

YOGA EDUCATION

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But it seems to me that the Church has to make a change towards expressing herself with the help of an Asiatic philosophy.

Theology uses a language that doesn't appeal to us anymore, so many people go out in search for their salvation somewhere else, especially in Eastern spirituality. For there, they emphasise direct experience—in contrast to the West, where they emphasise dogmatism and intellectuality which are considered very important.

In this field, our theology has a direct task. As Christians, we have to confront ourselves with that what God has said in other cultures. Christ, as a person, was born only in one country and in one culture, and therefore he is a limited personification of God, although He possesses unlimitedness within Him. God has spoken in a different way through Buddha and Krishna. We can learn from them also, just as they can learn from our Christ.

But we should not try to cut off the other person's way of love to God, to put our image of Christ instead of it. The image of Christ which I have is very subjective. Seen objectively it is the word of God, but the image is subjective. For a Hindu, Krishna is the word of God, and like I have to go to that deepest unity with God through Christ, he has to go through Krishna to reach that unity with God. But for me Christ is the way and I express this love because it is my conviction. This way is good for me, and may be for some one else.

JEAN V. STRAATEN

ARDHASANA

Written words did not cause confusion, in the old times, so far as Yoga techniques. Learning was then traditional — from the teacher to the pupil.

In a few works on Yoga we find the mention of an *āsana* named *Ardha* (half or semi). The passages describing the *Ardha Āsana*, clearly show that this *āsana* is the half of the well-known *Padmāsana**.

Here one may ask: Since the word *ardha* is dependent on (*i.e. sāpekṣa*) another entity, it must be used with its counterpart (*i.e.* it cannot be taken as the full name of an *āsana*). As the *Ardhāsana* is said to be the half of *Padmāsana* the name must be *Padmārdha*. Is there any reason for not using the word *Padma* with the word *Ardha*, thus creating a confusion.

Our reply is: There is no fault in not adding the word *Padma* with *Ardha*, for there is an established principle namely "a traditionally fixed thing is to be taken as intended, though not mentioned by name". Thus when no *āsana* is mentioned with *Ardha*, it is the *Padma* which is to be taken as the intended *āsana*.

That *Padma* is the highest of all the *āsanas*, that are highly helpful in practising fixity or meditation, can be proved by observing the fact that the *Padmāsana* is invariably mentioned in all the lists of the *āsanas*. It is remarkable to note that so highly exalted *āsanas* like *Siddha*, *Svastika*, *Bhadra* and *Vajra* have not been mentioned in all the lists of *āsanas*. For example (i) *Siddha* is not mentioned in the list of the five *āsanas* in *Devibhāgavata* 7.35.8-9; (ii) *Siddha* and *Bhadra* are not mentioned in the list of the three *āsanas* in a verse quoted in *Yatidharmasaṅgraha* (p. 40).

*According to Shri Yogendraji, in his work *Simple Meditative Postures*, "When this arrangement of the lower parts of the body... remains unassociated with the arrangement of the hands in any particular position, this posture is referred to as *Ardhapadmāsana* (incomplete lotus pose)"

Tradition connects the *Padma* posture with the creator Prajāpati or Brahma, who is regarded as a yogin of the highest state. It is for this reason that He is called *Kamalāsana* (Amarakośa 1.1.16), meaning 'one whose *āsana* is called lotus (*Kamala*, i.e. *Padma*)'. The exalted character of the *Padmāsana* may be ascertained from this. (There is however a different interpretation of the name *Kamalāsana*).

According to Bhikṣu, if one leg is placed on the thigh and the other is placed on the ground, then this posture is to be known as *Ardhāsana*. The foregoing discussion shows that 'the posture with the catching of the toes' is called *Padma* by some, and *Baddhapadma* by others; similarly 'the posture without the catching of the toes' is called *Padma* by some. It is to be known in this connection that there are teachers who hold that if the toes are not caught in the aforesaid manner, the posture is called *Kamala*, and if caught, the posture is called *Padma* (Comm. Siddhāntacandrikā on Yoga Sūtra II. 46). These teachers regard the *Kamala* posture, as superior to the *Padma* posture, for they connect it with the Creator.

It appears to us that in the original practice (which had only spiritual value), there was no catching of the toes, and the practice is named *Padma* (or *Kamala*, a synonym for *Padma*). When the practice of catching the toes is added to it, it became necessary to give a new name to it. In this process of naming, words were not used uniformly, by different teachers at different times — a practice which seems to have created confusion in later times. It is needless to say that, such use of words did not create confusion in olden times, as learning was traditional, and students were taught directly by their teachers*.

RAM SHANKAR BHATTACHARYA

*It would be interesting to note here that Shri Yogendraji in his work Simple Meditative Postures (1935) speaks of three presentations of the posture known as *Virāsana* (heroic pose). The first presentation is of incomplete lotus pose *Ardhāsana*(?): *Ardhāsana* or *Virāsana* is referred to by author of Yoga Prādīpikā on Yoga Sūtra II. 46 Vijnāna Bhikṣu in Yogasārasaṅgraha Ch. II and on Yoga Sūtra II. 46 Kūrma Purāna (p. 2-11-46) according to Dr. Bhattacharya. The second posture is *Dhīrāsana* while the third posture is traditional as revealed by Shri Yogendraji in his book Simple Meditative Postures p. 75-76. Editor

KEY TO PSYCHOSOMATIC AND PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS

Change of attitude is the main outcome of following a Yoga way of life. Treatment of diseases seems to become a bye-product of this change.

Yoga is a way of life, and not a therapy, in the accepted sense. While modern medicine aims at immediate relief, Yoga aims at removal of basic causes of disease. For Yoga, the real cause of disease, is an unsteady mind, or a disintegrated personality. Therefore, the aim of Yoga Education at The Yoga Institute of Santacruz, has been to help the patient to integrate his personality, and study the functionings of his mind. This total process happens through establishing healthy routines, and right habits, through changes in values, motivations and attitudes. On the physical side, simple *āsanas* with respiratory coordination, hygienic processes, which help in removing toxic substances from the body, and breathing techniques, which help in control of bio-energy and emotions, have been mentioned. Faith in the teacher, and a complete rapport are probably the most important aspect of Yoga education; they make it possible that the patient is guided towards re-organising his life. Nearly 2000 patients were treated from 1918 onwards at the Institute, and records maintained in a proto-scientific manner. The diseases included arthritis, asthma, constipation, gastric ulcer, heart trouble, obesity, nervous debility, neurasthenia, sinusitis, high blood pressure, etc.

A very interesting project was carried out in the year 1970 from point of view of medical research. For a period of 4 months, eminent medical practitioners, including psychiatrists were attached to the Institute, to examine patients before, during and after treatment through Yoga education. Adequate investigations, norms of observance and statistical evaluation were organised. More than hundred patients treated, did not resort to any medication during this period. The following table gives at a glance the improvements within the period of 4 months.