

YOGA EDUCATION

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THE YOGA INSTITUTE

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like a good husband who wants a devoted wife, why not? If it is any other way, there is no relationship between Yoga and you. You may say you know Yoga, but Yoga will say it does not know you. Study of Yoga should not be a matter of studying for sake of curiosity. Unless you get yourself integrated into the study of that total philosophy, the mere getting a little cure of your headache, or knowing something, would not serve any purpose in your life. You might as well employ that period in earning more money. So Yoga, if you study it, you study it for sake of Yoga like knowledge for knowledge sake. In ancient times the knowledge was acquired for the sake of knowledge alone, one was not concerned what money one would get after his study. It is not the knowledge we are interested in, it is the salary which comes through the knowledge that we are interested in. So one must ask oneself why acquire knowledge? You have never asked that question to yourself. Oh, everybody goes to college, so I also join. But why? No answer. Is it the knowledge itself that has to be acquired or is there anything else to be acquired with the knowledge? Are you clear on that? You don't know.

Talk Recorded by : WINNIE IMRIE

WEEKLY YOGA HEALTH CAMPS

The sick and the seekers of a better way of life may now join short residential camps at The Yoga Institute. Topics covered include relaxation, mental discipline, yoga āsanās, prāṇāyāmas, dietetics and spiritual guidelines. Residents are practically initiated in such a better way of life. Special hostel arrangements for men and women are provided so also medical assistance and wholesome food. It has been found that such camps help students in controlling chronic psychosomatic ailments like diabetes, asthma, rheumatism, gastric disorders, hypertension, etc. Life in such camps aids in checking psychiatric disturbances, and is useful in infusing a yogic attitude to life. Researches carried out on these principles for the Ministry of Health in 1970 revealed 82 per cent improvement.

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WHY VAJRASANA ?

The author does not find in Hathayoga texts, a posture in sitting with the hands placed in the hollow between the body and the crossed feet, called Vajrāsana, as mentioned by Sir Monier Williams. He finds a tradition where Vajrāsana is another name for Siddhāsana just as Mukhāsana and Guptāsana are. So he wonders as to the significance of the word Vajra.

WHY is Vajrāsana so called? It is indeed difficult to say. Vajrāsana may mean 'a posture like a vajra, which means a 'thunderbolt' or 'diamond'. We know nothing about the shape or form of a thunderbolt. A piece of diamond may be of any form or shape, and as such we cannot think of its similarity with the vajra posture. The sign X is also known as the vajra, which has hardly any similarity with this posture. To say that since this posture renders some parts or organs of the body firm or strong it is called Vajra, is not satisfactory, for there are a large number of āsanās which render different parts or organs firm or strong. Vajra also means a particular form of military array (senā-vyūha). I do not know the character of the vajra-vyūha, and as such I am unable to say whether the vajra posture is named after it.

Some yogic texts speak of a nerve called vajra in the suṣumnā nerve. It is said in Purnānanda's Śaṭcakranirūpaṇa that this vajra nerve is situated in the suṣumnā and is extended from the penis to the head. Whether such a physical nerve really exists, and is strengthened by the vajra posture cannot be stated definitely by physical experiments of modern science. So far as our views are concerned, we do not take the suṣumnā, and all nerves connected with suṣumnā as physical nerves, but as particular kinds of flows of divine feeling or force. No physical posture can render divine feeling or force strong, though it is true that yogic postures often enable yoga-practitioners to realize these inner flows of feeling or forces vividly. We have however no grounds to assert that the vajrāsana helps one to realize the inner flow called vajra, though it is extremely helpful for cultivating certain internal bhāvanās.

R. S. BHATTACHARYA