victory of the mind.

One cannot gain the ultimate stage if one gives up the practice of controlling prana. Resorting to other methods is only a waste of time and energy.

Lord Siva said:

\[ \text{nanamargaih sukhadukhha kevalyam paramam padam,} \]
\[ \text{siddhimargena labhyeta nanyatha sivabhasitam.} \]

Resort ing to various paths only leads to happiness or misery, not to the ultimate stage. This can be achieved only by yoga and nothing else.

(Yoga Cudamani Upanisad)
\[ \text{Om santih, santih, santih!} \]

The Liver and Other Abdominal Organs

Daksina pada pranasana or pranayamasana is not very difficult. It can be performed with a little effort by all. The practice of this asana cures a diseased liver. The liver is situated on the right side of the abdomen below the diaphragm. The lower surface of the liver is rough. The portal fissure divides it into two parts. The left part is six times larger than the right part. Between the two divisions lies the gall bladder, which is shaped like a pear. The small intestines start from the lower orifice of the stomach. The first ten inches is called the duodenum. The head of the pancreas fits into the curve of the duodenum. The pancreatic duct and the bile duct pour pancreatic juice and bile into the duodenum.
Daksina Pada Pranasana or Pranayamasana (#21)

Characteristics
The practice of this asana cures constipation, loss of appetite, indigestion, diarrhea, blood disorders, worms, piles, cough, asthma, rheumatism, enlargement of intestines, diabetes, leucorrhea, and excess of tamoguna and rajoguna. It awakens the dormant kundalini power. It whets the appetite.

Practice
One should practice this asana for a maximum of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Vama Pada Pranasana or Pranayamasana (#22)
(Left Foot Life Energy Asana or Breath Control Asana)

Description

Follow the description for daksina pada pranasana, with the positions of the left and right legs and arms reversed.
The Importance of Prana

Concentrate as follows: "When the Atman (core of being) leaves the body, the prana goes with it. Prana and Atman are close companions. Therefore, pranayama is considered to be the main constituent of yoga. Pratyahara can be achieved only through pranayama. Only pranayama can bridle the mind and the senses (which may be compared to mischievous horses) and allow the sadhaka to journey with ease into the regions of the Lord. Pranayama destroys disorders of rheum, bile, and phlegm. The powerful pranayama gives birth to 8,400,000 asanas and mudras, which themselves can destroy diseases.

"Goddess Sridevi asked Lord Siva in Siva Svarodaya:

\[
\text{devadeva mahadeva sarvasamsarasagare}, \\
\text{kim naranarn pararn mitrarn sarvakaryarthasadham.}
\]

Oh Great Lord of Lords, in this ocean of samsara, who is the best friend who enables a man to perform all his work successfully?

"Lord Siva answered:

\[
\text{prana eva param mitram prana eva parah sakha,} \\
\text{pranatulyah parobandhurnasti nasti varanane.}
\]

Prana is the supreme friend and the best companion.

As far as friendship is concerned, nothing else is comparable.

"Now I want to be strong, intelligent, and radiant, so I will worship my prana. I will learn the techniques of pranayama from Sri Sadguru. I am determined to cross the great ocean of unhappiness. \textit{Om santih, santih, santih!}
Vama Pada Pranasana or Pranayamasana (#22)

The Pancreas and Islets of Langerhans
The pancreas is situated horizontally, slightly below the stomach. Its forepart lies near the duodenum, and its end lies near the spleen. The pancreatic duct carrying the pancreatic juice joins the bile duct and empties the juices into the duodenum. These digestive juices help to digest carbohydrates, proteins, and fats in the food. The islets of Langerhans are ducts in the pancreas. They are different from the pancreatic ducts.

Characteristics and Practice
Vama pada pranasana or pranayamasana is complementary to daksina pada pranasana, thus the two asanas combine to make one asana. It is not necessary to separate them. The cure of diseases, the benefits, and the maximum time limit are the same as that of daksina pada pranasana. This asana is easier than ardha matsyendrasana. After practicing this asana, one should practice ardha matsyendrasana, then matsyendrasana. All three asanas fall into the same class.
Description

Sit in padmasana. Lift your left thigh up to your right shoulder, and exhale while you press the left side of your left knee with your right arm and hold your left foot. Rest your left hand on the ground to establish your balance, then take your left hand behind your back and touch your right thigh. (The left hand rests on the ground in the illustration. This is because the asana occurred according to the dictates of prana, and the sadhaka did not use his own will.) Turn your face and the upper part of your body towards your back to the left. After exhaling hold your breath out. Steady your gaze and attention on the tip of your nose.
Who Can Do Yoga Sadhana?
Concentrate as follows: This is the asana achieved by Yogiraja Sri Matsyendraji. How can an ordinary sadhaka practice the asana of a great siddha (adept)? One must practice enthusiastically. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika discusses the type of sadhaka who can practice yoga successfully:

\[
yuva vrddho'ivrddho va vyadhto durbalop'ip va, 
abhyasat siddhimapnoti sarvayogesvatandritah.
\]

The sadhaka may be young, old or even senile. Even if he is diseased and weak, he is eligible to practice yoga if he works at it diligently and with perseverance. (Hatha Yoga Pradipika, 1:64)

**Yogic Siddhis (Powers)**

\[
kriya yuktasya siddhih syadakriyasya katharn bhavet, 
na sastrapathatatrema yogasiddhih prajayate.
\]

Yogic siddhis are achieved only by practice, not by being idle. Mere study of yogic scriptures does not result in siddhis. (Hatha Yoga Pradipika, 1:65)

One does not gain yogic siddhis (powers) without practicing the eight components of yoga.

\[
a vesadharanam siddhih karanam na ca tatkatha, 
kriyayva karanam siddhih satyametanna samsayah.
\]

Dressing like a yogi or discussing yoga does not result in siddhis (powers). Only the practice of yoga brings siddhis. This is the truth; there is no doubt about it.
Worldly people strive to achieve material benefits by practicing yoga and do not think of salvation as a goal. Ambition has a major disadvantage: it causes one's mind to waver. As a result one loses good qualities like logic, faith, patience, valor, enthusiasm, and perseverance. He becomes illogical, distrustful, impatient, cowardly, dispirited, and negligent. The sadhaka who aspires for material gain does not succeed in his sadhana, so he gives up yoga and censures it. He may also pretend to be a yogi and cheat people.

The person aspiring to salvation comes to know from experience that if he practices yoga with the expectation of returns, he only makes himself miserable. The sannyasi (renunciate) strives for salvation by practicing yoga; he does not crave siddhis to perform miracles. Yoga sadhana meets with many difficulties. Only when one surrenders himself exclusively to the practice of yoga can he hope for any kind of result. Such a sadhaka achieves supernatural powers.

Therefore, a sadhaka has to practice yoga with diligence and faith in order to achieve siddhis. If he doesn't achieve them he should blame himself and try to discover his own fault. He should know that his lack of achievement is not the result of some defect in the science of yoga. If the sadguru has instructed his disciple and the latter has grasped the teachings properly then the result should be positive. Om santih, santih, santih!

The Yogi’s Relationship with His Body
The yogi has made the body independent, and he does not crave physical comfort. The whole muscular system becomes active with the practice of this asana and the sadhaka becomes physically fit. It is natural that the yogi has conscious control over his muscles, but he also has control over the involuntary muscular functions. In spite of this accomplishment he does not strain any of his muscles. He gains physical and mental control by surrender and devotion. If he does not resort to this method he cannot reach...
the lotus feet of the Lord. Yet he cares for his body as he would care for an earthenware bowl full of milk. One takes care of the bowl as long as it contains milk. Once the milk has been drunk the bowl has no value.

A person with a large abdomen is a glutton. He is not able to bend low and work. A man with a large abdomen is a disabled man, be he a world famous boxer or philosopher. To call or consider such a person a yogi is like an insult to the science of yoga. Obesity is the result of gluttony. One who does not understand the importance of moderate diet can never be called a yogi.

The Joints
Matsyendrasana is named after Yogi Matsyendranathji, who has rightly considered it to be very important. It is difficult, but also gives permanent happiness. Asanas that bring pressure on the joints of the body are difficult and painful. The joints that have been idle do not work in the beginning. This happens when one is disabled or weak.

The part of the body that holds two or more limbs together is called a joint. Without joints one would be miserable. He would be unable to turn his head or make a fist. If there were no knee joints one would have to stand forever. Thus there would be many difficulties. But the Almighty God is the supreme artist, so one cannot find fault with his work. He has created the joints in the body necessary to facilitate movement.

There are two kinds of joints: moveable and immoveable. The joints which facilitate movement are called moveable joints. Some of them have complete freedom of movement and some of them have limited movement. The immoveable joints have no freedom of movement.

The moveable joints are of four kinds: ball and socket joints, hinge joints, gliding joints, and pivot joints. A ball and socket joint is formed when the end of one bone fits in to the
socket of another bone. The upper arm and the shoulders are good examples of the ball and socket joint. The head of the humerus fits into the socket in the scapula to form the ball and socket joint. Because the socket in the scapula is not deep, the arm has more freedom of movement than the leg where the head of the femur (the thigh bone) fits into the socket in the pelvis. The socket in the pelvis is deeper and the ball at the head of the femur is more deeply fitted into the socket to enable the legs to carry the weight of the body. This deep fitting restricts the movement of the leg. The leg has, therefore, less scope of movement than the arm. This limited span of movement is the cause of pain in the joint when one practices ardha matsyendrasana.

The elbow and the knee joints are examples of the hinge joints. Hinge joints enable the limbs to fold in one direction and may be compared to the hinge of a door. The bones of the arms and the legs fold inwardly towards the body. They cannot be folded in any other way.

The gliding joints include the joints of the wrist and the ankles. They have very limited movement in all directions.

The vertebral bones pivot joints. The neck consists of seven vertebrae. The first vertebra is fitted on to the second vertebra like a pivot and revolves on it. The second vertebra remains stationary. The pivot joint allows us to turn our head in any direction.

When two or more bones are going there must be some way to keep them together. This is done by muscular tendons called ligaments. Also, the space around the joints is surrounded by a capsule of thin membrane that contains the necessary lubrication. Thus there is no friction or hindrance when the bones move.

**The Cause of Disease**

All diseases are caused by impure blood. Purification of the blood makes the mind
steady. Weakness of the digestive and circulatory systems is the cause of impurity in the blood.

Practice of the four constituents of yoga -- yama, niyama, asana, and pranayama -- leads one to unexpected good health.

Characteristics
The practice of this asana exercises and strengthens the intestines, stomach, pancreas, spleen, kidney, and other abdominal organs. The nostrils, throat, larynx, trachea, lungs, and diaphragm also are exercised and strengthened. The spine becomes supple and strong, thus strengthening the nerves. Cough, asthma, rheumatism, obesity, enlargement of the intestines, constipation, loss of appetite, indigestion, diarrhea, impurity of blood, piles, diabetes, paralysis, cancer, leprosy, elephantiasis, tuberculosis, kidney stones, colds, dysentery, and many more diseases are cured by the practice of this asana. The kundalini becomes active. The vayu enters the susumna and starts ascending.

Practice
One should gradually increase the practice of this asana to the maximum time limit of ten minutes.
Matsyendrasana-2 (#24)
(Matsyendra's Asana or Chief of Fish Asana)

Description

Sit in padmasana, then take up matsyendrasana-1, substituting the right for the left limbs, and exhaling. After exhaling, hold your breath out. Fix your gaze and attention on the tip of your nose.
Affirmation
Concentrate as follows: "O Lord, I crave to reach your lotus feet, but how can this lowly self do so without your grace? O merciful God, give me good thoughts and let me perform virtuous actions so that I can devote myself to reaching your lotus feet. Om santih, santih, santih!"

Prayer
Prayer is the best method of achieving raja yoga; therefore it is included in dharana. Prayer brings one to the stage of dhyana. The boundary of dhyana begins where the boundary of prayer ends. When love is kindled with prayers, then only natural inclinations arise. The devotee gets very close to God by loving prayers. When the devotee is attracted to God due to unexpected happiness or misery and presents his feelings before God, then is the moment ripe. The devotee sings, prays, and mutely expresses his joy or sorrow. This expression is the best type of prayer. After the completion of this kind of prayer the devotee becomes calm and collected. He gains strength, peace, consolation, enthusiasm, patience, knowledge, and inspiration from his prayers. As a result, his spiritual appetite increases.

The niskama (without desire) devotee prays to God only to receive his love. His love for God increases, and he waits eagerly for a glimpse of God. He does not give any importance to material goals. Such an individual considers ordinary prayer unimportant, so does not insult the spirit of devotion by praying for worldly gains. The niskama devotee reaches the peak of prayer and laments. He prays humbly to God, "O merciful God, please help me remove my physical and mental vices so that I may progress in the path of devotion and have a glimpse of you!"
Matsyasana-1 (#25)
(Fish Asana)

Description

Sit in padmasana. Press your left knee with your left hand and your right knee with your right hand. Now bend back and lie down. Remove your hands from your knees and lower your crossed legs to the ground. Raise your head, neck, and shoulders off the ground. Bringing your arms behind your head, place your right palm under your left shoulder and your left palm under your right shoulder. Then, while inhaling, lower your head and arms to the ground. Contract your sexual organ, bring the apana into your navel, and performing uddiyana bandha, raise the apana, then do jalandhara bandha. Fix your gaze and attention on the muladhara cakra.
Blood
Concentrate as follows: Pure blood flows in my body. I asked it to introduce itself to me; the blood is pleased because it feels I am concerned about its well-being. "Now I will introduce myself. I have three components -- plasma, red blood corpuscles, and white blood corpuscles.

"Plasma is a pale, yellow-colored liquid. Its density is low so the blood circulates quickly. Digested food is absorbed by capillaries in the stomach and intestines. The plasma conveys the digested nutrients to the different tissues of the body. The plasma also collects all the waste matter and conveys it to the excretory system. When it is exposed to air in the case of injury, it coagulates into a mesh that prevents the loss of blood corpuscles from the open wound. Plasma is made up of sugar, protein, fats, minerals, and oxygen.

"My second ingredient is red blood corpuscles. A single drop of blood contains thousands of these minute corpuscles. They are so tiny that one needs a microscope to count them. When they are together they look red, but each individual corpuscle is pale yellow. While the red corpuscles circulate in the lungs, an ingredient called hemoglobin absorbs oxygen and turns bright red. It is then called oxyhemoglobin. As the blood flows through the network of capillaries, the oxyhemoglobin gives out oxygen. In turn, the red blood corpuscles absorb carbon dioxide and convey it to the lungs for excretion. Red blood corpuscles are formed in the bone marrow, and have no nucleus. A corpuscle lives for about 100 days, then it is destroyed in the spleen or liver.

"The third ingredient in blood is white blood corpuscles. They are colorless and irregularly-shaped, changing their shape frequently. They are larger than the red blood corpuscles and move quickly. They squeeze themselves through the thin walls of the capillaries. There is one white blood corpuscle to every 500 red blood corpuscles. White blood corpuscles attack and swallow the disease germs. If the germs overpower the white blood corpuscles, the corpuscles die fighting. Pus is the mixture of the dead blood
corpuscles and the dead germs. The white blood corpuscles are produced in the tonsils, the liver, the minute tissues of the intestines, and the various secretory glands. The white blood corpuscles are formed of one or more nuclei, surrounded by tissues. It is with these ingredients that I preserve the body heat."

I thanked the blood for its interesting description. The blood said, "Salutations! Jaya Bhagavan!" "Jaya Bhagavan with love," I responded. *Om santih, santih, santih!*

**Characteristics**

*Matsya* means fish. If matsyasana is practiced with pranayama one can effortlessly stay in the water in this posture. The body floats if one has mastered the breathing process properly.

This easy asana can be performed with little effort. Even healthy persons who can sit straight get tired while performing dhyana. If one performs dhyana while in matsyasana, he need not try to keep the spine straight. The spine gets complete rest in this posture, thus its capacity for work increases.

When matsyasana is performed with pranayama, almost all the secretory glands--the pituitary, thyroid, suprarenal, Islets of Langerhans, spleen, and prostate are nourished. This results in the sadhaka's physical and mental health and well-being. The asanas that facilitate the functions of the respiratory system, circulatory system, and nervous system also facilitate the functions of the lower systems--the digestive system, the reproductive system, the muscular system, nervous system, excretory system, and the bones.

The digestive juices are secreted in the proper quantity by the practice of this asana, so the appetite is whetted. The bile juice is secreted freely, therefore curing constipation. Leukorrhea, dysentery, paralysis, kidney stones, deafness, dumbness, weak eyesight, and
tonsillitis are cured. This asana also cures the swelling of the trachea, tuberculosis, asthma, weak memory, and other diseases.

Practice
Sluggishness of the parts of the body comes from the sluggishness of the nervous system. Nervous diseases can definitely be cured by the practice of pranayama. Weak eyesight, deafness, dumbness, the paralysis of the body or of the limbs are due to defects in the nervous system. The yoga therapist should have the patient eat moderately and practice pranayama. After mastering pranayama, the patient should practice asanas.

While in matsyasana, inhale slowly through both nostrils and retain your breath for as long as comfortable. Mentally chant the Rama mantra, and continue to chant it while slowly exhaling.

This asana should be practiced for a maximum of thirty minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Matsyasana-2 (#26)
(Fish Asana)

Description

Sit in padmasana. Press your left and right palms on your left and right knees. Now slowly bend backwards and lie down. Remove your hands from your knees and hold your left toe with your right hand and your right toe with your left hand. Lower your crossed legs to the ground, then slowly inhale. Contract your anus. Raise the apana into the navel and perform uddiyana bandha. Raise the apana higher to cause jalandhara bandha, and fix your gaze and attention on the muladhara cakra.
Anugraha (Grace) Yoga

Concentrate as follows: I humbly ask my sadguru which yoga is best, and how it can be achieved. He replies "The best yoga is anugraha yoga. Lord Krsna says in the Srimad Bhagavadgita:

\[
tesam satatayuktanam bhajatam pritipurvakam, 
dadami buddhiyogam tam yena mam upayanti te. (10)
\]
\[
tesam eva'nukampartham aham ajnanajam tamah, 
nasayamy atmabhavastho jnanadipena bhasvata. (11)
\]

To those who continually worship me with love,
I give the yoga of discrimination by which they reach me. (10)

Purely out of compassion for them, I dwell in their Atman
And destroy their darkness-born ignorance
With the luminous lamp of knowledge. (11)

(Bhagavadgita 10:10-11)

"Anugraha yoga has many names, such as buddhi (consciousness) yoga, purna yoga, prema (love) yoga, bhakti yoga, saranagati (surrender) yoga, hatha yoga, raja yoga, mantra yoga, nada yoga, and laya (dissolution) yoga. The latter yogas are the supreme end of maha yoga.

"This maha yoga is anugraha (grace) yoga, because it is only with the blessings of the Lord that maha yoga can be achieved. There is no other way to attain maha yoga. Only with the Lord's grace can one acquire the grace of one's sadguru, so one should not differentiate the grace of the Lord from the grace of the sadguru. When the blessings of the Lord are acquired, knowledge, virtue, and devotion come of their own accord."
When the devotee is blessed with anugraha yoga, the kind and great Lord illuminates his path with the light of knowledge, so he need have no fear of losing his way.

The Power of Surrender
"Lord Sri Krsna explains the power of anugraha yoga or saranagati (surrender) yoga in the Srimad Bhagavadgita:

\[
\text{isvarah sarvabhutanam hrddese'jrjuna tisthati,} \\
\text{bhramayan sarvabhutani yantrarudhani mayaya. (61)}
\]

\[
\text{tam eva saranam gaccha sarva bhavena bharata,} \\
\text{tatprasadat param santim sthanam prapsyasi sasvatam. (62)}
\]

The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, and by his maya (illusion) causes all beings to revolve as though mounted on a machine. (61)

Seek refuge in him alone with all your heart, O Bharata. By his grace you will gain supreme peace and the eternal abode. (62)

\(\text{(Bhagavadgita, 18:61-62)}\)

"Om santih, santih, santih!"

Characteristics
In matsyasana, one can practice pranayama for a long time with little fatigue. This asana also easily leads the devotee into dhyana, dharana, and samadhi, and steadies him there. Matsyasana is of equal importance to the diseased, the healthy, and the yogi. One tires easily when performing japa, pranayama, or dhyana in asanas which require sitting
Matsyasana-2 (#26)

with a straight spine. But one can perform these functions lying down in matsyasana without getting mentally or physically tired.

The devotee of the higher stage uses this asana to raise the prana into the middle and upper parts of the body. At this stage daksina pada supta pavana muktasana, vama pada supta pavana muktasana, ardha supta padmasana, padma dolasana, savasana and other asanas start occurring spontaneously. In savasana or mrtasana the sadhaka is like a corpse, but experiences no difficulty. His gaze rushes to the bhrumadhya and becomes steady there. At this juncture the sadhaka enters samadhi and enjoys yoga nidra or faints.

This is the second variation of matsyasana. The diseases which are cured by the first variation of matsyasana are cured by this asana. The benefits are also identical.

Practice
This asana should be practiced for a maximum of thirty minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Description

Assume matsyasana-2. While inhaling, place the crown of your head on the floor. Your waist and chest will automatically rise. Fix your gaze and attention on the bhrumadhya. Finish inhaling and hold your breath.
Complete Surrender

Concentrate as follows: I asked my gurudeva, "If anugraha yoga depends on the blessings of Sri Hari, then would not the devotee have to remain inactive until those blessings are bestowed?" Sri Gurudeva replied, "Your conjecture is wrong. The Srimad Bhagavadgita describes the way to the Lord:

\[
yat\ karosi\ yad\ asnasi\ yaj\ juhosi\ dadasi\ yat,\\
yat\ tapasyasi\ kaunteya\ tat\ kurusva\ mad\ arpanam.
\]

O son of Kunti (Arjuna), whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you sacrifice, whatever you give in charity, and whatever penance you perform, do it as an offering to me.

(\textit{Bhagavadgita}, 9:27)

"The devotee should make acquiring grace his ultimate goal. He should therefore give up all his actions to the great Lord. This means that all actions of the mind or the body are performed at the initiative of the Lord. The sadhaka should firmly believe that he is only the medium. Again, the Srimad \textit{Bhagavadgita} states:

\[
matkarmakrn\ matparamo\ madbhaktah\ sangavarjitah,\\
nirvairah\ sarvabhutesu\ yah\ sa\ mam\ eti\ pandava.
\]

He who does actions only for me, who has surrendered everything to me, who is wholly my devotee, who is without attachment, and who has no hatred toward any beings, achieves me, O Son of Pandu (Arjuna).

(\textit{Bhagavadgita}, 11:55)
"The engine of a train has no wish to go anywhere, but the engineer takes it wherever it goes. In the same way, once the devotee has received the blessings of Sri Hari, he has no wish to do anything; the Lord leads him on and he works like a machine. Moreover, when one believes that Sri Hari is everything, his desires disappear. When a person has no enmity towards any living being, he immediately acquires the blessings of the Lord. Om santih, santih, santih!"

**Characteristics**

The prana of the devotee who practices this asana rises up to the sahasradala *padma* (lotus). Therefore, the blood circulates well in the head, and the cells of the brain are nourished and activated. The nerves become strong. The sadhaka can control himself. His imaginative power and memory become sharp. Minor defects of the head, the throat, the abdomen, and the reproductive organs disappear.

This asana is the third variation of matsyasana. The diseases which are cured by the former two asanas are cured by this asana. The benefits are also identical to those of the former asanas.

**Practice**

One should practice this asana for a maximum of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Tolangulasana-1 (#28)
(Finger Support Asana)

Description

Sit in padmasana. Put your left hand on your left knee and your right hand on your right knee and press down. Bend slowly backwards and lie down. Now slowly exhale and put both your hands under your buttocks, closing your fists. After exhaling, hold your breath out, bend your neck, and fix your gaze on the navel and your attention on the manipura cakra.
How to Chew Food
Concentrate as follows: Sadgurudeva’s advice comes to my mind sometimes. He said, "Chew your food properly. Do not chew vegetables with your chapatis for three or four days." Hearing this I wondered how one could swallow a dry chapati. However, I felt I should listen to my Guruji in any case. The next day, I started eating a dry chapati alone, taking care that no one would see me doing it, as they would surely ridicule me. I chewed each morsel properly. As I chewed, the chapati tasted sweet. This was the first time I had enjoyed the true taste of a chapati. I understood why Guruji had asked me to eat chapatis separately. When one eats a chapati with milk or vegetables, he tends to swallow it without chewing. This becomes a bad habit. I continued with my experiment the next day.

One tends to eat more when he does not chew, so he falls victim to diseases. Properly chewed food is eaten in smaller quantities and is digested properly. This keeps the body and mind active. If the teeth are not given proper exercise, but the body is exercised to the maximum limit, food still is not digested. I discovered all this by experience. Gurudeva was happy to hear of my experiment. He said that sensuality is increased when food is not properly digested. One becomes lazy and sleeps longer. The body acquires layers of fat. The joints in the body become less active. One dislikes physical exercise. Diseases enter the body, and it becomes a burden. At first, rajoguna increases, then slowly tamoguna becomes dominant. How can sattvaguna enter the body in this condition? When one chews his food properly, the body and mind are automatically purified. Vices do not trouble such a person. Other physical and mental troubles occur rarely. A pure mind is caused by pure blood. The glimpse of divinity comes only after the purification of one's mind. The purification of the mind is the sign of the increase of sattvaguna. Thus one can court both health and yoga by chewing his food properly.
"Guruji, you have expounded the principles of physiology, but there must be some secret principle of yoga involved; otherwise you would not consider chewing so important."

Guruji said, "Correct, there is a secret principle of yoga behind this advice. The yogis believe that the tongue is the visnu granthi (knot of sustenance). At the root of the tongue lies the sublingual gland. I have already explained the function of this gland. Therefore, the whole universe can be benefited by this knowledge. Ancient yogis gave much importance to the brahma granthi, the visnu granthi, and the rudra granthi. These three granthis respectively give rise to rajoguna, sattvaguna, and tamoguna. All the nadis (energy channels) are controlled by these granthis. The visnu granthi rules the visuddhakhya cakra. Yogi Goraksanathaji says in the Goraksa Padhhati:

\[
\text{bindurmulam sарsанааm sirastatra prатisthitah,}
\]
\[
\text{bhavayanti sariramaапатadatalamastakam.}
\]

The body is based on sexual fluids, which are mainly produced under the tongue. The tongue supplies secretions to all parts of the body, from the feet to the head. (Goraksa Paddhati, 67)

"Visnu is the creator of the visnu granthi. It lies in the ksirasagara (ocean of milk) of Visnu. Ksira means milk and it also means pure water. Both meanings can be applied here. The salivary glands secrete saliva, which is the ksira, thus the visnu granthi is the salivary gland. This saliva has many features. The yogis have called this juice in its best form amrta (nectar). Its gross manifestation lies beneath this gland. Only a purna yogi can drink pure amrta, but anyone can drink the stream of amrta that is present in the mouth. Chew your food properly. Eat little and your food will become amrta. It is said in
the Upanisads, "I am food, I am food, I am food. I eat food, I eat food, I eat food." It is because of this that one should recite these verses from Bhagavadgita:"

\[
\text{annad bhavanti bhutani parjanyad annasambhavah},
\]
\[
yajjad bhavati parjanyo yajnah karmasamudbhavah. (14)
\]

\[
\text{karma brahmodbhavam viddhi brahma 'ksarasamudbhavam},
\]
\[
tasmat sarvagatam brahma nit yam yajne pratisthitam. (15)
\]

From food beings become; from rain is food produced; from sacrifice rain proceeds; sacrifice is born of karma. (14)

Know karma to have risen from Brahma, and Brahma from the Imperishable. The all-pervading Brahma is, therefore, ever centered in sacrifice. (15)

(\textit{Bhagavadgita}, 3:14-15)

\textit{Om santih, santih, santih!}

**Characteristics**

The joints of the wrist, elbow, waist, knee, and neck are strengthened by the practice of tolangulasana. The muscles become strong. The organs of the abdomen and the thorax get proper exercise and therefore become active. The spine becomes strong. The nervous system starts working properly. This asana cures constipation, loss of appetite, dysentery, colic pains, cough, asthma, rheumatism, obesity, enlargement of the intestines, indigestion, impurity of blood, piles, diabetes, kidney stones, tuberculosis, and colds.
Practice
This asana should be practiced for a maximum of fifteen minutes, reaching this limit gradually.
Description

As part of the procedure for the three variations of matsyasana and tolangulasana, one performs ardha supta padmasana. Yet it is necessary to describe it as a separate asana. Sit in padmasana and clasp your left knee with your left hand and your right knee with your right hand. Now, while inhaling, slowly bend backwards and lie down. Perform the three bandhas (locks). Fix your gaze and attention on the anahata cakra.
Abandoning *Maya* (Illusion)

Concentrate as follows: Sadguru used to say that when one reads a lot about principles and ideas showing wisdom, one feels he has himself become wise. But one should not forget that the feelings of knowledge and renunciation that he obtains from reading are without the base of the six treasures: equanimity, persistence, indifference to the world, enduring faith, one-pointedness, and hunger for liberation. Similarly, when one reads and understands literature on yoga, he may feel that he has become a yogi. But one should never forget that one cannot become a yogi without the sublimation of all sensuality, or oneness with God. Moreover, by resorting to external means such as making a sign on the forehead, counting rosaries, giving or listening to lectures, composing and singing hymns, visiting temples, or going on pilgrimages, one cannot become a devotee. One should never forget that one cannot become a devotee without turning away from *maya*. *Maya* and devotion do not mix. *Om santih, santih, santih!*

In ardha supta padmasana, the position of the body allows all the organs of the body to function properly. One should perform pranayama in this position. The chapter on matsyasana-1 (#25) describes the way to perform this pranayama. If you look at the illustration, you will find that the three bandhas have occurred without any strain. The abdomen is compressed and the chest is swollen out due to the retention of breath.

The progeny of weak people are born with narrow chests. As a result, they fall victim to diseases as they age. They live with effort and die miserably. The main cause of a narrow chest is the underdevelopment of the lungs. The study of pranayama is absolutely necessary for the complete development of the chest. Pranayama is the king of all exercises. The power of pranayama is more than that of a hundred different exercises combined. The luster which occurs after one exercise is a result of the pranayama performed involuntarily during the exercise. Pranayama cures many incurable diseases. Many diseases originate in the weakness of the lungs. A body with a weak lung can stop functioning at any moment.
Ardha Supta Padmasana (#29)

The Bones of the Chest

Look at the picture of ardha supta padmasana. The chest is fully expanded, since it is filled with air. When one fills up the chest with air and retains the breath for a long time, the heart beats slower and slower, and finally stops. Yet the sadhaka does not die. Of course, when this type of breath restraint is practiced continually for a while, the sadhaka may faint, but the faint does not last long. Yet the sadhaka should practice this sort of pranayama under the guidance of an experienced guru.

When one retains the air in the chest, the chest becomes stiff and one's strength increases. When the sadhaka has practiced this retention, he can tolerate heavy weights on his chest, such as the breaking of a heavy stone that has been placed on his chest. If he has perfected this pranayama, he can even tolerate an elephant walking on his chest. In this way, any part of the body can be hardened and strengthened. The celibate sadhaka must practice this type of retention well to learn how to stiffen his body.

The bones of the chest take the shape of a cage consisting of the sternum, two collar bones, twelve pairs of ribs, and twelve vertebrae. This cone-shaped cage is called the thorax. It contains the heart and the lungs. The thorax is broad at the top and narrow at the bottom.

The collar bones are above the ribs. Seven pairs of ribs are joined to the vertebrae, the collar bone, and the sternum. These seven pairs of ribs are called the real ribs. They are joined to each other by cartilage and muscles that contract and expand with the lungs. This elasticity allows the respiratory system to function properly. As the cage widens, the lungs expand and draw in fresh air. As it contracts, the lungs contract and expel the stale impurities from the body. The last five pairs of ribs are not joined to the sternum; they are called the false ribs. The first three pairs of these ribs are joined to the seventh pair of the ribs by cartilage. The last two pairs of ribs are joined only to the spine and are called
Ardha Supta Padmasana (#29)

floating ribs. Thus, all the twelve pairs of ribs are joined to the twelve vertebrae at the back.

Characteristics
The diseases which are cured by the practice of padmasana or kamalasana are cured by the practice of this asana. The benefits are also identical.

Practice
Practice this asana for a maximum of thirty minutes, reaching this limit gradually.
Padma Dolasana (#30)
(Lotus Rocking Asana)

Description

Sit in padmasana. Press down on the left and right knees with the left and right hands. While exhaling, slowly bend backwards a little. After exhaling, hold your breath out. Fix your gaze and attention on the manipura cakra.
The Lymph
Concentrate as follows: As my blood was flowing through my arteries to my blood vessels and capillaries, I heard a voice say, "I am your lymph and your servant. You are kind. I live in your plasma. When your blood reaches your capillaries, I ooze out of the blood vessels. I am colorless. I do not contain any red blood corpuscles, but white blood corpuscles live in me."

I asked the lymph why it oozes out of the capillaries. It said, "I carry food and oxygen to the various tissues and cells of your body. As glucose and oxygen reach the tissues, metabolism starts. Your body gets the heat and strength it needs. Then I carry waste matter like water and carbon dioxide from the tissues back to the blood vessels. This waste matter consists of nitrogen and uric acid. I carry all this to the capillaries which connect to form veins. If I did not supply food and oxygen to the tissues, their development would stop. The cells of all tissues can reproduce themselves. I am present wherever there is an injury, and I increase the presence of white blood corpuscles in that area. Due to the presence of white blood corpuscles, the injured part swells.

"The lymphatic vessels carry me inside them. The small capillaries unite to form two main lymph vessels--the two lymphatic vessels which empty themselves in the vein near your heart. The lymphatic vessels from the legs, the abdomen, the chest, the left hand, the neck, and the left part of the head empty themselves into the thoracic duct, which meets the large vein near the clavicle. I then mix with your blood. Coming from the right hand, the neck, and the right part of the head, I am carried in the right lymphatic duct. I empty into the right vein at the clavicle and mix with your blood. These two veins unite to form the superior vena cava which carries me and the impure blood into the right ventricle. As I travel through the lymphatic vessels, I encounter lymphatic glands. I and the white blood corpuscles have a right of way through those glands. The lymphatic vessels enter the lymphatic glands through one end and leave them through another. The lymphatic glands separate the disease germs from me and prevent them from passing on into the
Padma Dolasana (#30)

outgoing lymph vessels. White blood corpuscles also accumulate in the lymphatic glands to destroy disease germs. During this time the glands swell up. These lymphatic glands are situated in the neck, chest, armpit, thigh, abdomen, and any other place where there are joints."

Thus the lymph introduced itself. *Om santih, santih, santih!*

Deflowering the Brahma Granthi
While sitting in padma dolasana, one should move backwards and forwards. By doing this the sadhaka helps deflower the brahma granthi. During the deflowering of the brahma granthi there is a sensation in the region of the sacrum and coccyx due to the movement of apana vayu. The kundalini awakens and tries to open the entrance of the susumna. When people sit in any asana and move backwards and forwards, the apana vayu creates movement in the coccyx and the sacrum. This causes the person to concentrate without any effort.

Characteristics
The practice of this asana exercises all the organs in the abdomen and thorax. It also exercises the vertebral column completely. This results in the increase of the elasticity of the vertebral column. Cold, rheumatism, worms, and abdominal diseases are cured by this asana.

Practice
This asana should be practiced for a maximum of five minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Description

Sit in ardha supta padmasana. While exhaling, bring your crossed legs to your chest. Then forcibly push your legs towards the chest, placing your arms over the legs with your hands on the lower back. After exhaling hold your breath out. Fix your attention and your gaze on the anahata cakra.
How to Live Perfectly

Concentrate as follows: Sri Sadguru told me that although I know many people and things, I do not know much about my body. I must travel a long distance in this physical body but if I do not take care of it, how can I reach my goal? If I do not befriend the mind, which rules my body, then it will become my enemy. I asked Gurudeva how I should go about making it my friend.

He said that I should study physiology, hygiene, psychology, and yoga from him in order to become friendly with my body and mind. I bowed down at his lotus feet. *Om santih, santih, santih!*

Characteristics

In order to facilitate the performance of baddha padmasana, one should first practice supta baddha padmasana. Practicing this asana exercises all parts of the body. The flow of blood increases in the upper part of the body and decreases in the lower part of the body, so the brain gets enough nutrition. The eyes, nose, ears, tongue, and other sensory organs become more active. The abdominal and thoracic organs become strong. Food is digested properly. One does not have bad or disturbing dreams. One sleeps well and is active when awake. One's mental state remains pleasant. The large intestines are purified as the old fecal matter leaves the body. The excretory and reproductive systems work properly. One does not lose one's sexual fluids, and it becomes easy to practice celibacy. Imagination, determination, and memory become powerful.

The diseases which are cured by baddha hasta padmasana are cured by the practice of this asana. The benefits are also identical.

Practice

Practice this asana for a maximum of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Supta Garbhasana (#32)
(Reclining Embryo Asana)

Description

Sit in ardha supta padmasana. Put each arm through the gap between the calf and thigh up to the elbow and hold the lobes of each ear. Touch your tongue to your palate. Fix your gaze on the bhrumadhya and your attention on the ajna cakra.
Affirmation
"By practicing the following four components of yoga--yama, niyama, asana, and pranayama--I naturally protect myself mentally and physically. As the nine cakras of the body bloom, light is thrown on the physiology and hygiene of the body. I understand the logic behind the workings of the mind and body. Yoga helps me to reach the pinnacles of success both materially and spiritually. Om santih, santih, santih!"

Making the Prana Ascendant
This asana is easier than supta baddha padmasana. The practice of this asana causes the vayu to enter the posterior median path and slowly reach the sahasradala padma. This asana is on the same level as those created by nabho mudra and khecari mudra. As you hold your ear lobes and touch your tongue to your palate, part of bhrumadhya is cleared for vayu to pass through. One can also perform yoni mudra during the practice of this asana.

To raise the apana and make it ascendant is very difficult. The sadhaka must practice for years to reach this stage. The cakras cannot develop as long as the body is full of impurities. The deflowering of the various granthis does not take place and the apana vayu gets stuck and descends again when the path is not clear. The sadhaka may also faint when the apana tries to ascend in an impure body. Asana, pranayama, and pratyahara must be performed in order to purify the body and the mind. The study of the four components of yoga is the study of hatha yoga. Without the study of hatha yoga, one does not find the energy and the enthusiasm to practice raja yoga. Those who do not accept this principle will never be successful. Knowledge, yoga, and devotion all must resort to hatha yoga to a certain extent. The paths may be different, but the practice of pranayama in some way or other is necessary.

Characteristics
**Supta Garbhasana (#32)**

The diseases which are cured by garbhasana are also cured by supta garbhasana. The benefits of both asanas are identical.

**Practice**

One should practice this asana for a maximum of five minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Description

This asana is almost identical to supta garbhasana. The only difference is that in supta garbhasana you hold your ear lobes, while in supta uttana kurmasana you press the back of your neck with your left and right hands. You should attempt supta uttana kurmasana only after learning supta garbhasana. Fix your gaze and attention on the tip of your nose.
Food
Concentrate as follows: Lord Sri Krsna says in Srimad Bhagavadgita:

\[
\text{annad bhavanti bhutani parjanyad annasambhavah,}
\]
\[
yajnad bhavati parjanyo yajnah karmasamudbhavah.
\]

From food beings become; from rain is food produced; from sacrifice rain proceeds; sacrifice is born of karma.
(Bhagavadgita, 3:14)

All living creatures are produced from food. Man is a human being, and also a living animal. Therefore, he also originates from food. Starvation makes the body weak, so we must maintain strength and protect the body by means of food. In Srimad Bhagavadgita Sri Krsna tells us the proper way to eat food:

\[
\text{na'tyasnatas tu yogo'sti na cai'kantam anasnatah,}
\]
\[
\text{na ca'tisvapnasrlasya jagrato nai va ca'ra'juna. (16)}
\]

\[
\text{yuktahara viharasya yukta cestasya karmasu,}
\]
\[
\text{yukta svapnavabodhasya yogo bhavati duhkhaha. (17)}
\]

Yoga is not eating too much, nor is it absolutely not eating. And not the habit of sleeping too much and not keeping awake either, Arjuna. (16)

For him who is moderate in food and recreation, whose actions are temperate, who is moderate in sleep and in waking, yoga destroys all sorrow. (17)
(Bhagavadgita, 6:16-17)
Supta Uttana Kurmasana (#33)

Food helps metabolism, gives heat to the body, and helps the body protect itself from diseases. The six components of food are as follows: protein, carbohydrates, fats, mineral salts, water, and vitamins. *Om santih, santih, santih!*

Characteristics
As the blood flows properly in the upper regions of the body, it gives nutrition to the glands in the throat, to the nerves, and to the brain. As the sexual organ contacts in supta uttana kurmasana, sensuality decreases and the power of self-control increases. The diluted sexual fluid thickens and diseases of the excretory system are destroyed.

The diseases cured by uttana kurmasana are cured by the practice of this asana. The benefits are also identical.

Practice
This asana should be practiced for a maximum of five minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Description

Assume a kneeling position with your knees close together. Interlace the fingers of both hands. Put the joined hands at the back of the head. Bend over until your forehead touches the floor. While exhaling, lift your heels, put the weight of your body on your head and hands, and slowly lift yourself. Put your legs in padmasana, and align them with your head. Hold your breath out. Fix your gaze and attention on the bhrumadhya without forcing.
How to Achieve Growth
Concentrate as follows: Everyone wishes to achieve perfection, but very few succeed. If the condition of the body and the mind are not proper, development does not take place. It is the duty of ambitious people to facilitate the development of the mind and body. If the individual does not try patiently and does not ponder how to grow, he is unable to travel the path of growth.

Yoga the Science of Psychology
According to Sri Sadguru, modern psychologists tell us that until recently, the science of psychology has been neglected. However, in the past, people understood the importance of psychology and recognized that knowledge of it was necessary for everyone. The use of psychology was well established. Gurudeva says that whatever modern psychologists say, psychology has never been and will never be neglected anywhere in the world. All the great men of the world have been psychologists, and whatever they have given to humanity contains psychological truths. They reached such heights of psychology that they established it as a science common to the world, countries, societies, and individuals. Not only that, they established it as the holy duty and religion for all people. They have suggested that all men should knit the principles of psychology in their way of life.

The great men of ancient times called the science of psychology "yoga." This yoga was not just achieved by meditation. Meditation was combined with many physical activities. Those ancient psychologists had to abandon society to achieve yoga. They lived for years in the forest, purging themselves of vices and filling the void thus created with virtues. They faced reality and discovered the father of the mind. They found out why and how the mind works in certain directions. They also experienced the conditions and circumstances in which the mind could be controlled or was uncontrollable. The eyes can see everything, but cannot see themselves; one has to use a mirror to see one’s own eyes.
Urdhva Padmasana-1 (#34)

These great men used the same principle and, using the mind as the medium, got to know their own minds.

Because medical science did not get to the root of all diseases, these great individuals cured diseases using the science of psychology. This demonstrates that physical diseases are connected with disturbances in the mind. Yoga is a necessary treatment for physical and mental health. Mental diseases such as anger, jealousy, joy and misery, happiness and unhappiness give unbearable pain. Birth and death, childhood, youth, middle age, and senility are physical diseases, and are also painful. To remove such suffering, yoga is required. *Om santih, santih, santih!*

The Two Paths of the Susumna

Urdhva padmasana occurs automatically when the apana ascends toward the right and the left after deflowering the brahma granthi in the muladhara cakra. After this occurs, sattvaguna increases in the body of the yogi. Rajoguna is slowly destroyed. As the *ida* (left-hand energy channel) and the *pingala* (right-hand energy channel) combine, the whole body is governed by the susumna.

The susumna has two paths—*purva madhya marga* (anterior median path) and *pascima madhya marga* (posterior median path). The *purva madhya marga* passes through the muladhara, svadhishana, manipura, anahata, visuddakhya, and the ajna cakras into the sahasradala cakra, and lies in the front of the body. The *pascima madhya marga* passes through the same cakras, but it lies in the spinal column.

Passions awaken after childhood. When these passions become uncontrollable, there is a sexual awakening. The apana vayu becomes powerful and the mind of the individual becomes unsteady. It becomes difficult for him to control his passions. He becomes composed only when he ejaculates. The brahma granthi is the granthi of rajoguna. The
real yogi wins over the apana vayu by means of yogic techniques, and transforms the sexual fluids into amrta. By practicing urdhva padmasana, the yogi drinks this amrta.

Characteristics
This asana is a variation of sirsasana. Since padmasana is used in this asana, urdhva padmasana is included in the padmasana section of this book. Yogis and scientists have praised this asana without any hesitation. They have said that the proper practice of sirsasana would prove that it is beneficial. This asana is included in theviparita karani mudra.

Because the sadhaka is in a reverse position--the head on the ground and feet pointing upwards--the veins carrying impure blood function properly. Without any effort they take the impure blood to the heart. As a result the pure blood collects in the head, and nourishes the brain. The power to meditate and think increases. One's intelligence becomes sharp and the power of memory also increases. The eyes, nose, ears, chest, and heart, which have become weak during the metabolic process, become strong. All the secretory glands get a good supply of pure blood and become active. Every part of the body gets nutrition and strength.

This asana removes all diseases, including diseases of the ears and eyes, constipation, nocturnal emissions, cold, weakness of memory, headaches, indigestion, colic, asthma, weakness of the brain, fever, leucorrhea, piles, dental diseases, hysteria, insomnia, lunacy, diarrhea, intestinal ulcers, rheumatism, tonsillitis, diabetes, cataracts, paralysis, dumbness, jaundice, loss of appetite, fistula, impurity of blood, skin diseases, swelling of the intestines, tongue ulcers, elephantiasis, heart diseases, hiccups, gastritis, weakness, menorrhrea, dysmenorrhea, and irregular menstruation.
Urdhva Padmasana-1 (#34)

Practice
Some books prescribe that sirsasana be practiced for three hours at a time. This is not good advice. Ghee is nutritious, but one cannot acquire good health by drinking only ghee. Similarly, however beneficial an asana may be, it should not be practiced for a long time. One should not perform sirsasana for more than fifteen minutes. An advanced sadhaka can practice this asana for three hours, but such a yogi has mastered the study of pranayama and has purified his nadi cakras. His brahma granthi, visnu granthi and rudra granthi have been deflowered. Therefore, an advanced yogi can transform his sexual fluids and drink amrta from the visnu granthi. The ordinary sadhaka should not practice without understanding. Asanas performed without understanding bring misery instead of joy.

It is natural that this asana is difficult for beginners. The beginner should use a supporting wall or person. There are two ways to perform this asana. In the first method (urdhva padmasana-1), the whole weight of the body rests on the forehead, the neck remains bent, and one cannot sustain the position for a long time. In the other method (urdhva padmasana-2), the weight rests on the middle of the head, the neck remains completely straight, and therefore one can maintain this posture for a longer time. Both these methods are shown in this book. Some believe that it is proper for the weight of the body to rest on the forehead. They believe it is beneficial and causes no harm. They believe that it is harmful for the body to rest on the middle of the head. However, experience proves that each method is correct in its own way. One should practice both the methods. In the beginning one should practice the first method, then go on to practice the second method. It is advisable not to practice only one method.

This asana opens both the anterior and the posterior median paths. As a result, the ordinary sadhaka’s nasal passage becomes blocked during the practice of this asana. There is a strong tendency to breathe in through the mouth. One feels giddy and uneasy
as the prana goes to the head, and has a sense of palpitation. These are signs that the nadis are impure and the cakras are not developed. Such sadhakas should first learn to perform pranayama properly and then practice this asana. While performing sirsasana, naturally inhaling and exhaling through the mouth does not harm the sadhaka. If the sadhaka prevents himself from this natural action of breathing through his mouth, then he is harmed.
Description

Place the top of your head on the ground and the left and right palms on the ground on each side of your head with the fingers pointing towards the head. While exhaling, lift your body and assume padmasana with your feet in the air. Align your legs with your head. Hold your breath out. Fix your gaze and attention on the bhrumadhya.
What Is the Mind?
Concentrate as follows: Sri Sadguru told me when he instructed me about yoga,

\[\text{yogas citta-vrtti-nirodhah.}\]

Yoga is the cessation of the impressions in the mindstuff.
\textit{(Yoga Sutra, Samadhipada, Sutra 2)}

Why should one want the impressions in the mind to cease? The mind is uncontrollable and vulgar because a wide variety of feelings have influenced it and it concentrates on the external organs. It is always unsteady and meets with happiness and misery. It always hopes for complete happiness, eternal peace, and joy, and so it becomes unsteady and roams everywhere in vain in search of them. Therefore, it should be brought back towards God, so that its hopes are fulfilled.

I asked gurudeva about the form of the mind and its origination. Gurudeva said, "The mind is born of nature. It consists of sheer blankness. In other words, it can be said that \textit{purusa} (the individual) and \textit{prakrti} (nature) combine to give birth to citta, the mind. The body of citta is the minutest part of \textit{prakrti}, and the power of citta is born from the minutest part of \textit{purusa}. We may also define the mind as the functioning of the brain.

Psychology and Yoga
"Certain psychologists ridicule yoga. They consider it to be a disease of dharma. True scientists do not believe this. Those who have read only scientific books and observed the external actions of science may believe it, but they are not really scientists. Their opinion has no base or importance, since a true scientist will give his opinion only after carrying out experiments."
"Imperfect yoga can be called psychology and perfect psychology can be called yoga. The yogi reaches the root of citta and acquires saccidananda (truth, consciousness, bliss).

One who uses citta to fumble around on the ground of psychology remains only a scientist and cannot become a yogi.

"The science of physiology is developing rapidly. The scientist can watch the functions of all the organs of the body. But one should not forget that by the control of prana, the yogi is able not only to watch the functions of his body, but also to clearly see the results. "One must know physiology properly to understand psychology. Without understanding psychology one cannot have a glimpse of God, who lies within. This self-realization, or glimpse of God, can occur only when one reaches turiya (the fourth state), which is different from the states of dream, wakefulness, and sleep. People who have read scientific books and performed some external kriyas (purifying activities) believe that meditation in solitude is yoga. This is incorrect. The yogi is really a psychologist. He does not neglect science. Thus the real psychologist is a sadhaka yogi. He also does not neglect yoga. It is good that you asked this question to dispel your doubts. Om santih, santih, santih!"

Characteristics

Urdhva padmasana-2 is the second variation of urdhva padmasana. It can be included in the sirsasana category and in the viparita karani mudra. The diseases which are cured by the first variation of urdhva padmasana are cured by the practice of this asana. The benefits are also identical.

If a yoga sadhaka has progressed properly, he has purified his body internally by the time he reaches the stage at which this asana spontaneously occurs. His granthis and cakras have developed completely. He drinks amrta and becomes a perfect yogi within two years. He becomes an urdhvareta. Every cell of the body change after such a yogi
Urdhva Padmasana-2 (#35)

acquires perfection. His luminous, pure, and virtuous body is called a divine body by the yogis. This divine body is like electricity. A glimpse from such a yogi can change the current of an individual's mind. Rajoguna and tamoguna decrease and sattvaguna becomes powerful.

Practice
One may fear that the neck could be sprained by practicing this asana. The hands shiver, and the sadhaka feels that he will not be able to perform this asana. He should not feel frustrated, but should get another individual to assist him. Practice this asana for a maximum of fifteen minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Description

Assume ardha supta padmasana. While exhaling, raise your waist and legs with the help of both arms, and hold the pelvic bones with your hands to keep your body raised. Your crossed legs should be straight up from your waist, with your elbows on the ground. Fix your gaze on your navel and your attention on the manipura cakra.
The Thyroid and the Prostate Glands
Concentrate as follows: I hear somebody telling me that I do not care about an individual who is under pressure. I want to know who he is. He introduces himself as the thyroid gland, which lies under the chin near the neck. I tell him that I have put pressure on him so that the irregularity in the thyroid glands may leave the body. I tell him that I am doing this for the sake of my health. I find that if my body does not function properly, I become short tempered and prone to many physical disorders. Meanwhile, the prostate glands also protest against the pressure. They tell me that I should eat moderately, chew my food properly, observe celibacy, and perform asanas with pranayama in order to keep them healthy. This is how yogis maintain their health. *Om santih, santih, santih!*

Characteristics
This third variation of urdhva padmasana can also be included in the category of sirsasana and viparita karani mudra. This asana brings about the normal functioning of the heart, because the blood from the lower parts of the body rushes towards the heart, allowing it to rest and become strong. The chest, neck, and head receive pure blood, so mental weakness disappears, the power of memory increases, the nerves of the eyes and ears become strong, and diseases of the eyes and ears are cured. Tonsils do not trouble the sadhaka, and diseases of the kidneys also disappear. The excretory system starts functioning properly. The internal organs of the thorax and abdomen become strong, and the spinal cord gains more elasticity.

The practice of this asana cures sterility, weakness of the sexual organs, marasmas, nocturnal emission, tuberculosis, asthma, jaundice, cold, loss of appetite, fever, rheumatism, lunacy, piles, enlargement of the intestines, dropsy, fistula, kidney stones, diabetes, swelling of the uterus, impotence, irregular menstruation, skin diseases, paralysis of the thigh, impurity of the blood, constipation, rheumatism of the joints, hernia, insomnia, dullness, deafness, and other such diseases.
Urdhva Padmasana-3 (#36)

Practice

Practice this asana for a maximum of fifteen minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Sirsa Sprsta Padmasana (#37)
(Head Touching Lotus Asana)

Description

Take up the third posture of urdhva padmasana. While exhaling, bend both arms at the elbow, resting your hands on the floor, palms up, a little away from your shoulders. Meanwhile, bring your crossed legs down to touch your head. Fix your gaze and attention on the bhrumadhya.
Development of the Brain
Concentrate as follows: There was a time when man roamed naked in the jungles. He sought protection from cold, heat, and rain by hiding in caves or holes in the ground. There were no cities or palaces, and no means for him to improve his life. Then, in the next yuga (age), civilization was born. But there was a difference between this uncultured man and the animals of the jungles. This difference, responsible for the creation of science, was that man had a brain and the power to think. There are many animals so large that one of their limbs weighs as much as a human being. But compared to the human brain, these animals' brains are smaller and undeveloped. The development which has taken place in the brain of man cannot be seen in any other animal.

Modern birds and animals live in the same way as the ancient birds and animals. But human beings created cities and gardens. Now he does not shiver from the cold, nor suffer the summer heat, nor get miserably wet in the rain. He has sheltered himself from all these discomforts. But physical protection alone does not give happiness. Man still has a mind and body. This mind contains anger, jealousy, happiness, misery, joy, and sorrow, which continue to come to its surface.

The Search for Happiness
After the creation of civilization, the human brain was not satisfied, because it wanted infinite peace, infinite happiness, and infinite joy. Man started thinking about what he could do to destroy misery, sorrow, and disquietude, and what he could do to make the mind calm and virtuous. He has created cities and increased the capacity of the eye, ear, hand, and leg by scientific methods, but now he is tired of using the telescope and microscope. His ears are tired of listening to different languages on the radio. He is tired of breaking up mountains with machines to obtain ore. He is tired of traveling by ship, submarine, train, car, and airplane. In spite of all these physical conveniences, his mind is not happy, peaceful, or joyful.
He looks with despairing eyes towards the city and different scientific methods, then dives deep into the depths of the mind. When he comes out of his thoughts, there is a gleam in his eyes and a smile on his lips. He thinks, "Whatever I have created is inspired by my mind. A treasury of knowledge resides at the root of the mind. There is no doubt about it. But how can I reach this treasure?"

He looks at the newborn infant who declares his presence in the world by opening his eyes, breathing through his nose, and crying. The thoughtful man looks at the child for a long time. The truth shines in his mind like electricity. He sees light everywhere. He understands that there is a deep friendship between prana and the mind which moves the whole body. This is the truth.

He gets up with pleasure, but after some time his mind becomes prey to suspicion. He is confident of the attainment of truth, but he wants to test it. He gets the opportunity to test it one day, as he looks firmly at a dying man. He notes carefully the attempts made by the dying man. The dying man takes his last breath. His eyes widen and his body becomes lifeless. The prana and the mind have left his body. By holding on to prana one can hold on to the mind, and by holding on to the mind one can hold on to prana. The philosopher sees this in the newborn baby and in the dying man. Now his suspicion is allayed.

He tries to realize this truth by seeking solitude, sitting calmly, and trying to take hold of prana. As his practice matures, the mind comes under his control. He understands clearly physiology, hygiene, and psychology. One fine day he enters the root of his mind.

Now the scientist becomes a yogi. He transcends the conditions of wakefulness, dreaming, and spiritual ignorance and reaches the stage of complete knowledge, in which the soul becomes one with the supreme spirit. Now his body and mind do not trouble him. He is no longer an ordinary man, but has become a superman. He is everyone's friend, well-wisher, and helper. Om santih, santih, santih!
Characteristics

Sirsa sprsta padmasana belongs to the halasana group. This asana exercises the chest, abdomen, and spine. It influences the thyroid and para thyroid glands, which improve one’s health when they function properly. The secretion from the thyroid gland benefits the inner and outer skin. The parathyroid glands regulate the presence of calcium, which benefits muscles and nerves and destroys any poison in the body. The healthy secretion of the parathyroid glands also stimulates physical activity.

This asana also benefits the kidneys, the suprarenal glands, and the islets of Langerhans. The kidneys are situated at the back of the body near the last ribs. The right kidney lies below the liver and the left kidney lies below the spleen, overlapped by it. The suprarenal glands are situated above the kidneys. These glands have no vessels. They secrete adrenalin. The suprarenal glands regulate blood pressure and protect the blood and blood vessels, helping them to function properly. The practice of this asana causes the islets of Langerhans to produce the correct amount of insulin. Sugar is properly metabolized and prevented from going into the urinary tract.

Sterility, the malfunction of the ovaries and the testes, leucorrhea, nocturnal emission, kidney stones, diabetes, deafness, dumbness, impotence, pimples, eczema, indigestion, loss of appetite, constipation, urinary trouble, obesity, abdominal pain, and many other diseases are cured by the practice of this asana.

Practice

One should practice this asana for a maximum of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Description

Assume ardha supta padmasana. Then exhale as you lower your crossed legs. Take the left leg with both hands and place it on the left shoulder. Lower your hands to the small of your back and join them, putting the right arm over your right leg, and keeping your left arm under your left leg. Make sure that the left foot does not move away from its original position on the left shoulder. After exhaling hold your breath out. Fix your attention and your gaze on the anahata cakra.
The Source of Mental Disorders

Concentrate as follows: A woman requests a saint who is adept at mantra to exorcise a ghost that haunts her daughter. Modern psychology mocks at remedies such as exorcism and sacred threads to ward off ghosts. It says that any such cures of mental disturbances are illusionary, and that the patient should instead be treated scientifically. The doctor should try to reach the base of the disturbance.

The Unconscious Mind

Psychologists say that we have some acquaintance with our conscious mind, but are complete strangers to the unconscious mind. Yet several experiences prove the existence of the unconscious mind. We take an immediate like or dislike to certain individuals, thoughts, behaviors, or things without any obvious reason, yet we cannot rid ourselves of these likes or dislikes. Psychology explains this mystery by saying that our likes or dislikes come from the unconscious mind.

Psychology goes on to state that modern society erroneously considers will power to be the repository of the mind’s strength. Actually will power is weak. The unconscious mind is the source of many human powers. When one of these powers gains strength and creates havoc, then will power flies away with the breeze.

Though the mental states of foolishness, intelligence, and sentimentality in man seem different, this difference is only in name. According to Sigmund Freud, the strength of the mind is the libido, which includes all of man's inclinations. Freud distinguishes two parts of the libido—self-preservation and the preservation of one’s society. This is not false; it is completely correct. Life itself is always trying to get food. If any other activity prevents this, life becomes hostile. As a result of being engaged in sensual gratification, one naturally becomes attracted to the opposite sex. Reproduction takes place and man lives in the society of his own creation. Everyone experiences this reality.
Supta Eka Pada Sirasana (#38)

This great psychological truth was known to the ancient sages of India. They have expressed the truth in their own special way. Freud's libido was called prakrti (nature) by them. According to Freud, the power of attachment called libido activates the mind. In the same way, the power of prakrti activates the mind. Freud is concept of libido poses an enigma, while the ancient understanding of prakrti does not. That good and bad mental states result from the libidinous power of attachment is not clear, but the fact that prakrti causes good and bad mental states is clear. Prakrti is said to have three qualities, manifested in the three different states of mind. Sattva, rajas, and tamas are the three qualities of prakrti. You can see humans and other living beings living three types of life: superior, ordinary, and base. Lord Krsna emphasizes the power of this prakrti or life force:

sadrsam cestate svasyah prakrter jnanavan api,
prakrtim yanti bhutani nigrahah kim karisyati .

Even a wise man acts according to his own nature.
Beings follow nature; what can restraint accomplish?
(Bhagavadgita 3:33)

Freud says that no one is free from sexual instincts. This is an ancient truth. The ancient scriptures state that the great Saint Visvamitra was tempted by Menaka and could not resist. Lord Siva was also swept away by the charms of Bhiladi and Visvamohini. But the ancient psychology called yoga by the sages of old indicates a way to sublimate sexual instincts. Therefore the ancient scriptures, which showed the great Saint Visvamitra and Lord Siva waver due to sexual instincts, have also shown them in the state beyond temptation, a state of sublimation of their sexual instincts. In addition, they have given a wide meaning to the word "passion," which encompasses all sorts of passionate instincts and desires, including the sexual instincts.
Supta Eka Pada Sirsana (#38)

The Srimad Bhagavadgita states:

*Sri Bhagavan uvaca:*

*kama esa krodha esa rajoguna samudbhavah,
mahasano mahapapma viddhyenam iha vairinam.*

Radiant God said:

Know that it is *kama* (desire), it is wrath begotten by rajoguna, the great devourer, the great sin, that is the enemy here.

*(Bhagavadgita 3:37)*

This verse, together with the following verse, shows that there is nothing new in Freud's findings.

*avrtam jnanam etena jnanino nityavairina,
kamarupena kaunteya duspurenanalena ca.*

Knowledge is enveloped, O Son of Kunti, by this insatiable enemy in the form of *kama*, the constant foe of the wise.

*(Bhagavadgita 3:39)*

The Introverted or Extroverted Mind

The unconscious mind occupies an important position in modern psychology. It is the residence of repressed passions. Its main goal is to achieve happiness, peace, and joy. For this reason it does not welcome the rule or coordination of anyone or anything. In other words, it can be said that the ego of man is much larger than the highest mountain in the world. According to Indian yogis there is only one mind, but it flows in two directions: towards oneself or away from oneself. In the former case, man is said to be introverted, and in the latter case, man is said to be extroverted.
The repressed mind of the man whose nature is dominated by tamas is called the unconscious mind by Freud. The impressions that play havoc during waking, sleep, or deep sleep are not known much to the conscious mind, but are within the knowledge of the unconscious mind. As a result, the unconscious mind runs quickly whichever way it wants. The introverted mind dominated by the quality of rajas has acquired some knowledge from the flow of sattvaguna, so it acts sanely sometimes. The introverted mind immersed in sattvaguua goes on acquiring knowledge from the rich storehouse of the soul, and can thus work for the good of others.

**The Censor**
Freud says that repressed passions remain latent deep in the unconscious mind, and emerge when they get the necessary atmosphere. A watchful censor restrains them, allowing a repressed passion to emerge into dreams or wakefulness only after altering the whole appearance and name of the passion. The play that takes place in the dream world can have the strong hidden motive of revenge. This revenge can either be taken directly or acted out in dreams.

This is an example of how repressed passions manifest. Suppose a wealthy man has grossly insulted a poor man, making him angry. The poor man would get in trouble if he showed his anger directly, so the anger goes down into the unconscious and seeks revenge on the rich man. When conditions are amicable, he seeks revenge secretly in a way that looks like he is obliging the rich man.

**Buddhi (Intellect)**
According to the ancients, the inclination of the determined mind, or buddhi (intellect), has three different conditions--sattvika (of sattvaguna), rajasika (of rajoguna), and tamasika (of tamoguna). The buddhi that steadies itself within is called introspective, and the one that steadies itself in others is called extroverted. A dream manifests itself in introspective buddhi and works as the censor. The sattvika, introspective buddhi dwells in
one's own soul, and gaining divine determination gives up old human determinations easily. The rajasika, introspective buddhi attains divine determination when it is affected by sattvaguna, and also makes human determinations with great strength. But there is the shadow of sattvaguna over it, so the strength of excitement of the human determinations subsides. The introspective intellect ruled by tamas is full of strong and fast determinations that are sometimes affected by the great current of sattvaguna, resulting in a good change. This sattvika, rajasika, or tamasika buddhi is ruled by one's ego.

Ego, Id, and Superego
The ego is another important element of the human psyche. It has to tolerate the id, which emerges from the unconscious mind, by the practical rule of the outer world and by the decision taken after using discretion. If it does not emerge victorious from these conflicts, it is affected by mental diseases. Ego has its place in the ancient writings.

The id dominates the unconscious mind where the repressed passions stay. It sometimes brings out the repressed passion and gives joy. This id is eternally blind, yet progresses very fast in any direction. It does not see anything beyond joy, and is thus bound from birth. When it progresses towards the attainment of joy, it heed's nothing. It is the pet of the mental impressions of self-protection and the protection of one's society. It is also favored by the libido.

The superego is the power that makes one behave according to social and acquired conditions. The ego has complete faith in it, and accepts the direction of the superego. The superego tries to avoid those actions it thinks forbidden, and makes it its duty to perform the actions that appear to be its duty. Sometimes, however, the ego's desires are so powerful that it dominates the superego. The society, nation, and world are completely influenced by this superego.
**Supta Eka Pada Sirasana** (#38)

**Rtambhara Prajna (Truth-Holding Wisdom)**

All have to stay within the boundaries etched by the superego. The ancient Indian texts named this superego *rtambhara prajna*. It can be achieved only by samadhi. Lord Krsna says in the *Srimad Bhagavadgita*:

\[
\begin{align*}
tesam satatayuktanam bhajatam pritipurvakam, \\
dad ami buddhiyogam tam yena mam upayanti te. (10) \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
tesam eva 'nukampartham aham ajnanajam tamah, \\
nasayamy atmabhavastho jnanadipena bhasvata. (11) \\
\end{align*}
\]

To those who are always engaged in worshipping me with love,
I give the yoga of discrimination by which they come to me. (10)

Purely out of compassion for them, I dwell in their Atman and destroy
their ignorance born of darkness by the luminous lamp of knowledge. (11)

(*Bhagavadgita* 10:10-11)

The great man who has achieved *rtambhara prajna* (truth-holding wisdom) has also achieved samadhi, and the *civilized* men of the society, nation, and world regard him as a great realized saint. Therefore, they also obey his advice in his absence, and try to follow his path. Yet the *ordinary* individual, society, and nation give more importance to their own intuitions. The great saint who has achieved *rtambhara prajna* and samadhi inspires only undiluted truth. Because of this, the civilized individual, society, or nation hesitates to override the advice of this great saint.

All the components of the human system that have been established by psychology are also experienced by the study of yoga. The yogi dives deep into his mind and enters the unconscious mind. Not only that, he also reaches the boundary of his soul, which is
beyond the unconscious mind. Due to this, nothing can be hidden from the yogi. The yogi must spend many years in continuous, deep meditation in order to cross the domain of prakrti. During this meditation he experiences childhood, adolescence, youth, middle age, and old age in reverse order. He experiences sleep, unconsciousness, lassitude, pneumonia, hysteria, lunacy, and other such afflictions. He experiences health, happiness, misery, joy, unhappiness, and other such emotions without experiencing any pain. He also experiences painless death. In other words, it may be said that the yogi looks on as an outsider at the function of the nervous system and its influence on the body. He does not mix his own wishes with its functions. His experiences are pure truth. By accepting the truth of life, he decreases the bonds of prakrti.

There are two kinds of yogi--the realized and unrealized. For the unrealized yogi, there is every possibility that the truth he experiences may be mixed with falsehood. It is the duty of all human beings in the world to realize truth by means of yoga, to see God, and to become one with him. Psychology is the science by which you know the mind, and yoga is the science by which you realize Brahma (the Absolute). "Sa vidya ya vimuktaye." That which liberates, is knowledge. Om santih, santih, santih!

Characteristics
By the practice of supta eka pada sirasana, the kundalini power rises easily to the head. All the muscles of the body, the small and big joints, and the abdominal and thoracic organs become strong. The elasticity of the spine increases. Because the sexual fluids are ascendent, the individuality of the yogi develops, and new knowledge dawns. As sattvaguna becomes strong, rajoguna and tamoguna become weak. Old age and diseases disappear, so the body and mind become active and steady. Ignorance and darkness disappear. By changing the position of the legs, the second variation of this asana can be performed.
Supta Eka Pada Sirsana (#38)

Constipation, gastritis, diabetes, kidney stones, loss of appetite, elephantiasis, menorrhea, painful or irregular menstruation, leucorrhrea, diseases of the uterus, marasmus, nocturnal emission, urinary diseases, piles, indigestion, and the like are cured by the practice of this asana.

Practice
One should practice this asana for a maximum of fifteen minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Ardha Upadhanasana (#39)
(Half Pillow Asana)

Description

Lie down on your right side. Raise the left leg, and put your right foot on your left thigh by bending your right leg at the knee. While exhaling, hold your left leg with both hands and arrange it on your left shoulder near your neck. Bend your right arm at the elbow. Keeping the wrist towards the front spread your fingers on your right ear and support your head. Put your left palm and fingers under your chin so that the palm and the fingers rest on your left cheek. Rest your left elbow on the heel of your left foot. After exhaling, hold your breath out. Fix your gaze and attention on the manipura cakra.
The Words of the Realized Saint

Concentrate as follows: There was a time when humanity had faith in the speech of the realized saint, an individual who had realized the truth. His speech was called *sabda* (sound, language), and this *sabda* was truth itself. Lord Krsna, who spoke the Srimad Bhagavadgita, was regarded as such a realized saint. Later, people lost faith in the speech of the realized saint. The scientist took his place and the people started believing the scientist's speech. There is nothing wrong with this.

Physics demonstrates the existence of an infinite power behind the functions of the universe. This power brings about the creation of the universe. The world born from it is making progress toward finding this ultimate power. Today's humanity is incomplete, today's society is incomplete, today's nation is incomplete, and today's world is incomplete. The incompletion is in search of completion; there is no doubt about it. This time may be called the *satya yuga* (age of truth) in the words of a realized saint. *Om santih, santih, santih!*

Characteristics

This asana is called ardha upadhanasana. *Upadhana* means pillow. Here the right hand is used as the pillow. By the practice of this asana all the muscles and joints of the body become strong. Pressure is put on the right side of the torso. The left side of the torso and the left thigh are also pressed. Whenever the left side is pressed, the vayu flows through the right nostril, or *pingala nadi* (right-hand energy channel). Therefore, the right lung and all its vessels and capillaries become more active. The left lung becomes less active, and all the vessels and capillaries going through this lung function slowly. In the same way, when the right torso is pressed, the vayu flows through the left nostril or *ida nadi* (left-hand energy channel).

Since both sides are pressed in this asana, the vayu stops flowing in both the ida and the pingala nadis and flows through the middle path, the susumna. As the leg is placed on the
Ardha Upadhanasana (#39)

shoulder near the throat, the *pascima madhya marga* (posterior median path) is pressed. As a result, the vayu flows though the throat near the epiglottis, enters the esophagus, and reaches the *sahasradala padma* (lotus). This asana is difficult, but has a steadying effect on the mind. The second variation of this asana is performed by alternating the position of the legs and the hands.

The practice of ardha upadhanasana strengthens the stomach, the spleen, and the pancreas. Modern science has shown that the pancreas plays a greater part in the digestion of food than the stomach. The secretion of the pancreas helps in the digestion of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins.

Diabetes, kidney stones, loss of appetite, diseases of the uterus, tonsillitis, cold, fever, rheumatism, and similar ailments can be cured by the practice of this asana.

**Practice**
This asana should be practiced for a maximum of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Description

Lie down on your left side. Bend your left arm and arrange your palm behind your ear so that your fingers are distributed on your neck and head. Bend your right leg and place it at the joint between your thigh and pelvis with your toes touching the ground. Then bend your left leg and place it at the joint of your right thigh and pelvis. Hold your knee with your right hand, fingers spread. Fix your gaze and attention on the muladhara cakra while exhaling. After exhaling, hold your breath out.
Scientific Breathing
Concentrate as follows: As long as the body has life, an individual breathes in through both nostrils. He dies when he stops inhaling. Air is the life force behind a human being. All the organs of the body work with its strength, so the respiratory system governs the functions of all the other systems of the body. If you look, you will see that most people breathe irregularly, but the yogi breathes scientifically. His health is a model to the public. Pranayama increases his mental capacity, sharpens his intelligence, increases the power of his memory, and makes his nature virtuous.

It is natural to want to know how pranayama brings about this result. The ordinary individual's body functions irregularly due to irregular exhalation and inhalation. This results in irregular blood circulation. Disorders in the body start with irregularities of the excretory system. Some cells are normally destroyed while carrying out their functions. Urea, uric acid, carbon dioxide, water, and other waste materials are produced. Complications take place if these substances remain in the body instead of being excreted. By the proper practice of pranayama, the lungs, large intestines, and kidneys become active and do not allow waste matter to remain in the body, resulting in alertness of the mind and body. Om santih, santih, santih!

Characteristics
Daksina pada padmasana is very easy. The yogi practices a special kriya (purifying activity) while doing this asana. He frequently contracts his sexual organ. However, he only does so after having removed the kundalini's head from the mouth of the susumna by the practice of sakti calana mudra. The kundalini has thus already entered the boundaries of the susumna. Nirvikalpa (without fluctuation) samadhi cannot be achieved without this practice. This kriya can also be performed with asanas such as padmasana, mula bandhasana, vajrasana, bhadrasana, and svastikasana. This technique stimulates the pituitary and prostate glands to produce secretions that make the yogi lustrous.
**Daksina Pada Padmasana (#40)**

By reversing the position of the legs, the second variation of this easy asana takes place. As it resembles ardha upadhanasana, the benefits are identical. This asana cures loss of appetite, indigestion, gastritis, piles, intestinal worms, and other such ailments.

**Practice**

One should practice this asana for a maximum of five minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Description

Assume daksina pada padmasana. While exhaling, bend your crossed legs downwards to rest on the floor. While doing this, remove your left arm from under your head and keeping it stiff, place it straight out on the floor, palm down. Bend your right arm and press your palm on your chin in such a way that your fingers touch your right cheek. Fix your gaze and attention on the muladhara cakra.
Knowledge and Yoga

Concentrate as follows: I sat in the holy shadow of my gurudeva, discussing yoga. He said, "People misunderstand yoga. The study of scriptures, which imparts knowledge, is known as unseen knowledge or knowledge without experience. To obtain self experience in knowledge one must take recourse in yoga. In Yoga Bija, Goddess Parvati asks Lord Siva:

\begin{quote}
\textit{jbanadeva hi moksam ca vadanti jnaninah sada,}
\textit{na katham siddhayogena yogah kim moksado bhavet.}
\end{quote}

O Lord of Knowledge, the wise say that only knowledge leads to liberation. How then does yoga bring liberation?

"Goddess Parvati asks why one should bother with the difficult practice of \textit{siddha} (adept) yoga, which seems useless if only knowledge brings salvation. Lord Siva replied:

\begin{quote}
\textit{jnanenaiva hi moksam ca tesarn vakyam tu nanyatha,}
\textit{sarve vadanti khadgena jayo bhavati tarhikim.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{vinayuddhena viryena katham jayamavapnuyat,}
\textit{tatha yogena rahitam jnanam moksaya no bhavet.}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{jnananistho virakto va dharmajno'pi jitendriyah,}
\textit{vina yogena devo'pi na moksam labhate priye.}
\end{quote}

O Beloved One, salvation is achieved through intellect. The learned are not wrong in saying thus. All say that the sword wins victories, but victories are not achieved without valor and fighting also. Similarly, knowledge without yoga cannot lead to salvation. One may be learned, religious, or detached from the world; he may be a
master of his senses or may even be a god, but he cannot be fit for salvation unless he practices yoga.

"Lord Krsna says the same thing in the Srimad Bhagavadgita:

\[\text{ekam sarnkhyam ca yogam ca yah pasyati sa pasyati.}\]

He truly sees who sees that knowledge and yoga are one.

\[(\text{Bhagavadgita, 5:5})\]

"Lord Krsna's Srimad Bhagavadgita, which engulfs all scriptures, is really a text on yoga philosophy. Even nowadays it is considered a standard text. Lord Krsna has led his beloved disciples such as Arjuna and Uddhava onto the path of yoga. Jnana yoga, bhakti yoga, and kriya yoga are all included in the word 'yoga.' To give the name 'yoga' to only one of its aspects is to exhibit one's ignorance.

"The Srimad Bhagavadgita also states:

\[\text{tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogi jnanibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikah,}\\ \text{karmibhyas ca 'dhiko yogi tasmad yogi bhava 'rjuna.}\]

The yogi is deemed superior to ascetics, superior to the learned, and superior to people of action. Therefore be a yogi, Arjuna!

\[(\text{Bhagavadgita, 6:46})\]

"And further:

\[\text{tasmat sarvesu kalesu yogayukto bhava 'rjuna. (27)}\\ \text{vedesu yajnesu tapahsu ca'i'va danesu yat punyaphalam pradistam,}\]
Therefore, be steadfast in yoga at all times, Arjuna. (27)

The yogi who knows this transcends the fruits of meritorious deeds attached to the study of the Vedas, sacrifices, austerities and gifts, and attains to the supreme primeval abode. (28)  
(Bhagavadgita 8:27-28)

"In this way Lord Krsna has expounded the value of yoga. Narada, Sukadeva, Yajnavalkya and other great sages have resorted to yoga for salvation because that is the only path. Om santih, santih, santih!"

**Characteristics**

Daksina parsva padmasana makes the spine, spleen, stomach, and right kidney more active. The second variation of this asana is called varna parsva padmasana. You can perform this variation by changing from the right to the left side. The spine, the stomach, the pancreas, and the left kidney are exercised by varna parsva padmasana. The sadhaka should practice both variations. The two variations are complementary, and combine to make one asana.

The salivary glands absorb lymph from the capillaries in the cheeks and convert it into saliva. If the sadhaka who practices this asana chews his food properly, he becomes healthy and free of all diseases. There is a secretion called ptyalin in the saliva that changes carbohydrates into dextrin. When one does not chew one's food thoroughly, the
function of the ptyalin remains incomplete.

Practicing this asana also causes proper secretion of the gastric juices, which contain rennin and pepsin. Rennin is a form of hydrochloric acid. It stimulates the muscles in the walls of the stomach, which helps in the churning and digestion of food. Pepsin transforms proteins into peptone, and helps digest casein, the protein in milk.

Loss of appetite, indigestion, fever, constipation, cold, dumbness, gastritis, enlargement of the spleen, rheumatism, diabetes, and kidney stones are cured by the practice of this asana.

Practice
This asana should be practiced for a maximum of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
Description

Assume daksina parsva padmasana. While exhaling, touch your chest and abdomen to the floor, bending your head back so that you touch the floor with your chin. Hold your toes with your respective thumbs and forefingers. After exhaling, inhale.
The Eight Components of Raja Yoga
Concentrate as follows: I prayed to my gurudeva, "You are a powerful and great yogi, and I have come to surrender myself at your lotus feet. Please tell me the components of raja yoga and how I go about achieving it."

Guruji said, "Yoga has these components:

\[
yama-niyamasana-pranayama-pratyahara-dharana-dhyana-
\text{samadhayo}'stav-angani.
\]

\[
Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana,
dhyana, and samadhi are its eight parts.
\]
\,(Yoga Sutra, Sadhanapada, Sutra 29)\]

"The wise sadhaka practices all these components.

"According to the ancients, only a fit person should be initiated into the science of yoga. In order to become fit, one must observe yama and niyama strictly. Only when the guru has made sure that the sadhaka is wise, enthusiastic, persevering, a lover of scriptures, and a faithful follower of God and Guru, does he initiate him in asana and pranayama.

"Today's people believe that yoga is a commodity rather than a science, so they do not accept the need for qualifying themselves before practicing yoga. They tell the yogi that if he cannot teach them yoga when they ask, then he is not a capable yogi. The modern yogi's reply is that they need not go into the forest in quest of the knowledge of yoga, and that he has taken a great vow to give yogic knowledge to everyone without requiring any effort on the part of the student. Neither do such yogis consider old age or childhood a hindrance to achieving yoga."
Among the ancients, the knowledge of yoga was very rare, but there were many sadhakas. Today, there are plenty of yogis to impart knowledge, but a scarcity of real sadhakas.

To succeed in the practice of asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, and samadhi, one must accept the background of yama and niyama. The yogis have presented the last six components of yoga not because of their personal feelings, but as a result of their deep experiences.

The Five Yamas

With these five yamas, one becomes fit to receive instruction in yoga.

\[
\text{ahimsa-satyasteya-brahmacaryaparigraha yamah. (30)}
\]

\[
\text{jati-desa-kala-samayanavacchinnah sarvabhauma mahavratam. (31)}
\]

The five yamas are \textit{ahimsa} (nonviolence), \textit{satya} (truth), \textit{asteya} (non-theft), \textit{brahmaqary} (celibacy), and \textit{aparigraha} (non-possessiveness). (30)

These (five vows), independent of class, place, time, or occasion, and extending to all stages, constitute the great vow. (31)
(Yoga Sutra, Sadhanapada, Sutras 30-31)

\textit{Ahimsa} (Nonviolence)

Now I will tell you how to practice the vow of \textit{ahimsa}.

\[
\text{karmana manasa vaca sarvabhutesu sarvada,}
\]

\[
\text{aklesajananam proktahimsatvena yogibhih.}
\]
Not harming any living being by action, thought, or speech is called *ahimsa* by the yogis.

"One should not impart pain to any living being by action, thought or speech. This is called *ahimsa*. The sadhaka should remember that he is trying to steady his wavering mind by means of the practice of yoga. One whose mind is full of anger, jealousy, and passions cannot enter the regions of yoga. If you have hurt any living being willfully or unknowingly, he will try to take revenge, so you will have to remain alert to protect yourself. As it is, the mind is full of internal disturbances, and you would add an external disturbance to those already in the mind, making the practice of yoga impossible. Moreover, if you fill your mind with hatred or jealousy towards another, then this hatred or jealousy intensifies, and does not abate until the person concerned has been hurt. As a result, external disturbances afflict the mind, causing it to become many times more unsteady.

"Jealousy or hatred hidden in the mind is destroyed by the practice of yoga as the feeling of love towards all beings increases. If you harm someone by bitter speech, it causes unbearable pain in his heart, and he thirsts for revenge. To fight this revengeful attitude, you will also become excited, which makes the mind disturbed. Therefore, behave in such a way that mental peace is always maintained.

*ahimsa-pratisthayam tat-samnidhau-vairatyagah*

Hostility is abandoned in the presence of one who is firmly established in *ahimsa*.
*(Yoga Sutra, Sadhanapada, Sutra 35)*

"When *ahimsa* is established, feelings of revenge leave the mind. The calm mind and behavior of the sadhaka impress onlookers, causing feelings of revenge to dissipate, and instilling love. *Om santih, santih, santih!*"
Viparita Matsyasana or Supta Padmasana (#42)

Characteristics
The chest broadens, the lungs become healthy, the spine benefits with little effort, and the muscles, the joints of the neck, and other joints of the body are exercised by viparita matsyasana.

Constipation, gastritis, loss of appetite, diarrhea, indigestion, cold, rheumatism, tuberculosis, asthma, dysentery, and other such diseases are cured by the practice of this asana.

Practice
One should practice this asana for a maximum of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.
**Uttita Padmasana (#43)**
(Raised Lotus Asana)

**Description**

Sit in padmasana. While exhaling, use your hands to raise yourself up on your knees. Now join your hands together in the center of your chest in the position of namaskara (salutation, gesture of worship). After exhaling, hold your breath out. Fix your gaze and attention on the muladhara cakra.
Satya (Truthfulness)
Concentrate as follows: Sadgurudeva has told me about *ahimsa* (nonviolence). Now he tells me the salient features of *satya*:

* sat yam bhutahitam proktam nayathartha-bhi-bhasanam. 

Truth is that which is spoken for the good of living beings and is not mixed with falsehood.

"One who wants to become a yogi should seek solitude for his own benefit. Solitude provides an escape from many troubles. One should talk moderately and only with good reason. One should not wish to falsely impress others. There is a great attraction in simplicity, so one should be simple. It is said in *Manusmrti*:

* sat yam bruyat priyam bruyanna bruyat satyamapriyam,
  priyarn ca na nrtam bruyadesa dharmah sanatanah. 

One should speak that which is true and pleasant, and should not speak that which is true and unpleasant or false and pleasant; this is the Sanatana Dharma.

(*Manusmrti*, IV, 138)

"One should definitely speak the truth, but in such a way that it is not spurned by others. One should speak with love, but this speech should not be without truth."

I said, "Gurudeva, God is the personification of truth. Because he is not easily achieved, the sadhaka has to strive for a glimpse of him by sadhana. Under these circumstances, how can one deal completely with truth?"
Gurudeva answered, "It is true that the sadhaka does not know truth, but it is also true that he wants to know it. When he is passing through this complicated phase, he should take the advice of some great saint and follow in his footsteps. Truth is unique and singular. The seeker of truth should describe conscientiously and precisely his experiences and glimpses of truth. That is also truth. Truth that can be described is the truth of speech. The truth of speech is that which is spoken as the result of the experience of one’s senses, logical reasoning, or listening to others.

"When one’s own selfish interest is at stake, he hides the truth from others. To hide one truth, one must resort to innumerable lies. He has to fabricate many schemes so that the original truth may not be exposed. Thus, one lie leads to another, which again leads to an infinite number of lies, making the person's mind unsteady. One who craves salvation cannot afford to resort to falsehoods and disturb the balance of his mind. Speaking the truth is beneficial to others, but the benefits to oneself are manifold.

\[ satya-pratisthayam kriya-phalasrayatvam. \]

When one is established in satya (truthfulness), the fruits of his action follow from that action alone.

\[ (Yoga Sutra, Sadhanapada, Sutra 36) \]

"O child, listen to me with affection. As truth gains firmness, words and actions go together. The speech of a truthful person is never proved false. It is said in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika:

\[ atyaharah prayasasca prajalpo niyamagrahah, \]
\[ jana sangasca laulyam ca sadbhiryogo vinatyati. \]
Over-eating, over-exertion, excessive talking, unsuitable disciplines, mixing too much with others, and unsteadiness are the six faults that destroy yoga.

(Hatha Yoga Pradipika, 1:15)

"This verse is full of the nectar of experience. When the intelligent, sincere sadhaka sips this nectar, his attention is drawn to the importance of yama and niyama. Truth cannot be protected by talking constantly. Undisciplined speech comes from an unsteady mind, and results in telling lies. False pride increases and knowledge and humility decrease. The person with a wavering mind uses his tongue to express himself, and the quiet individual gives expression to his thoughts by his behavior. The talkative person cannot impress others or project his ideas as much as the quiet person. Solitude makes one steady and less talkative. The effect is reversed when one is extroverted.

Asteya (Non-Theft)

\[
\text{karmana manasa vaca paradravyesu nihsprah,}
\]
\[
\text{asteyam-iti-samproktam-rsibhistattva-darsibhih.}
\]

Asteya is not coveting (not grasping) wealth by action, thought, or word; this is the realized truth spoken by the sages.

Yajnavalkya Samhita

"When one does not covet secretly wealth that belongs to others, he is practicing asteya. One should not use another's wealth without his consent. To practice yoga means to aim at greatness from our position of smallness. If a person with ideals resorts to theft, how can he achieve greatness? When one is in great need, he may naturally want to steal the wealth of another if it comes his way. It is here that the sadhaka must use discretion. It is unwise to give up a great virtue for minor materialistic needs. By stealing, the mind becomes guilty and unsteady. This unsteadiness interferes with reaching one's goals. To
Utthita Padmasana (#43)

become great, one should give up all small needs. The impurities in the mind are to be abandoned with knowledge and a steady mind. Only then can one achieve the Atman.

"By resorting to asteya, food, wealth and other necessary articles come to you effortlessly. Om santih, santih, santih!"

Characteristics
Because the weight of the whole body is on the knees in utthita padmasana, the knee joints become strong. To maintain the balance of the body, all the organs must coordinate, so they are all exercised. Elephantiasis, rheumatism, constipation, gastritis, piles, indigestion, and slow fever are cured by practicing this asana.

Practice
One should practice this asana for a maximum of five minutes, working gradually up to this limit.
Description

Sit in a cross-legged position. Place your right foot between your left thigh and calf, and your left foot between your right thigh and calf. Now exhale as you bend both arms, place each forefinger at the root of the thumb, and bring the hands near the shoulders. Perform *tribandha* (triple lock) and hold your breath out. Fix your gaze and attention on the muladhara cakra.
Brahmacarya (Celibacy)
Concentrate as follows: Sri Gurudeva says that he has taught me the first three parts of yama. Now he will advise me on the fourth part, brahmacarya:

karmana manasa vaca saravasthasu sarvatha,
sarvatra maithuna-tyago brahmacaryam pracaksate.

Brahmacarya is the abandonment of all actions, thoughts, or words of sexual intercourse in all situations, everywhere.

Yajnavalkya Samhita

"Lord Vyasa discusses brahmacarya in his commentary on the Yoga Sutra:

brahmacarya guptendriyasopasthasya samyamah.

Brahmacarya means using samyama (the process of dharana, dhyana, and samadhi) on the secret sexual organ.

"Performing samyama on the sexual organs is known as niskama karma yoga. Niskama karma yoga is called brahmacarya (celibacy). This divine knowledge is the mother of all knowledge. It is mysterious and secret. After solving this mystery, no other knowledge remains to be revealed. Countless sadhakas who understand the importance of brahmacarya try very hard to practice it. But the brahmacarya which is expected of the seeker of divine knowledge is unattainable by ordinary persons. It is, therefore, said in the scriptures:

na tapas tapa rutyahur brahmacaryam tapottamam,
urdhvareta bhaved yastu sa devo na tu manusah
**Svastikasana (#44)**

Of all austerities, *brahmacarya* is the ultimate. One who has mastered *brahmacarya* is no longer a human, but a god.

"Brahmacarya is the greatest form of austerity. Other austerities exist, but are inferior. One who has practiced austerity by performing samyama on the sexual organs is a great saint, not an ordinary person. He is a god on earth.

"As a girl or a boy reaches puberty, she or he is burned by the fire of the senses. This sensuality upsets that youth. But as soon as saktipata is given to that individual, the downward path opens up. This path must be closed and the *sakti* (divine energy) made ascendant. This is as difficult a task as making the river Ganges ascend to heaven. Without total renunciation, the yogi cannot travel this difficult path.

The Two Types of Brahmacarya

"Brahmacarya has a primary and a secondary (incomplete) variation. The primary form is to be observed by the celibate student, hermit, and the renunciant. The second variation is to be observed by householders.

"The husband and wife should have sex for the purpose of procreation sixteen days after the start of menstruation, except for holy days. This is considered to be *brahmacarya* for the householder.

“If one does not understand the importance of brahmacarya he is a fool, even though he may be a learned man. The development of an individual's personality is impossible without brahmacarya. Therefore, Maharsi Patanjali says in his *Yoga Sutra*:

*brahmacarya pratisthayam virya-labhah.*

On being firmly established in brahmacarya, vigor is gained.
"Once someone becomes steady in celibacy, he becomes powerful. This powerful individual can achieve the ultimate truth, then fame, money, and other material goods come to him automatically.

\[ siddhe bindau mahadevi kim na siddhyati bhutale. \]

O Goddess, when one has mastered the sexual fluids, what power is not at his command?

"After the mastery of sexual fluids all powers are the slaves of the urdhvareta saint. The saint becomes an urdhvareta only by the practice of yoga. It is the urdhvareta who achieves God. A god's divinity is achieved only through brahmacarya.

\[ brahmacaryena tapasa deva mrtyumupaghnata. \]

Through the penance of brahmacarya, the gods have destroyed death.

"How can disease enter the body of an urdhvareta who has destroyed death!

"Lord Sri Krsna declares the importance of sexual fluids in the \textit{Srimad Bhagavadgita}:

\[ bijam mam sarvabhtitanarn viddhi partha sanatanam. \]

Know me to be the primeval seed of all existence, O Partha. \textit{(Bhagavadgita, 7:10)}

"The world is created from the powerful seed of the great Creator."
Lord Sivaji says:

_Aham binduh sivo binduh._

I am the _bindu_ (drop, ovum); Siva is the _bindu._

“The _Durga Saptasati_ states:

_ya devi sarvabhutesu saktirupena sansthita._

The Goddess resides in all beings in the form of _sakti_ (divine energy).

"Sexual energy is itself Durga, the goddess of power.

"The great saints observed celibacy for attaining God. This jewel is found in the _Srimad Bhagavadgita_:

_yad icchanto brahmacaryam caranti._

One who desires to reach his goal observes brahmacarya.

_(Bhagavadgita, 8:11)_

"Yogiraj a Goraksanatha describes the importance of sexual fluids as follows:

The beloved fades in the absence of a husband and the yogi fades when he loses his sexual fluids.

It is also said:
Svastikasana (#44)

maranam bindupatena jivanam bindu dharanat.

The loss of sexual fluids leads to death, and the sublimation of sexual fluids rejuvenates.

How to Observe Brahmacarya

"Let us see if there is a way to observe brahmacarya easily.

brahmacaryam sada raksedastadha laksagam prthak,
smaranam kirtanam kelih preksanam guhyabhasanam. (12)

sankalpo'dhyavasayasca kriyanispatireva ca,
etanmaithunamastangam pravadanti manisinah. (13)

na dhatasyam na vaktavyam na kartavyam kadacana,
etaih savairvinirmuktah yatirbhavati netarah. (14)

To completely observe brahmacarya, follow these eight rules: avoid thinking lustfully about a member of the opposite sex, do not discuss the opposite sex, do not play with those of the opposite sex, do not look at them with soft feelings, avoid solitude with a member of the opposite sex, decide against having sexual intercourse, do not determine to win over one of the opposite sex, and do not think about enjoyment with those of the opposite sex.

(Daksa Samhita)

"The sadhaka can be a yogi if he observes these rules and uses his discretion to keep the opposite sex at a distance. Thus, the sadhaka should not imagine sex, discuss sex, nor engage in sex. Om santih, santih, santih!"
Svastikasana (#44)

The yoga sadhaka, devotee, athlete, or individual aspiring for good health should chant the fifty-two stanzas on brahmacarya daily.

Fifty-two Stanzas on Brahma-carya
Chanting these verses gives a person the strength to practice brahmacarya. Women should omit verses 12 and 14, and men should omit verses 13 and 15.

Dear brothers and sisters, give up your despair and forget your miserable past. Become confident and stand up! If you become a celibate, the goal toward which you laboriously strive will come to you of its own accord. (1)

A man or a woman without power is looked down upon by family, society, and nation, because he has lost his sexual fluids by secret cohabitation. To avoid this humiliation, protect your sexual fluids and become celibate. This is the path of dharma and the shortcut to success. (2)

The weak men and women who have lost their power lament night and day, trying in vain to find a path out of the forest of despair. On the other hand, the powerful men and women who have mastered their sexual fluids enjoy infinite bliss on the great mountain of hope. (3)

People drive away a guard dog, but if a lion comes and sleeps in place of the dog, they do not have the courage to drive it away; they themselves run away. (4)

When wind blows on a forest fire, thinking it to be strong, it makes the fire even more intense. The same wind, however, puts out a small light burning inside the house, thinking it to be weak. (5)
The skin and seed of the mango are kicked about on the road after the juice has been sucked away. In the same way, weak men and women are insulted by strong men and women. (6)

Dear brothers and sisters, a single drop of sexual fluid is more valuable than all the wealth in the world. Those who are attracted by sensual pleasure waste it, but a yogi who knows its true value carefully protects it. (7)

Protecting the sexual fluids makes the body lustrous. Just as the lamp without fuel burns down, so also that luster fades when the individual becomes sensual, loses control, and wastes his sexual fluids. (8)

When sensual pleasures increase, strength is lost; so many diseases make their home in the body. On the other hand, a celibate individual protects his sexual fluids, so strength increases and not a single disease remains in his body. (9)

A single drop of sexual fluid creates a complete child. Everyone knows this, yet one who is tempted by sensuality and destroys innumerable drops of sexual fluid murders countless unborn children. Is it right to enjoy life by murdering children? (10)

The seed is a part of the tree and there is a tree hidden in every seed. In the same way, the soul is a part of God, and God is within the soul of every individual. To experience this truth, resort to the scientific practice of niskama karma yoga and become an urdhvareta, who is not distinct from God. (11)

Dear sadhaka, if you wish to glimpse this great truth, you should believe the beautiful female body to be a hidden fire that burns onlookers and those who attempt to touch it. (12)
Dear sadhika (female aspirant), if you wish to glimpse God, shun attraction to men. The sensual man is a resident of hell. He will seem like a God to you, but he is actually a monster. He will worship your beauty, then make you descend from heaven into the hell of sensuality. (13)

Dear sadhaka, remember that you can never tread the path of yoga as long as you have the image of a beautiful woman engraved in your heart. No one can say when you will give in to temptation and pursue her. (14)

Dear sadhika (female aspirant), remember that as long as you play with a man, you cannot preserve your body and find the path of God. (15)

Death is imminent when sexual fluids are lost, and life is preserved when sexual fluids are protected. Therefore, make all efforts to prevent the loss of sexual fluids. (16)

It does not matter whether you know your country or your religion. But it does matter whether you observe brahmacarya. If you wish to delve into the truth that lies secret in your body—that is, if you wish to see the great Lord who dwells within—you must practice brahmacarya. Without brahmacarya, your efforts to attain truth will be in vain. This is a point of utmost importance. (17)

Brahmacarya is our childhood companion, and we should not fear that this companionship will be lost. One should fear sexual desire, because it is the enemy of youth. (18)

You will fail at brahmacarya unless you build a fortress to protect your determination. Only the sadhaka who eats moderate and wholesome food and
Svastikasana (#44)

digests it with necessary exercises can practice brahmacarya. The sadhaka who eats immoderately or who fails to exercise never succeeds at brahmacarya. (19)

Prakrti is made up of three qualities: sattvaguna, rajoguna, and tamoguna. Sattvaguna is the best of the three. If you cannot increase sattvaguna, you cannot practice niskama karma yoga to become an urdhvareta, and you cannot become a complete devotee of God. (20)

Prakrti itself is Radhika Rani. She is the great power. Partake of her sattvaguna, and she will give you the gift of a matchless personality. (21)

O unlucky ones, take care. How long will you wallow in sorrow? Awaken the dormant valor that lies in your heart. Take the great vow of brahmacarya and abandon your foolishness. (28)

Liars murder a tiger in their talks with one blow of the sword, but when they come face to face with a dog they are afraid. Their vow of brahmacarya does not last long. (23)

Cowards are not brave, though they may speak thousands of words to show their valor. The truly brave are inspired by few words. They are so brave that even when their heads are cut off, their bodies go on fighting. (24)

The vow is a daughter of God. Only a brave, godly man can marry her. The cowardly can only marry demonesses. (25)

Only the brave men and women who protect their sexual fluids can protect the universe. Other men and women cannot even make their family happy or fearless. (26)
Dear brothers and sisters, you are afraid because the demoness of difficulty obstructs and harasses you every moment of your life. If you give up licentious behavior and resort to brahmacarya, this demoness of difficulty will fear you and will tread the path of death. (27)

In spite of any obstacles in your path, you will be victorious. All difficulties will be afraid and will accept defeat. Wield the weapon of brahmacarya with a pure heart and confront your enemies bravely. You will then realize how many of your difficulties live, how many die, and how many disappear. (28)

Just as the sun looks glorious in the sky and the moon is decorated by clusters of stars, so also the celibate finds a pedestal among men. (29)

Do not become passionate and destroy your sexual fluids. The protection of sexual fluids is the best and most correct form of sadhana. By its practice your desires are fulfilled, and you can achieve salvation. (30)

The strength obtained by the protection of sexual fluids opens up the closed gateway of luck, and makes your body more and more beautiful. (31)

The protection of sexual fluids increases physical strength, intelligence, patience, and memory. It makes the mind steady and brings happiness and peace. (32)

One who has been able to protect sexual fluids can achieve anything in this world. Even if it is dark, one can find a hidden object with a torch. The protection of sexual fluids is like the attainment of light in a world of darkness. (33)

If you can attain self control, greatness will await you. All your wishes will be fulfilled, and fame, which is at your door, will welcome you. (34)
Self control is the key to well-being. It is the only key that opens all locks, but locks the doors of sorrow. (35)

Passionate men and women search in vain for happiness, yet they do not achieve it. On the contrary, happiness is always in search of the celibate. Such is the unpredictable play of God. (36)

O great celibates, the penance of brahmacarya yields such mighty results that one fine day all supernatural faculties will come to your feet and request you to allow them to stay. The gods will be happy and will accept your greatness, and everyone will sing your praises each day. (37)

Enjoyment gives one a sense of pleasure, but one only experiences sorrow in the end. On the contrary, yoga gives happiness in the beginning, middle, and end. (38)

Though it goes by many names, yoga is unique and is called the yoga of brahmacarya or niskama karma yoga. One can become an urdhvareta by means of this yoga, which is like Midas's touch. Do not abandon this precious gem in order to search for a colorful stone. (39)

Dear sadhakas, consider your body to be a laboratory where you can practice yoga, and consider your soul to be your teacher. Then take up the vow of brahmacarya and practice niskama karma yoga. (40)

Dear sadhakas, remember that enjoyment leads to downfall, and yoga leads to success. The sensual person falls toward hell, and the yogi goes toward infinite achievement. (41)
The strict observance of brahmacarya is a great vow. It is the soul of mantra. Therefore, any sadhana without the practice of brahmacarya is a failure. Gods depend on brahmacarya, so it is the main element; all other techniques are minor. (42)

Yoga initiation means devoting yourself to niskama karma yoga, which makes the sexual fluids ascendant, thus bringing divine luster to your forehead. After the prana becomes ascendant, the fire of yoga puts a mark on the yogi's forehead. This is the true sign of a successful yogi. Others imitate this state by putting various marks on their foreheads. (43)

Each religion has its own pilgrimage places. Brahmacarya is the only pilgrimage that has a universal following. Without asking its protection, the dirty mind cannot be cleansed. This pilgrimage is the site of penance of all the great saints of the world. Here reside all supernatural powers and accomplishments. (44)

The devotee who is separated from worldly attachments can have a glimpse of the great Lord. To get rid of worldly attachments, take the protection of niskama karma yoga, which means to practice scientifically the path of brahmacarya. There is no other way to achieve God. (45)

One who wishes to make this divine pilgrimage should use the vehicle of brahmacarya to succeed. Only those who have God's blessing can succeed on this pilgrimage. (46)

Sexual fluid is a great gem. One who hoards it can achieve anything. If one can achieve divinity by practicing brahmacarya, why cannot one also accomplish everything that the world has to give? (48)
Svastikasana (44)

Dear sadhaka, preservation of sexual fluid is the principle of God. Worship God under its protection. This is the illumined path. Do not leave it and tread the path of darkness, inviting only disappointment. (49)

Just as a boat saves people from drowning in the river or the sea, so also these verses on brahmacarya will save you from drowning in the ocean of worldly life. (50)

The devotee who chants these verses on brahmacarya every day at dawn will be divinely inspired. This divine inspiration is not just inspiration; it is the divine blessing of the kind Lord. (51)

Nothing is unattainable in this world if you are divinely inspired. Inspiration is the great power that runs the universe. (52)

Characteristics
Svastikasana is in the same class as kamalasana or padmasana. The diseases cured by padmasana or kamalasana are cured by this asana. The benefits are also identical.

Practice
Practice this asana for a maximum of one hour, gradually working up to this limit.
Sthita Vivekasana (#45)
(Firm Discrimination Asana)

Description

Sit in a cross-legged posture with the left foot between the right thigh and calf and the right foot between the left thigh and calf. While inhaling, cross your arms on your chest, placing the palms of both hands on the arms just below the armpits. Hold your breath. Fix your gaze and attention on the muladhara cakra.
Aparigraha (Non-Possesiveness)
Concentrate as follows: Sri Sadgurudeva said, "O quiet one, now I will tell you about aparigraha."

"The yoga sadhaka abandons the city and takes up residence in the forest to practice yoga. He possesses only the minimum necessities. If he is involved in collecting many possessions, he will spend a lot of time worrying about how to acquire them, protect them, and see that they are not destroyed. The sadhaka must become an ascetic, so he should not collect unnecessary things. Also, it should not be forgotten that one is influenced by everything he contacts, including things, individuals, ideas, behavior, and surroundings. Therefore, the sadhaka should detach himself from all superfluous items. Only then will he be able to attain the principle of aparigraha (non-possessiveness). He must abandon all that is not absolutely necessary for his sadhana.

"The mind full of attachments becomes healthy when influenced by the sense of abandonment. But if this abandonment creates pride, it is also considered to be a form of attachment. Only detachment can bring about the sense of aparigraha. If the sadhaka is more attached to things and the sense of abandonment exists in him to a lesser degree, he either collects a lot of possessions or he becomes proud of his sense of abandonment and gives up all worldly possessions. So being detached requires some discretion. One must give primary importance only to his austerities and not to his possessions.

"To accumulate goods for the sake of enjoyment of the senses is possessiveness. One who wants to practice yoga should not cheat in order to collect wealth. Accepting wealth obtained without effort and wealth which belongs to others is also a kind of possessiveness the yogi must avoid. Collecting more wealth than necessary for your comforts may also be called possessiveness. If you roll in wealth and sensual pleasure, how can you steady yourself in yoga? By the vow of aparigraha the mind does not waver, but becomes completely steady."
Sthita Vivekasana (#45)

aparigrahasthairiye janmakathanta sambodhaq.

When the vow of aparigraha becomes firm, one comes to know one's previous births.
(Yoga Sutra, Sadhanapada, Sutra 39)

"I have already described the components of yama listed in Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra. According to the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, yama has ten components.

ahimsa satyamasteyam brahmacaryam ksama dhrtih,
dayarjavam mitaharah saucam caiva yama dasah.

The ten components of yama are: non-violence, truthfulness, non-theft, celibacy, forgiveness, steadiness, compassion, simplicity, moderate diet, and purity.
(Hatha Yoga Pradipika, 1:17)

Ksama (Forgiveness)

"I have already described non-violence, truthfulness, non-theft, and celibacy. Now I will tell you about ksama.

priya priyesu sarvesu samatvam yaccharirinam,
ksama saiveti cidvadmirdita vedavadimbhih.

Ksama is defined by the reciters of the Veda as that state wherein one holds all embodied beings to be equally dear.

"Ksama (forgiveness) means not to show attachment or anger towards any living being who does good or harm. This is the principle of the Vedantists. The yoga sadhaka should not make new friends and increase attachments, nor should he create enemies and
increase enmity. He should learn to be tolerant. If he does not learn tolerance, his mind will become full of attachments and anger, and will never become steady.

\[sukham hyavamatah sete sukham ca pratibuddhayate,\]
\[sukham carati loke'sminna vamanta vinasyati.\]

The insulted person is happy in sleep and awake, and he moves easily among people; but the man who has insulted someone is destroyed by his own sins.

\textit{(Manu Smrti, 2:163)}

"If the feeling of pride is very dear to the yoga sadhaka, it leads him on the wrong path and his meditation falters. But by tolerating insults, his meditation is improved. If one performs miracles while he is a sadhaka, he is faced with many difficulties which obstruct his devotion. Considering all this, the devotee of yoga should definitely decide to become tolerant and to avoid being moved by attachment or anger.

**Dhrti (Steadiness)**

"Now I will acquaint you with \textit{dhrti}:

\[dhrtya yaya dharayate manah pranendriya kriyah,\]
\[yoganavyabhicarinya dhrtih sa partha sattviki\]

O Partha, the determination that is unswerving, that is sustained with steadfastness by yoga practice, and thus controls the functions of the mind, prana, and senses, is sattvika.

\textit{(Bhagavadgita, 18:33)}

"\textit{Dhrti} (steadiness) means the pure power of the mind to cling to good feelings and virtue under any circumstances. This steadiness, which is the best virtue, leads to one goal—
obtaining Sri Hari. Therefore, one who is steady does not go off the path, though it may be strewn with obstructions. One who is steady always perseveres.

\[
prarabhyate na khalu vighnabhayena nicaih,
p rarabhya vighnavihita viramanti madhyah.
Vighnaih punah punarapi pratihanyamana,
prarabdham uttamajana na paritya janti.
\]

Certain good actions involve some danger. On learning this, people of a lower order avoid the good path. Medium type people start good actions but are defeated by difficulties, and stop midway. People of the highest order behave in an exemplary way. Any number of obstructions may cross the path of their good actions, but they never leave their path.

(Niti Sataka, 27)

“Om santih, santih, santih!”

Characteristics
When sthita vivekasana occurs at the end of sabija samadhi and at the beginning of nirbijja samadhi, its manifestation is unique. At that time the left palm is placed just below the right armpit and the right palm is placed just below the left armpit, in front of the center of the chest. The gaze and the attention are fixed on the anahata cakra. The whole respiratory system then becomes independent. Often the inhalation and exhalation become slow and steady, making the gaze and the attention steady. In this condition, the eyes do not function in spite of being open. In the same way the mind is not able to concentrate on the object of meditation, and becomes blank and void of any inclinations.

Sthita vivekasana is in the same class as padmasana or kamalasana. It cures the same diseases and has the same benefits as padmasana or kamalasana.
**Practice**

One may practice this asana for a maximum of one hour, gradually working up to this limit.
Description

Assume svastikasana. While inhaling, hold the sides of your abdomen hard with your palms. Perform tribandha. Fix your gaze on your navel and your attention on the manipura cakra.
Daya (Compassion)
Concentrate as follows: Sri Sadgurudeva said, "Now listen to the salient features of daya:

yatnadapi paraklesam hartum va hrdi jayate,
iccha bhumisurasrestha sa daya parikirtita.

Compassion is a voluntary wish to help others ward off troubles.

"The Padma purana characterizes daya (compassion) as follows:

Pare va bandhuvarge ca mitre dvestari va sada,
atmavad-vartitavyarn hi dayaisam parikirtita.

Daya means behaving with the same friendly closeness toward one's own relatives, another's relatives, enemies, or friends.

"The Yajnavalkya Samhita states:

Daya sarvesu bhutesu sarvatrangrahah smrtah.

Daya is treating all beings kindly at all times.

"In the Bhagavadgita, Lord Krsna extols the qualities of a real yogi:

atmaupamyena sarvatra samam pasyati yo 'rjuna,
sukharn va yadi va duhkham sa yogi paramo matah.

O Arjuna, he is thought to be a supreme yogi who sees by comparison with himself the same in all cases, whether as to pleasure or as to pain.
Apanasana (#46)

(Bhagavadgita, 6:32)

"A great saint blesses all individuals, regardless of their mental, physical, social, or financial status.

sarvetra sukhinah santu sarve santu niramayah,
sarve bhadranipasyantu ma kascid duhkhamapnuyat.

May everyone be happy;
May everyone be healthy;
May everyone be prosperous;
May no one be unhappy.

Arjava (Simplicity)

"Arjava means simplicity of the body, organs, and heart. A great philosopher said:

pravrttau va nivrttau va ekarupatvamarjavam.

The path of action or inaction is illusory; identity with the form of God is arjava.

"The path of illusion is complicated. It drags the yoga sadhaka toward worldliness. As the mind gets more soiled, the yoga sadhaka becomes less able to achieve the steadiness needed to succeed at yoga. Asceticism decreases and the sadhaka becomes more involved with the senses.

"Complication ends in selfishness, and arjava (simplicity) ends in divinity. Arjava leads the sadhaka toward the path of God. As the mind is purified by arjava, the steadiness so critical to achieving divinity is attained. This causes asceticism to increase and attachment to sense objects to diminish."
Mitahara (Moderate Diet)

"The Hatha Yoga Pradipika states:

\[ \text{susnigdha-madhuraharascaturtharnsavivarjitah,} \]
\[ \text{bhujyate sivasamprityai mitaharah sa ucyate.} \]

Mitahara means eating sweet, agreeable food to please Siva, leaving the stomach one-fourth empty.

(Hatha Yoga Pradipika, 1:58)

\[ \text{dvau bhagau purayedannai-stoyenaikarn prapurayet,} \]
\[ \text{vayoh sancaranarthaya caturthamavasesayet.} \]

One should fill two parts of his stomach with food and the third with water, leaving the fourth free for vayu to pass.

(Jyotsna commentary on Hatha Yoga Pradipika, 1:58)

Overeating is Harmful

"One becomes unhealthy when food is swallowed without chewing, when food is eaten to satisfy taste only rather than to nourish the body, when too much food is ingested, and when dairy products are eaten indiscriminately. These indiscretions allow disease to enter the body easily. First, rajoguna increases, then rajoguna is suppressed and tamoguna increases. This causes constant aches all over the body, lethargy, and the tendency to yawn. The glutton becomes lazy and accustomed to taking long naps.

"Such gluttony results in the body and mind becoming inactive, and in lethargy replacing activity. The glutton's power of imagination fades. He wavers in his decisions. The lustful fire of sensuality blazes. Gluttony leads to the malformation of the body and makes it
ugly. In spite of overeating, one tends to grow weaker every day. The mind becomes intolerant and quarrelsome, and the ego increases to a high pitch.

"Yet God is ever merciful. He sends diseases to purify the body and the mind. By *mitahara* (moderate diet), all these troubles disappear.

**The Yogi's Diet**

"The aspiring yogi should abandon an unwholesome diet. He should avoid sour, pungent, bitter, hot, salty, and oily food. He should also avoid garlic, onions, gas-producing green vegetables, sesame, oil, mustard, jujube fruit, carrots, jaggery, arvi leaves, spinach, sago, bunty, batvo, orange gourd, masur beans, string beans, math beans, flat beans, peas, chickpeas, black chickpeas, cottonseed, coarse millet, tamarind, sour woodapples, sour limes, raw mangoes, marijuana, hemp, wine, opium, hashish, meat, fish, tobacco, and alcohol.

"The wholesome diet prescribed for the yogi includes wheat, rice, nivar, sarno, barley, beans, milk, butter, ghee, honey, parval, yam, tapioca, ginger, sweet potatoes, ridge gourds, dordi, brinjals, jackfruit, bananas, grapes, potatoes, dates, dry ginger, sugar, coconut, cardamom, cloves, fennel seeds, cumin seeds, betel leaves, and water.

"Some of the unwholesome food prohibited for the yogi may be eaten by people who practice yoga less seriously. They are as follows: coarse millet, bunti, bavta, masur beans, string beans, math beans, flat beans, peas, chickpeas, black chickpeas, oil, sesame, jaggery, jujube fruit, spinach, sago, garlic, onions, and carrots.

**The Causes of Failure in Yoga**

*atyaharamanaharam nit yam yogi vivarjayet.*
The yogi should neither overeat nor fast completely.

*(Amrtabindu Upanisad)*

*natyasnatas tu yogo'sti na caikantam anasnatah.*

One who eats too much or too little cannot become a yogi.

*(Bhagavadgita, 6:16)*

*mitahararn vina yastu yogarambham tu karayet,*

*nanarogo bhavet tasya kincid yogo na siddhyati.*

One who practices yoga without observing moderate diet gets sick, and cannot succeed at yoga.

*(Gheranda Samhita, 5:16)*

*“Om santih, santih, santih!”*

**Characteristics**

As the ida and the pingala nadis are compressed by apanasana, the path of the susumna dilates. This steadies the mind, whets the appetite, and makes every convenience available for the beginning of anahata nada.

Constipation, obesity, appendicitis, gastritis, tuberculosis, asthma, weakness of the nervous system and body organs, urinary diseases, loss of appetite, indigestion, and piles can be cured by the practice of this asana.

**Practice**

Those who cannot practice the three locks simultaneously should not practice this asana.
Apanasana (#46)

This asana should be practiced for a maximum of ten minutes, slowly working up to this limit.
Description

Assume svastikasana. As in apanasana, press your palms against your sides. Then slowly press your abdomen and move forward to interlock your fingers. Contract the muscles on the left side of your abdomen. Perform tribandha. Fix your gaze on your navel and your attention on the manipura cakra.
Internal and External **Sauca** (Purity)

Concentrate as follows: Sri Sadgurudeva said he would explain the tenth feature of yama, *sauca*.

\[
\text{Saucam tu dvividham proktam bahyamabhyantaram tatha,}
\]
\[
\text{mrjjalabhyam hi bahyam tu manah suddhistantaram.}
\]

\[
\text{adbhirgatraini suddhayanti manah satyena suddhayati,}
\]
\[
\text{vidyatapobhyam bhutatma buddhirjnanena suddhayati.}
\]

It is said there are two kinds of *sauca*: external and internal. External *sauca* is achieved by washing with soap and water. Internal *sauca* is achieved by purifying the mind.

Water cleanses the body; truth cleanses the mind; learning and penance cleanse the Atman; and knowledge cleanses the buddhi.

*(Yajnavalkya Samhita)*

The Five Types of **Sauca** (Purity)

\[
\text{manah saucam karmasaucam kulasaucam ca bharata,}
\]
\[
\text{sarirasaucam vakasaucam saucam pancavldham smrtam.}
\]

O Bharata, purity of mind, purity of action, purity of family, physical purity, and purity of speech are the five types of *sauca*.

*(Vrddhagautama Smrtil)*

"Scripture reading, meditating, treasuring knowledge, associating with saints, serving saints, acquiring virtues, and avoiding vices cleanse the soul. When one's thoughts change, one's behavior changes also. Evil thoughts beget vices and good thoughts beget
virtues. A change in one's thoughts brings about a change in one's speech. Good speech breeds sweetness and bad speech breeds bitterness. The practice of yoga purifies one's body, mind, and intellect, and the soul reaches the lotus feet of the great Lord.

The Benefits of the Yamas
"Steady practice of the ten yamas eliminates ordinary diseases and miseries. Sattvaguna increases. The sadhaka is drawn to practice yoga and to seek devotion and knowledge. Vices fade and virtues develop. This is why Maharsi Patanjali calls yama the great vow to be observed at all times and in all stages of life.

Niyama, the Second Component of Yoga
"Now I will explain the niyamas (observances):

sauca-santosa-tapah-svadhyaye'svara-pranidhanani
niyamah.

Purity, contentment, austerity, self-study, and surrender to God are the niyamas. (Yoga Sutra, Sadhanapada, Sutra 32)

Santosa (Contentment)
“I have already talked about sauca (purity) as one of the yamas, so I will begin my discussion of niyama with santosa.

yadrcchalabhato nit yarn manahputam sahediti,
adhirnstanrsayah prahuh santosam sukhalaksanam.

Contentment is accepting God's will, tolerating mental disturbances, and being happy with only the minimum necessities of life.
"In the *Yoga Darsana* commentary, Sri Vyasaji describes santosa this way:

\[ \textit{santosah sannihita-sadhanadhikasya nupaditsa}. \]

Contentment is fearlessly accepting the things that sustain the body's life, and desiring nothing more.

(Vyasa Commentary on *Yoga Sutra*, Sadhanapada, Sutra 32)

The *Manu Smrti* states:

\[ \textit{santosa paramasthaya sukharthi samyato bhavet,} \]
\[ \textit{santosa-mulam hi sukham duhkha-mulam viparyayah} \]

To achieve happiness, seek contentment with self-control, for the root of happiness is contentment, and the root of misery is its opposite (desire).

(Manu Smrti, 4:12)

"As a sadhaka, you should concentrate fully on sadhana. Provide for your existence as dictated by God. If, in your dissatisfaction, you want more than what you have, your mind will become unsteady. The unsteadiness caused by such superfluous ideas will impede your sadhana. However, if you put \textit{upasana} (worship) before everything else, contentment will come automatically and never leave you.

\[ \textit{santosad-anuttamah sukha-labhah}. \]

Contentment brings superlative happiness.

(Yoga Sutra, Sadhanapada, Sutra 42)
"When satisfaction is created in one’s heart, one is happy forever.

**Svadhyaya (Self-Study)**

"Listening to the scriptures prescribed by the sadguru, meditation, and daily practice of sadhana is called *svadhyaya*. *Svadhyaya* is the second component of dhyana. To practice the eight limbs of yoga daily is also *svadhyaya*. *Svadhyaya* includes *japa* (repeated prayer), worship of God, and surrender to God.

"Internal cleanliness takes place by meditation on the principles in scripture. As virtuous thoughts enter and become steady in the soul, vicious thoughts vanish. It is a joy to adopt virtuous actions. Daily practice of yoga immerses one in the mysteries of yoga. Such practice results in faith, enthusiasm, patience, valor, close adherence to yama and niyama, knowledge, and ascetism.

"Devotion and surrender to God is to worship and become one with the great *sakti* (divine energy) that runs the universe. When anahata nada emerges by the power of yoga sadhana, the sadhaka spontaneously chants Om and Rama. When the spontaneous and constant chanting of these sacred names of God occurs, one automatically reaches God's lotus feet, leaves the most difficult obstacles behind, and acquires the strength to progress in sadhana. *Svadhyaya* (self-study) can reward one with a vision of God. *Om santih, santih, santih!*

**Purification of the Manipura Cakra**

When the manipura cakra is deflowered, samanasana occurs automatically. The apana vayu incited by sakti calana mudra enters the abdomen and moves restlessly, breaking down hardened fecal matter. This makes the sadhaka defecate often, weakening his body.

This sounds like the stage described in the sixth chapter of the *Jnanesvari*. However, the stage mentioned above is preliminary, and the stage described in the *Jnanesvari* is
advanced. After completing the above mentioned stage, one can progress slowly. However, after completing the stage described by Saint Jnanesvara, the sadhaka enters the fourth stage of sabija samadhi.

In samanasana, the apana tries to mount the anahata cakra as the hands press the middle of the abdomen. The prana attracts the apana and takes it from the muladhara cakra up into the svadhisthana cakra, then into the manipura cakra. The prana combines with the samana in the abdomen and strengthens the samana, increasing the appetite.

For a long period of sadhana, diseases frequent the sadhaka's body. However, these diseases slowly fade away. After the disturbances are destroyed, the sadhaka progresses quickly in his yoga sadhana. All these disturbances are hurdles in the path of the yogi. The sadhaka of surrender yoga experiences no fear. Therefore, he takes no medicines for his diseases. The medicine for these diseases is the Rama or Om mantra that emerges from the anahata nada. When the doctor is the great Lord himself, why should one fear? The sadhaka who is scared of disease and death can never become a yogi.

The manipura cakra is situated behind the navel in the abdomen. The astute yogi correctly considers this cakra to be highly important. Lord Visnu is the deity who rules the manipura cakra. As the digestive system is the life force of all the systems, it is not wrong to call the manipura cakra the most important. This cakra is the greatest center of functionality. However, this does not lessen the importance of the other cakras. All cakras are equally important.

**Characteristics**
The practice of samanasana improves the appetite. The mind and body become active, and one experiences valor, enthusiasm, pleasure, magnanimity, compassion, humility, love, and mental purity. The manipura cakra blooms. The kundalini tries to progress
**Samanasana (#47)**

towards the anahata cakra. The yogi involuntarily chants Rama and Om, as well as sounds resembling the Vedas and classical Indian vocal music.

Samanasana destroys constipation, loss of appetite, enlargement of the spleen, respiratory diseases, cough, hiccups, and diseases arising from coughing due to irregular rheum and bile.

**Practice**
Practice this asana for a maximum of ten minutes, gradually working up to this limit.