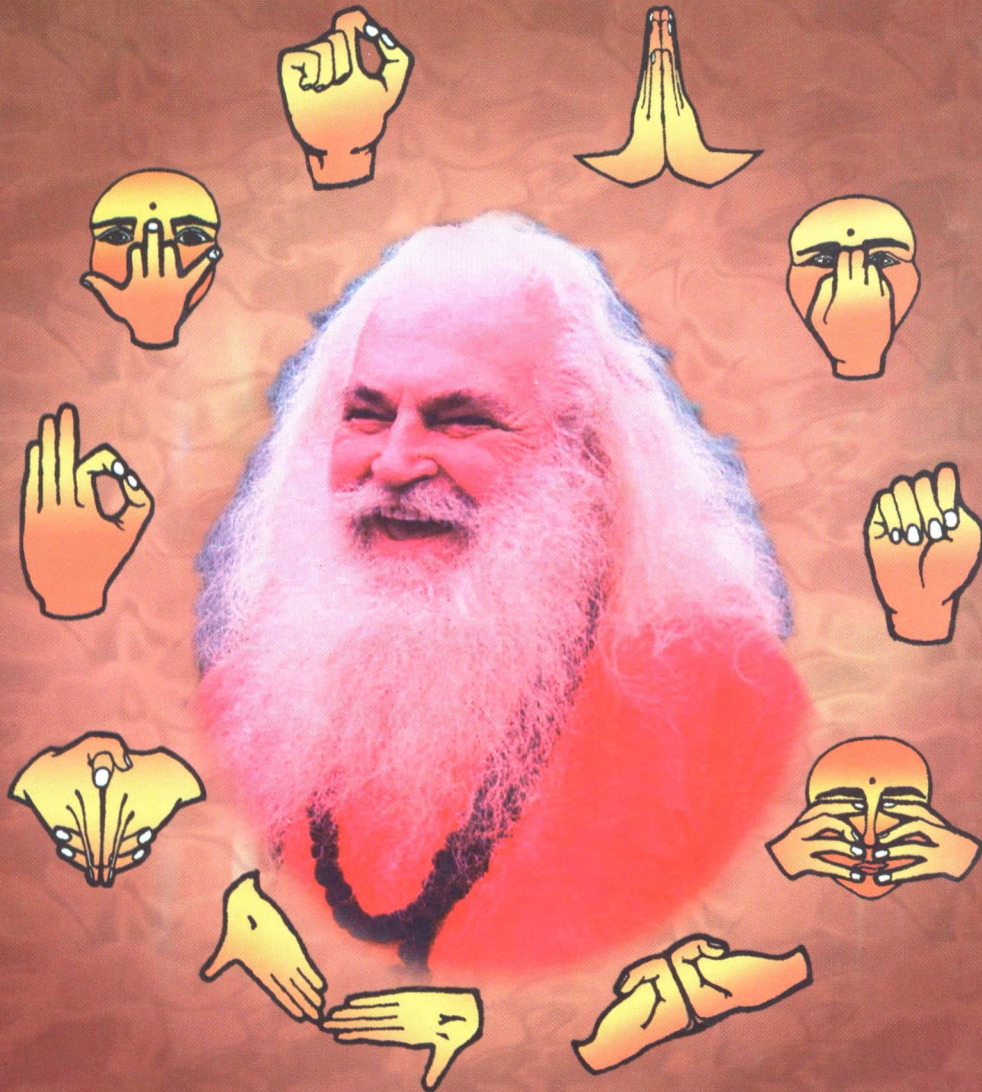


# MUDRAS

By

Yogamaharishi Dr. SWAMI GITANANDA GIRI



A STUDY IN THE CLASSICAL GESTURE LANGUAGE OF  
HINDUISM, YOGA AND TANTRA

Completely Revised and Edited by

Yogacharya **Dr. ANANDA BALAYOGI BHAVANANI**

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**First Edition 1975**  
**Revised Edition 2007**

**Published by** **Kalaimamani Yogacharini**  
**MEENAKSHI DEVI BHAVANANI**  
**Managing Editor**  
**SATYA PRESS**  
**25, 2nd Cross, Iyyanar Nagar,**  
**Pondicherry-13. Tel. +91-413-22415 61**  
**E-mail: amma@icyer.com**  
**website: www.geocities.com/yognat2001**

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**Photos of Mudras : Yogacharya Hariharan, Gitananda Yoga,**  
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# CONTENTS

<b>AN ANCIENT RISHI IN MODERN GARB</b>	<b>vii</b>
<i>By Dr. S.R. Sundaram Iyengar</i>	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE:</b>	
<b>MUDRAS - AN OVERVIEW</b>	<b>1</b>
Hatha Yoga Mudras	6
Pranayama Mudras	13
Dhyana Mudras	18
Shakti Mudras	23
Mudras in Ancient and Modern Literature	26
Prana Vayus	33
The Respiratory Centre	35
For Greater Understanding of Mudra	38
The Neuro - Mechanics of Mudras	40
Prana Mudras	43
<b>CHAPTER TWO:</b>	
<b>OLI MUDRAS - A GENERAL OVERVIEW</b>	<b>47</b>
Yoga and the Control of Sexual Energies through the Shakti Mudras	50
The Yoga Method of Sexual Sublimation, Control or Discipline	59
Sublimation of the Sexual Drive	61
Bandha Trayam Prakriya	63
Effects of Bandha Trayam	69
A Typical Tantric Hymn	72
<b>CHAPTER THREE:</b>	
<b>OLI MUDRAS - THE SHAKTI MUDRAS</b>	<b>75</b>
Introduction	77
Vajroli Mudra: Part-I	78

Vajroli Mudra: Part-II	79
Sahajoli Mudra: Part-I	80
Sahajoli Mudra: Part-II	81
Amaroli Mudra: Part-I	82
Amaroli Mudra: Part-II	83
Ojas and Tejas	85
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: HASTHA MUDRAS - THE LANGUAGE OF THE HANDS</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: BRAHMA MUDRA</b>	<b>97</b>
The Human Neck and Upper Back	99
Brahma Mudra - The Four Faced Gesture of Creation	105
Teenmurthy Mudra	109
Trimurthy Mudra	110
Shoka Kriya	112
Ashoka Kriya and Mudra	113
The Psyche of the Mudra	115
<b>CHAPTER SIX: SURYA PRANA MUDRA</b>	<b>117</b>
Surya Prana Mudra	119
Eye Palming	122
Surya Prana Mudra Technique	122
Surya Mantras	125
Surya Pranayama Without the Sun	127
The Sun as the Source of Life	128
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN; BODY TALK</b>	<b>131</b>
<i>By Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani</i>	
<b>ANANDA ASHRAM</b>	<b>151</b>



## **AN ANCIENT RISHI IN MODERN GARB**

Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri would yield to none in his deep love, respect and intuitive understanding of the essence of our Rishi culture. His is not the appreciation and assessment of a partisan. He values the Rishi culture more as representative of the human trend towards spirituality and inner development, as contrasted with the trend toward materialistic and external achievement. His approach is broad, catholic and synthetical. His evaluation of the weak is balanced. He stands for a broad synthesis, not only in the thought-world, but also in the concrete society around himself. In thought, word and deed he brings the East and the West together, not only in the world of intellect, but also in its manifestation, the material environment that he has created around himself. The life and studies as well as the actual physical environment itself at Ananda Ashram are a prime example of the perfect blending of Eastern and Western cultures.

It is a simple task to write the biography of Swamiji based on known facts, but it is extremely difficult to venture to describe his Sadhana. Yet, an effort must be made, since it is his Sadhana which is of utmost importance, interest and value to the modern Yogic world.

Swamiji's achievements in the various fields of Yoga, religion and philosophy, and Shakti and Tantric worship are monumental. Yet, far greater, much more significant and still more abiding are the contributions that he has made in the field of Yoga, especially in the Asanas, Mudras and Pranayama. A great pioneer, with a daring, adventurous spirit, he has broken new ground. He has inspired new faith. In this manner, Swamiji has excelled himself.

Many efforts have been made to relate the physiology of Hatha Yoga to that of the present-day scientific discoveries. Notably, Swamiji has identified the Chakras with the plexuses of the human body. An elaborate comparison of Hatha Yoga physiology with modern anatomical science is found in his teachings. He explains the effects or accomplishments of Yoga from the stand-point of modern physiology. For example, he correlates the Prana with the nervous energies, the five chief airs being the five important subsidiary nerve centres in the brain and spinal cord; the Chakras with the plexuses involving both spinal cord/ cerebro-spinal automatic nervous systems; the nectar from the moon (Bindu) with the cerebro-spinal fluid; Sushumna, Ida and Pingala with the divisions of the nervous system; the Shaktis of the various Chakras with the fibres connecting them with the spinal nervous systems, and Brahma-randhra with the cavity in the skull. He teaches the Yogic method, of Pranayama, Bandha and Mudra by which the Yogi can gain control of the automatic nervous system, especially that portion which controls the involuntary, vital activities related to the plexuses. In this way he explains the voluntary control, which the Yogi exercises over consciousness and the ability to produce trance and self-hibernation.

India is old, with vast, age-long experience in Yoga and spiritual endeavours. Her best minds have been those which explored the depths, widths and heights of human consciousness, seeking "The Ultimate", the very end point of the Eternal Quest. Swamiji values ancient wisdom, especially the rich spiritual heritage. Yet, he is careful to point out that the old must be re-vitalised and integrated with the on-rushing current of the progressive and evolving culture.

In fact, Swamiji is "slave to nothing", neither orthodoxy, superstition, nor science. His own personal Yogic history, as well as that of his teachings, though firmly rooted in ancient Rishi wisdom, is one long, interesting narrative of an original life, overflowing with individuality and rich in its freshness, spontaneity and uniqueness. His life is a living, shining example of the Gita's famous couplet which commands men to follow their own Swadharma, their own Inner-Law Being, rather than that set down by others.

Swamiji's sincerity is absolute and he lives a life of effortless simplicity. The gift of detachment is natural to him. He is highly intelligent, with tremendous powers of concentration. His intellectual capacity is prodigious and he can discuss in depth any subject. His voluminous writings of the highest quality are extraordinary. He is rich in emotion and imagination, which give added strength to his literary productions. Above all, he is self-confident and knows that he has a mission in life. His Yogic and spiritual experiences, along with this self-confidence,



confirmed his youthful inclination to follow the Yogic path. Above all, when all is said and done, he is a sincere worshipper of Devi, the Parama Shakti.

It is our prayer to his Ishta Devatha, Lord Shiva, to bless Swamiji with a long and useful life for the benefit of the Yogic world, and indeed, all of mankind!

By Dr. S.R. Sundaram Iyengar, *M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt.*,

(From Preface to the First Edition 1975)

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# MUDRAS

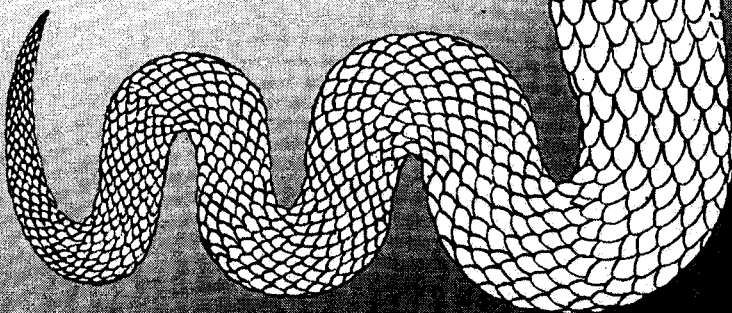
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Yogamaharishi

**Dr. SWAMI GITANANDA GIRI  
GURU MAHARAJ**



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## INTRODUCTION



Asana, Kriya and Mudra are said to be the key to the Hatha Yoga and Pranayama systems of evolution of body, emotions and mind. A good deal of material is available to the modern student on the subject of Hatha Yoga Asanas, and some knowledge is available about the Hatha Yoga Kriyas and the Mala Shoddhana Karmas, the cleansing Kriyas of the body, particularly those known as the Shat Karmas or Shat Kriyas, the Six Body Purificatory Processes. But little is known on the subject of Mudras.

Mudras represent some of the deeper practices of the Yoga system and usually require a Guru steeped in the tradition of Classical Yoga and Tantra to properly introduce and perform the techniques. So little is known here in India that even a well-known writer like Dr. Mahajot Sahai of Kaivalyadhama writes in *Yoga Today*: "*No writer on Yoga, as far as my knowledge goes, has made an attempt to define the term 'Mudra'.*" Fortunately, Dr Sahai is wrong! Much information is available from Yogis deeply involved in the esoteric practices. This volume is a small attempt on the part of the author to introduce a wider knowledge of Mudras.



One expects a minimum of knowledge about Yoga and its practices from Western writers, but Goldie Lipson, in her book *"Rejuvenation Through Yoga"* reduces Mudras to their absolute lowest level by stating that Mudras are *"Interesting finger exercises to play around with and develop graceful hands"*.

Here in India there are three levels at which Mudras are employed:

- The use of Mudras in *Classical Indian dance forms* as fully meaningful gestures to convey Bhava and Rasa.
- In *Hindu ritualistic worship*, Nyasa and Mudras are used meaningfully in various rites and Pujas.
- In *Yoga and Tantra*, Mudras are used with the most evolutionary knowledge available to the serious student about the relationship between energy flows in the tissues, nerve channels and organs of the body as well as their correlation to higher flows of Prana in the subtle and causal bodies.

In the higher practices of Yoga, Mudras are used to *"gesture"* the mind, Prana and the lower and higher Shaktis through the Nadis, or subtle nerve channels of the Pancha Kosha, the Five Bodies Of Man. In Param Bhakti Yoga, the Mudra transcends body nerve currents, Pranic flows or conscious mind gestures to become the Supreme Functionary of the Universe, the Shakti - Shakta Itself.

In my book, *Yoga Psychic Neurology*, I have made this point by writing that "*Verily, the Mudra is the Devi, even the Supreme Adept Himself...Devi is Shakti, but the Mudra controls Her... so Mudra is also the Supreme Shakta*".

I would like to recommend to my readers certain practices outlined in this book. The *Hatha Yoga Mudras* are, of course, the apex of *Asana* practice, but it is the *Pranayama Mudras* that will give the most startling positive experience of how *Mudras* actually control physical functions of the body. A short practice of these *Prana Mudras* will soon convince even the most skeptical student of their value. The *Oli Mudras* appear here for the first time in a book and may be amongst the most valuable techniques ever undertaken by a serious student of *Yoga*. The *Shakti Mudras* represent the highest form of sublimation of lower energy drives into the bountiful *Ojas* and *Tejas*, the higher forces produced in the human body by the *Yogis*.

This dissertation on *Mudras* can be made into a larger work on *Mudra Yoga* but even this short introduction should whet the appetite of those sincerely interested in this magnificent "Science Of Energy Control". A fuller study would be a monumental task, taking a great deal of time to collect the material necessary for a full exposition of the Hindu art and science of *Mudra*. Material used here is mainly drawn from my classes and from private instructions. In many cases, it will be an expansion of my classes and lectures on the subject. This present material has already appeared in separate

sections in the international monthly journal *Yoga Life*, the monthly English magazine-cum-journal of Yoga Jivana Satsangha (International) published since 1970 from Pondicherry.

As this particular work has been spontaneously produced with the grace of my Guru and brought into print without in-depth scholastic research, there may be some deficiencies, but I request my readers to follow up by deeper study of Mudra Yoga which contains hundreds of techniques. Such a work should be sincerely researched and therefore, would be highly valuable to the scholar, researcher and practitioner of Yoga alike.

• *Yogamaharishi*

**Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj**  
**Founder - Director, ICYER**  
**Ananda Ashram, Pondicherry, South India**  
*(From the First Edition, 1975)*



# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **MUDRAS** **AN OVERVIEW**

The traditional meaning ascribed to the Sanskrit term "*Mudra*" is as "a seal, a gesture or a secret practice of Yogins". The *Kularnava* describes *Mudra* as coming from "*Mud*", meaning "delight or pleasure" and "*Dravay*", the casual form of "*Dru*", "to draw forth". In Hinduism, *Nyasa* is also included with the science of *Mudra*. Ancient authorities agree that the *Mudra* has four distinct aspects or powers. *First*, the *Mudra* gives delight to the deity being worshipped or evoked. *Secondly*, it "draws the compassion" of the evoked deity. *Thirdly*, "melting the mind of the deity" the worshipper gains control over that force, and lastly, for the mystic, the *Mudra* gives "control over the powerful forces of the deity" manifesting through psyche, mind and body.

*Nyasa* is a similar gesture or symbol language assigning the various parts of the body to different deities. In Hindu worship, *Nyasa* is usually accompanied with appropriate Mantras, articulate power sounds, incantations or runes and the corresponding *Mudra*, gesticulations of the hands, feet and sometimes, the entire body.

Both Yoga and Tantra use the term "*Mudra*" in their ancient writings, although, some ancient authorities on Yoga do not mention the term at all. Maharishi Patanjali, the codifier of the *Yoga Darshana*, does not mention the use of *Mudras* or even the term itself in his 195 versed *Yoga Sutra*. But then, Patanjali does not mention Kundalini or its Shakti, which is so closely associated with the *Antaranga*, the inner phases of Yoga. Tantra uses the word "*Mudra*" in many, many ways, some crude and profane, yet others, sublime and sacred. One ancient Tantric work states that "*Mudra*" is the "*mystical symbol for the number or the numeral 18*".

In Yantra, Hindu mystic symbology and semasiology, it is stated that Mudra is the secret meaning behind the art of writing and reading. Yantrists state that Mudra is a *symbolic language in which secret messages can be sent between individuals or between the mind and the body via the nervous system*. Mudras and Nyasa are used as a body sign language to convey emotions, feelings and stories in the ancient classical dances of India such as Bharata Natyam, Kathakali, Mohiniattam and Odissi.

Mudras were not confined to India alone, nor to Hinduism within India for that matter. Buddhist texts are rife with the term "*Mudda*" which is the Pali for the Sanskrit "Mudra". No doubt, the term became popular by the inclusion of Hindu Tantra within Buddhist rites and rituals which are now popularly termed Buddhist Tantra, but more correctly entitled "*Vajrayana*".

The Magi of ancient Persia employed *Musaru* or the *Muzra*, the Mudra, in their sacred rites. Musaru is Babylonian in origin and so are most of the mystic teachings of the Near East, giving rise to the ancient Hebrew concept of Mudra as a "seal". In early Christian mysticism, the Mudra is the "Seven Seals" of John the Divine in his *Apocalypse, The Book of Revelations*. Mudras play a special-part in the rituals of the Zen Buddhists of Japan and amongst the Japanese Buddhist sects of Tantric origin or those who have taken up the Tantric practices. Sufis of Islam employ the Mudra in symbolical valorization of ritual gestures. In the most evolved mysticism of Islam, Sufism, fifteen Mudras which are described as *physical and mental attitudes* are required in the course of canonical-prayer. The Jains of India also have their Mudras and a Jain work entitled *Mudra Vichara* describes seventy-three gestures, while another work, the *Mudrandhi* lists



**114 Mudras. Most of the Mudras of other religions are identical with those used in Classical Yoga or Tantra.**

In Yoga, Mudra takes on a special significance and, in some cases, is considered a *Yoganga* or an independent branch of Yoga. In Yantra, Mudra Yoga is a classical school of practice where hands, feet, body, emotions and mind are all used in actual or symbolical gestures. *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* states Mudra to be a "Yoganga" and describes twelve Mudras while the *Shiva Samhita* classifies only ten Mudras. *Gheranda Samhita* describes twenty-five Mudras, using one hundred stanzas to describe these Mudras. On the other hand it is interesting to note that the same Gheranda Maharishi uses only ninety-six stanzas to describe Pranayama and only five stanzas to describe Pratyahara. Both Swatmarama Suri in his *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and Gheranda Maharishi in his *Gheranda Samhita* mentioned earlier, devote a complete chapter to Mudra.

From these and other ancient Yoga sources, we can compile a list of some FIFTY-EIGHT classical Mudras used in the practice of Hatha Yoga Asanas, Kriyas and Mudras and with the Pranayama, Pratyahara and Laya Yoga Kriyas. Still another group of Mudras are suggested for *Dharana* (concentration) and for *Dhyana* (meditation). If we reach within the sciences of Tantra and Yantra, we will uncover some 729 classical Mudras.

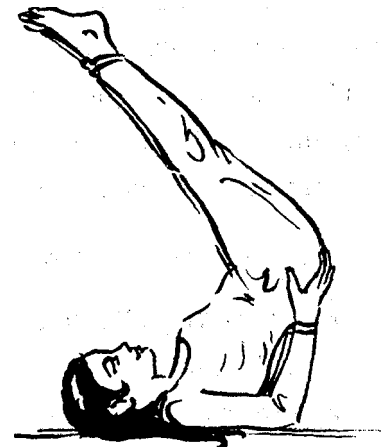
In light of the above, Yoga Mudras may be classified as follows:

- Hatha Yoga Mudras, which are similar to the classical Asanas of Hatha Yoga,
- Pranayama Mudras used for channellizing the Pranic forces,
- Dhyana Mudras for meditative practices and
- Shakti Mudras for the creation and control of vital energies.

## HATHA YOGA MUDRAS

In Hatha Yoga the term "Mudra" means a "neuro-muscular activity arousing secretions from the exocrine and/or endocrine glands of the body". Usually sufficient pressure is used in holding the Mudra position so that involuntary muscles are called into play, stimulating nerves adhered along these same involuntary nerve chains. In the Adhyatmic forms of Yoga, the highest of all Yoga practices, the Mudra becomes a psycho-mental gesture controlling the same functions as the Hatha Yoga Mudras. However, it is necessary first that the physical Mudras be learned for gaining the higher controls.

Viparita Karani Mudra: *The Topsy-Turvy Pose.* "Viparita" means "topsy-turvy" and any posture like Sarvangha Asana (the Shoulder Stand) or Shirsha Asana ("the Head Stand) can rightly be called "Viparita". The term "Viparita Karani Mudra", however, is reserved for a Shoulder Stand-Like posture where the weight of the body is held by the hands against the pelvic girdle. In the incomplete action the legs are bent forward, while in the completed action the legs are bent away in a rigid position to stimulate secretions from the pancreatic gland in the abdominal area. This Mudra is highly recommended for the prevention, control and possible cure of conditions such as Diabetes Mellitus and imbalances of the



*Viparita Karani Mudra  
(First Part)*

thyroid gland. It is also useful to reduce prolapsed organs such as the uterus or rectum back into its normal location, as well as in the temporary reduction of hernias.

**Yoga Mudra:** *The Gesture of Union.* This Mudra is done from the Lotus Posture, the Padma Asana. There are a number of versions of the hand position for this Mudra. In one, the hands are crossed at the wrist and placed onto the soles of the feet. In a second, the hands are simply placed palms down onto the soles of the feet. In a third, one hand grasps the wrist behind the back. In a fourth, the hands are placed palm-against-palm, fingers upwards in the middle of the back in a hand position called Hamsa Mudra.

In all cases, the head is bent to the floor on an outgoing breath and shallow Sukshma Pranayama done for the required length of time to attain to a quiet state of psycho-physical union.



*Yoga Mudra*

**Maha, Mudra:** *The Mighty Gesture.* This is used for the control of tidal breathing and particularly for the control of upper lobular breathing so often affecting asthmatics and others with chronic breathing disorders. The position begins from Vajra Asana, a heel sitting pose, with the hands clasped behind the back. The



*Rishiculture Maha Mudra*

head is lowered to the floor on an expelled breath and then the arms raised high above the back to force an extra discharge of air from the upper lobes. This pose helps to eliminate stale air from the lungs and allow the inhalation of a fresh supply of air into the 'air hungry' lungs. The above is a description of the Maha Mudra as taught in the Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga Paramparai.

There is also a Maha Mudra in the Hatha Yoga tradition as mentioned in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika. This is performed as follows. The left heel is pressed into the perineum while the right leg is stretched out in front. The thumb and first fingers of both hands are used to grasp the toe of the stretched out right foot. The Jalandhara Bandha is to be performed after an inhalation and held in. The breath should be then slowly released in a phased manner.



*Maha Mudra*

**Pashini Mudra:** *The Noose Gesture.* This is a complicated Hatha Yoga posture where the legs are locked behind the head while the body reclines on the mid-lower back. It stimulates the entire spinal area associated with the Chakras. It is also known as the Yoga Nidra Mudra. The psychological benefits of this Mudra include a release from the unconscious animal conditioning that is afraid of being locked up or chained up. Here, one voluntarily ties oneself in a knot in order to release hidden sub-conscious animal fears, thus become conscious, human beings.

**Shakti Chalana Mudra:** *The Shakti Moving Gesture.* This Mudra is a complicated sitting posture where the feet are locked up in the Gupta Asana, the Hidden Position, with one heel against the Yoni Nadi (in the perineum) and the other against the bulbous root of the penis or clitoris. It is used in the Amaroli techniques that are part of the Oli or Shakti Mudra series that will be discussed in detail later.

**Shakta Chalani Mudra:** *Shakta-Shakti Gesture of Union.* This is the Gesture which "sends Shakti to Shakta" and is performed in the Shakti Chalana Mudra sitting position. It is also known as the Amaroli Mudra. It involves a Kumbhaka or retention of the held in breath for sixty-four seconds, then a Shunyaka, a held-out breath immediately for thirty-two seconds, and then the rapid pumping action of Nauli Kriya, which is performed fifty-five times without taking in a breath.

**Vajroli Mudra:** *Thunderbolt Gesture.* Vajroli Mudra is one of the Shakti or Oli Mudras. This Mudra has two parts which excite the "Thunderbolt Action" of the pelvic plexus. In Part One, from a sitting position, both legs are raised higher than the head. Extreme hand pressure is used against the floor to attain to the highest lift. In Part Two, the ankles are grasped by the hands and the head is pulled tight in against the knees. The balance of the weight of the body is on the tailbone. Extreme pressure is exerted while the Bandha Trayam (Moola, Uddiyana and Jalandhara Bandha in combination) is performed.

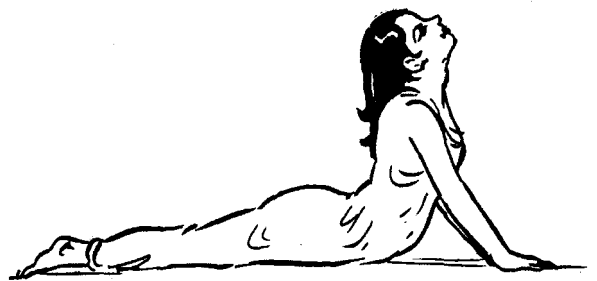
**Sahajoli Mudra:** *The Natural Power Gesture.* The Sahajoli is done while standing on the head in Shirsha Asana, the Head Stand. It has two parts. The frog-like action of Manduka Mudra is used in Part One. The soles of the feet are placed together

and extreme pressure is exerted while the breath is held out. In the second part, the legs are entwined in Garuda Mudra, the Eagle Gesture and the legs straightened upwards on a deep incoming breath.

**Amaroli Mudra:** *The Gesture of Celestial Ambrosia.* This Mudra has two parts. The actions have been explained in the Shakta Chalani Mudra earlier.

**Matangi Mudra:** *The Elephant Gesture.* Matangi Mudra is a technique of sucking water in through the nostrils, taking it to the stomach, then blasting it out again causing secretions in certain brain centres and the uvula of the throat.

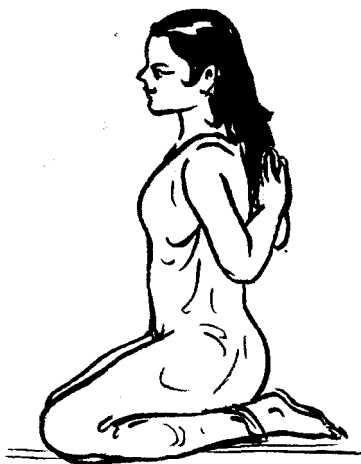
**Bhujangini Mudra:** *The Serpent-Goddess Gesture.* This Mudra is performed in the same posture as Bhujanga Asana. A powerful feminine Devic force is released by hissing out the breath like an excited cobra while attaining to the final upright Cobra Position. It cures neurasthenia and negativity by secreting glandular fluids into the brain cells. It is an excellent "stress-buster" and helps to release pent up stress in the neck and head regions.



*Bhujangini Mudra*

**Hamsa Mudra :** *The Swan Gesture.* This is performed by placing the hands together, palms touching, behind the back, like the wings of a swan. It is the reverse to the Namaskar Mudra, as the same position on the front of the body is called Namaskar

**Mudra.** The Hamsa Mudra is used in conjunction with various Asanas such as the Prasrita Uttana Asana and the Padottana Asana. It opens up the chest and is a wonderful exercise for the joints of the shoulders, elbows and wrists.



*Hamsa Mudra*

**Garuda Mudra:** *The Eagle Gesture*



*Garuda Mudra*

**G a r u d a Mudra,** is done by crossing the hands at the wrist, palms together, thus forcing the nerve currents to pass from one side of the body to the other. A similar action of twisting one leg around the other is used to perform the Mudra with the feet either from the standing Samasthiti Asana or Shirsha Asana, the Head Stand position.

**Shanmuki Mudra:** *The Six Opening Gesture.* This is a hand position closing all of the six orifices of the face. The Mudra arouses inner sounds of the divine Dhun, the Shabda Brahman. It is sometimes called the "Facing-Inwards" Gesture, *Parang-mukhi Mudra* or *Samabhava Mudra*, the "Gesture



*Shanmuki Mudra*



*Shanmuki Mudra*

of Equipoise". It is also called the Yoni Mudra or the Womb Gesture. Yoni is also called Kula and in Tantra, this becomes Kaula Mudra. The fingers of both hands are used to close the eyes, ears and the nostrils. This is an excellent pacifier for excessive stress when used with the Brahmari Pranayama. The thumbs are placed into the

external auditory canal of the ear, the index finger pressuring the root of the nose and covering the eyes while the middle finger controls alternate nostril breathing. The ring finger and little finger pressure the Bindus above and below the lips respectively. This Mudra stimulates the Trigeminal and Facial nerves that run over these very same pathways. The Shanmuki Mudra is an excellent physical Pratyahara technique as all five senses (Pancha Jnanendriya) are controlled.

**Ashvini Mudra:** *The Horse Gesture* is done by imposing an anal restraint called Moola Bandha on the external sphincter muscles of the anus and rapidly tensing and releasing the restraint, like the defecating action of a horse (Ashva). This Ashvini Mudra energizes the entire nervous system and is an excellent preventive and curative practice for hemorrhoids as well as disorders of the rectum, gonads and perineum. It is useful before, during and after pregnancy and childbirth.



## PRANAYAMA MUDRAS

In *Pranayama Yoga, the Science of the Controlled Expansion of the Vital Forces of Life*, certain Mudras are used to help control the flow of breath into different sections of the lungs.

**Chin Mudra:** This *Mudra of Consciousness (Chit)* is used to gesture the Pranic energies to the lower lobe area of both lungs in the performance of Adham Pranayama (Abdominal or Lower Chest Breathing). The tips of the thumb and the index finger are joined together in a perfect circular form with the other three fingers held straight together. The Mudra is placed palms down on the lap to stimulate the neuro-vascular rich femoral area on the inner side of the upper thighs.

**Chinmaya Mudra:** This Mudra is used to gesture the Pranic energies to the middle lobes of the lungs in the performance of Madhyam Pranayama (Thoracic or Mid Chest Breathing). The tips of the thumb and the index finger are joined together in a perfect circle as in Chin Mudra and the three other fingers are curled inwards towards the palm as if making a fist. The Mudra is then placed palms down on the lap to stimulate the femoral area on the inner side of the upper thighs.

**Adhi Mudra:** This Mudra is used to gesture the Pranic energies towards the upper lobe of the lungs in the performance of Adhyam Pranayama (Clavicular or Upper Chest Breathing). All four fingers are closed into a fist over the thumb. The Mudra is then placed facing downwards on the inner side of the upper thighs.

**Brahma Mudra or Mahat Yoga Mudra:** This Mudra is used to gesture the Pranic energies in the performance of a unified Grand Yogic Breath that includes lower chest, middle chest and upper chest breathing in a balanced and orderly fashion. The Mudra is performed by making the hands into a fist, as in the Adhi Mudra, and then placing the Mudra in front of the navel with both hands touching at the knuckles. The fists will face upwards and the back of the hands will face downwards. This Mudra helps facilitate the neuromuscular system and stimulates the respiratory system to function in a proper manner, thus correcting numerous breathing difficulties that are the bane of the modern world.

**Shunya Mudra:** "Shunya" means a void or vacuum. This Mudra is performed by placing the hands on the lap with the palms facing upwards. The fingers are held straight together and the thumb is held at a right angle to the other fingers. This Mudra is utilised along with other Prana Mudras in *Pradakshina Pranayama* where the breath is circulated in different lung sections in a clockwise fashion, as this Mudra helps 'close down' different regions of the lung.

**Kaki Mudra:** This Mudra is a *Crow's Beak Gesture* of the mouth that is used to expel the breath in the *Dhauti Pranayama*, known also as *Mukha Bhastrika*. Kaki Mudra controls the nerves of the glossopharyngeal-laryngeal plexus. In appearance it resembles the puckered lips that are used when one whistles.

**Kakachandra Mudra:** This Mudra is performed by rolling the tongue into a tube or curve, like the tongue of a crow. This gesture is used to sip the air into the throat in *Sitali Pranayama*, one of the cooling

Pranayamas. Using Kaka Chandra Mudra and the cooling breaths can help alleviate the "hot flushes" of menopause.

**Nasargha Mudra :** This is a hand position used with the right hand in order to control the breath so that it will move through only one nostril at a time. The index and middle fingers are turned down in against the bridge of the nose with the thumb against the right nostril. The ring and little finger are placed against the



left nostril. This is also known as the Nasika Mudra and is used in the alternate nostril breath-ings practices such as *Anuloma Viloma*, *Nadi Shuddhi* as well as the single nostril Pranaya-mas such as *Surya* and *Chandra Pranayamas*. It is also used in the ritualistic Gayatri Japa of the Brahmin community during the practice

*Nasargha Mudra* of Sandhya Vandanam.

**Vishnu Mudra:** Vishnu Mudra, the *Gesture of Conservation*, is a right-hand position with the tip of the middle finger on a point between the eyebrows at the root of the nose.



*Vishnu Mudra*

This point is known as the Bhrumadhya Bindu and is related to the pituitary gland and the hypothalamus of the neuro-endocrine system. The index finger closes the right nostril while the ring finger closes the left nostril. The thumb and



*Vishnu Mudra*

little finger are spread into a wide "V" shape resembling the traditional "V" mark of the Vaishnava community. This also indicates the path of cosmic Prana moving in Pingala (right) and Ida (left) Nadis. This is an excellent Mudra for the practice of the alternate nostril and single nostril Pranayamas as it has the added advantage of focusing the mind on the Bhramadhya Bindu area.

**Apraakasha Mudra:** This Mudra is a swallowing action that is performed following the intake of breath, thus giving control over Apraakasha Bindu, the respiratory centre of the lower reptilian complex (brain stem) of the brain. This Mudra is especially useful in the practice of *Savitri Pranayama* as it helps to prevent any undesirable rise in various intrathoracic pressures, in a manner similar to that of the Bandhas.

**Bandha Trayam Mudra:** *The Triple Restraint* is used in Pranayama and is usually classified as a Bandha when the Kumbhaka or a restraint of breath is also used. Under certain circumstances, these Bandhas employ Mudras or become Mudras themselves as they gesture energy against the "Trigranthis or the Triple Knot-Barriers" that are present along the Sushumna Nadi of the spinal column.

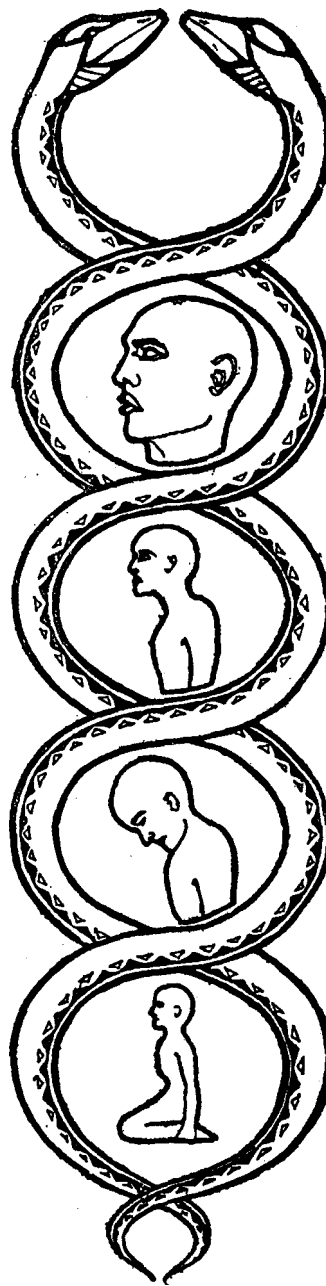
**Jalandhara Bandha:** This unites the chin with the jugular notch after the use of Mayur Mudra. Mayur is a peacock and its gesture is to force the chin forward, stretching the high cervical area of the neck and spine for a proper lock of Jalandhara. It is usually applied at the end of an inhalation.

**Mula Bandha:** This is the restraint of the external sphincter muscles of the anus after a Kumbhaka or restraint of the breath. It is sometimes called *Mula Mudra*. If the body is leaned slightly forward while Jalandhara and Mula Bandha are both being held, the

position is called Shakti Mudra or the Energizing Gesture.

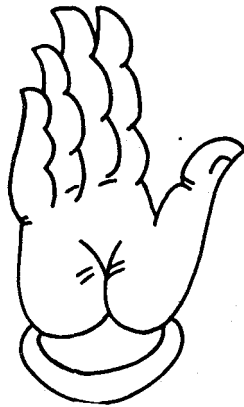
**Uddiyana Bandha:** The Flying-Up Restraint is done after a fully expelled breath. The abdomen is lifted "like a tank" and hence, it is also termed as the Tadaga or Tadagi Mudra. The same position is also sometimes called the Nabhi or Nabho Mudra. When the Bandha Trayam is employed for a lengthy held-in and held-out breath, it is also called the Amaroli Mudra. While doing the Amaroli, a hand position called Nataraja Mudra is employed. The index and middle fingers are kept rigidly extended, while the ring and little fingers are entwined, with the little finger of the right hand on the outside of the left little finger. The thumbs are also crossed, with the right thumb in the superior position above the left.

**Pancha Devi Mudra:** These are a series of five secret gestures to control the Shaktis or the Devis of the spinal Chakras while doing the Amaroli Mudra. These Mudras are also called Akarshana Mudra as they are said to attract the Devi. Akarshana means "fascination."



*Top to bottom :  
Kaki Mudra, Mayur Mudra,  
Jalandhara Bandha,  
Uddiyana Bandha*

## DHYANA MUDRAS



*Abhaya Mudra*

Many hand gestures are depicted in pictures of the Gods and Goddesses associated with the Chakras, while others are suggested to be used in concentration and meditation poses.

**Abhaya Mudra:** This *Gesture of Fearlessness* is an open-palmed hand position. The fingers of the right hand are raised skyward. This Mudra, by which the Deity assures the devotee that there is no need to have any fear, is found prominently in statues, pictures and depictions of all Indian Gods and Goddesses.

**Jnana Mudra:** The *Gesture of Wisdom* has the thumb and forefinger joined together in a perfect circle. The other three fingers are rigidly outstretched. It is held with the palm facing upwards. Union of thumb and index finger symbolises the union of Jivatma with Paramatma while, the other three fingers held together and straight symbolise the control of the senses (Pratyahara). Jnana Mudra is used to focus the mind, thus attaining a state of Jnana or wisdom.

**Chin Mudra:** The *Gesture of Consciousness* has the tip of the index finger forming a perfect circle by touching the tip of the thumb. It is held palm down, but is otherwise like Jnana Mudra. Chin Mudra is utilised in Pranayama practice where it is used in the palm downward facing position upon the thighs. It helps force air to move primarily in the lower lungs in Adham Pranayama.

**Akasha Mudra:** The *Gesture of Space* has the thumb and forefinger joined together in the Akash symbol with the other three fingers lightly turned inwards.

**Bhairava Mudra:** This is the *Gesture of the "Terrible Shiva"* who appears as the fierce and angry manifestation of the principle of change. This is performed by dropping the hands into the lap with the palms up and the right hand superior to the left. The reverse is called (Durga) Bhairavi Mudra.

**Yoga Mudra:** *The Gesture of Union* has the hands dropped into the lap. The fingers of the hands are clasped together and entwined with the right fingers superior to the left.

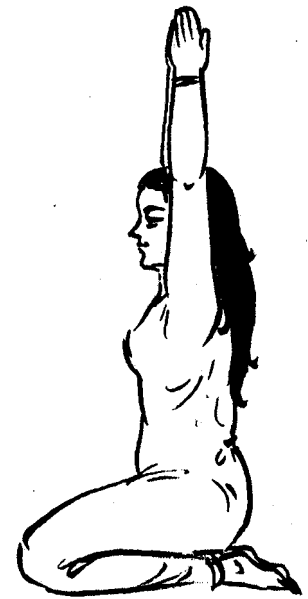
**Chakra Mudra:** *The Wheel Gesture* is performed by turning the backs of the hands in against the sides of the lower lobes of the lungs, fingers upwards.

**Namaskara Mudra:** *The Greeting Gesture* is a palms-together position as in the prayer gesture. It is held at the chest level and means, " I salute the Divine Self that is manifesting through you". It is a gesture of energy conservation, as energy that is normally lost from the palms is conserved by close-circuiting the two palms together.



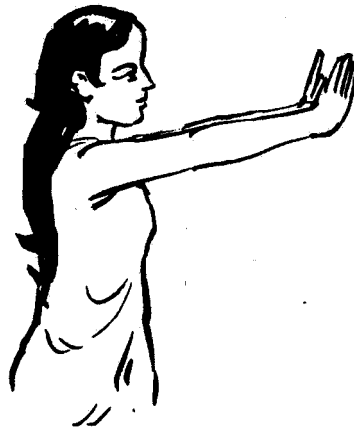
*Namaskara Mudra*

**Anjali Mudra:** The *Hailing Gesture*, is performed by bringing the hands high over the head in the Namaskara Mudra, and is used as a greeting for the Guru or God. It is also used in the Surya Namaskar Kriya of Hatha Yoga.



*Anjali Mudra*

**Bhumi Sparsha Mudra:** The *Earth Witnessing Gesture* is touching the earth with the finger tips while the hands are palms down over the knees in any sitting position. This Mudra is used to ground the nervous system "short circuiting" negative nerve impulses from the physical and Pranic nervous system into the ground. It is called "Earth Witnessing" or "Earth Touching". It is a gesture of reverence for the earth planet that sustains the human race. Ancient Yogis were true environmentalists and through development of reverence for nature, they upheld the ethical principles of conservation.



*Surya Dhrishti Mudra*

**Surya Dhrishti Mudra:** The *Sun Gazing Gesture* is a hand position where one can view the sun through an aperture created between the second finger of the right hand. This Mudra is used in the ritualistic practice of Sandhya-Vandanam performed in high class Brahmanism.



**Mahabhinish Karamana Mudra:** This is called the *Mighty Gesture of Renunciation*. This Mudra is the hand position that the Buddha is usually depicted with the right hand is put into a clenched fist with the thumb directed straight upwards, indicating Divinity, while the left hand is kept palm upright with the thumb at a 90 degree angle to the hand. The Mudra is held in front of the navel area.

Some modern Yoga writers describe a few of the Mudras in their books. Sri Yogendra of Mumbai writes of twelve Mudras which he calls neuro-muscular controls and ten Maha Mudras which he says are "Ideonervi-processes". Swami Kunalayananda of Lonavala mentions five Mudras, one of which is not commonly mentioned by other writers, called Simha Mudra. It is the special arrangement of the jaw and tongue while doing Simha Asana. Swami Satyananda Saraswati of Munger describes six Mudras. Kaki Mudra is described as a Crow Beak shape of the mouth to allow the drinking in of air. (Described in this book as Kaka Chandra).

**Khechhari Mudra:** This Mudra is done by stretching the tongue with iron tongs or the fingers, after massaging with ghee or butter. In the final process, one is to gaze at the middle of the eyebrows, while the tongue is made to pass through the upper cavity of the palate. Khechhari is said to be "the best of Mudras" according to the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*.

**Sambhavi Mudra:** In this Mudra, the gaze is directed towards Bhrumadhya, area in the middle of the eyebrows. The Sadhaka is advised to meditate upon the Atman, Brahman, the Higher Self. This Mudra is also used along with other Hatha Yoga practices such as the Simhasana.

**Nabho Mudra:** In this Mudra, the tongue is directed upwards towards the palate, while doing Shambhavi Mudra. There is also a subtle element involved in the directing of the consciousness towards the navel.

**Mahavedha Mudra** is a Bahir Kumbhaka, holding out the breath. (This Mudra is described here as in the Bandha Trayam).

There are countless other Mudras similarly depicted in ancient temple sculptures, scrolls and paintings. Each is said to have its own particular meaning and value.



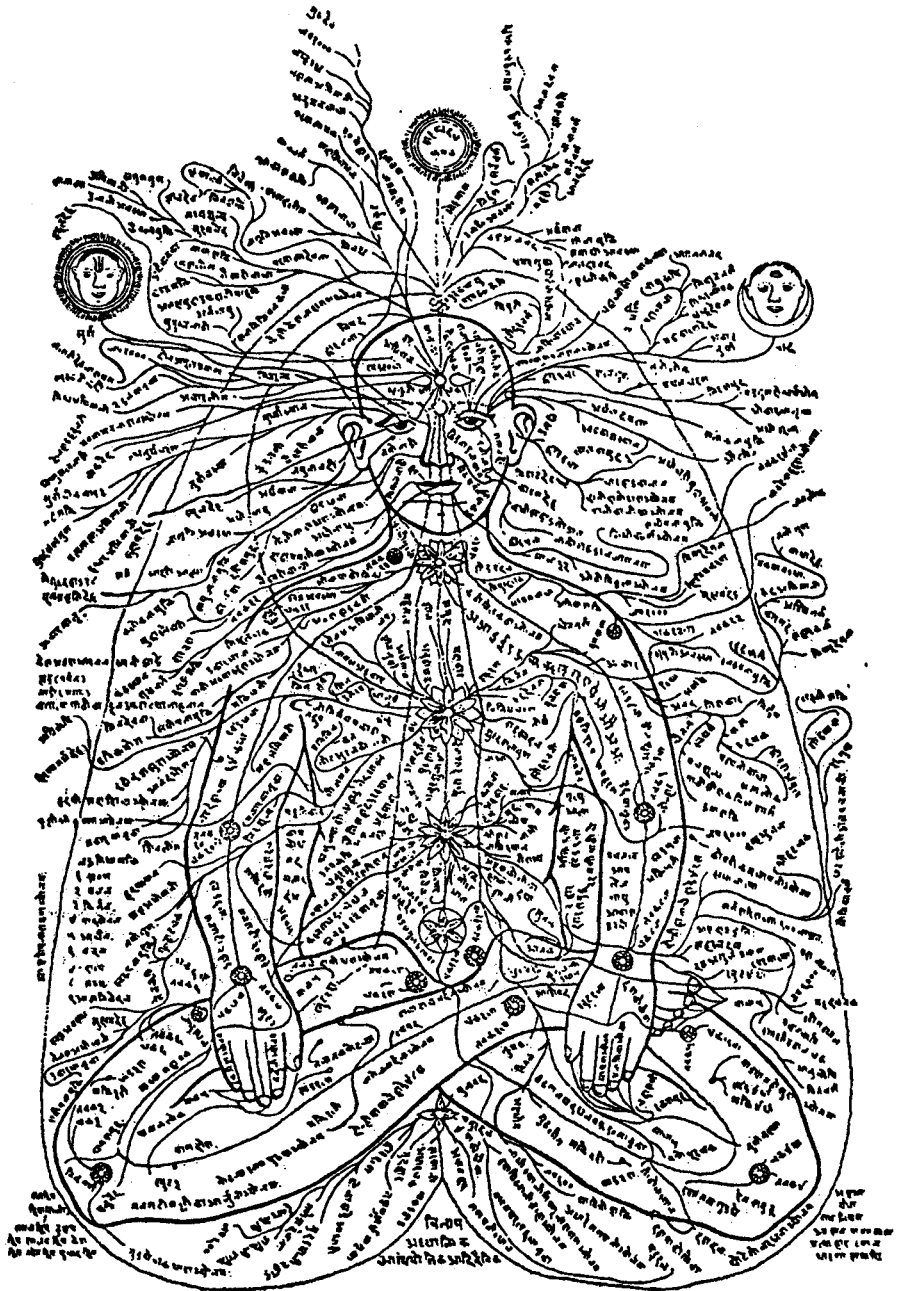
*A traditional depiction of goddess Kali*

## SHAKTI MUDRAS

**Oli Mudra:** The six classical Oli Mudras, the *Power Gestures*, transmute lower energies including that of the life force in the male semen and the female ovum into Tejas (fire power) and Ojas (mind stuff created from virile semen). The Oli Mudras represent a difficult discipline of the Laya Yoga system. They are sometimes called the Shakti Mudras.

**Kali Mudra:** The *Gesture of Kali* is a technique to produce hibernation of body processes. This state of suspended animation appears like death. Yet the Yogi is fully alive, though inner-withdrawn. There is no breath or heart beat. It is thought that Lazarus of the Christian scriptures fell into this state. George Lamsa states that Jesus taught the Kali Mudra to his disciples. In Lamsa's Aramaic version of the Christian scriptures, Jesus uses the word "Yoga" three times and speaks of many Raja Yogic states and techniques. He performs Jala Stambham (walking on water) and Vayu Stambham (flying in the air). He states to Mary, the sister of Lazarus, that her brother is not dead, but that he has improperly performed Kali Mudra.

**Khechari Mudra:** Khechari literally means "to roam through space". It is the most bizarre of the Mudra practices. The frenulum of the tongue, a restraining band or fold under the tongue, is slowly cut so that the tongue is first lengthened, and later, strengthened, so that it can be turned backwards into the throat opening to the nasal cavity. In some cases the tongue is split in two and is called Jihva Bhedana Mudra.



*Nadis and Chakras of the Pranamaya Kosha.*

In the diagram opposite, the Prana Nadis or nerve channels of the body are shown in relationship to major nerve currents, and the major and minor Chakras. The Chakras shown from the base of the diagram up through the centre of the body are vortexes of spiritual energy, centered in particular areas along the spine. In the lower body called Pindanda, the Shat Chakras are Muladhara, Swadhisthana, Manipura, Anahata, Vishuddha and Ajna. There are six celestial Chakras in the Brahmanda, but for the initiate these are usually all confined within the name Sahasrara, the Thousand-Petalled Lotus Centre.

Minor Chakras are also to be found at the ankles and the wrists, at the elbows and the knees, at the hips and shoulders, at the groin and at the neck. The two major Pranic flows of Surya and Chandra are shown on the right and left sides respectively. The high spiritual forces are shown at the top.

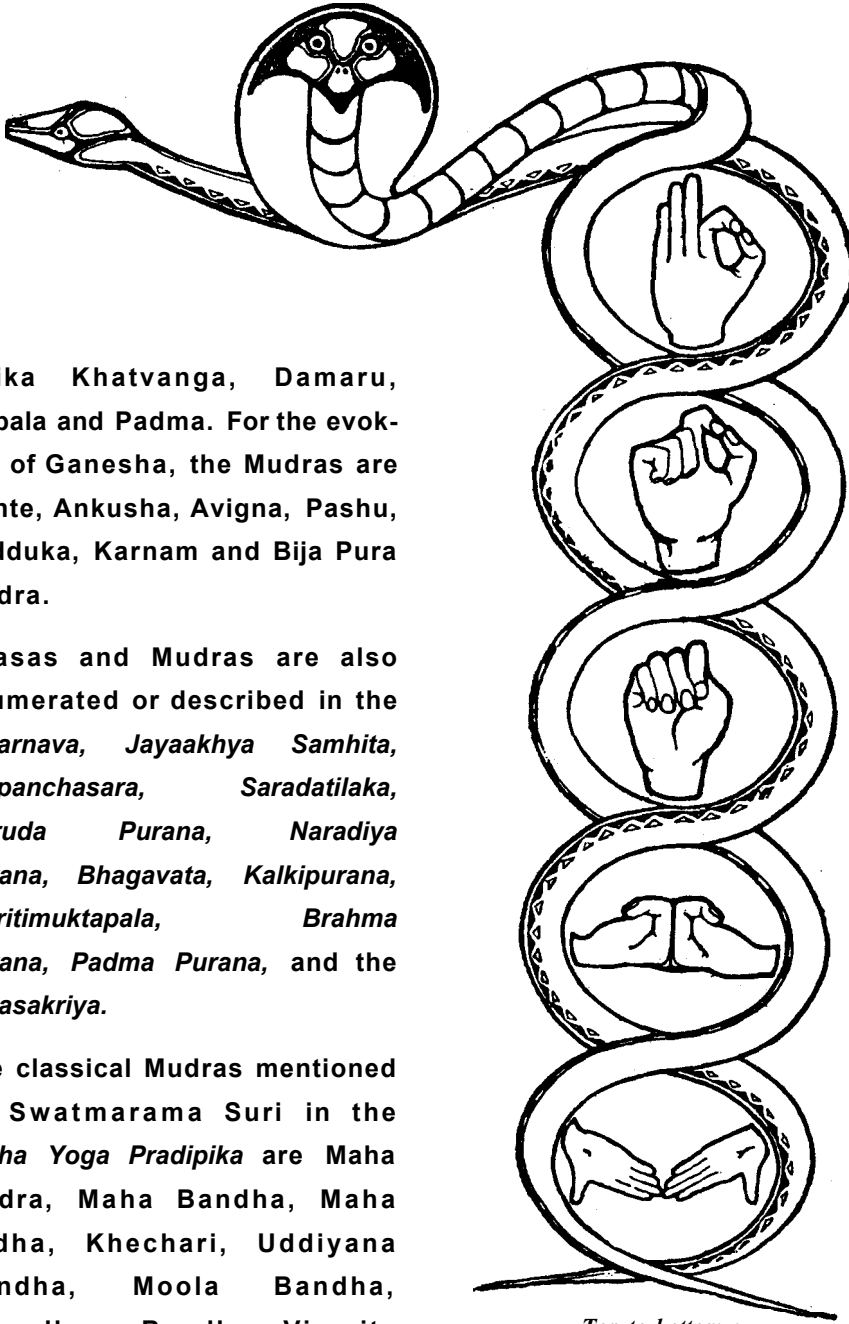
Twelve flows of Prana are flowing through the Pancha Kosha, the Five Bodies of Man. Five of these are known as Prana Vayus (Major Vital Airs), five are called Upa Prana Vayus (Minor Vital Airs), while the two Para Pranas are used by the higher mind. The Pancha Prana Vayus are Udana (for sensory perception), Prana (reflex energy for breath and heart action), Samana (for digestion), Apana (for elimination) and Vyana (for circulation and motor activity). The Upa Prana Vayus, the Nagadi, or Lesser, Minor Vital Airs are Naga, Kurma, Krikkara, Devadatta, and Dhananjaya. The two higher Pranic forces are Akasha Vayu and Chitra Vayu, which are psycho-mental and neuro-mental Pranic impulses.

The Prana Vayus are united by the various Mudras, so that the nerve currents may flow together as rivers, converge, diluting and the major and minor Chakras with Pranic energy.

## MUDRAS IN ANCIENT AND MODERN LITERATURE

The literature both ancient and modern on Mudra is extensive and in addition to the *Shiva Samhita*, *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, *Gheranda Samhita* and other popular texts on Hindu Yoga, there exist many rich sources of Yoga, Tantra and Yoga Mudra Mysticism. The *Yoga Tattva Upanishad*, *Aryamanjushrimula Tantra*, the *Shat Chakra Nirupana*, *Mudra-Nighantu Upanishad*, the *Kamaratna Tantra*, and the *Mahanirvana Tantra*. The *Jakaya Samhita* lists fifty-eight Mudras, *Jnananarnava Tantra* lists thirty Mudras as does the *Niyasodasi-Karnava* and several of these appear to be the same Mudras. *Vishnu Samhita* lists thirty-one Mudras, but states they could be innumerable if the worshipper so desires. Two works on Nyasa and Mudra list nine major Mudras, but differ in the names and descriptions. The *Kamakala Vilasa* lists Avahan, Sthapini, Sannidhapana, Sannirodha, Sammukhi Karani, Sakalikriti, Avajunthna, Dhenu and Maha Mudra. The *Kamapala Vilasa Kaumudi* lists Trikhanda, Sarva, Sankhsobha Karani, Saravidravini, Mahankusha, Akarsini, Unmadini, Yoni, Biji, and Khechari Mudra.

The *Nighantu Tantra* is a glossary of Mudras and Nyasas. It lists nine Mudras, which can be used for any kind of worship, such as the Avahani, a flower holding gesture, and those described earlier in the *Kamakala* and the *Kamapala Vilasa*. Nineteen Mudras are described for the worship of Vishnu, ten Mudras for the worship of Shiva and seven Mudras for evoking Ganesha or Ganapathy. The Mudras for Vishnu are Shankha, Chakra, Garuda, Padma, Venu, Srivatsa, Kausthubha, Narasimhi, Varahi, Hayagriva, Dhanu, Bana, Parasu, Jagan-Mohini, Vami, Vanamala, Jnana, Vidya and Gada. For Shiva, the Mudras are Linga, Yoni, Trisula, Aksamala, Abhiti (also including Abhaya and Mriga),



Asika Khatvanga, Damaru, Kapala and Padma. For the evoking of Ganesha, the Mudras are Dante, Ankusha, Avigna, Pashu, Ladduka, Karnam and Bija Pura Mudra.

Nyاسas and Mudras are also enumerated or described in the *Kularnava*, *Jayaakhya Samhita*, *Prapanchasara*, *Saradatilaka*, *Garuda Purana*, *Naradiya Purana*, *Bhagavata*, *Kalkipurana*, *Smritimuktapala*, *Brahma Purana*, *Padma Purana*, and the *Varasakriya*.

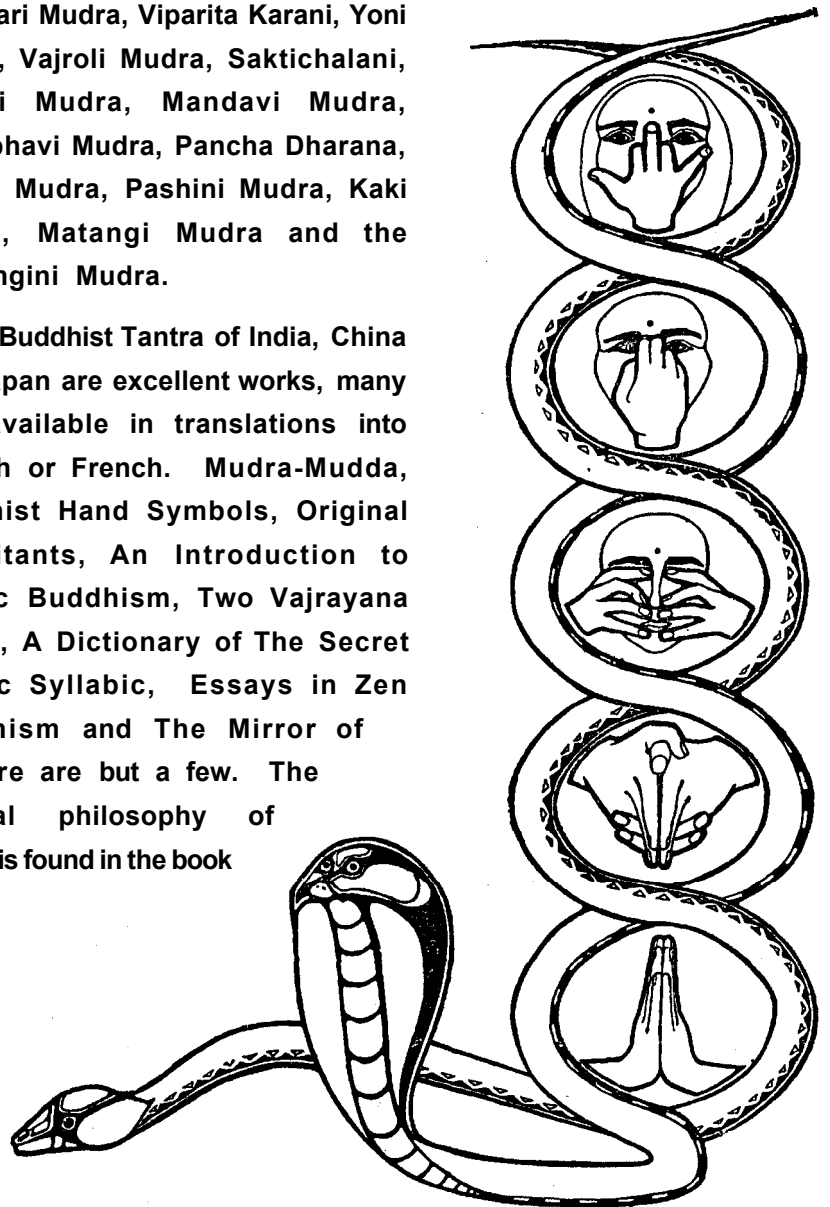
The classical Mudras mentioned by Swatmarama Suri in the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* are Maha Mudra, Maha Bandha, Maha Vedha, Khechari, Uddiyana Bandha, Moola Bandha, Jalandhara Bandha, Viparita Karani, Vajroli, Sahajoli, Amaroli and the Shakti Chalana.

*Top to bottom :*  
*Chin Mudra, Chinmaya Mudra,*  
*Adhi Mudra, Brahma Mudra,*  
*Shunya Mudra*

The classical Mudras mentioned in the *Gheranda Samhita* are Maha Mudra, Nabho Mudra, Uddiyana Bandha, Jalandhara Bandha, Moola Bandha, Maha Bandha, Maha Vedha, Khechari Mudra, Viparita Karani, Yoni Mudra, Vajroli Mudra, Saktichalani, Tadagi Mudra, Mandavi Mudra, Shambhavi Mudra, Pancha Dharana, Aswini Mudra, Pashini Mudra, Kaki Mudra, Matangi Mudra and the Bhujangini Mudra.

In the Buddhist Tantra of India, China and Japan are excellent works, many now available in translations into English or French. *Mudra-Mudda, Buddhist Hand Symbols, Original Inhabitants, An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism, Two Vajrayana Works, A Dictionary of The Secret Tantric Syllabic, Essays in Zen Buddhism and The Mirror of Gesture* are but a few. The general philosophy of Mudra is found in the book

*Top to bottom :*  
*Vishnu Mudra,*  
*Nasarga Mudra,*  
*Shanmukha Mudra,*  
*Nataraja Mudra,*  
*Namaskara Mudra*





called Kathakali and The Diagram of Hand Poses, Les Kathakalis du Malabar, Simla Village Tales, Folk Tales of Kashmir, The Secret Messages and Symbols Used in India and in Moudra Et Hastha Ou Le Langage Par Signes. Gestures In Simarian and Babylonian Prayer and La Passion D'al Hallaj, Martyr Mystique De L'islam and Mention Du Mon Divin are all sources for hand, foot and body positions used by Sufis and the Magi.

Yet, in Yoga and Tantra, Mudra is more than a sign language. It is that which leads to Union itself, and is equal to the Mantra and the Puja. Indeed, in one form of Tantra, Mudra is elevated to the Godhead state and is said to be the Presiding Adept in Manipura Chakra. In traditional Yoga and Tantra, Rudra, the Primordial Shiva, is said to preside over this solar plexus centre. Mudra indeed then is given a high status. In Laya Yoga, the Yoga used to withdraw and make latent all powers and tendencies in the body, emotions and lower mind, the Mudra is associated with evoking the Shakti or in controlling the Devi in the particular Chakra or Padma. The Pancha Devi Mudra is a five-part Mudra to first evoke and then control the Shaktis. In the inner teachings of Yoga, there is an insistent repetition that for the uninitiated, the early practitioner of Yoga, the Nadis or nerve centres need to be cleansed from their impurity and both physical and psychical obstructions removed. Purification is brought about by the use of Asanas, Kriyas and Pranayama, while the obstructions are removed by Mudras. In actual practice, a form of the Bandha Trayam in Pranayama is used to burst through three psychic obstructions called the Trigranthis, while the Mudra is used for the arousal of the sleeping goddess Kundali, and her Shakti, the Kundalini Shakti. Tada Mudra, the Knock Gesture, is used for this purpose and then the Mudra to the five Matrikas or little Mothers, the Shaktis or the Devis of the five spinal centres are employed. The Shakti Chalana Mudra is taught as one of the most important of the Mudras for the arousal of Shakti. In Hatha

Yoga it is taught as a physical body posture, but in the inner schools of Kundalini Yoga it is included in the six secret Mudras.

The Oli Mudras, veiled heavily with sexual valences, are a dynamic Yoga practice divided into three major sections having two parts to each section. Vajroli Mudra has two gestures and Sahajoli also has two gestures where the Manduka Mudra is used in one part and the Garuda Mudra is used in the second. In the Amaroli Mudra, two parts are also used, one as the Shakti Chalana Mudra and the other, as the Shakta Chalani Mudra. In the mystic Kapalas, the author states: *"He who knows the true nature of these Six Mudras, who understands the highest Mudra, meditating on himself as in the position called Bhaga Asana, reaches Nirvana"*. The six secret Mudras should not be mistaken for some Hatha Yoga practices, which are more correctly called Vajra Karmas, where a tube inserted in the penis is used to suck up various fluids into the bladder. Water, milk, ghee, honey, mercury and the female "Kama Sila" are all employed in this manner in some Vama Marga Tantric rites. They may have their place there, but not in inner Yoga. Khechari and the Kali Mudra are also often associated with sexual overtones, but incorrectly so.

Vama Marga Tantra (the so-called Left-hand Path of Tantra), dwells heavily on the use of Mudra for its sexual perversion. Mudras are the gestures used for the arousal of sexual passion, as well as the positions for sexual intercourse used by the participants. The Mudra is also used to describe the instructions given by the Tantric Guru to the man and woman being initiated into these Vama Marga rites. Indeed, the woman herself is called Mudra, and so is elevated to the position of Devi, the Goddess. Vama Marga, the Left-hand Tantra has five schools and the term "Vama" is also used to mean "the woman". Vama, Devi and Mudra are therefore synonymous,

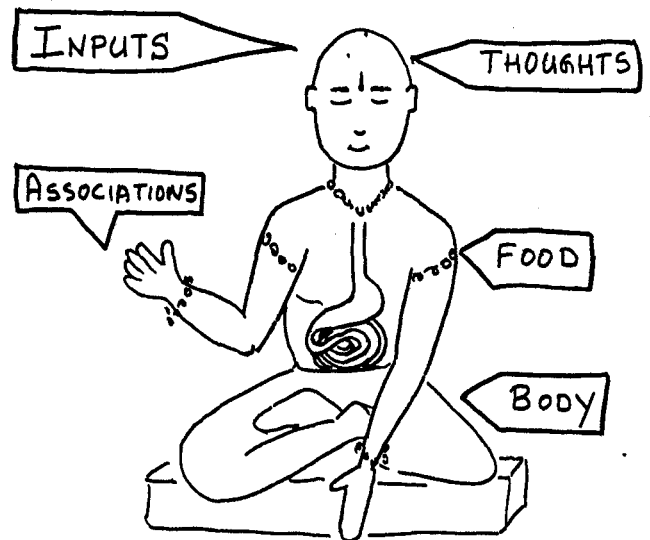
so these schools could be called Mudra Tantra, Devi Tantra or Vama Tantra.

The term Mudra is also found in the Pancha Makaras or the five symbolical acts which make up the Tantric rites and rituals. There, Mudra is said to mean the eating of parched grain. But, in fact it can also mean the sexual act of the mouth congress with the sexual organs. This is said to hasten the ascent of the Kundalini by bringing about an immobility of the breath, thought and semen. The semen must be contained at all costs.

In the five schools of the Dakshina Marga Tantra, called the Right-Hand Path, the physical body is considered the negative pole or the female, and the mind is the positive pole, or the male. The perfect union between mind and body by the correct use of Asanas, Mudras and Kriyas burns out everything in the path of the Kundalini Shakti aroused by the Antara Mudras, the suppression of the Pranic forces and the removal of the psychic obstacles. The sexual force is transmuted into Tejas and Ojas and a return to the Nirman Kaya, the Celestial Body, is achieved. It is impossible to set about the awakening and arousal of the Kundalini Shakti without the spiritual preparations implied by the Bahiranga disciplines of Yama (morality) and Niyama (ethics). The actual awakening of the Devi and her ascent through the Chakras is brought about by arresting all forms of respiration in Kumbhaka while the body is performing the Oli Mudras. The Khechari Mudra is often times also advocated to be used with the Six Mudras earlier mentioned. When the powerful Kundalini Shakti merges with her Supreme Lord in the Brahmarandhra, the full Celestial Union, the marriage in heaven, takes place. Both Yoga and Tantra agree that this is the end of the coming and going in the round of births and rebirths or as the Buddha puts it, "the end of woe!".

In the *Gheranda Samhita*, the author prescribes the use of Mudra for the attaining to one of the seven achievements of Yoga. This Sthirata is a Siddhi or psychic accomplishment. All of the ancient texts agree that if the Mudras are used with the mind out-turned, Siddhis will be gained. But they all also agree that if the mind is in-turned, then the practitioner of the Mudras realises the attainment of Oneness with the true Self. The external manifestation of this in-turning is a Riddhi known as psychic prosperity. Riddhi is to have all of the richness, health and happiness of the world without any attachment to the materialistic states.

When a Mudra is used for Pratyahara, (sensory control and withdrawal), Dharana (concentration) and Dhyana (meditation), it is necessary that an appropriate mental attitude or Mano Mudra be adopted. The Mudra may



*Pratyahara: Controlling the senses*

employ the hands, as in Hastha Mudra, or the feet as in Pada Mudra, the mind as in Mano Mudra, or the body as in Kaya Mudra. The mind gestures the attitude so much so that it is possible that the attitude or mental Mudra may be maintained long after the concentration or meditation is actually finished. The constant attention of the mind towards the Supreme Nature is the highest gesture or Parama Mudra.

## PRANA VAYUS

Prana is the cosmic catalyst of the Universe in which we live. It binds the disparate elements of the Cosmos together and man into his Cosmos. The control of this Prana at the micro-cosmic level can be accomplished through Mudras. This Prana can also be evoked and directed by Prana Mantras. Pranayama done without the appropriate Hastha Prana Mudras or the Mano Mudra of the mind is merely "*Vayu-Ayama*", or the control of external breathing.

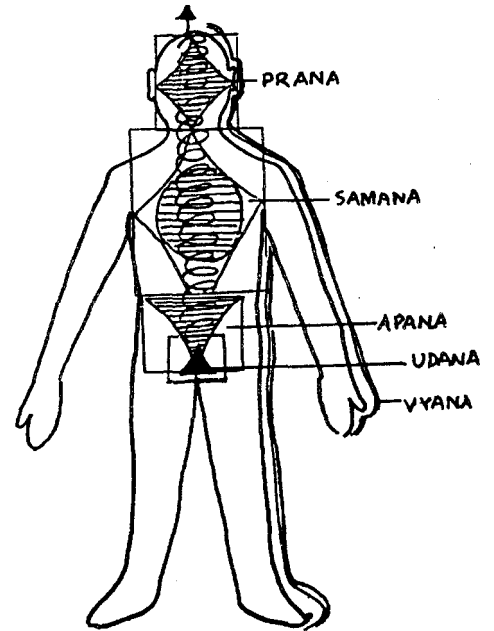
An understanding of how the Prana can be moved, controlled, or gestured through Prana Mudras is necessary for the student of Yoga who is advancing along the evolutionary Adhyatmika Path of Conscious Evolution. "*Conscious Evolution*" is the best possible definition for the term "*Yoga*". It embodies every phase of philosophical discernment, view of Reality and its attainment, and the lifestyle and Yoga practices necessary to support that positive life style.

Cosmic Prana is the first emanation of Shakti or Universal Energy. At the level of the microcosm, in the human sphere, the Five-Sheath-Body, the Pancha Kosha, the Prana is seen in three major divisions. These are:

- Pancha Prana Vayus: The Five Major Pranic Flows
- Upa Prana Vayus: The Five Minor Pranic Flows,
- Para Prana Vayus: representing psycho-mental-neurological flow of Cosmic Prana through the five sheaths of the Pancha Kosha.

At the lower speed of vibration these are represented as the *Pranamaya Kosha*, the Vital Sheath, and the *Annamaya Kosha*, the body sheathed in organs and cells. There is a great deal to

be understood by the term *Prana Vayu*, as seen in this definition. *Prana Vayu* can further be described as the Pranic flow that moves in the Prana Nadis of the Pranamaya Kosha, and the corresponding neurological Nadis of the Annamaya Kosha, the physical body.



*Pancha Prana Vayus*

*Prana Vahaka* is the Sanskrit term for nerve impulses, which move molecularly along the nerves or Nadis electrified by the Prana Vayus. These impulses are equal to molecular disturbances sending signals along the telegraph or telephone wire.

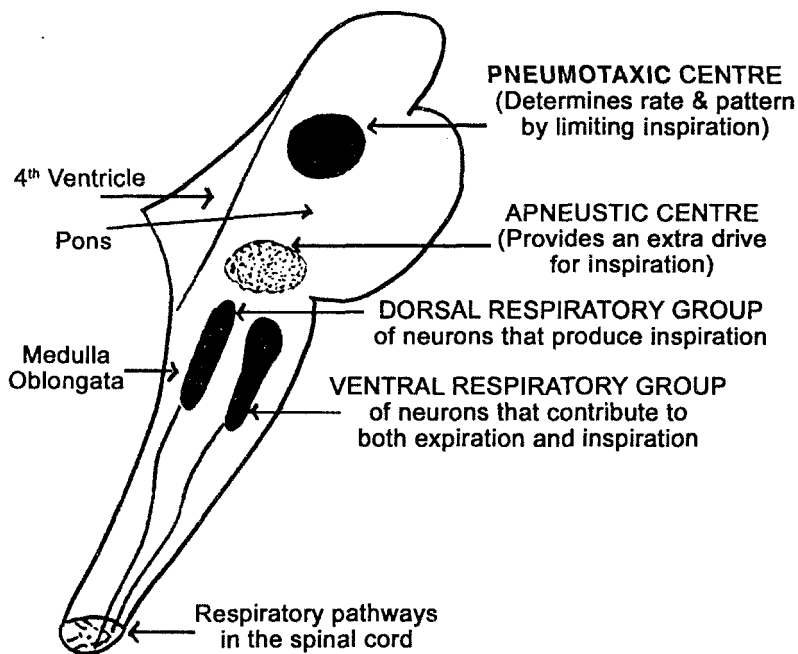
*Prana Vahana* represents nerve fluid which is passed by osmosis from cell to cell and from nerve area to a subsequent nerve area. Not only does energy as Vayu and impulse as Vahaka move in the nerve chain but so also Vahana as nerve fluid carries the vital messages of our entire being.

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*Prana Vana* is an abstract term used for the highest vibration of the Prana, moving in the Chakras of the psychic system of each human body. This Vana is stimulated by the practice of certain Mudras and their Pranayama, as well as by the use of Mantras found in the Laya Yoga system. Pranayama with Mudra and Mantra is the basis of the only safe Kundalini arousal and control system in Yoga.

## THE RESPIRATORY CENTRE

The respiratory centre situated in the Pons and Medulla in the brain stem of the human brain is a computer-like area that governs autonomic breathing and can also be influenced consciously by Yoga Mudras. The respiratory centre is divided into various sections. The dorsal respiratory group of neurons in the medulla are present near the exit of the 9th cranial nerve and are mainly responsible for the inspiratory signals that are sent to the muscles of inspiration, namely the diaphragm and the external intercostals through nerves such as the phrenic nerve. The ventral respiratory group of neurons in the medulla are expiratory in nature and are mainly involved in forced expiration as expiration is normally passive in tidal volume respiration. The pneumotaxic centre in the Pons helps in the cessation of inspiration and start of expiration. The apneustic centre in the



*The Respiratory Centre of the Human Brain*

lower Pons on the other hand helps to stimulate the inspiratory neurons of the medulla. The respiratory centre can be divided laterally into three sections. The different parts of sectional breathing may be attributed to respective areas in the respiratory centre.

The respiratory centre is a complicated "human brain computer" and is called in Sanskrit as the "Apraakasha Bindu". Interruption of a normal breath cycle for even a few minutes will cause this centre to increase its signal output and increase the rate of breathing. Similarly, oxygenating the blood by deep breathing will slow down this sensitive centre. This "computer centre" is damaged by childhood nasal, throat and lung disorders and by subsequent dyspnoea. This "computer centre" is regulated by a number of factors including the carbon-di-oxide levels, acid content of the blood passing through this brain computer, blood cell hydrogen ionization, and reflexogenic feedback from the reflex nerve terminals in the thoracic wall and the inspirational and expirational reflex nerves buried deep in the lungs.

In doing Pranayama, carbon-di-oxide content of the blood is kept under control so that the respiratory centre is less affected than in ordinary breathing. This accounts for less "irritation" of the respiratory centre, creating conscious control of the breath. When conscious control is present, respiratory dysfunction ceases and corresponding psychosomatic as well as somato-psychic conditions are removed.

In normal body workload, breathing represents about two per cent of metabolism. Respiratory acidosis may create hyperpnoea or rapid breathing or dyspnoea, disrupted or difficult breath and the workload of respiration may go up as much as forty percent. Ventilation of the breath controls the blood



carbon di-oxide tension and the build up of carbonic acid that strangles lung cells, producing hypopnoea or shallow but difficult breathing. Apnoea, cessation of breath, may be caused by the same carbon-di-oxide or acid-base effect upon the respiratory centre of the brain. The respiratory centre is also influenced by lower hydrogen ion concentration in the blood. Other blood acids like lactic acid may also "tire" the whole process of breathing and shut down the breathing centre.

In Prana Mudras the reflex nerves are joined together in hand to hand, hand to body, or hand to foot or foot to foot Mudras. Reflexogenic impulses are directed back through the nervous system to the appropriate part of the "respiratory computer" and the resultant efferent motor signals select appropriate neural pathways to the lower lungs through the phrenic nerves, the mid inter-costal lungs through the pneumo-gastric nerves, and to the clavicular lungs through the thoracic nerves.

The study and practice of the Mudra was at one time a separate section of Yoga, which not only included the use of hand and foot' Mudras, but a system that led to concentration and meditation and Cosmic Union. The use of Mantra was an intrinsic part of Mudra Yoga. The study of Yantra and its mystic symbolism was considered of paramount importance. The Yantric system includes the knowledge of geometrical energy flows and body forces as well as energy flows affecting the planet earth and cosmic flows. Yantra also deals with interpretation of bio-rhythms and the construction of consciousness. The science of Mudra has suffered greatly from lack of modern scholastic research, and reluctance by scientists to explore this field.

## **FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF MUDRA**

*To define Mudras in totality will go much beyond the scope of this study To understand the use of the Mudra a requires number of major considerations :*

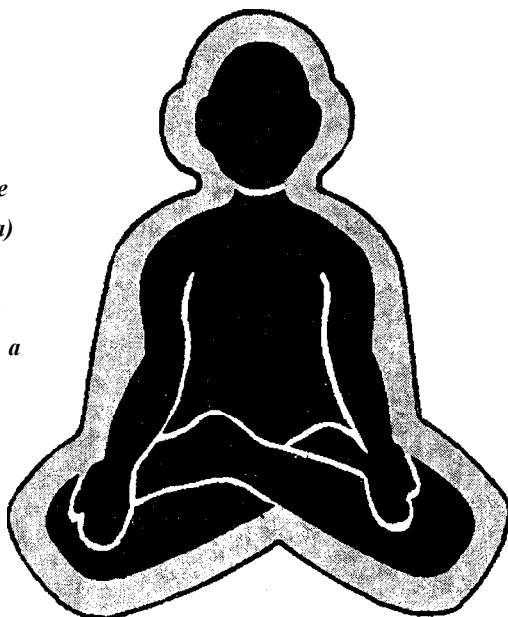
- **The Mudra is made complete by bringing together acupressure points at various sites on the human body. These Bindus are concerned with the pristine practice of Mudra. Thus, every Asana or Kriya is in some way a partial Mudra if these acupressure Bindus are brought into play. This is especially noted in the practice of Hathaats, Hathenas, and Hastikams in the Hatha Yoga system. This group of Asanas comes very close to being classified as Mudras.**
- **The Mudra or gesture can act like a Kriya, increasing or impeding circulation of the blood or lymph into various vital organs. Mudras can control every organ and function of the body and mind.**
- **The Mudra moves energy through the physical nervous system of a bi-polar nature. This bi-polar nature is also inherent in the energy moving in the Pranamaya Kosha, the Vital Body. The Mudra helps to produce an electrical field (Aura) around the Yogi, abundant in negatively charged ions, producing a sense of well-being.**
- **The Mudra extracts energy and substances from the nerves and vital bodies producing the various enzymes and hormones needed for vibrant health.**
- **The Mudra creates a uni-polar base of energy in the Kanda, the Conus Medullaris at the base of the spinal cord. This uni-polar energy is popularly called "Kundalini Shakti".**

The Mudra converts enzymes and hormones into Ojas, purified autocoids, and Tejas, super-enzymes. The Mudra accomplishes *Urdhwa Retas* or a transmutation of lower substances and instinctual needs and drives, producing a *Satchidananda Deha*, an indestructible Yogic body.

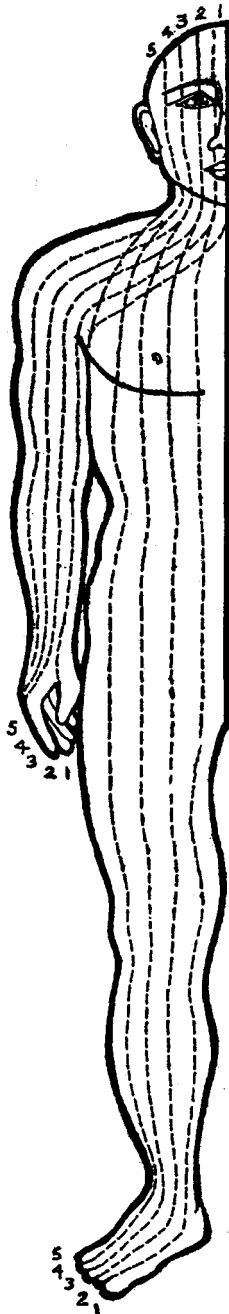
The Mudra arouses and controls the Kundalini Shakti. Kundalini arousal without Mudra is madness.

The Mudra is itself a vehicle of total Union or Yoga. To a pious Hindu Yogi, the Mudra is no longer a gesture of Union, but is Union itself. The devotee becomes Shiva, or Shakti. To quote this author's definition, which appears in *Yoga Psychic Neurology*, "Verily, the Mudra is the Devi, even the Supreme Adept Himself ... Devi is Shakti, but the Mudra controls Her... so Mudra is also the Supreme Shakta".

*Mudras help to produce an electrical field (Aura) around the Yogi, abundant in negatively charged ions, producing a sense of well-being.*



## THE NEURO-MECHANICS OF MUDRAS



The casual observer or the neophyte to Yoga may be easily led to believe that the beauty of the gesture, or the power of the esthete, is that which evokes the Devatha, the Deva and the Devi, or that the entire procedure is entirely symbolical. Nothing could be further from the truth.

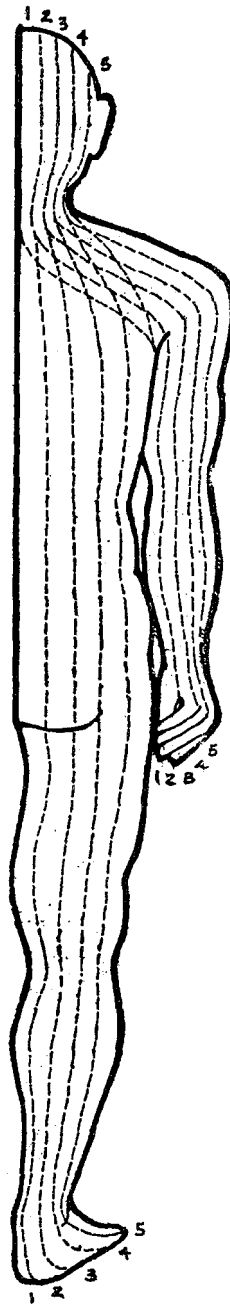
There is a good basis for acceptance that the Mudra does control the mind-brain processes and the functions within the nervous system by uniting various nerve terminals of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. It is acceptable in neurology that the nervous system is divided into aflex and reflex systems. The aflex nervous system carries afferent or

*Prana-Nadi nerve currents in the Annamaya Kosha (physical body) and the Pranamaya Kosha (vital body) flow through the brain into the spinal and peripheral nerves and terminate in the five toe digits (No. 1 to 5). The human body is thus divided into ten Pranic areas, (see figure opposite)*

sensory responses as well as efferent or motor responses. The reflex system is much like the grounding wire of any high voltage electrical system.

In Yoga, the human body can be divided equally into ten distinct parts, five on each side of a median drawn directly through the centre of the body from the top of the head to the base of the spine and terminating in each of the digits of the toes and the fingers. The body can be further sub-divided into ten Pranic areas, where one of the five major Pranic flows governs the head, and others the chest, the abdomen, the pelvis and the extremities. Five minor Pranas are more subtly at work within specific nerve areas. The true use of Pranayama is to control these ten flows of Prana Vayu moving in the Nadis or nerves of the Pancha Kosha, the Five Bodies of Man.

*Prana-nadi nerve currents originating in the brain flow through the pneumogastric nerves to their corresponding members in the fingers of the hands (No. 1 to 5) Proper polarity of the body is maintained by the practice of Pranayamas while doing appropriate Mudras. (See figure opposite)*



**When the fingers of the hands are united together in the Hastha Mudra, the specific nerves (as in Jnana Mudra) are united together in a closed nerve circuit. The fingers not in use represent an open nerve circuit. If the hands are united together (as in Namaskara Mudra), then the cranial nerve circuits of the head and the upper part of the body in the cervical and pneumogastric or vagus system are united. If the hands are brought into alignment on the face (as in Yoni Mudra) then the vagus and facial nerves are brought together in a closed circuit. If the hands are united with the feet (as in Yoga Mudra) then the vagus system is close-circuited with the cerebrospinal nerves. When a posture like Parva Asana, the Past Posture, is used, all of the nervous systems of the body are thrown into turbulent action. Parva Asana is used by the Yogi to see into his past existences and to recollect past lives. It is also sometimes called Purva Janma Mudra or Parva Mudra."**

**Some research is now being done into the way in which the Mudras affect the whole personality. This knowledge was first understood by our ancient Rishis.**

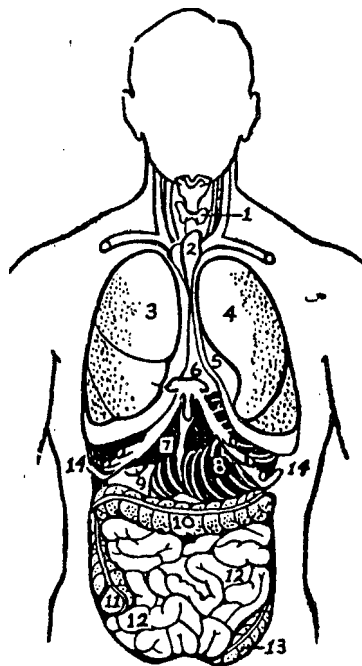
**The purpose of Hatha Yoga Asanas is to bring together these same nerve terminals, uniting them uniquely in the various postures to produce the specific effect of that posture. Asanas, Kriyas and Mudras must be done correctly, otherwise the posture is meaningless. It becomes little more than a physical exercise if the deeper significance is not understood.**

## PRANA MUDRAS

A startling example of how Mudras actually control physical functions of the body exists in the group of Mudras used in Pranayama Yoga for the control of the various lobular segments of the lungs. The right lung is divided into three separate lobes or areas: an inferior, lower, abdominal lobe; a middle lobe; and a high, apical, clavicular or superior lobe. The left lung has only the high and the low lobe except in some very rare cases. However, the lingular part of the left upper lobe is functionally similar to the middle lobe of the right lung as far as functional aspects are concerned.

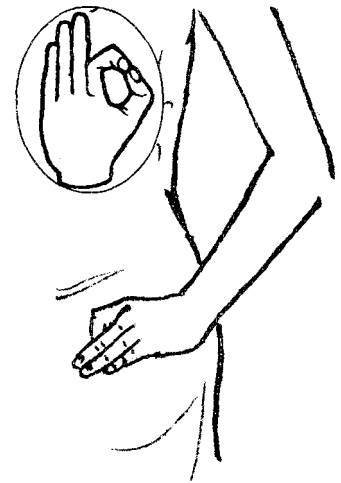
Each of these three lobes is controlled from a section of the brain called Apraakasha Bindu. It is equivalent to the

1. Thyroid
2. Thymus
3. Right Lung
4. Left Lung
5. Cardiac Notch
6. Pericardium
7. Liver
8. Stomach
9. Gall Bladder
10. Transverse Colon
11. Caecum
12. Small Intestine
13. Sigmoid Colon
14. Rib Cage



*The thoracic & abdominal cavities*

medical respiratory centre in the brain stem. The respiratory centre is divided into three general areas. The lower area, called Chin Bindu, governs abdominal breathing. The mid area, known as Chinmaya Bindu, governs mid lobular breathing, while the upper-most area of the respiratory centre, called Adhi Bindu, governs clavicular or high breathing.



*Chin Mudra*

The entire Apraakasha Bindu is divided into two segments, one governing inspiration and the other governing expiration. Impulses that arise from the lower area of this vegetative part of the



*Chinmaya Mudra*

brain, send nerve impulses through the phrenic nerve and thus excite diaphragmic breathing. The Yogic term for diaphragmic breathing is Adham Pranayama. The Mudra to control this area is called Chin Mudra. Conscious impulses arising in the cerebral cortex of the brain arouse impulses in the mid section of the Apraakasha Bindu, sending signals through the pneumogastric nerves for mid-chest breathing. Intracostal or mid-chest breathing is called Madhyam Pranayama and is controlled by the use of Chinmaya Mudra. Apical breathing in the superior or high



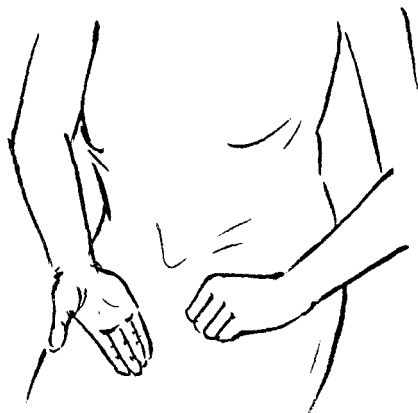
area of the lungs is ordered by impulses arising from within the cerebral cortex of the conscious brain, sending mental impulses into the upper portion of the breathing centre. The Mudra to control high chest breathing is the Adhi Mudra

Each lobe of the lungs can be primarily inflated and deflated independently, one from another, by the use of the appropriate Mudra with one hand, while the Shunya Mudra is gestured by the other hand.



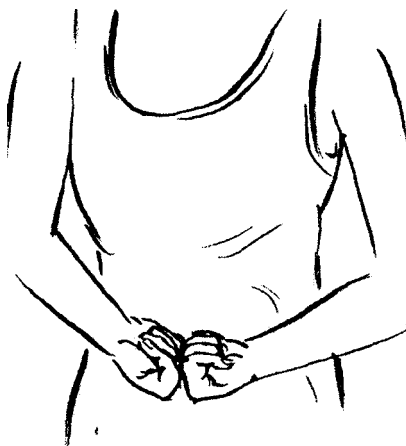
*Adhi Mudra*

It will be observed that mainly only one lobe will inflate at a time. The hand Mudras may be reversed a number of times to see the flow of air from side to side in the appropriate area of the lungs.



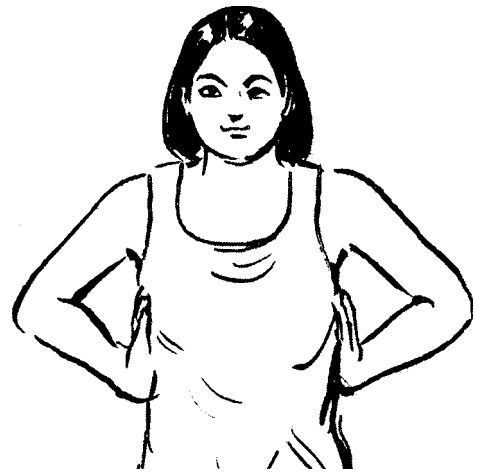
*Shunya Mudra with Adhi Mudra*

The Brahma Mudra, with both hands held in a closed fist, fingers upwards, at the navel is used to stimulate air flow into all three areas of the lungs.



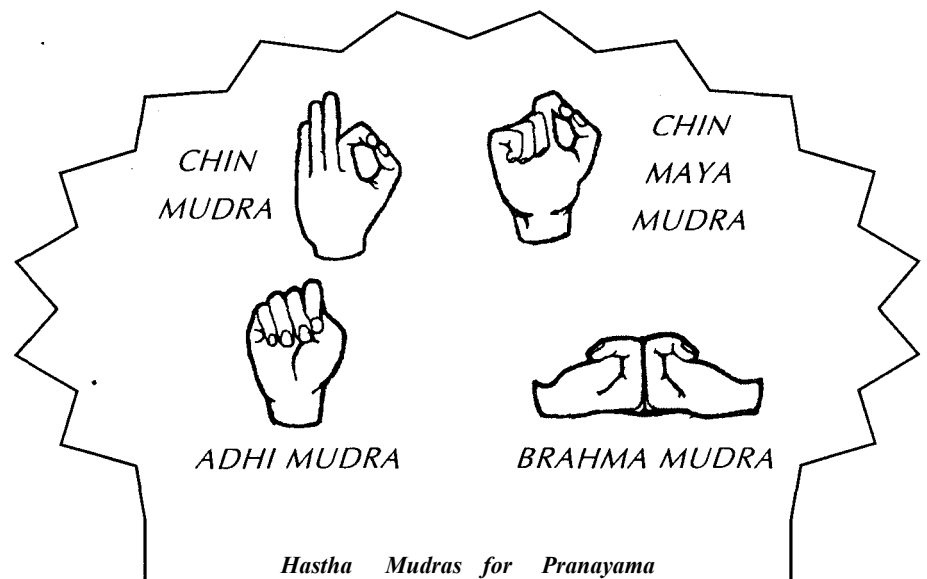
*Brahma Mudra*

This is called Mahat Yoga Pranayama, or Complete Chest Breathing. In the Mahat Yoga Pranayama, the lower lobes inflate first, then the mid lobes, and finally, the upper lobes, in a slow, consecutive breath. Deflation occurs in a similar pattern from low to high. It is of interest to note that the oldest meaning of the Sanskrit word "Brahma" is "breath".



*Sparsha Mudra  
placed on the side*

These Hashta Mudras known by our ancient Yoga Rishis for the control of breath are but a few of the hundreds of Mudras used in Yoga and Tantra for the control of the body and its functions as well as for balancing the emotions and mind and for the arousal, control and culmination of the Kundalini Shakti into the Supreme Union, "Self with Self".



## **CHAPTER TWO**

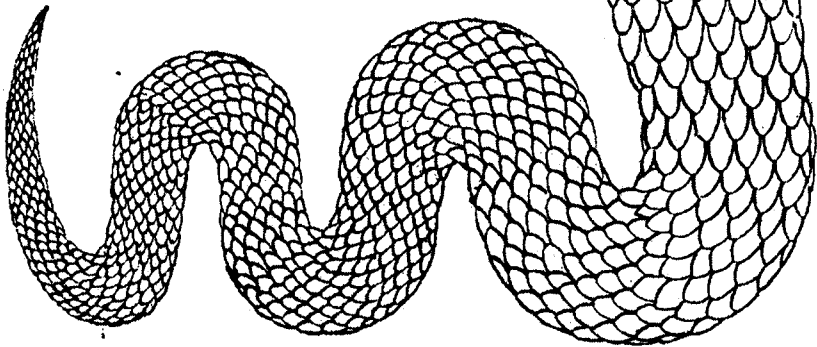
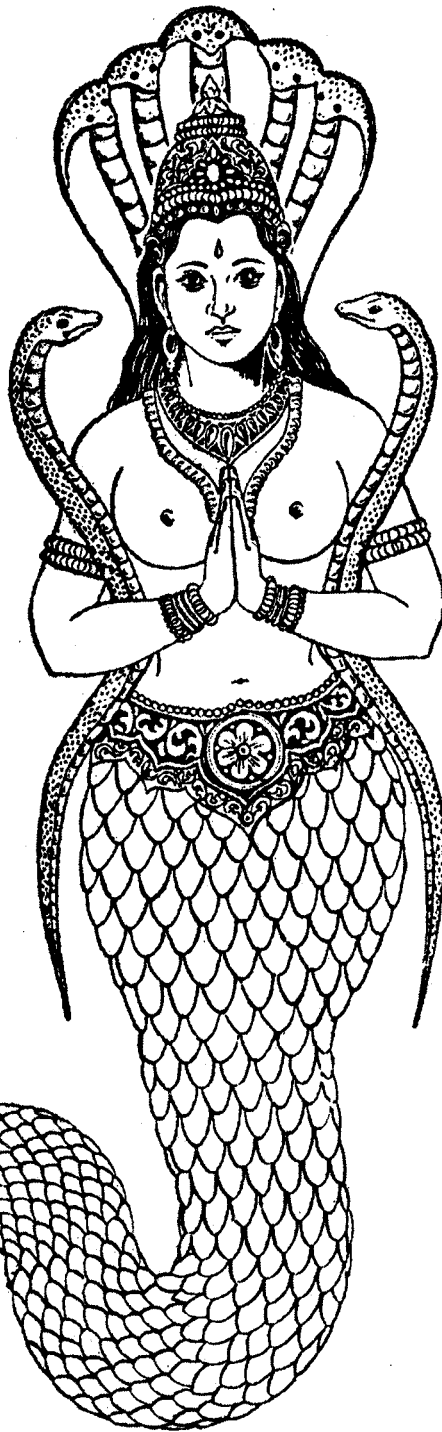
### **OLI MUDRAS**

#### **A GENERAL OVERVIEW**

**A STUDY IN THE  
CLASSICAL SHAKTI MUDRAS  
ALSO CALLED THE  
SHAT MUDRAS**

*"The Natural Universe is locked in one gigantic cosmic embrace of energies, classified as positive and negative. The ancient Rishis depicted these forces as male and female, as God and Goddess. The highest of these Divine Forces were termed Shakta and Shakti. Shakta could not move without Shakti. Shakti or power was observed manifesting at all levels and the Rishis described the most powerful of all these forces as the Kundalini Shakti which lies dormant in the Kanda at the base of the human spine."*

— Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri



## YOGA AND THE CONTROL OF SEXUAL ENERGIES THROUGH THE SHAKTI MUDRAS

*"In this present Kali Yuga, attainment of all things is achieved alone by Kaulika observances. Therefore, these practices should be performed with every care. In doing so, all knowledge of the Brahman is revealed. The worshipper, while living, is freed from the rounds of birth and re-birth. The righteous man by right-use-ness is exonerated from the performance of all other religious rites and rituals. At this time all things appear to be the same, whether pure or impure. All is the Supreme. What is there that can be impure?"*

**-Kulachara Tantra.**

I approach this subject with my mind open to the Supreme Lila, the Sport of the Divine with His Creation. I present this knowledge with the certainty that the mind of the reader is equally open, without judgment of whether a thing is pure or impure, so that greater knowledge can be gained, tolerance may be extended and ignorance turned towards truth.

It is almost impossible to discuss, study or teach the subject of Yoga and particularly, Tantra, without dealing with concepts related to sex and sensuality. Sexual activity must be differentiated from sexuality for the purpose of greater understanding. Although a Sadhak may not engage in sexual activity, the mind may continue to be filled with sensual thoughts. Sensuous thinking occupies most of the fluxuations of the mind, stealing away the "time of the spirit". No other single train of thought more occupies the adolescent and adult mind than that of a sensuous, sexual nature.

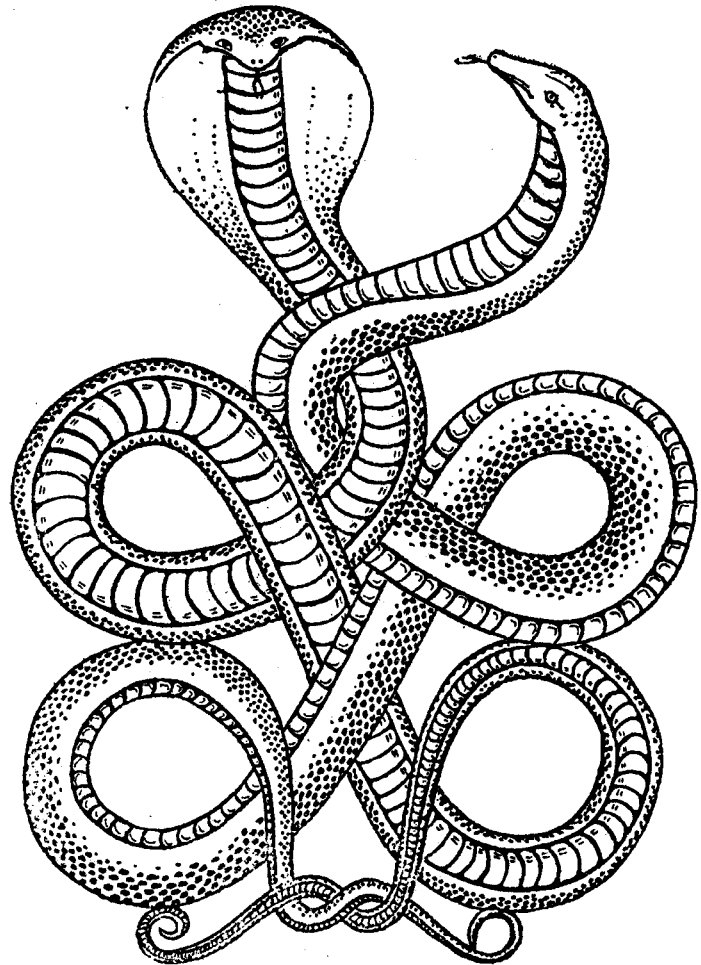
Yoga is Oneness. Nothing, can be left out in a universe which is "Full". Sensuality leads to sexual activity for many. Sexual congress may be the only form of union many men

or women may ever know in this or many other incarnations. Yet, Yoga means the "Ultimate of Unions". Therefore, Yoga must deal with "Union" in all concepts and activities, imaginary or actual. Yoga openly teaches an elevating attitude towards sexual mores. Definite rules are laid down for the conduct of men and women at various levels of their evolution. Techniques for control of sensuous thoughts and the sublimation of the sexual drive and forces are a legitimate part of the practice of Yoga.

To the Buddha's Eight-Fold Path of Righteousness, Yoga has added a ninth commandment-the right attitude towards sexuality. Upon the right-use-ness of this powerful sexual force depends the Supreme Release (Moksha) of the Yogin.

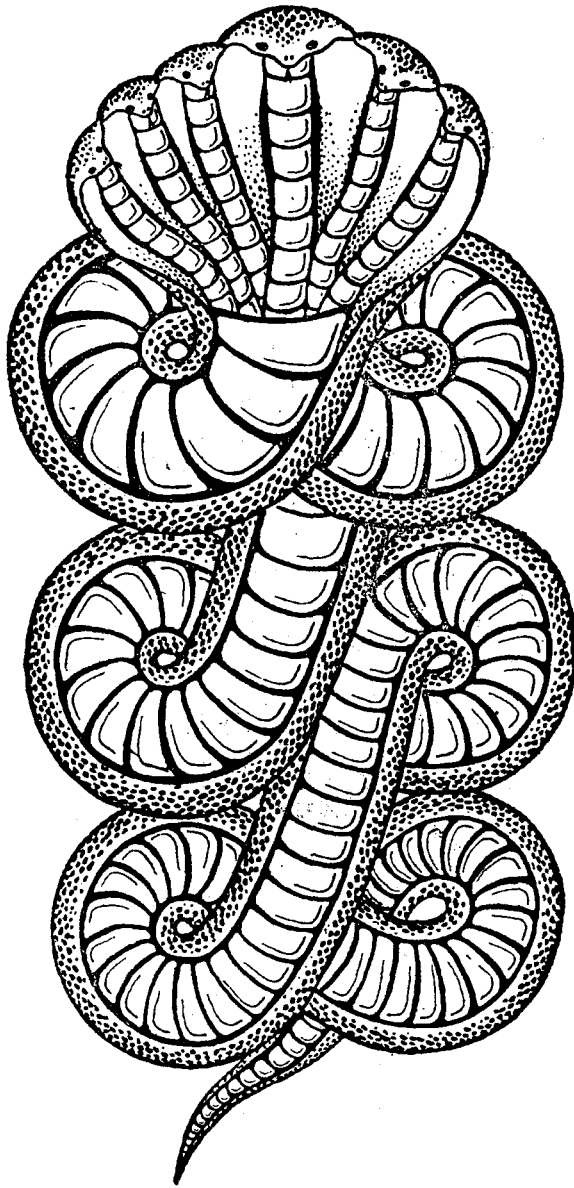
India has given birth to three mystic sciences: Yoga, Tantra and Yantra. These three distinct but sometimes interrelated philosophies and paths exist so that every type of nature in man may be served within the universality of these philosophies as a way of life. Yoga is a practical, self-help method to attain to Union or Oneness. Tantra is a mystical path having two aspects, one sexual and the other, a-sexual. Yantra is an esoteric path to elevate the mind through symbolic interpretations of the power in man through spiritual mathematics, geometry, and semantic symbols.

Yoga offers three paths to its devotees. The first is *Brahmacharya*, the path of celibacy. Celibacy alone must not be considered a Yoga. A *Brahmacharya* without the practice of Asanas, Kriyas and Mudras, Pranayamas, Bandhas, Pratyahara, Dharana and Dhyana will simply be an undeveloped Tyagi, a renunciate, a wanderer, a common Sadhu without much evolutionary depth. A profound study of the innermost teachings of Yoga, Yantra and Tantra are necessary to produce a true Brahmachari,



Ida and Pingala

*The powerful forces of the human body are depicted in ancient Rishi literature as Nagas or serpents. Usually the king cobra was chosen as the depiction. The term "Shakti" literally means power or energy and this Shakti is said to permeate the Pancha Kosha, the Five Bodies of Man. In the physical body, this Shakti moves through Nadis or nerves. There are 72,000 Nadis in all of the Pancha Kosha. Yoga and Tantra teach that eighteen of these Nadis are most important. Ida and Pingala Nadi the most important pair of these eighteen, are here depicted as a male and a female cobra which also represent a form of the Shakta-Shakti. The right peripheral nerve is superior to the left. Pingala Shakti takes precedence over Ida Shakti. When the power of both is subdued by the Laya Yogin, then energy otherwise dissipated through these two Nadis is directed to the Kanda, the Conus Medullaris, at the base of the spine.*



Sushumna Nadi

*The powerful force of the Shat Chakras, the Six Psychic Centres of the spine, is depicted in the six coils of the aroused Maha Shakti Naga, a serpent also called Shanmukhi Naga, the Serpent with Six Heads. This is the powerful force collected from the other nerves of the body and concentrated into the Sushumna Nadi, the hollow opening of the spinal cord, the Canalis Centralis.*



*"literally, one who has taken God as his guide". A Brahmachari is pure in thought, word and deed and is not just sexually abstinent.*

The second path is open to the spiritual aspirant is that of Grahastha, the householder. Many great Rishis and Yogis have been married men. Indeed, some spiritual giants have been women. Grahastha Ashrama is an honorable stage of life for which many Yogic practices are highly suited. Some Tantric practices are highly recommended for those who wish to elevate sexual activity into an act of Prema or Universal Love, a kind of Param Bhakti.

*Sannyasa is the third path open the Yogi. It is the path of total renunciation. Although in classical Hindu social organisation there are four Ashramas or states, the third being retirement (Vanaprastha), Yoga holds that after the household stage Sannyasa should be taken. Vedantins usually enter Vanaprastha the third stage, retiring from family activity, customs and rituals. Sannyasa is to dedicate one's life totally to spiritual evolution. This is not simply renouncing the world, but rather, opening up to the entire higher Universe hidden previously from view by worldly attachments. The world gives up the true Sannyasi. He does not need to give up the world.*

The practice of Yoga under a competent Guru offers the safest means for the attainment of a high evolutionary spiritual state. The Jivan Mukta state is available for the sincere student on the path of Yoga. Although it is said that Tantra Sadhana is fit for the people in Kali Yuga, it must be explained that only the Dakshina Marga or Evolutionary Path of Tantra is meant by this statement. Vama Marga is devolutionary, retrograding and retrogressing.

Those who follow the Tantric path without the guide of an evolved Guru will degenerate into common sexual psychopaths. Without the discipline of Yoga, the inner or hidden meaning in the Pancha Makara and what appears to be "sexual rituals" will not be revealed. The unwary student will fall victim to his lower nature. In Yoga, the sacred meaning of marriage or union, indeed of the sanctity of the sexual act itself, is clearly taught. If a study of Yantra, Hindu mysticism, is undertaken, then a clear insight will be found into the meaning of the male-female principle, the Shakta-Shakti of the entire Universe.

There is an inherent danger in the study of Yantra as well. Yoga discipline is necessary to avoid this pitfall. Yantra teaches of the origin of the human mind, of energies potential and factual, of universal cycles and body-rhythms. Interest in these cosmic cycles and bio-rhythms alone can deteriorate into a study of analyzing others, of working out cycles for business and other material things, rather than the real application of Yantric principles as tools of knowing one. All three paths of Yoga, Tantra and Yantra are equally moral and virtuous and have been encouraged by great Rishis and Gurus from earliest times. These teachers of Eternal Truths may have placed more emphasis upon one path than another, but the Rishis had sincere respect for all paths. Teachers of half-truths have inflicted their prejudices upon their students so often that these prejudices are directed toward the latter two paths of Tantra and Yantra.

This author has experienced all Ashramas as a student, a householder who entered and retired from the professional world, and as a Sannyasin now dedicated only to higher pursuits, I can unequivocally state that Yoga, Tantra and Yantra are ONE.

Similar practices or techniques are used by followers of all three paths. Only the end result, because of the motive for their use,

is different. *This should clearly show that the mental aspect behind one's motive is extremely important.* The "Adhi" produces the "Vyadhi", the "higher" produces the "lower". "Adhi-Vyadhi" is the Sanskrit for psychosomatics, and can be positive as well as negative. In popular modern medicine psychosomatics is considered only from its negative standpoint. The Rishi Vashishta taught Lord Rama its positive application as well.

For the Brahmachari, or the Yogi who chooses to live a sexually pure life, Asanas, Kriyas and Mudras offer the discipline and training necessary for his Tapas, celibate austerities, seclusion and spiritual chastity. The controlled sex act and the teachings of household Dharma provide a means of liberating the Grahastha from the animal, nature of his lower passions, opening his mind to spiritual contentment. The esoteric teachings of the Prema-Bhakti rites and sexual-like techniques supply the elevation of consciousness for the Yogi and Yogini who are engaged in an active sexual life, even enjoying the fulfillment of the senses while in the Grahastha Ashrama. For the Sannyasin, the Oli Mudras offer a manner in which the Virya or power of the sexual drive is transmuted into Ojas and Tejas, mind stuff, and the psychic forces. Ojas and Tejas are psychic mental food and fire power which arouses, various forms of Shakti. The Brahmachari, the Grahastha, as well as the Sannyasin are encouraged to practise the Shat Mudras, the Oli Mudras. The *Kapala Tantra* states, "He who knows the true nature (and practises) the Six Mudras, who understands (that this is) the highest Mudra, meditating on himself (the Atman within) in the posture called Bhaga Asana (the Posture of Highest Morality) reaches Nirvana (Union with the Supreme Nature)."

Methods or techniques which control the "sexual Shakti" preventing it from continually arousing sensuous passions vary from one Parampara (Lineage) to another. Some teachers

recommend an abstinence from sexual intercourse as being the only suitable method for the Brahmachari, infrequent intercourse for the Grahastha and sublimation of an indefinite nature for the Sannyasin and the Tantric.

These practices may produce negative results or suppression or repression of the powerful sexual drive. Repression can only lead to a disassociation of mind from reality, and subsequent chaotic behavior. Suppression, although offering a diversion of the emotions, is also negative. A distraction from the higher spiritual goal is inevitable. In repression, emotions and feelings are held in check or under control, which are suspected to be unacceptable to one's moral standard, religious code, or to society as a whole. In suppression, certain emotions or behavior patterns unacceptable to one's religious code, moral standard or society in general, may be pushed down below the level of consciousness, and somehow held there. An analogy may help explain. Suppression is somewhat like a fireman sitting on the outlet of a powerful fire hydrant. As soon as he moves, the water gushes forth again. Repression is stated to allow thoughts and acts to slip out from under the control of the mind, like water seeping through cracks in a dam until the seepage causes so much damage that the dam bursts.

Some alternative approaches to abstinence, which may cause repression or suppression, must be available. Indeed, Yoga offers a method and a technique. The method is a type of activity that leads to mental control, while the technique is one leading to healthy sublimation of the sexual drive. The first requires simple discipline. The second requires a discipline supported by powerful effort.



## THE ETERNAL PAIR

*Gauri-Shankar*

*Parvathi-Shiva*

*Shakti-Shakta*



## **THE YOGA METHOD OF SEXUAL SUBLIMATION, CONTROL OR DISCIPLINE**

The sexual control advocated through various forms of Yoga discipline produces a kind of Pratyahara, a sensory withdrawal or sensory control of the visceral senses. Hunger and thirst are also closely associated with the sexual drive. These Yoga techniques increase the power of concentration of the mind and give overall sense of well being.

### **DIET**

A carefully chosen diet eliminating or severely restricting foods which tend to influence the Tamasic or Rajasic nature must be followed. Tamasic foods include all flesh and devitalized foods, while Rajasic foods are pepper, salt, alcohol, refined products like sugar and alcohol, and all stimulating drugs.

### **NATURAL HYGIENE**

The bowel must be kept clear of congestion and the kidneys and bladder should function properly. The skin and other mucous organs must operate at peak efficiency. Glands should be kept healthy, particularly the prostate gland in the male.

### **SECLUSION AND QUIETNESS**

Some time should be spent in a clean, peaceful environment, away from oppressive frictions of any type. A natural, rural environment is to be recommended, near a water source or on a mountainside. An attempt should be made to practice short periods of "speech

continence" or Mauna, as silence is an excellent way to gain control of the lower nature.

#### **HARD WORK**

Manual labour offers both a diversion from sexual passion as well as a discipline using up the emotional energy which is otherwise dissipated. Gardening, or some other similar activity, is highly recommended.

#### **EXERCISE**

Hatha Yoga Asanas, Kriyas, Mudras and the Pranayamas are particularly advocated as a method to sublimate sexual drive. Some sporting activities may have a similar effect.

#### **PRAYER OR MEDITATION**

Inner quietude offers a diversion of a psychological nature. Meditation is much superior to prayer for this purpose, as prayer tends to turn negative through repeated requests for some particular strength.

#### **STUDY**

The study and reading of good books, particularly those which are called "The Holy Books" also offers a diversion of the mind from sexual preoccupation. These books often are the source of *"that precious knowledge which sets one free"*.

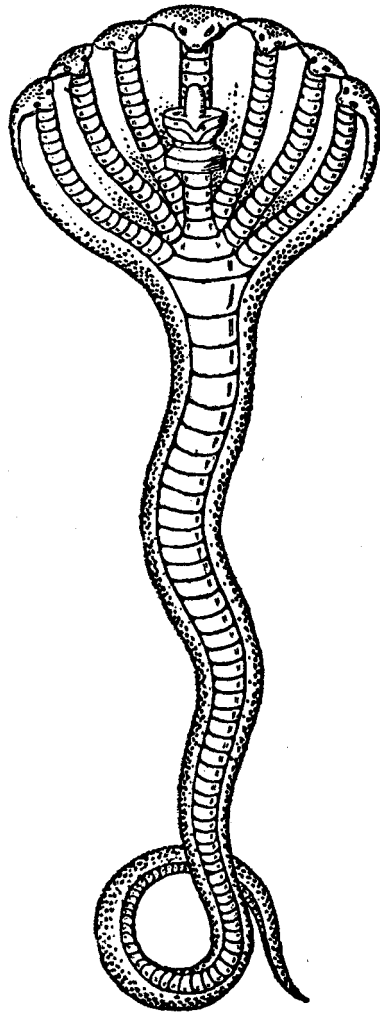
#### **MANTRA**

Mantras, in particular that form called Japa, or constant repetition of some Bija or short Mantra is an excellent form of thought sublimation. The Japa repetition may be in either a written (Likitha), oral (Vachika) or mental (Manasika) form of expression.

## SUBLIMATION OF THE SEXUAL DRIVE

The sublimation of sensuous thoughts or sexual stimulation into a higher form of energy or power is the ultimate goal and the ideal in the practice of Yoga. Many will deny that their lower thoughts are sexual, but if analyzed properly, one will find that all worldly attachment has a sexual overtone in the desire to possess or be possessed.

Proper sublimation builds the power of the mind in its manifold aspects and if properly released produces



*The full blown Shakti is depicted as a Sapta Mukha Naga, a serpent with seven heads, representing seven open Chakras or Padmas. The full-flared hood of the giant Bhujangini gives honour and security to the transmuted sexual forces represented within the Mahalingam and the Mahayoni. When depicted in this fashion, the serpent power (Kundalini Shakti) has been uncoiled from its usual three-coiled, dormant state and raised through the Sushumna Nadi.*



**the powerful Shakti for a Cosmic Conscious experience called Samadhi, where Atman and Paramatman are realised as One.**

**The process or technique of sublimation may include all of the controls previously mentioned, and should be the preliminary stage or the beginning point for a novice or new practitioner to Yoga.**

**The following five points are then to be observed.**

- 1. Dedication to a lofty ideal, as in the attainment of Cosmic Union.**
- 2. Proper guidance and instruction at the feet of a competent Master, a Guru skilled in the tradition of the sublimation of lower thoughts and activities into the higher powers of Ojas and Tejas.**
- 3. Receiving instructions in the proper manner to perform the Shat Mudras, the Six Vital Gestures, also called the Oli Mudras.**
- 4. Proper instruction in the Antaranga or inner phases of Yoga, particularly Pratyahara and Dharana. This sensory control and Adhyatmic concentration ultimately leads to meditation. Meditation is a higher mental process of reaching through the lower murkiness of mind to the "seeds of thought" and then moving into the higher conscious stages.**
- 5. An initiation into the correct techniques of Laya Yoga. Laya Yoga is the technique of reabsorption of wasted energies to produce the Cosmic Conscious experience of Samadhi.**

# **BANDHA TRAYAM PRAKRIYA**

## ***THE THEORY AND TECHNICAL PRACTICE OF THE TRIPLE RESTRAINT AS TAUGHT IN RISHICULTURE ASHTANGA YOGA***

Important but neglected techniques of the entire Hatha and Raja Yoga system are the Bandhas associated with the Pranayama Kriyas and Prakriyas, where the restraint of breath is a part of the technique or process. This fault is particularly glaring where Yoga has been taught as a mundane process of body activity and breathing exercises with no reference to Rishi Culture Yoga or to anything that would qualify as Yoga in light of ancient teachings.

Even scientific researchers of Yoga must be careful to see that they do not research the lack of Yoga... especially if this lack is in the researcher rather than in the Yoga. Scientific investigators must be "men of Yoga" if they are to research the phenomenon of Yoga. At present, the field has been taken over by 'arm-chair Yogis' and the material spewed out is dubious, to say the least.

In Hatha Yoga, Uddiyana Bandha is done while semi-standing in a modified squat. There, the emphasis is on neuro-muscular actions alone, rather than upon the total effects of the Bandha, and particularly the effects of the Uddiyana Bandha in relationship to the other two Bandhas in the Bandha Trayam. If the three Bandhas are attempted in any other posture than the Vajra Asana, then the effects are minimised. Using the contemplative poses like Siddha Asana, Ardha-Padma Asana or Padma Asana modifies the excellent peripheral blood flow observed in

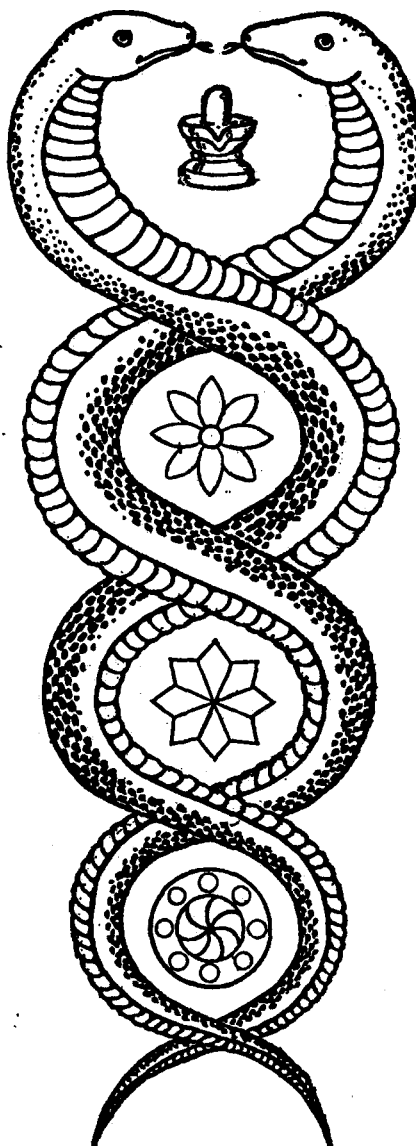
the tests done using Vajra Asana alone. Few candidates are observed to be able to hold a sufficiently erect spine in any crossed-leg sitting position to gain much value from the Bandha Trayam. There is an exception to this for those who are highly proficient in the art of Hatha Yoga. In the highest of all Yoga practices, a practice which is part of the Oil Mudras, or Shat Mudras, the Amaroli Mudra is done from a complicated crossed-leg sitting position, the Shakti Chalana Asana and Shakta Chalani Asana.

A second point often raised is whether it is possible to do the Bandha Trayam while the breath is held 'in' or restrained. Jalandhara Bandha at the throat and Moola Bandha at the anal sphincters can be accomplished, but it is not possible to do the high abdominal Uddiyana Bandha except on the 'held out' restraint of the breath. It may be possible to do a modified or semi-controlled Uddiyana Bandha while the breath is 'held in', but it must be observed that the total effect of the Bandha Trayam can only be observed with the 'held out' breath restraint.

The Bandha Trayam, the Triple Breath Restraint, is a complicated Prakriya, a Yoga Pranayama process directing various energy flows upwards along the spinal nerve channels of Ida, Pingala and Sushumna Nadi. When done correctly the Bandhas represent the powerful Pranic restraints, which force the aroused Kundalini Shakti to pierce through the Tri-Granthi, the Triple Psychic Knots, which protect the ignorant Yogi from arousing the Shakti without proper knowledge and control, thus unleashing a powerful negative force represented by the Goddess Kali.

The aroused creative energy, the Kundalini, should move up through the open Sushumna Nadi, the Canalis Centralis of the hollow spinal cord. In the Pranamaya Kosha (the Vital Body) three barriers called Granthis or knots impede the movement

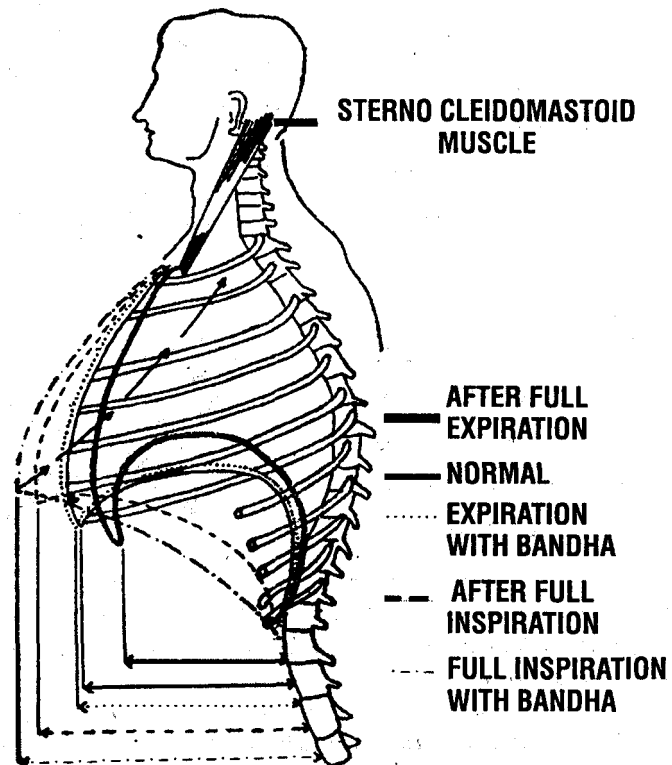
of the Shakti as it moves in the two lower bodies. The first barrier is the Brahma Granthi in the pelvic area. The second is Vishnu Granthi in the abdominal area. The third is Mahadeva Granthi at the throat. Collectively, they are termed the Tri-Granthis, the Triple Knots. These Granthis actually protect the ignorant practitioner from danger. They must be pierced only when the practitioner has matured in his or her Yoga practice and has been given a specific Mantra to loosen up the constriction imposed by the Granthis, along with the specific practice of the Bandha Trayam. If these knots are pierced by any other method, then emotional indulgence, insanity and ultimately, violent death ensues. The appropriate Mantras used for the piercing of the Tri Granthis must be received from a Yoga Master



*The entwined serpents depict the Shakti in Ida and Pingala Nadi. The eight-pointed forms depicted within the coils are the Granthis or psychic knots along the spinal column. These Tri-Granthis (triple psychic knots) are removed by the practice of the Bandha Trayam. The Lingam and the Yoni shown between the unopened hood of the cobras represents the Divine Potential within the aroused Kundalini Shakti.*

steeped in the Mantric and Tantric principles and practice. A common form of such a Mantra is *OM AIM KLIM STRIM OM*.

A schematic explanation of the effect on the body of breathing with and without the use of Bandhas follows. The contraction of the intercostal muscles aided by the contraction of the sternocleidomastoid and scalene muscles, especially after adopting Jalandhara Bandha, raises the ribs and makes them flair out laterally and so increases the transverse and the antero-posterior diameter of the thorax. It affects the position of the thorax and also affects the position of the dome of the diaphragm. Uddiyana Bandha and the Moola Bandha sustain the action of the Jalandhara Bandha. The position of the ribs, sternum and



*Respiratory Action with Bandha*

diaphragm are shown in the diagram at the side, with and without the use of the Bandhas and at the normal resting position. Considerable difference is to be noted with the use of Bandha Trayam.

The Bandha Trayam is not just a simple use of three restraints or the Rishi developing this Kriya and Mudra would have entitled the process Tribandha Prana Kriya. Bandha Trayam is a Kriya when used in the Hatha Yoga concept. It becomes a Prakriya when used in Pranayama Yoga. It becomes a powerful neuro-muscular Mudra when used in the higher practices of Yoga, such as in the Oli Mudras and in the preliminaries to the practices of the Kundalini-arousing Laya Yoga Kriyas.

The three parts of the Bandha Trayam must be carefully practised, one independently of the other, until full mastery is attained. They are then coupled together so that Jalandhara Bandha and Moola Bandha are used on the held-in breath, (the Kumbhaka) while all three Bandhas are applied after the expulsion of the breath (Shunyaka), a vacuum state also known as Bhaya Kumbhaka. In some advanced Pranayamas, like Ujjayi and Surya Bhedana, the breath is actually moved through the locks.

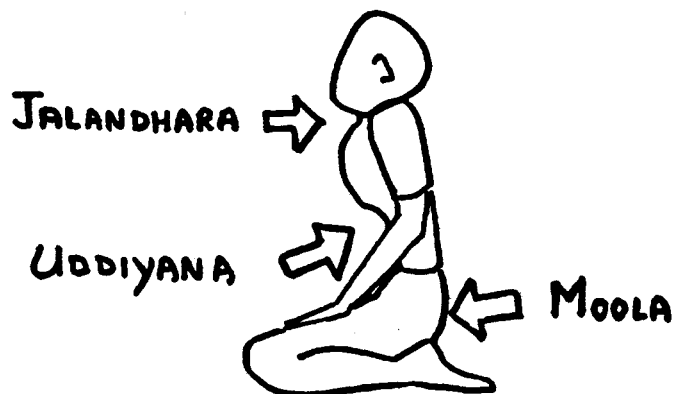
The technique for each of the Bandhas must be carefully observed, whatever the breath ratio.

**Technique for Jalandhara Bandha :** The restraint at the jugular notch is accomplished by taking in a slow deep inspiration. At the peak of the breath, push the chin forward in the Mayur Mudra, like a peacock. Then, drop the point of the chin onto the jugular notch of the chest. This Bandha allows Shakti to safely pierce through the Mahadeva Granthi.

**Technique for Moola Bandha :** The restraint at the root base of the alimentary canal is accomplished as follows. After the breath is held in or out in a Kumbhaka, the rectal muscles are tensed so that the sphincters of the anus are tightened in an exaggerated manner. Lean (not bend) forward slightly in Shakti Mudra to allow the energy to pierce the Brahma Granthi just above the anus.

**Technique for Uddiyana Bandha :** The "Flying Up Restraint" is done only after a Rechaka or expelled breath. While the breath is held out, pull the abdominal wall and internal organs back towards the spine. Then, lift upwards so that the abdominal organs are sucked up by the vacuum into the rib cage. Various other Kriyas and Mudras like Nauli Kriya, Agni Sara, and Manthana Kriya are done while this Bandha is held so that the Shakti pierces the Vishnu Granthi.

In the higher practices of Rishiculture Yoga, a breath ratio is used along with the Bandha Trayam to augment the Yoga restraints. First, the held in breath is for a 16 count while the held out breath is for an 8 count. Then the breath restraints are increased and intensified day by day. After months of dedicated practice the breath is restrained for a 64 by 32 count.



*Bandha Trayam: The Triple Restraint*

## **EFFECTS OF BANDHA TRAYAM**

**There are immense benefits to the practice of the Bandha Trayam while doing Pranayama. Some of the benefits are received when performing each of the three, independent parts of the Triple Restraint.**

**Jalandhara Bandha regulates the flow of blood to the cephalic region of the head, actually accelerating blood drainage from the vital organs of the head and the neck. Without this Bandha, blood normally stagnates in the organs of the head causing tension of the eyes and producing such conditions as migraine headaches and the general sense of "woolliness" of the brain. The enhanced venous drainage, from the head and neck area is of great value in correcting tension problems of the face, nasal passages as well as the throat and neck area.**

**Moola Bandha affects the central and sympathetic nervous system in a positive manner, reducing tension. This ultimately reduces inflammation at the uro-genital region. The ovaries in the female and the prostate gland in the male receive an enhanced blood circulation. Increased muscular tone relieves problems relative to varicose veins and hemorrhoids. Moola Bandha may be used as a prevention of these conditions. Phlebitis and blood clotting thrombus is eliminated. Moola Bandha has been shown to be beneficial for toning up the kidneys, bladder and generally tuning up the muscle structure of the female sex organs. There is some possibility that Moola Bandha is of aid in dissolving or passing soft kidney and bladder stones.**

**Uddiyana Bandha strengthens of the diaphragm, cures dyspepsia and is recommended for diabetics. Uddiyana Bandha**



aids in draining a clogged up liver, and hardens and tones up the pancreas and the spleen. With the retoning of the spleen, horrific conditions like leukemia may be retarded or controlled, especially if used in conjunction with special Asanas designed to eliminate radioactive fall-out from the body. Uddiyana Bandha and its companion practice of Nauli Kriya eliminate constipation by encouraging the natural peristalsis of the bowel.

There is a tremendous psychological value to the practice of Bandha Trayam as well. The Jalandhara Bandha gets rid of "cob-webby" thinking. Uddiyana Bandha insures that blood circulation maintains a peak efficiency, while the Moola Bandha has the effect of canceling out neurotic and psychotic tendencies associated with failure, or disappointment associated with sexual drives. Using Ashwini Mudra instead of Moola Bandha is useful in treating borderline neurotic and psychotic cases. Ashwini Mudra begins with the anal sphincter tightening action of the Moola Bandha, then the tension is released and rapidly imposed once again. The action is repeated over and over again, simulating the method of the fecal evacuation of a horse. Relief from neurotic and psychotic tendencies is often almost miraculous. Feelings of serenity and equanimity ensure and body and mind attain homeostasis.

In general, the practice of Bandha Trayam improves the tonus of the lung tissue as the width of the chest increases and a greater breath capacity is produced, developing all major parts of the lungs equally. Pressure is taken off various organs like the heart and lungs. While doing the Bandha Trayam, the heart elongates vertically, giving it a healthy massage, increasing cardiac blood flow, reducing fatty accumulation and increasing cardiac and pulmonary efficiency.

A regular practice of the Bandha Trayam is recommended as a preventive to all types of lung and heart diseases, and as an aid to digestion and elimination processes. Hernias, prolapse of organs and glandular infections are prevented. Thrombi, blood clots, and venous phlebitis are retarded. A healthy spine can also be attributed to the practice of Bandha Trayam. Enjoyment of life is increased with good digestion and a "happy" liver. Ladies should note that healthy babies are spawned from a healthy pelvis. One ardent writer declares in an ancient text that, with the practice of Bandha Trayam, "fear flies away".

My readers should note, therefore, that Bandha Trayam is not a "throw-away" Yoga technique as popular Yoga teachers would have us believe, but rather is a vital life-giving, life-sustaining life-enjoying practice for those living the YOGA LIFE.

## **BANDHAS: A SAFETY VALVE**

During the prolonged performance of the held in (Anthara Kumbhaka) and held out (Bahira or Shunya Kumbhaka) breath practices there is a great increase in the intra thoracic and intra abdominal pressures. If this is not checked in time it may result in the occurrence of various hernias, organ prolapses or the production of hemorrhoids. The Bandhas act a safety measure to prevent this 'pressure overload' as they effectively take off pressure from the internal organs of the thoracic and abdominal cavities during the practice of prolonged Kumbhakas. They also strengthen and re-train the muscles of respiration as well as the pelvic and abdominal muscles to function in an efficient and healthy manner. Thus it may be said that the Bandhas are an effective safety valve during the prolonged and rigorous practice of Pranayama.

*(Based on a study by K.S Gopal and S Lakshmanan published in Yoga Life, Jan 1973, pg 3-18)*

## A TYPICAL TANTRIC HYMN

### EXOTERIC ( LITERAL )

All men  
Serve the female  
Freely.  
The Maharasa  
Within the body  
Is worth  
Thousands of chests  
Filled with gems.  
When that wealth  
Is lost,  
Man  
Becomes subdued  
By the woman.  
A lioness  
Is she  
She casts  
Her eyes  
Like a tigress  
She leaves aside  
The bones and flesh  
and sucks up  
The Maharasa,  
Woman  
Deals in the  
Wealth of man  
and the  
Allured man  
Goes on  
Serving her  
Freely.  
With his plough  
and bulls  
Man cultivates  
The fields of others.  
There is the loss  
of the bulls  
and the seed  
In the bargain.

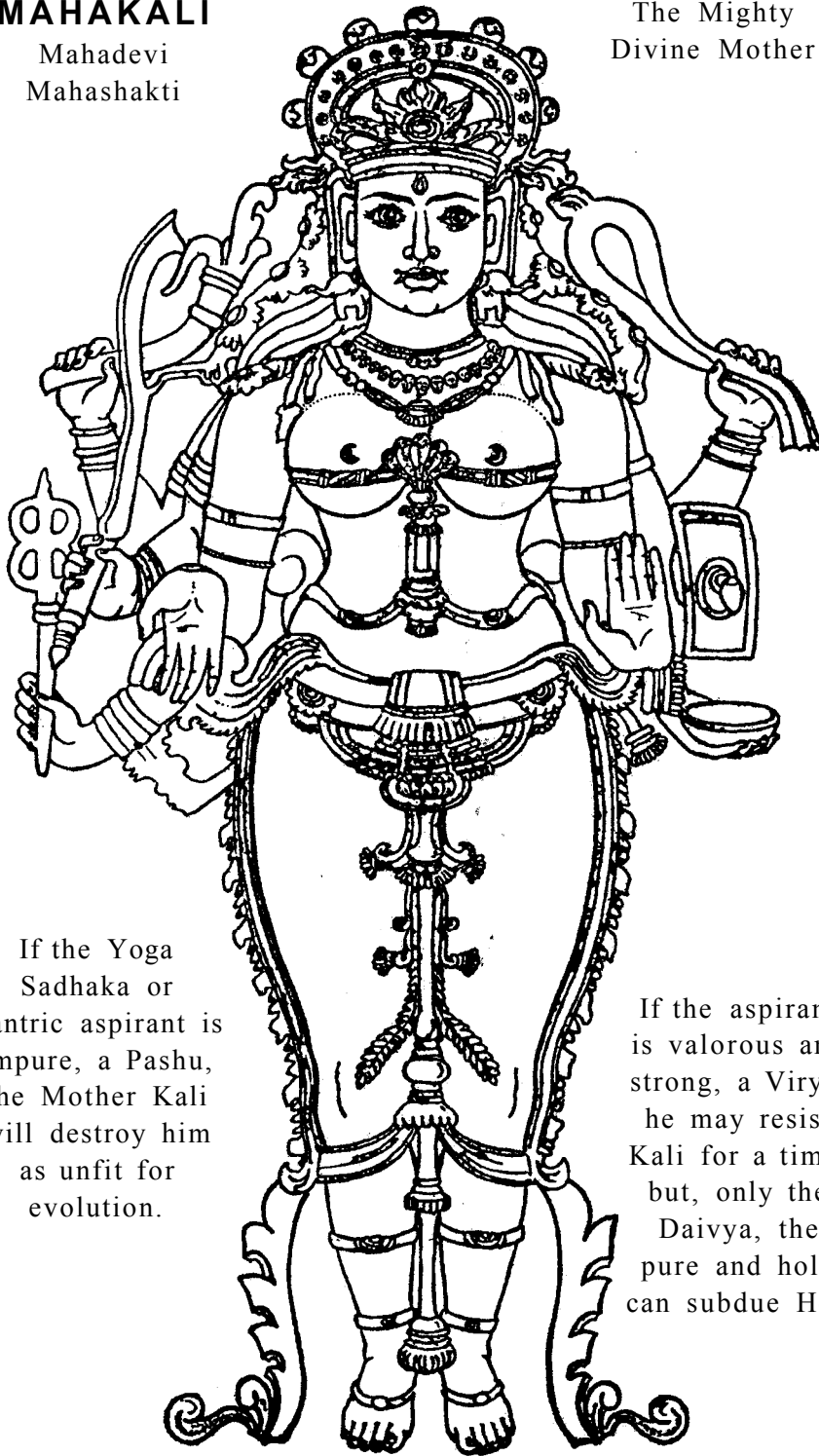
### ESOTERIC ( HIDDEN )

All functions of the mind  
serve the body  
autonomically, without question.  
The Power of Life itself  
dwelling in the gonads is the most  
valuable of all physical possessions,  
Rejuvenation and procreation are  
governed from these glands.  
When this power is dissipated and  
mind control is lost,  
Man is taken over by his body desires.  
Bodily desires can destroy physical  
health and mental balance.  
As a lioness can rend aside flesh  
and bones and devours only the vital  
organs of her prey, so also the lust  
in man will tear aside the morality  
and ethics of society and religion in  
the pursuit of sexual passions and their  
deviation. The Maharasa is a powerful  
Shakti said to produce the mightiest  
of emotions, (no doubt the gonadal hormones)  
The physical body  
demands the attention of the mind, and  
that mind which is forced to serve  
the body without discipline will waver  
and wander and become filled  
with irrelevant thoughts, rather than  
those pertinent to evolution to the  
Higher Life.  
The plough is the penis, and the bulls  
are the powerful secretions of the  
testicles, cultivating the field of  
passion, rather than the Higher Mind.  
In this, there is a loss of the seminal  
power as well as the "seeds" that can  
be turned into Ojas and Tejas for  
higher mental and spiritual development.

# MAHAKALI

Mahadevi  
Mahashakti

The Mighty  
Divine Mother



If the Yoga  
Sadhaka or  
Tantric aspirant is  
impure, a Pashu,  
the Mother Kali  
will destroy him  
as unfit for  
evolution.

If the aspirant  
is valorous and  
strong, a Virya,  
he may resist  
Kali for a time,  
but, only the  
Daivya, the  
pure and holy  
can subdue Her.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **OLI MUDRAS**

### **THE SHAKTI MUDRAS**

## INTRODUCTION

Although there are fourteen classical Hatha Yoga Mudras, or neuro-muscular postures, that activate endocrine (ductless) glands of the body, only six of the fourteen qualify as Oli or Shakti Mudras. These six Mudras arouse, then transport or transmute, whichever the case may be, the Kundalini Shakti, otherwise lying dormant in the Kanda.

In Hatha Yoga each of the Mudras has three distinct phases:

- The attainment to the proper, correct position
- The appropriate Pranayama regulating the arousal and then, the control of the Kundalini Shakti
- The calculated use of one, two or all three parts of the Bandha Trayam with the appropriate auxiliary Mudras

Laya Yoga includes a fourth consideration of a Vedic nature which requires the use of an appropriate Bija or Mantra.

The first three parts or phases may be taught to qualified candidates in small groups, but the Mantras must be passed privately in the traditional Guru-Chela "mouth to ear" system. The giving of the Mantras represents initiation into the Laya Yoga techniques and the mutual acceptance of agreed responsibilities by teacher and student alike, one to the other.



*Shava Asana*

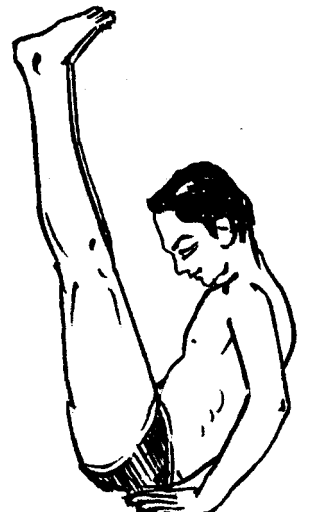
## SHAT MUDRAS

There are six Oli or Shakti Mudras. They are divided into three groups having two parts or activities in each group. They are:

- Vajroli : Part I and Part II
- Sahajoli : Part I and Part II
- Amaroli : Part I and Part II.

### VAJROLI MUDRA: PART I

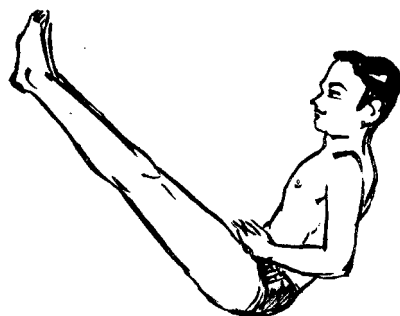
Lie down in Shava Asana and on an incoming breath (Puruka) attain to Uttana Asana, the Yoga Sit-Up. Adjust the hands onto the floor for a secure position and then perform the Alaap Bhastrika of "whooshing" out the breath in one complete forceful expulsion. Perform Uddiyana Bandha. Raise both legs, stiff-kneed, high off the floor, so that the feet are much higher than the top of the head. Force the chin forward into the Jugular Notch, creating Jalandhara Bandha. If possible, touch the forehead, the knees. Simultaneously, hold Mula Bandha at the anus. Hold this position without breath until the body shakes violently with the aroused Shakti. Then, release the tense constricted position on an incoming breath and relax to the supine, beginning position. The Shakti aroused may cause the body to jump or some other reflex muscular actions to take place. Simply relax and do deep Rhythmic Breath to allow this Vajroli Mudra to work fully in the various bodies.



*Vajroli-I*

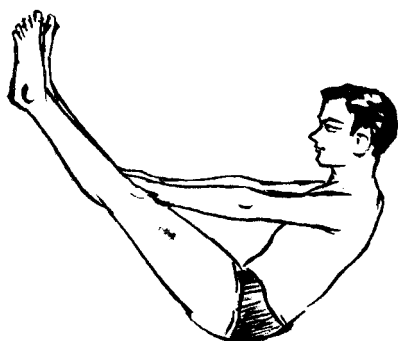
## VAJROLI MUDRA: PART II

From Shava Asana, perform Uttana Asana, the Yoga Sit-Up. Place the hands onto the top of the legs, close to the body, and raise both feet off the floor until the toes are aligned with the nose in Nava Asana, the Boat Posture. Expel the breath vigorously with Alaap Bhastrika and slide both the hands forward



*Nava Asana*

along the front of the legs. Grasp the ankles, pull the head down against the knees and do Jalandhara Bandha. Release any air still trapped in the lungs and attain the Uddiyana Bandha.



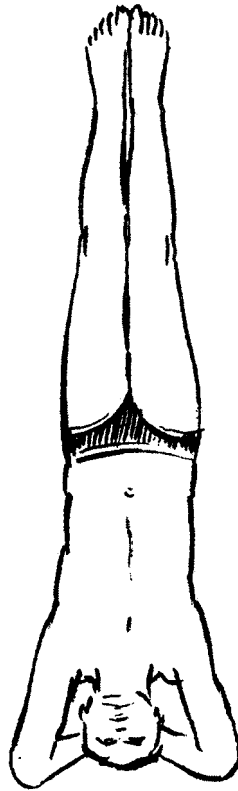
*Nava Mudra*

Now apply the Mula Bandha. Hold the Mudra until the body shakes with aroused Shakti. If rocked back onto the middle spine, regain the original position of Nava Asana once again. Release the position and relax in the Shava Asana with deep Rhythmic Breathing, Savitri Pranayama.



*Vajroli-II*





*Shirsa Asana*

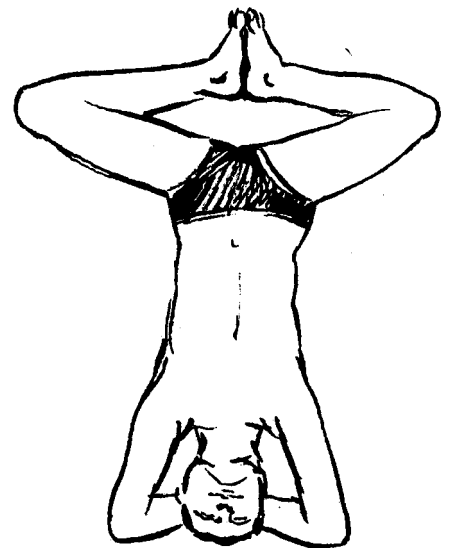
**Warning:** do not "flop" when doing any of the Oli Mudras! Not only is it dangerous physically, but also it is harmful psychically to do so. Relax and do Rhythmic Breathing at the end in Shava Asana.

## SAHAJOLI MUDRA : PART I

Attain a good, stable Shirsha Asana. Bend out the knees so that the soles of the feet can be drawn together in Manduka Mudra, the Frog Gesture. Explosively expel the breath and do Uddiyana Bandha and Mula Bandha. Press the soles of the feet tightly together and create a tremendous natural pressure in the abdominal cavity. Continue the pressure, short of falling over,

until there is a sensation of a natural moving upwards of energy along the spine.

Release the pressure on the soles of the feet and raise the legs once more into the extended Shirsha Asana. Repeat the Manduka Mudra again and even a third time until assured that the Shakti is moving.



*Sahajoli-I*

The Sahajoli Mudra is sometimes called Urdhva Ekakin Shirsha Asana (Paravritti) or Urdhva Padma Asana if the legs are locked in the Lotus position. In the Urdhva Padma Asana it is difficult to get the Shakti to move upwards as insufficient pressure is garnered by the leg position.

## SAHAJOLI MUDRA: PART II

When Sahajoli Mudra, Part I, is completed, remain standing on the head.

Bend the knees and entwine the legs

in the Garuda Mudra. In Garuda Mudra,

the legs are entwined in the same fashion as

when doing the standing pose called Garuda

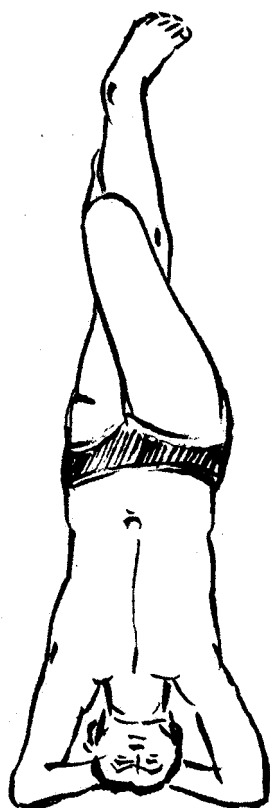
Asana, the Eagle Posture. The legs are

crossed above the knees, one

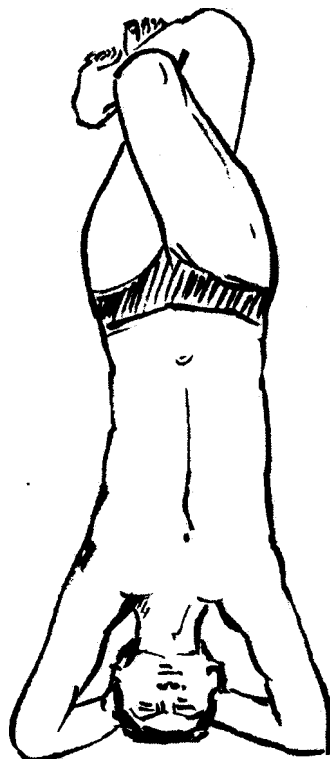
foot catching behind the outside of the opposite

ankle.

On a slow, incoming breath, the entwined legs are raised slowly upwards until the full breath is attained. The Garuda Mudra creates a "soaring upwards like an eagle" of the aroused Shakti. Lower the legs and



*Sahajoli-II  
(Incoming Breath)*



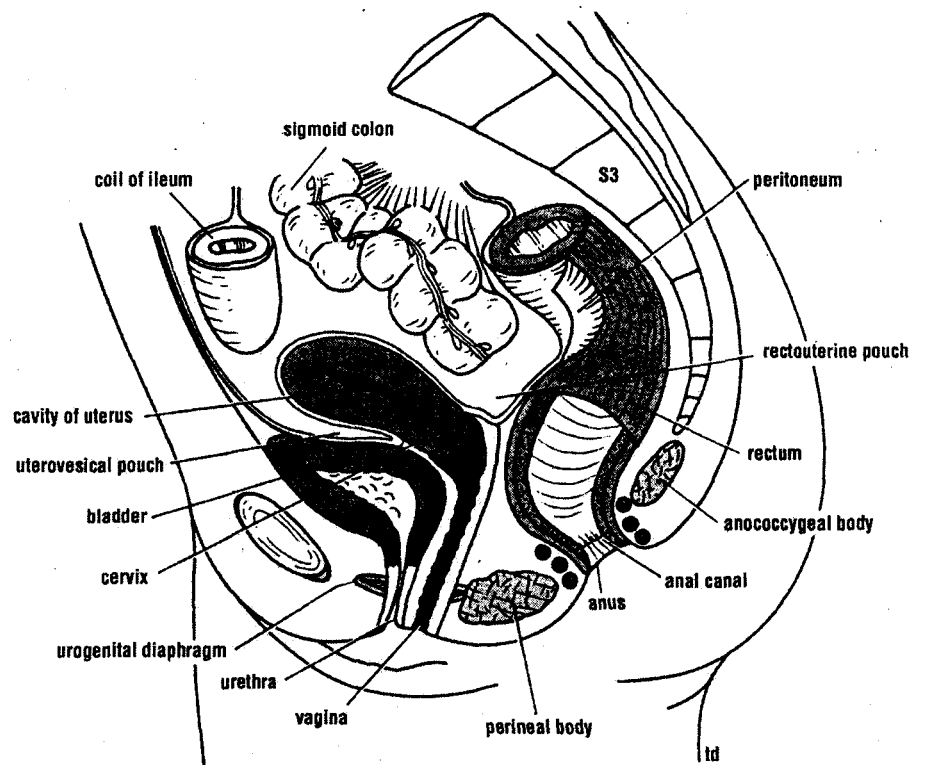
*Sahajoli-II  
(Outgoing Breath)*

bend the knees on the outgoing breath. Repeat the Garuda Mudra once again on the incoming breath. This posture is also known as Urdhva Garuda Asana. When done as an Asana, it does not have the effect of the Sahajoli Mudra.

Make sure that you come down slowly from the Shirsha Asana and relax in Shashanga Asana for a few seconds of rhythmic breathing. One may also relax in Shava Asana.

## AMAROLI MUDRA : PART I

A difficult sitting position is assumed, sometimes called Gupta Asana, or Shakti Chalana Mudra. One heel is placed against



*Pelvic Anatomy of the Female*

the Yoni Nadi (perineal body) in the perineum while the other suppresses the bulbous root of the penis of the Yogi or the clitoris of the Yogini.

A deep breath is inspired and the full Jalandhara Bandha and Mula Bandha are then applied. The breath must be restrained in this Kumbhaka for a slow count of sixty-four beats. To reach this extended Kumbhaka takes about three or more months of



*Amaroli - I*

intense practice. Begin a restraint of the breath for a sixteen count, slowly increasing the restraint for a count or two per day until the lengthy Kumbhaka is attained. The breath is then "blasted out" with a "whoosh", and the entire Bandha Trayam is applied on the held out breath. The Shunyaka, or held out breath must be half of the held in breath. For example, the perfected breath is 64 seconds held in, 32 seconds held out.

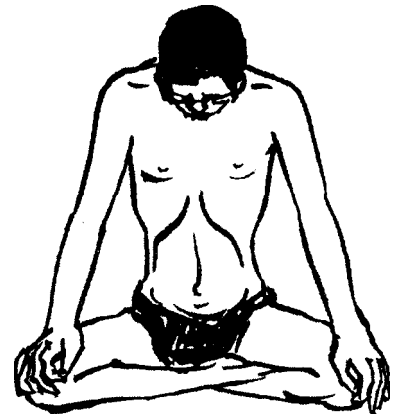
## AMAROLI MUDRA : PART II

While maintaining the Gupta Asana also called Shakta Chalana Mudra, inhale a complete breath, as in the style of Mahat Yoga Pranayama. Practice til the breath can be held 64 second.

After the lengthy Kumbhaka with the two Bandhas is perfected, blast out the breath and add the third Bandha, the Uddiyana, and practice until the breath can be held out for a thirty-two second count. The ratio of the Kumbhaka in Amaroli Mudra is two to one (2x1). The restraint of the breath may be

learned simultaneously for both Amaroli I and II. One can start with a sixteen second held in breath, and an eight second held out breath. After doing the first part with a held-in breath of a sixteen count, the second section of the Amaroli Mudra may be done with a held-out breath for an eight count. As the timing is increased, the two by one proportional ratio should be maintained: 18x9, 20x10, 30x15, 40x20, etc until one reaches 64x32.

This Amaroli Mudra (Part II) is also called Shakta Chalani Mudra, because the Shakti is now sent upwards through Sushumna Nadi to her Lord Shakta by employing the Nauli Kriya.



*Amaroli - II*

After blasting out the breath with a "whoosh", perform Uddiyana Bandha. Rapidly pump the abdominal recti muscles up and down by performing the Nauli Kriya or the Manthana Kriya. At least fifty-five gyrations should be done on the single, held out breath. Start with half a dozen movements of the Nauli Kriya, increasing a few more rounds each day until the maximum of fifty-five can be comfortably attained.

It is important to relax in any comfortable posture with deep rhythmic breathing after the practice of the Oli Mudras, as it is during the relaxation phase that the complete benefits may be obtained by the Sadhaka. The preferred mode of relaxation is Shava Asana. The Shat Kriyas should always be learned under the guidance of an experienced Guru.

The practices outlined here are only the preliminary phase of the Mudra. The advanced phase must be learned only directly from a competent teacher.

## OJAS AND TEJAS

Our Rishiculture science teaches that the reproductive power, the life force, of the human can be transmuted into higher energies which make the aspirant fit for spiritual evolution. These higher forces or powers are termed Tejas and Ojas. They are the by-products of the proper practice of Yoga, and particularly, of the practices such as the Shat Mudras and the Laya Yoga Kriyas.

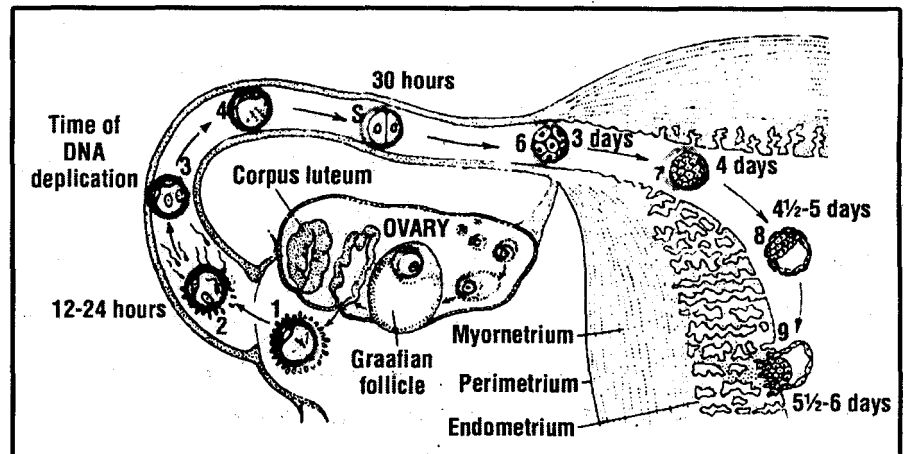
Uninformed people believe that the physical semen is somehow raised through the spinal cord and used as "food for the brain" for certain Yoga practices. This explanation becomes extremely crude in light of what happens in the actual practice of Yoga.

The male semen is referred to in Sanskrit by a number of terms, such as Shukram, Retas, Bijam, Viryam and Tejas, The Shakti or powerful life force in the semen is called Virya Shakti. In doing the Shat Mudras, the Oli Mudras, this Shakti is transmuted via the physical nervous system and the psychic Nadis of the higher bodies into the core of the brain, the Brahmastrandhra, the Corpus Colossum. There, the elevated Ojas and Tejas Shakti is used by the higher mind as a kind of "food". *As the brain requires sugar and oxygen for its survival, the mind requires Tejas and Ojas to obtain the power to perceive spiritual truths*

Tejas, a Sanskrit term, literally means the heat produced by fire. In the sense that Tejas is used in Laya Yoga, it means the powerful fire-like force educed from the semen, which is also sometimes called Tejas. It is this Tejas in the Pranamaya Kosha that produces the halo around the body, particularly the head, of the advanced Laya Yogin. In the Pranayama adept, Tejas gives grace and beauty to the physical body and produces great

energy. As a force, it is said to be "bright, brilliant, splendid" and at its highest level, "effulgent".

"Ojas", from the Sanskrit, refers to the powerful force contained within the generative faculty of the human body. In the male, Ojas stimulates the glands to produce testosterone and the other androgens which make for masculinity and gives great strength, vigour and virility. If this force is transmuted only to a lower level, it produces Ojaha, the powerful Siddhi used by the "Ojaha-walla", Abhicharah, the sorcerer. If transmuted as Ojas Shakti, it becomes Amritam, the ambrosial food for the Gods. The transmutation of the power of Shukram, Bijam or the semen, into Tejas and Ojas Shakti is not confined to the male alone. The Yogini who practises the Shat Mudras, the Oli Mudras, also effects a form of "Shakti transmutation" by suppressing the Tejas Paryaaya, the etrous cycle of the female. Neither do the ovocyte ripen, nor do the Graafian follicles upon which mature ovulation depends.



*Diagrammatic representation of the events - ovulation, fertilization and implantation. (1) Oocyte immediately following ovulation (2) Fertilization (3) Formation of male and female pronuclei (4) In the process of first mitotic division (5) Two cell stage (6) Early morula (7) Late morula (8) Early blastocyst stage with disappearance of zona pellucida (9) Early phase of implantation*

The Ojas or life force of the undeveloped ovum is transmuted in a similar manner as that of the male as Ojas Shakti, the Shakti extracted from the spermatozoa of the male sex cells. Peshim Shakti is the Sanskrit term for the female life force.

The Shat Mudras or Six Gestures are collectively known as the Oli or Shakti Mudras. The term "Oli" is a suffix added to each of the names of the Six Gestures, i.e., Vajra-Oli (Vajroli) The term "Oli" is derived from the Sanskrit Olamdita which means, "to cast up, to throw up, or, to throw upwards". In Laya Yoga it is a corresponding term to Uddiyana, which is used in Hatha Yoga and Pranayama to mean, flying upward, or, to throw upwards. It is derived from an older root, Oshah. which means burning, combustion or transmutation in Laya Yoga.

Vajroli (Vajra + Oli) therefore means the powerful force which moves upwards by the "lightning gesture" (Vajra is Indra's thunderbolt). Sahaja means natural and when combined with the suffix "Oli" means the "natural flying up of energy gesture." Amara means "undying, imperishable, or immortal" so Amaroli means the raising of lower forces of mortality to immortality. The term is derived from the Sanskrit root "Am" which means "to go to" or "to go towards". Amara is the Abode of Indra who is the Lord of the Heavens. The Yogi who perfects this Mudra is said to become "Amaraja", which is an epithet for Indra, but is also a name for Vishnu and Shiva, as well as a title for Brihaspati, the most ancient father. The Siddhi for accomplishing this Mudra is Amarata, immortality.

Clinical tests have shown a remarkable reduction of active spermatozoa immediately following the practice of the Shat Mudras, the Oli



**Mudras. In a healthy male the number of spermatozoa ejaculated during one sexual act may exceed 200 million. One hundred and sixty million would be necessary to be considered normally virile. Below 100 million count there would be little likelihood of pregnancy taking place during copulation. Tests on volunteers who have performed these Mudras often show less than 60 million sperm count. *The life force has gone somewhere!* Science is not yet ready to accept the obvious. . . . the force has been transmuted to a higher level.**

**The practice of these Oli Mudras releases normal sexual frustration for both young men and women. Energy, otherwise dissipated, produces lustrous skin and eyes. A beautiful inner glow appears, "a haloing of the whole body in light." Youth is maintained, or recaptured if lost.**

**The Oli Mudras offer a Yogic method of family planning for the Grahastha. The women is also "made safe" by an inhibiting of the forces which produce the growth and glandular transformation for ripening of the ovum in the ovary or the fallopian tubes. When pregnancy is desirable, the daily practice of the Oli Mudras is stopped, and the next cycle is allowed to take place naturally.**

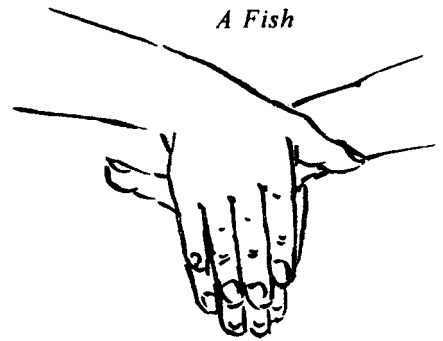
**For the serious student of Yoga, the Oli Mudras represent a step forward to the powerful Laya Yoga Kriyas, which are techniques to reabsorb energies dissipated through the Manomaya and Vijnanamaya Kosha. The Laya Yoga also "absorbs" energies controlled by the Oli Mudras in the lower Annamaya and Pranamaya Koshas. All of these forces are "re-united" again in the Ariandamaya Kosha, or the Body of Immortal Bliss. When, propelled by the high energies generated by these practices, the Yoga Sadhak attains Samadhi.**

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

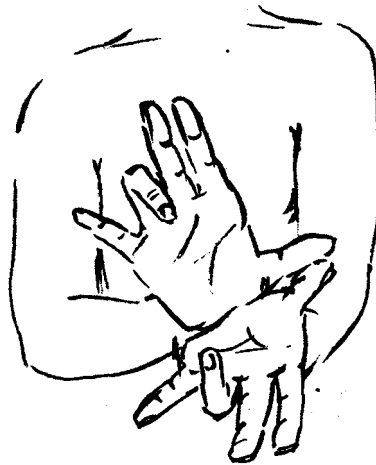
# **HASTHA MUDRAS**

**THE LANGUAGE OF  
THE HANDS**

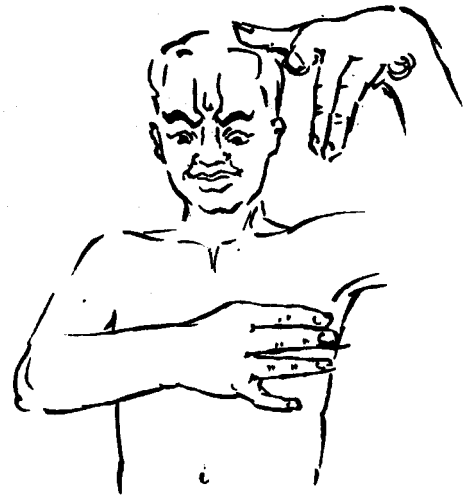
**STORIES THE  
HANDS CAN TELL**



*A Fish*



*A Whale*



*Honey Dripping From a Flower*

**PICTURES THE  
HANDS CAN CREATE**

**HASTHA MUDRAS**  
**THE LANGUAGE OF THE HANDS**

**"Yatho hasthas thatho dhristihi**  
**Yatho dhristis thatho manaha**  
**Yatho manas thatho bhavo**  
**Yatho bhavas thatho rasaha"**

*Where the hand goes, there follows the eye; where the eye goes, there follows the mind; where the mind goes, there follows the expression and only when Bhava is expressed is the complete enjoyment of creation understood.*

*- Bhartha Muni in his Natyasastra*

**Have you ever been to a foreign land and discovered the need to communicate by gestures? If you were able to do so effectively, then you already know something about Hastha Mudras.**

**In India, from ancient times until the present, the art of dance has been expressed by the language of the hands called Hastha Mudra. The eyes, the face, the body, the feet, and the hands are moulded into one delightfully expressive language in the silent art of the dance. The oldest form of Mudra gesture is found in the style of the dance called Dasiattam. Much of its style is still preserved today in the modern Bharata Natyam.**

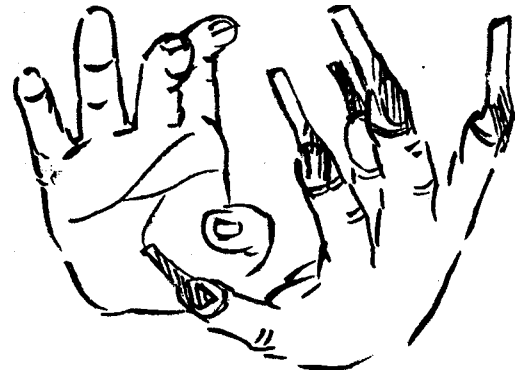
**The term "Bharata Natyam" is rather recent in origin, and is usually used to typify South Indian dancing. The Dasiattam, or the Devotee's Dance, is the term still more commonly used**



*The husband*

in South India, but is also revealed in the term, "Sadhira", which is performed exclusively by Devadasis, celestial devotees dedicated to service in the great temples of South India. The classical Mudras were codified by the writer Bharata in his immortal

work, "*Natyasastra*," and by Nandikeswar in his "*Abhinaya Darpana*." Once glorious, the classical Mudra Dance of both North and South India fell into disrepute under the decadence of alien rule, and suffered from neglect by the colonized nation, influenced by foreign domination. Even sensitive Indians seemed incapable of understanding the greatness of their own classical art. Influenced by the disdain of the British and other European colonizers for "Native arts", Indians themselves became unsympathetic to the ancient genius that created and fostered the dance. Like so many other "Yogas," the traditional dance, for want of patronage and understanding,



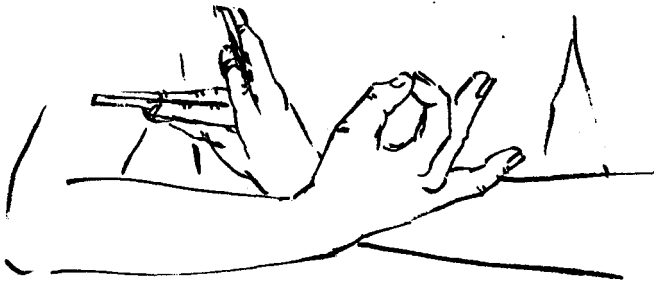
*A Lotus*



*Lord Brahma*

has nearly disappeared. Even the performers, like modern Yogis, have degenerated into simple "business people" making a living from their art. Happily, in the New millennium a beautiful revival of the inner life in every aspect of the Indian culture is taking place. A new era is dawning amidst the Yogis of the dance. The great maestros of the past are living again through a few of India's modern artists.

The maestros of the art of dance in the classical past, as now, are called Nattuvanars. The original Nattuvanar taught the art of the Mudra to Devadasis. The maestros seldom appeared in the role of the dancer, but rather as conductors and masters of



*Goddess Parvati*

ceremony. This was so because Dasiattam is based on Lasya, the feminine, gentle form of the dance art, as opposed to the more virile and manly Tandava. The Dasiattam is today best known as the Bharata Natyam. The modern Bharata Natyam was given present form and content only about 200 years ago by four illustrious brothers of Thanjavur (Tanjore) in what is now Tamil Nadu, who were patronized by the ruling Maharastrians. Unlike the earlier Dasiattam, the modern form of the Bharata Natyam is by no means a religious rite, though it may contain a semblance of religion, in that a singleness of purpose, dedicated devotion, and religious discipline is needed to achieve perfection. Nor does the fact that Bharata Natyam is often performed in the precincts of the temple give the dance a particular religious significance. The Dasiattam is often accused of being an "out-and-out sophisticated, high brow art", and this explains why it is so little understood. Dasiattam was not intended to be entertaining. It was rather an edification, a dedication of one's life and one's talent to the Supreme. Only the "initiated" can derive full enjoyment and benefit from it.

Because of the loss of spiritual values, the true meaning of the arts of India, including Yoga, has been missed by the general public. The dance, like Yoga, is an integrated form of spiritual expression. Body movement is closely linked with the music. The most minute twist, twirl, and gesture is guided and controlled by the subtle requirements, the grace, and the nuances of the music, usually specially composed for the dance. Costume, lighting, decor, and the stage setting all have to blend together to give the setting for the high experience of "Oneness". Bharata Natyam differs from the South Indian Kathakali

in that it restricts the Rasas, or basic emotions, in its repertoire. Both forms of the dance make great use of the hand Mudras, as well as foot movements and gestures. In the Bharata Natyam, the erect posture is assumed only at the beginning and the end of the dance. The trunk of the body is kept slightly learned fore-ward at all other times to give the illusion of movement, even in moments of stillness.

Padha Abhinaya is interpreting the meaning of a particular part of the dance by facial gesture and by gestures of the hands. Gesturing with the hands and the fingers is known as Hastha Abhinaya. These gestures are symbols of set patterns, using the palm, the thumb and fingers of the hand. Often both hands will be used for these Hastha Mudras. The one-handed gesture is known as Asamyutha, while that symbol which requires the use of both hands is called Samyutha. The gestures generally can be readily identified with the objects they stand for, although there are Hastha Mudras that form "the alphabet of interpretive dance". The hands of an expert can completely convey an entire vocabulary, with shades of meaning and variants, which run the gamut of emotions. In the Thillana of Bharata Natyam, the hands and finger gestures are purely decorative movements, and are used for aesthetic appeal. In the Thillana, as well as the more extensive Bharata Natyam items, the dancer must stick to the dictum, *"Where the hands are, the eyes should follow (Yatho Hastha Tado Drishtihi) "*

Along the Malabar coast of South India, the classical Kathakali developed a strong, virile, masculine dance. The Rasas were much employed in the telling of the religious tales of Hindu folklore.



While the nine Rasas or classified basic emotions like love, jealousy, anger, and fear are used, unique emotions were allowed to tower above all else to produce an ecstatic thrill in those performing as well as in those for whom the dance was performed.

Kathakali, or "picture dancing", was originally performed in the temple compound between the various parts of the ritualistic services. The dance was used to enhance the temple experience as well as to dramatize the particular celebration. As entertainment value, it filled the time of devotees who were waiting between rituals scheduled at the various hours auspicious to the Gods being worshipped. All of the roles were performed by male dancers. When a female role had to be played, a male dancer was chosen to fulfill the part. All of the dancers usually undertook their training from early childhood and were often also accomplished musicians and singers. Only in very recent times have women been allowed to play roles in the Malabar Kathakali.

The dancers of Kathakali must learn innumerable gestures of face, hands, and feet, and be able to use these various Mudras to convey the meaning or theme of the dance play. The Mudras in the various dances of India are communicative devices, where deep meaning and feelings are communicated silently, "without a word". These moments of "silent communication" have the power to deeply penetrate the heart of the sensitive onlooker.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

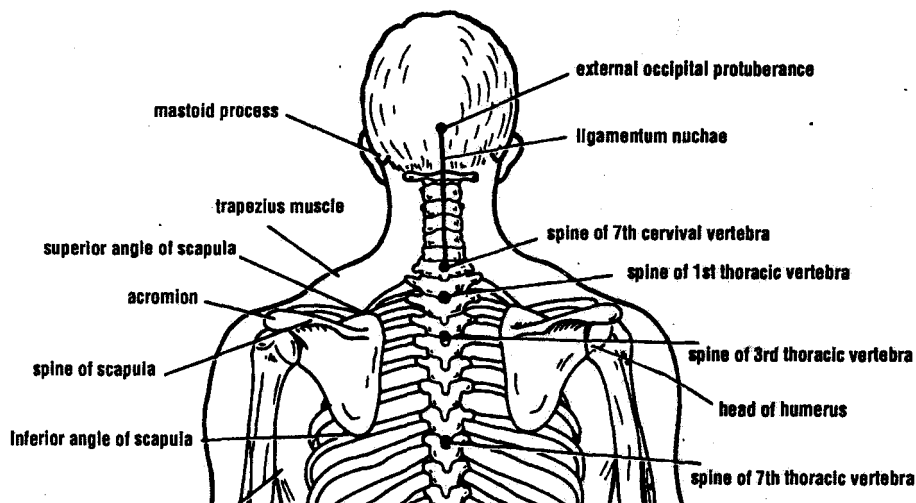
### **BRAHMA MUDRA**

#### **THE GESTURE OF CREATION**

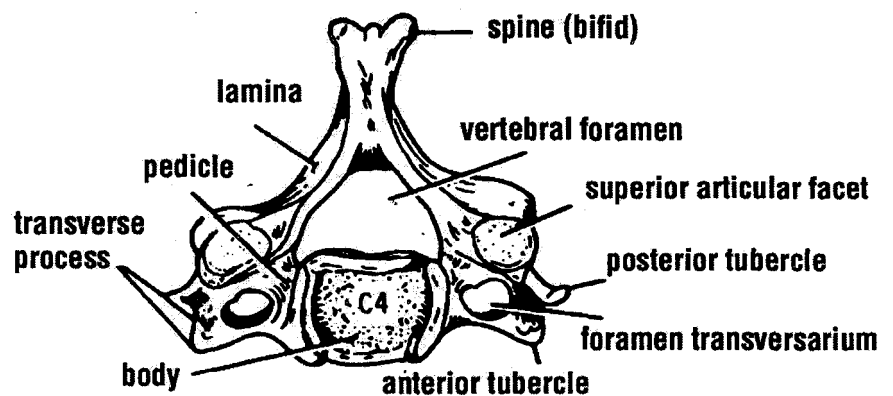
## THE HUMAN NECK AND UPPER BACK

Neck problems have always been with us. So common and annoying is cervical degeneration that the pain arising from the neck is considered uniquely unbearable. This has created a common saying applied to a person giving us irritation: "*He is a pain in the neck!*"

Neck problems typically begins as structural problems due to the fact that the human body is built on an animal skeletal frame that was never intended to walk upright. However, mankind stands upright on its hind legs, through some Karmic quirk of fate. Now man has to face the problems associated with a heavy head balanced on top of a group of fragile neck bones held in place by a not-so-strong muscular system. Modern man apparently has a much larger head than, his earlier ancestors, adding to the problem. The main problem, however, is that modern man

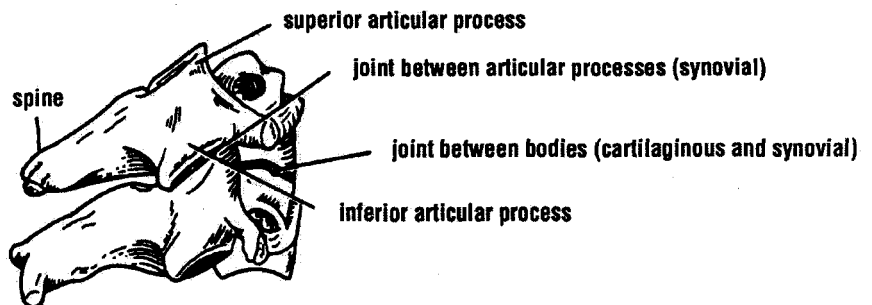


*Bones of the upper Back and Neck*



*The Fourth Cervical Vertebra*

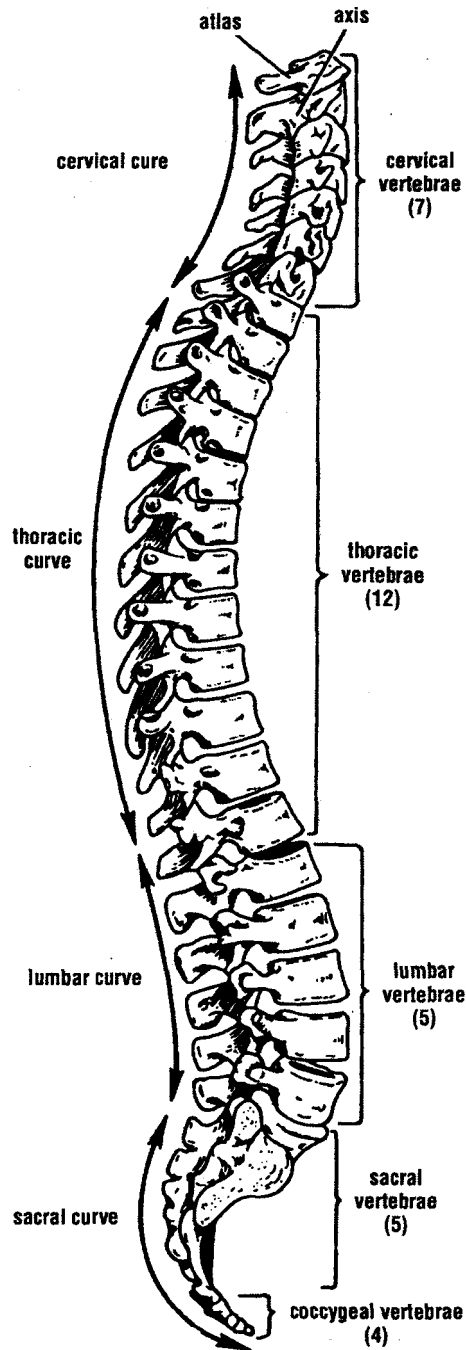
is a very shallow breather. The Pranic energy needed to strengthen, and maintain the neck and its skeletal musculature, as well as its nervous and blood supply, is subsequently inadequate. It is scientifically estimated that the average man breathes into less than ten percent of his breathing capacity, so at best he is only getting a ten percent circulatory supply to any part of the body. Yoga teaches that a special Udana Prana Vayu is necessary to operate the various systems of the neck and head



*A Cervical Joint*

at peak efficiency. This Udana Prana is used up by the sensory nerves at the expense of the other nerves, as well as the muscular and skeletal systems.

There are many common conditions affecting the neck and head. Rarely does anyone get through a lifetime without sore muscles from overwork or tension, a stiff neck from a chill or cold, and the inflammation that goes along with the common cold and throat conditions. But, the most chronic condition is one that is called osteo-arthritis of the spine. When this affects the neck, it becomes cervical osteo-arthritis. Cervical spondylitis is a kind of degeneration of one or more of the vertebrae of the cervical spine. This can also be



*Lateral View of Vertebral Column*

a chronic condition called ankylosing spondylitis, characterized by ossification of the spinal ligaments and ankyloses of the cervical joints. This same condition occurs devastatingly at the sacro-iliac joints in the lower back. There it occurs most often with young men, while the cervical condition is found more often with middle aged women. Spondylosis deformans is a disintegration of part or all of an intervertebral disc with new bone formation at the periphery of the disc. When it occurs in the neck, it is referred to as cervical spondylosis. There is a condition where there is an extra bone in the neck in about eight percent of all humans and found mainly in women. This condition usually produces a wry neck. Torticollis is a wry neck-like condition where there is a contraction of one sternomastoid muscle. The head is slightly flexed and drawn towards the contracted side with the face twisted over to the other shoulder. Fortunately, it is usually painless.

Whatever be the cause of the problem, good neck health is lost. To restore a healthy neck, the practice of certain Yoga practices is a must. During the acute pain as well as the recovery from a neck condition some Yoga Asanas, Kriyas and Mudras should be avoided. Shirsha Asana (the Head Stand), Sarvanga Asana (the Shoulder Stand), Hala Asana (the Plow) and any variations of these postures which put excess pressure on the neck must be eliminated until the neck muscles are rebuilt and the spinal cervical column is again in line. Care and caution must be the watchwords here.

Generally, a severe neck strain will require traction to relieve the pressure on the inter-vertebral discs and an especially designed collar is usually used for this purpose. Although bulky

and difficult to put up with, it does do the job while repair takes place. Some cases may need the services of an osteopath, a chiropractor, or a Yoga Chikitsak to re-set a misplaced vertebrae. A badly strained neck is treated in exactly the same way as a fracture of the spine. In the case of destruction of the cervical area by tuberculosis, the neck will have to be supported by a brace or collar while the bones re-form. A special treatment is necessary to counter the spread of the tuberculosis. In severe cases of neck strain, a competent medical diagnosis should be made and treatment followed up.

Many doctors are now recommending Yoga therapy for the renewal of neck bones and the release of neck tension. There are a number of practices that can be used. They include Teenmurty Mudra, Trimurti Mudra, Brahma Mudra and its variations, Shoka Kriya and Ashoka Mudra, to name a few. This whole group will be detailed for those who want to practice a form of neck fitness or for those who wish a return to good neck health. A proper diet is necessary to rebuild the muscles, ligaments and spinal joints, as well as the spinal intervertebral discs. Plenty of fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and calcium-laden products must be added to the diet. Therapeutic doses of calcium should be added to the diet. Calcium remedies in the homeopathic pharmacopoeia may also be used.

Calcium is derived from milk, cereals, whole grain cereals, and nuts predominantly. Therapeutic doses of calcium are usually made from animal bone meal, or sea shells or the shells of eggs. Natural calcium is found in many of the mountainous areas of Europe and Dolomite is highly recommended.

Natural Dolomite is also a natural sedative but one must consult a homeopathic specialist if they are interested in that field. There are some twenty commercial homeopathic remedies. This subject is too vast to be dealt with in this article, but generally Calcarea Fluorica is recommended for the regeneration of the bone, Calcarea Arsenicica for stimulation of new bone and intervertebral disc tissue and Calciferolum for any stubborn conditions. The latter must be taken with Vitamin D unless it already has been prepared in combination. In the earlier group of therapeutic calcium, sea shell or egg shell calcium is useful. Particularly for discriminating vegetarians, milk may be of use.

It is important to be well hydrated, as the first body parts to suffer when there is even mild dehydration are the the joints of the body. This is apparent especially in the joints that are used extensively, such as the neck and the knees. The intervertebral discs need hydration for proper health and dehydrated discs are similar to dry sponges that can rupture or tear easily. A minimum of two litres of water is recommended as a daily allowance, except in those suffering from kidney troubles.



## BRAHMA MUDRA - THE FOUR FACED GESTURE OF CREATION

This gesture or Mudra is named after Lord Brahma, the "Creator" of the Hindu Pantheon of Gods, who is shown with four heads, one facing each of the cardinal directions of the compass. Normally only three faces of Brahma are shown, as the fourth is hidden. This visage of Brahma is a common one in Hindu society and is even depicted on one of India's most popular postage stamps. To perform Brahma

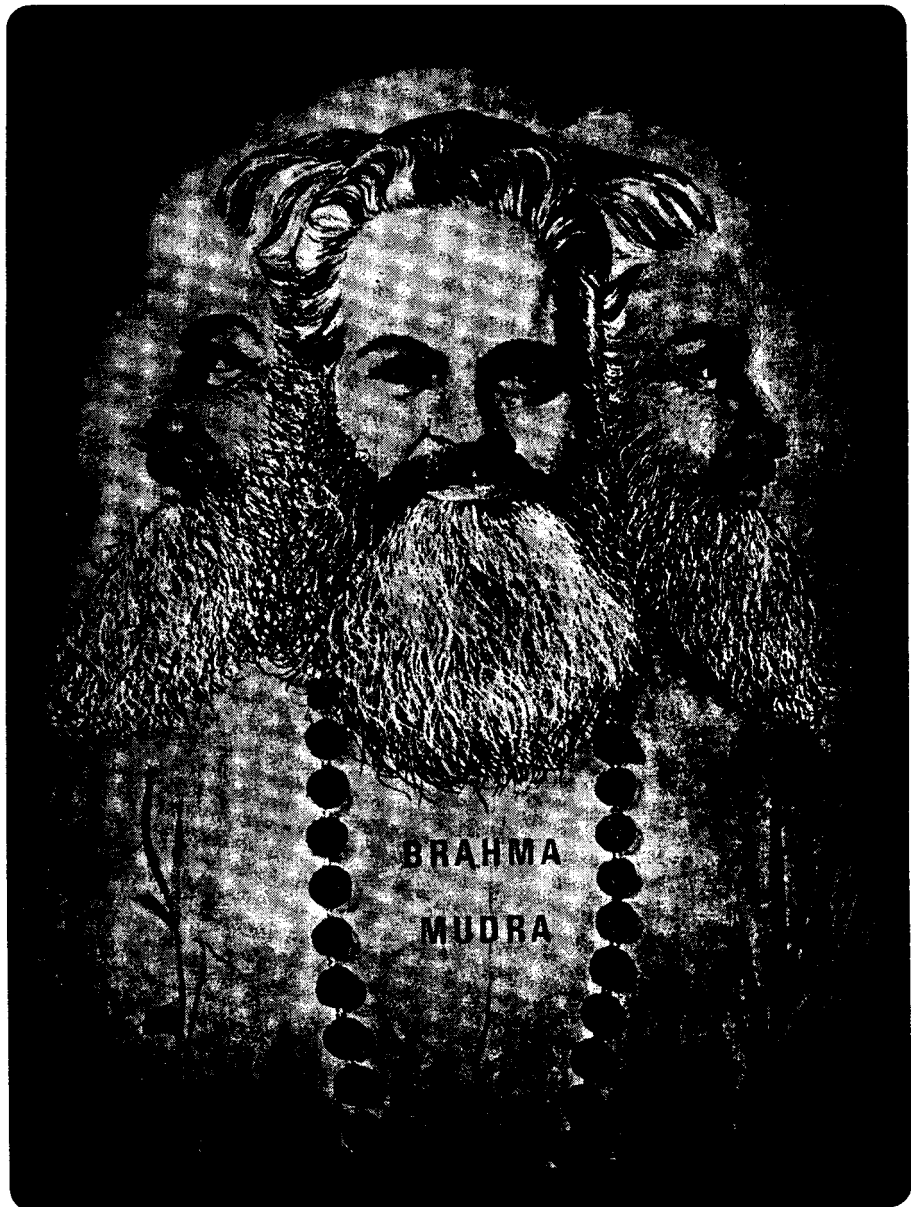


*Lord Brahma*

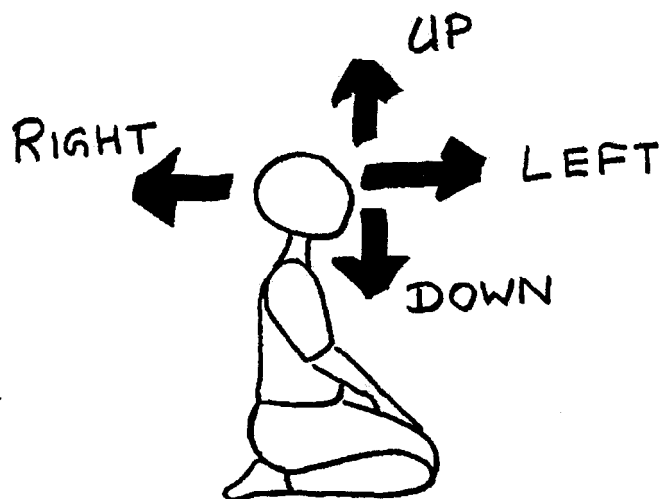
Mudra, sit comfortably facing the north. In the early morning, face east to the rising sun. In the early evening, one may face west and use the coloured sky of the setting sun. If indoors one may sit two to three metres from a wall, upon which there is an object for fixation. A symbol of the Pranava OM is wonderful for this purpose. Out of doors, one may find a fixation point farther away.

### TECHNIQUE No.1

Gaze straight ahead. The eyes may be allowed to blink. Take in a deep inhalation and slowly turn the head on the neck as far to the right as possible. Then, slowly turn back the head to the beginning position while letting out the breath. Take in another deep breath and slowly turn the head to the left as far as possible. Let out the breath while



*Brahma Mudra: The Gesture of Creation*



slowly returning to the mid gaze position. Take in the third breath pulling the head back slowly until the chin is lifted as high as possible. Release the breath and come back to the mid gaze position. Take in the fourth breath and lower the head into the chest so that the chin touches the chest bone. Release the breath and raise the head to the beginning position. This is one round of the head turning practice of Brahma Mudra. At least two more rounds should be done at each sitting. Six to nine rounds maximum are permitted at a single sitting. It may be necessary to rub in some medicinal oil before, during, and after the practice of this Mudra, as suited. Wearing a flannel cloth wrapped around the neck after the Mudra is wise if there is any chance of getting a chill.

## **TECHNIQUE No. II**

In this practice, the vibratory Bija sounds are used along with the movements of the head in technique No.1. As the

head is turned to the right, think of the Bija sound "Ahh" and when the breath is let out, and the head returned to the mid position, make audibly the sound "Ahh". (Concentrate on the area of the neck to be relieved, repaired, or rejuvenated while sounding the Bija Mantra). On the second breath, while turning the head to the left, think of the Bija sound "Oooo" and when the breath is let out, and the head returned to the mid position, audibly make the sound "Oooo". Take in the third breath and think "Eeee" while pulling the head back and making the sound of "Eeee" audibly on the out breath when returning to the mid position. On the fourth breath, imagine the sound "Mmmm" when taking the chin to the chest, then make the sound "Mmmm" on the outgoing breath. The four sounds thus utilised in this practice are "Ahh", "Oooo", "Eeee", and "Mmmm". Concentrate on the neck area during the meditation-upon the sound on the 'in' breath and on making the sound audibly on the 'out' breath. Do a minimum of three rounds at a sitting, up to a maximum of six to nine rounds as the neck tension subsides.

It is wise to drop one's head down in Dharmika Asana, a prayer-like posture, after doing Brahma Mudra, or to lie down on the back, supine in Shava Asana. A pillow should not be used, although it may be necessary in the beginning if the head is badly out of line. The pillow should be discarded as soon as possible in the practice of Hatha Yoga. For sleeping, a narrow and hard pillow similar to a hard bound edition of a book may be used, but be sure to avoid giant stuffed pillows. Such 'luxury' pillows may be the cause of misfortune in the first place, as they offer no support whatsoever to the bones of the neck.

## TEENMURTHY MUDRA

The Teenmurthy Mudra is a variation on Brahma Mudra, the classical Sampradaya Sanskrit technique. Teenmurthy is Hindi for "The Three-Faced God" and it usually means Lord Shiva. This is a head-turning Mudra like Brahma Mudra but involves placing the head in only three directions rather than moving it in four like the Brahma Mudra.

Sit comfortably with some object two to three meters away and at an even level with the eyes for fixation of the central position. Take in a deep breath and turn the head as far as possible to the right. Let out the breath and come back to the central position. Blink on the object of fixation. The eyes should rapidly blink holding a positive view of the object of fixation. Take in the breath again, and slowly turn the head to the left as far as possible. Release the breath and come back to the central position, and do a few seconds of rapid eye blinking again. Continue this neck turning and eye blinking for six to nine rounds before relaxing the chin into the chest for a short rest or by doing Dharmika Asana, the Yoga "Posture of Devotion".

There is a version of this practice where the name of Shiva (*Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva*) is chanted as Japa while turning the head from side to side and doing the blinking reflex. "*Om Namah Shivaya*", the holy Pancha Akshara, is also to be recommended or simply thinking "*Om, Om, Om, Om*".

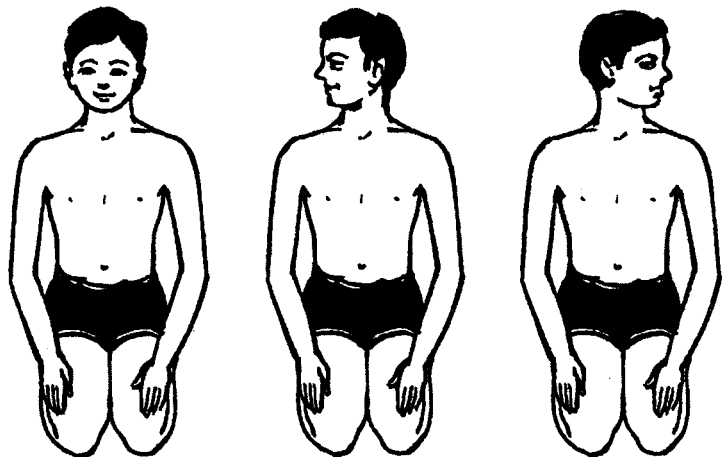
## TRIMURTHY MUDRA

The term "Trimurthy" is from the Sanskrit and is the same as the "Three Faced One" of Teenmurthy in Hindi. In the Elephanta Caves in the harbour of Bombay is a beautifully carved depiction of the Trimurthy Shiva which incidentally is also depicted upon Indian postage stamps.

In this variation of head turning, each of the sounds of "Ahh", "Ooo" and "Mmm" are used to pull the head first to the right, then subsequently to the left.

Sit with eyes staring straight ahead with or without an object of fixation. It is helpful to use a Shiva Murthi, statue or picture of Shiva for eye fixation.

Take the breath in slowly while thinking "Ahh" and turn the head as far as possible to the right. Release the breath and turn the head as far as possible to the left while making audibly the



*Trimurthy Mudra*

sound "Ahh." Repeat this gesture three times. Then, draw the head as far as possible to the left while thinking "Ahh" and release the breath and turn the head slowly to the right making the sound "Ahh" audibly. Do this three times in all, then, repeat turns to the right and three turns to the left, while thinking and making the sound of "Ooo". Conclude with another three rounds to the right and then three rounds to the left, while thinking and making the sound of "Mmmm".

Not only does the neck area receive a massive "self-transfusion-like" flood of needed blood circulation, but the Prana increases tremendously while using the Bija sounds appropriately. This practice can be used at the Sandhyam or the divisions of the day: early morning, noon and early evening. Devotional people can add this movement to their daily prayers and gain wonderful benefits from of this spiritual practice.



*Trimurthy Shiva*

## **SHOKA KRIYA**

This practice may also be called a Mudra but because it has obvious movements, it has been termed a Kriya. "Shoka" is the Sanskrit term for "sorrowful" and indicates a person who is rolling the head on the neck in a sorrowful action or gesture. Of course, one does not necessarily do this action with such a Bhava or sorrowful feeling, but tension filled people naturally used this gesture to relieve neck tension.

Sit with the spine erect. On an outgoing breath let the head drop with the chin to the chest. Inhale the breath slowly and draw the head off towards the right in a circling motion, letting the head flop back from the right shoulder to the centre position on an explosive out going breath (whoosh). With the chin still down on the chest, draw the head to the left and as far as possible without rolling over the shoulder. Drop the head back onto the chest on an outgoing "whooshed" out breath. Continue this half a dozen to ten rounds until neck tension subsides.

A similar practice can be done with the head thrown back, drawing the head into the central back position and letting it roll back to the shoulders on the "whooshed" out breath. One may take the help of a family member or friend to guide the head if there is any fear of injuring the neck or straining the neck muscles. If the head will not go back far enough for comfort in this head rolling, then massage the neck beforehand and apply a warm terry towel compress to the back of the neck.



## ASHOKA KRIYA AND MUDRA

Ashoka was an ancient emperor of India and his name indicated that he was the 'One *who had overcome sorrow*'. He obviously didn't have any neck trouble! A sore neck can spoil any good day and throw one into a deep gloom, even if other circumstances are good. A healthy neck is a must, if one desires happiness!

There are two techniques in the Ashoka Kriya and both may be used together or in turns depending on the physical condition of the person.

### TECHNIQUE I

Sit with a straight back. Take in a deep breath and while doing so, tighten the muscles and ligaments at the throat. Release the breath and drop the chin to the chest. Take in the breath and again, tighten the muscles and ligaments at the throat while turning the head in a complete circle towards the right and around onto the back of the neck and over the left shoulder to the beginning position. Let out the breath. Relax the head at the chest. Now take in the breath again with neck muscle and ligament tension and roll the head off to the left and completely around the back, over the right shoulder and down to the chest again. Let out the breath. Repeat this twice more in each direction, before relaxing with the chin down onto the chest. Hot fomentation may be applied onto the back of the neck, if the neck is painful or a cold compress onto the back of the neck if one has a head ache.

## **TECHNIQUE No. II**

While doing the Ashoka Mudra, the "Sorrow-Less Gesture," pull the head half way around on the in-breath and then let out the breath and roll the head, weight-free for the rest of the circle back to the chin-on-the-chest position. Be sure that you do an equal number of pulls to each side if you have a healthy neck, but, if you suffer from a wry neck then do double the number of rounds to the side requiring adjustment. Stay out of a breeze and avoid the possibility of getting a chill following these neck exercises. Anyone with a bad neck should be wearing a scarf or muffler around the neck, protecting it from draught and cold.

Good luck to you with this group of head and neck Mudras. May no one ever refer to you as "that pain in the neck!"

## **YOGA AND THE NECK**

In addition to the Brahma Mudra and its associated Mudras and Kriyas, Yoga offers many practices that can prevent and manage problems of the neck and upper back as well as maintain and produce good health of this vital region. These include many of the Yoga Asanas such as Bhujanga Asana, Shalaba Asana, Sarpa Asana, Nauka Asana, Ushthra Asana, Dhanur Asana and Chakrasana. The third part of the Vibhagha and Pranava Pranayamas are very useful in addition to the soothing Brahma Pranayama and Ujjayi Pranayama that creates heightened awareness in the inner aspects of this region. Relaxation practices that are useful include the Kaya Kriya, Tala Kriya and Dridha Kriya as well as the Marmanasthanam Kriya. Mandala Dharana on the Akasha Mandala, a magenta oval representing the Vishuddha Chakra as well as the Japa repetition of the Bhija Mantra of the throat center is useful in producing a healthy neck that enlivens all aspects of our life.

## THE PSYCHE OF THE MUDRA

**A Mudra is usually defined as "a neuro-muscular activity stimulating into action involuntary muscles with (or without) a resultant activity of the endocrine (or exocrine) glands". One can see this dynamic activity at work in the Shat Mudras, also called the Oli Mudras. The glands are definitely activated, functions balanced and body incredibly benefited, especially Yogically. But, there is a whole aspect of the Mudra which may miss one's casual attention... and that is the psychic effect of the Mudra.**

**The psyche should be taken to mean all of the higher activities of the mind, and even those qualities of the Atman or Self that may be present in one's universal nature. These higher qualities of mind, intellect, and universality are also brought into play by certain Mudras. The group of Mudras in this section are outstanding examples of that psychic effect. When doing Brahma Mudra, the creative impulses of the brain and nervous system are also "gestured, enlivened and awakened" by the practice. There has been much international publicity about the development of the "Creative Intelligence" through certain aspects of Higher Yoga. The Mudra may also "sustain" as in emulation of Vishnu or bring about change, as in the use of the Shiva Mudras. *The texts are quite adamant that the Mudra is the Supreme Self... not that the Mudra represents an aspect of the Supreme Nature. The Mudra is the Diety!* **When doing a Mudra, try to emulate the "mood" or Bhava of the Mudra.****

Raise the mind in thankfulness. Let go of old worries and lower psychic states.

Mudras can be used very effectively as mood elevators and consciousness escalators. Higher Yoga seekers could also employ the Mudras in this subtle spiritual manner in all phases of Yoga, but particularly Hatha Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Raja Yoga. In a section called Mudra Yoga itself, the Mudras are used as a personal tool to elevate oneself to a high state. In the Brahma Mudra, try to imagine re-creating ligaments, sinews, muscles, nerves, blood vessels. Be creative! Become Brahma! Open the mind to the infinite possibilities of life in an Abundant, Benevolent Universe.

## **A WORD OF CAUTION**

When we are ill we want to get better as fast as we can, but, a word of caution in rebuilding bones must be here offered. Strength is to be built slowly back into the bones. This process takes time, and slow, steady perseverance in a properly designed routine is needed. We can rebuild quickly, but the structure may not be strong. It will be weak and subject to break down again. The practices that are recommended here must not be overdone. Rather, one practice should be used for ten days to two weeks, twice or three times a day, three to six times at a sitting. If one wants to choose only one out of this group, one should choose the Brahma Mudra as the most extensive of the practices and having the most far-reaching effect. All of the others are valuable in themselves, but one may want to change the order in which these practices are presented by doing first Shoka Kriya, then Ashoka Kriya, followed by Teenmurti Mudra, then Trimurti Mudra and finally Brahma Mudra as the last practice.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

# **SURYA PRANA MUDRA**

**GESTURING THE LIFE-GIVING SUN**

## SURYA PRANA MUDRA

**Om Bhur Bhuvah Swah Tat Savitur Varenyam**

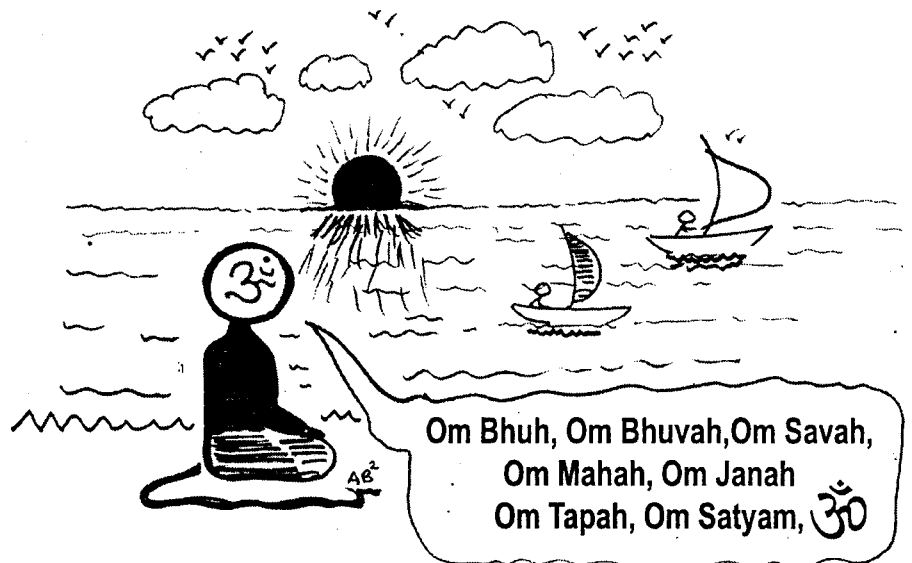
**Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi, Dhiyo Yo Nah Prochodayat Om**

*We contemplate and meditate upon the glorious  
effulgent Light of the cosmic Sun. May it  
illumine our minds and protect our actions.*

The sun called "Savituh", which centres our solar system, is the source of all life on this planet. " *The sun giveth life and the sun taketh away*". Without the sun, man could not exist. Yet, this very sun is ignored by most modern human beings and taken only as a nuisance in summer enjoyments. Man has so lost contact with his environment that few know or acknowledge that the sun is the core of his existence. Many urban dwellers never see the sun rise or set.

The various forms of Surya Namaskar or Sun Adoration practices are the core of the Hatha Yoga Asanas, Kriyas and Mudras. Along with the appropriate breath control Pranayamas, and appropriate Mantras, they make up an essential part of a daily Yoga routine. Living in a climate without the sun requires some compromise on these practices, but whenever there is a sun, one should avail of its healing powers. The coloured sky just before the sun rises is filled with a special energy called Usha Shakti. The early morning hours are a wonderful time to take in these beneficial healing rays that may alter and change the course of one's life. Early morning sun rays are particularly helpful in avoiding chronically debilitating diseases. Usha Sakti is also potentially the cure for many refractory chronic disorders.

The use of proper Mudras can control and even, in some cases, cure grievous body conditions, including lung disorders like emphysema, tuberculosis and cancer. Healthy lungs depend much upon the sun's rays. Yes, the sun or high-density light enters the body through the skin and the eyes, and particularly through the palms of the hands, the soles of the feet, and the base of the spine. As these rays pass through the skin, natural Vitamin D is produced. Endocrine glands of the body, particularly the pineal gland in the hindbrain, are photosensitive. This accounts for the fact that natives in the tropics have active, healthy pineal glands. Those living in northern climes devoid of sun have atrophied pineal glands. Often the pineal glands are so destroyed that only pineal dust remains, red-like granular material that looks like red coloured sand. For Yogis, the pineal gland is an important glandular body, not only having a spiritual effect upon the lower bodies but also producing special hormones called red and white Soma (Melatonin?) necessary for higher spiritual development. The brain is also



highly photosensitive and is scientifically known to react to the change from night to day in a diurnal day-night cycle.

Many germs and viruses incubate in the body during a diurnal cycle and if high density light or sunshine does not touch the body, these germs will develop into full blown diseases. Tuberculosis is one such disorder, especially that form of tuberculosis affecting the lungs of highly emotional people. Doing the Surya Namaskar and particularly this Surya Prana Mudra in the early hours of the day, just before sunrise, through the actual sunrise and until the sun is 15 degrees above the horizon, will help terminate the active tubercular germs in the lungs. The rays of the sun activate nerve terminals in the hands during this Prana Mudra and the energy aroused passes back through reflex nerve terminals directly into the brain and lungs. The setting sun may give some healing rays, but does not contain the Usha Shakti of the morning sun. If one has tuberculosis or is tuberculosis prone, one should avoid the mid-day sun as that can activate dormant germs within the lungs. One prone to such disorders should not go out in the noon day sun from approximately 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and when out in the sun must cover the head and most of the exposed skin. The sun is the source of "all life" even of germ life that causes disease! Yet, there are times when the sun works for man as a healing agent. One should also do a cleansing routine using Mukha Bhastrika, especially to clean out the filth that has accumulated in the lungs. This is especially needed if living in a highly industrialized area associated with petrol burning machinery or equipment. If one heats one's house by gas or cooks by propane, then one needs a lung cleansing routine. A cleansing diet of plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables along with an intake of plenty of fresh water is also necessary to start rebuilding new lung cells.



## **EYE PALMING**

**After doing the Surya Prana Mudra or the Savituh Prana Mudra it is necessary to rest the eyes. This is done while still sitting in Vajra Asana. Rapidly rub the palms of the hands together for 30 seconds. Now cup each hand as though to hold water. Place the cupped hands over the eyes, crossing the hands at the little fingers over the bridge of the nose. Lean forward until elbows touch the ground and relax for two to three minutes with eyes resting in the velvety darkness of this Pranic poultice. When ready to return to normal activity, sit back up, keep the eyes closed, but remove the hands that have been cupped over the closed eyes and then slowly turn the head from side to side while doing deep breathing. Continue this slow motion head turning for two to three minutes. Then, open the eyes by blinking the eyes rapidly to get back the "blink reflex" and continue to turn the head from side to side slowly for a few more rounds of deep, rhythmic Pranayama.**

## **SURYA PRANA MUDRA TECHNIQUE**

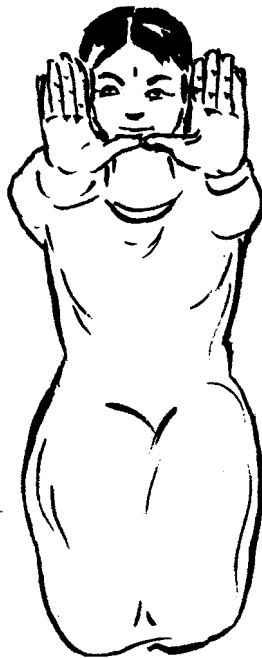
### **TECHNIQUE No.1**

**Sit in Vajra Asana facing the East, just as the sun is beginning to rise. The early morning colour of the sky is of great healing value to the eyes. Blink constantly during the entire sequence of this Mudra. Fold palms together at the chest. Now begin a long, slow, deep inhalation and reach forward towards the sun. Continue the in breath until the arms are fully stretched forward and the sun is centered between the left and right hand with the fingers straight, tips of the**

thumb touching one another. Be sure that the position of the hands is a square "U" and not a "W". Hold in the breath, blinking at the rising sun between the hands. Now, turn the palms to touch each other and let out the breath and return the hands to the beginning position. Hold out the breath briefly, and then repeat the entire sequence of the four-part-breath.

It would be appropriate to use Savitri Pranayama, named after the sun, for this routine. The in breath and the out breath are both done to a rhythm of a slow count of eight, while the held in and the held out breath are done to a four count.

Continue this Surya Prana Mudra until the sun is either too bright or fifteen degrees above the horizon.



## TECHNIQUE No.II

Using the same Surya Prana Mudra begin with an 8:4:8:4 breath as in Savitri Pranayama. Then, lengthen the breath count to 10:5:10:5, then 12:6:12:6, building up the control until the count of 32:16:32:16 can be done after several months. This is Savituh Prana Mudra. It has many advantages over the first technique but obviously is much harder to do.

*The exact hand position for Surya Prana Mudra is important to get the benefit of the sun's rays falling onto the palms of the hands, stretched out to the rising sun.*



*Fig. 1*



*Fig. 2*



*Fig. 3*



*Fig. 4*

*Surya Prana Mudra*  
*Gesturing the Life-Giving Sun*

## **SURYA MANTRAS**

A whole dimension is added to the practice of the Surya Prana Mudra when the Surya Mantras are chanted. This Mudra is directed towards the life-giving sun. An esoteric meaning associates with the sun is the Paramatman, the Supreme Self, the Over Soul. In performing Surya Mudra properly, one can also trigger off the Solar Medullars or the Solar Plexus in the abdominal nervous system and gain tremendous benefits neurologically, possibly even spiritually. The solar plexus is the earthly contact with that spiritual core which is termed "Ultimate Reality", the Paramatman.

The classical Savitri Mantra to the sun is an excellent Mantra to use while going through each round of the Surya Prana Mudra. This Mantra can be repeated aloud on the outgoing breath and repeated silently on the incoming, the held in and the held out breaths.

Begin from the Namaskar Mudra with an audible AUM, then chant:

*Om, Bhuh Bhuvah Swah Tat Savitur Varenyam  
Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat Om*

There are twelve suns in this Universe. Surya centres the earth's part of the solar system. The other suns are light years away, including that sun which is called Bhaskara, the nemesis of Western astrophysics. To use the twelve names of the sun, while doing a series of twelve rounds of the Surya Mudra Pranayama, can transform a very beneficial experience into a joyous, spiritual one. One needs to

recite these Mantras in the order suggested. It is highly recommended that the Sadhaka memorize these names and sounds in the order given for the additional benefit of tuning into the cosmic system.

The twelve names of the twelve suns and their Mantras are:

*Aum Mitraya Namah* - (Adoration to the Friend of All)

*Aum Ravaye Namah* - (Adoration to One Who is Praised by All)

*Aum Suryaya Namah* - (Adoration to the Guide of All)

*Aum Bhanave Namah* - (Adoration to the Bestower of Beauty)

*Aum Khagaya Namah* - (Adoration to the Stimulator of the Senses)

*Aum Pushne Namah* - (Adoration to the Nourisher of Life)

*Aum Hiranyagarbhaya Namah* - (Adoration to the Promoter of Virility)

*Aum Marichaye Namah* - (Adoration to the Destroyer of Disease)

*Aum Adityaya Namah* - (Adoration to the Inspirator of Love)

*Aum Savitre Namah* - (Adoration to the Begetter of Life)

*Aum Arkaya Namah* - (Adoration to the Inspirator of Awe)

*Om Bhaskaraya Namah* - (Adoration to the Effulgent One)

If, in the beginning, it is too difficult to remember the Gayatri Mantra of the twelve names of the sun, then one may choose to use the Mantra "*Om Suryaya Namah*". This should be easy enough to remember. Use it round by round in the Surya Prana Mudra. If performing the second variation of the Savituh Prana Mudra, use the ninth Mantra "*Aum Savitre Namah*". Even more simple yet, is the use of the Pranava "*Aum*". The whole routine is intensified if sectional Vibhaga Pranayama is done while using the Pranava AA-UU-MM, concentrating the "AA" into the abdominal section, the "UU" at the infracostal or between the ribs mid-chest breathing and the sound "MM" into the upper clavicular chest area. The "*Aum*" is silently intoned while breathing in, and voiced

aloud on the out-going breath. There is another form of the Mantra that can be done if one is also doing Chakra or Mandala Kriyas, while still another if doing a Mantra Laya Yoga Sadhana.

## **SURYA PRANAYAMA WITHOUT THE SUN**

Not everyone is blessed to live in the equatorial tropics where the sun shines most of the year and the most spectacular sunrises imaginable "come up like thunder "a over the horizon". I have had students join me here in Pondicherry from Northern Europe who have never seen a sunrise till they took up Yoga with me on the wide sandy expanses of our Ashram beach on the balmy shores of the Coromandal coast! The early morning sky is a riot of colours and the Usha Shakti is obvious and immediate. Sitting with the eyes closed and slowly turning the head from side to side is called "sunning" or Usha Kriya. It can be done with the eyes open if the sun has not yet risen. The colours enter directly into the nervous system through the optic nerves and act according to the laws of chromo-therapy, one of the oldest forms of medical and healing therapies. As the sun starts to rise, begin the Surya Prana Mudra or the variation Savituh Prana Mudra.

One has to observe the weather closely in inclement conditions to catch the early morning sun and perhaps in some northern climates, the sun may not be seen for weeks on end. Then, it is necessary to construct an alternative for these Mudras. The alternative is never equal to the real thing

because the sun's rays are missing. But, if light of sufficiently high density is used, the body will be photo-activated. These exercises are also excellent for strengthening the eyes and overcoming the most common disorder affecting human eye sight, photophobia or the aversion to light. Rearrange your room so that you can sit facing East, preferably with a blank wall two to three metres in front of you. At eye level or a little higher, place a copper disc modeled on the sun, a decorative metal plate or something of that nature. Shine a light from behind either over your left or right shoulder onto the copper disc or plate and do the Surya Mudra for five to six minutes while facing this "artificial sun".

A mirror may be so designed or placed that only an area representing the sun will catch the light. Alternatively a light may be set up in a wall socket at eye level or higher, but if the wall socket is much higher than the eye level, the arms would have to be raised to make sure that the light is still between the first fingers of the left and right hand in the Surya Prana Mudra. With a little imagination a sun-like device may be created that would be appropriate for the regular practice of this Mudra. But realise, that there is nothing like the sun itself to get full benefit of this practice.

## **THE SUN AS THE SOURCE OF LIFE**

All life on the planet earth is dependent upon the sun. Our relationship to this magnificent orb includes our angle of axis to the sun, creating the various seasons, and maintaining the constant gravitational distance from the sun. If earth were to shift away from the sun, the planet earth would freeze in

ice, while if the planet were to move any closer, mankind would be burned up by the ferocious heat. In modern times the sun-earth relationship has been affected by allowing chemicals as effluents to enter the atmosphere, chemisphere, and ionosphere. The mean temperature of the ionosphere is slowly increasing because of carbons and fluorocarbons and the residue of nitrates and super nitrates that are indestructible. These "waste materials" get caught in the ionosphere, intensifying the rays of the sun in the lower atmosphere. These "super rays" are creating all sorts of skin disorders including skin cancer. Perhaps in time man will have to live without the sun.....what an unhappy thought for those of us who consider themselves as "Children of the Sun". Many people are happy to live in cold, sunless climates and have adapted to that environment. But, at what a price! The sun is a source of healing energy. This healing energy affects air, water, plant life, even the earth itself and man ingests and digests these solar activated sources. Man is also photosensitive and without the sun, he would die. It is almost impossible to think of the healing of any disease of the body without sunshine, yet sick patients are seldom allowed to bask in the sun in modern hospitals, even for brief periods of time. A return to the old so-called "pagan cults" of sun worship which populated the earth early in human history may be a good idea! The worship of the sun is certainly preferable to the scientific view of the sun as "just a ball of gas in a cold sky!". Sun worshipping mankind should remain, but in the conscious, intelligent Yogic sense!



# **CHAPTER SEVEN**

## **BODY TALK**

THE EXCELLENCE OF  
NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

# **BODY TALK - THE EXCELLENCE OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

*By Yogacharini, Yogamani, Kalaimamani*  
**Smt. MEENAKSHI DEVI BHAVANANI**  
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A huge amount of sub-conscious "body talk" exists below and beyond the daily words we use to communicate with each other. In fact, the most effective communication is actually non-verbal. We inherently distrust words. We even distrust the perceptions of the mind. One of the most popular expressions in the English language is "I *think* so, but I don't *know*". Embedded within the structure of the language itself is the knowledge that "what we think" may not be "true". We cannot be certain of the validity of our own thinking process! If we doubt the validity of our own thinking, which is basically verbal in educated persons, how much less can we trust the validity of our spoken words, verbalized thoughts, which often "rush wildly out of our mouths".

There is no inherent truth in verbalization. Anything can be "thought". Anything can be "said", whether it bears any relationship to truth or not. We can say, "The lion is purple." This is obviously untrue, but its inherent fallacy does not prevent us from making the statement. Words can be arranged in any way the speaker wishes, whether they bear any relationship to the situation at hand or not. Furthermore, we often say exactly the opposite of what we feel. How often has the phrase "I *hate you*", sputtered out in anger, really been a frustration of the true feeling "I *love you!*"? The point is this: words are a most unreliable form of communication. Whether spoken or written they can

be manipulated. They can be influenced by wrong associations. They can be warped by negative emotions. They can become so abstract that they lose all meaning. On top of that, they can be easily misunderstood. All this plus the fact: words are "easy". It is "easy" to say things which are not true, simply to gain an advantage, to make a point or to bring about a desired effect. Our collective cultural unconscious recognizes this in English-speaking people with the commonly used expression, *"Actions speak louder than words"*.

A great problem in modern society is that words have been drained of their essential meaning or energy through overuse and misuse. The incredible influence of advertising media has done much to destroy the power of words. For example it is difficult to take the word "love" seriously, when it is used to indicate one's feelings towards everything from deodorant to tooth-paste to Italian pizza. When one is constantly exhorted to "trust" a particular brand of shaving cream or depilatory, one soon loses the sense of the true meaning of the word. Youngsters freely express the sacred words "love", "friendship", "caring", "good", and then, exhibit behaviour which shows the utter lack of these emotions or qualities. It is easy to say "I love you" when sexual passions are inflamed. But when tests come, as they do in all relationships, most modern people stop short of its real meaning, which also includes fidelity, loyalty, sacrifice and deep caring.

Is there a more effective vehicle of communication? Verbalization is inadequate. The ancient Chinese believed that as soon as one talked about something, it was an indication that the thing no longer existed. When we feel we must "tell someone we love

them", we can doubt our emotion. Words are necessary only when that which was once obvious is no longer to be seen or felt. As soon as we talk about something, we change that thing by making ourselves conscious of its existence.

In India the Gurus knew "verbal comments" adversely affected personality. This is why they rarely paid compliments to their students. They knew that by bringing the action or quality or achievement into the verbal realm, the student would become "self-conscious of that action or quality or achievement". Thus, the verbalization would destroy the naturalness and spontaneity of that thing, quality or state described. Self consciousness would either lead to anxiety that the status must be maintained, or egoism that the status had been achieved. Therefore, the student mentally and intuitively had to know his Guru's attitude towards him at all times. That subtle communion is tainted if it descends to the gross communication of words. Important things should not be brought to the gross level of verbal communication, but rather be communicated in more subtle ways. Or, so it has been taught in the ancient East.

What are those ways, those means of communication which are subtle, refined, delicate beyond words? What means of communication exist which will not destroy the fragile relationship, the delicate emotion, the subtle thought? Equally important, how can the individual mind communicate with its own emotions, with its own body? Is there an intimate form of communication within the human structure itself? In India, a whole language grew up which was capable of expressing the most subtle spiritual truths, the most refined human emotions and thoughts without resorting to the gross vehicle of verbal communication, which

alters any situation it expresses. That form of communication was called the Science of Mudra.

Broadly speaking, Mudra means a "gesture". It can be a gesture of mind, (Manas Mudra); a gesture of the body (Kaya Mudra); a gesture of the hands (Hastha Mudra); a gesture of the feet (Pada Mudra); a gesture of the face (Mukha Mudra) or a gesture of the eyes (Chakshu Mudra).

Most humans unconsciously use "Mudras" constantly in their daily lives. They simply are unaware of it. Let us examine a few Mudras common to humanity throughout the world, "Mudras of the Daily Life", so to speak.

*"Body Talk"* has become a popular cliché in "pop psychology" circles in the West. We unconsciously tell the world many things about ourselves, unconsciously communicate much of our real self to those around us, simply by the way we hold our body, our hands, our face, and our feet. The English expression *"It was a gesture of good will"* indicates that we recognize that emotions can be "gestured". Mentally we can "gesture" or "reach out" towards others with good thoughts or even bad ones, and this "gesture" has its own power, depending upon the concentrative force of our mind. This is a Manas Mudra. When we see someone with shoulders caved in, we know that the person is dejected, or lacking confidence, just as we know that someone who walks with shoulders thrown back, straight and tall is filled with confidence. We know that someone who is constantly "fidgeting" or moving a body part unnecessarily is nervous and worried. These are examples of unconscious "gestures" of the body known as Kaya Mudras.

Some common unconscious gestures of the hands (Hastha Mudras) include wringing of the hands when in great difficulty or trouble; showing the palm of the hand to another, a gesture asking the person to stop what he is doing (This Mudra is used by traffic policemen all over the world); putting the hand into a fist to show defiance and anger; gesturing the thumb up, with the remaining fingers closed into a fist to show approval. (In the ancient days, the gladiators in the Roman coliseum depended upon this signal from the emperor to spare their lives).

Gestures of the feet are not so commonly used in the shoe-clad West, but everyone knows what it means if someone "kicks" their foot at them or stamps their feet in anger. In the East it is considered a gesture of great disrespect to sit with the legs crossed at the knees when in the presence of someone who should be shown respect. It is also considered disrespectful to sit with the feet outstretched toward anyone. Because it is customary to sit on the floor, the people are accustomed to many positions of the feet, which have different meanings. This is the Pada Mudra. We are all also aware of gestures of the face (Mukha Mudras). We all know what a smile is and what a frown is, and what a grimace of disgust looks like or a hateful look. These are all common facial Mudras. The Chakshu Mudras, those gestures of the eyes, are much more subtle. Certainly most lovers are experts in the Chakshu Mudra, sending glances of love, of disappointment, of anger, of sorrow etc. The unconscious use of various "Mudras" to communicate basic emotions, feelings and ideas is common throughout the human family. It is only in India, however, that this human phenomenon has been observed, codified, structured and refined into both a science and an art.

Mudra was elevated to the position of a carefully thought out science of cause and effect in the discipline of Yoga, and refined to an exquisite form of communication in the art of Bharat Natyam. The Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga systems of the ancient Hindus contain a wide repertoire of Pada Mudras, Hastha Mudras and Kaya Mudras. Although there are Chakshu Mudras and Mukha Mudras, their use is not so widespread as in, for example, the Bharat Natyam.

The Yogis in times past were fully aware of the flows of Prana or Vital Energy in the body, the effect of this Prana upon the human organism and its importance in all forms of life. The existence of Prana is a fact that even the greatest of modern scientists have yet to discover. Carl Sagan, well-known popularizer of scientific theories in the USA and Canada, had stated that it was simply by chance adaptation to environmental conditions that the human body developed five fingers and five toes. The Yogi, who knows his own body inside out and has studied its connection to the Universe, realises the great scientist was badly mistaken. The human has five fingers and five toes on each side of his body because he has five flows of Pranic energy which terminate in each of the digits. There are five flows from head to foot on the right side, and five flows from head to foot on the left side. As well, there is a definite form of Prana circulating in the head, in the torso, in the stomach, in the pelvic area and in the extremities. These Pranic energies even have separate names in Yogic terminology. Their flows have been well charted in ancient Yogic literature. Udhana Prana circulates in the head; Prana Reflex in the chest; Samana in the digestive organs; Apana in the organs of elimination and Vyana in the organs of mobility (arms and legs). Bringing

these various diverse flows of Pranic energy into closed circuits ("sealing" the energy flow) is one of the methods by which Mudra achieves its purpose. In fact, one of the esoteric meanings of the word Mudra is "to seal or to close".

Even the less sensitive human has some dim awareness of the flow of energy from the hands and feet. This is why for ages immemorial holy men (men who had achieved some high level of energy within their human frame) have been able to "heal" by the "laying on of hands". This is why we like to be touched by "high-energy", positive people. They are transferring their surplus energy to us. It also explains why we shudder to be touched by negative, low energy people - they literally drain us of our energy. Normally we are losing energy through our hands and feet. It was discovered by the Yogis that joining hand to hand or hands to feet in various ways not only prevented that energy loss, but also helped build up the power of the nervous system, making it capable of handling the greater energy flows needed for (and produced by) "real" meditation. In Namaskar Mudra, for example (which is the hand position also used by Christians for prayer), the palm is placed against palm, and held against the region of the heart. In Yoga Mudra, the feet are crossed into Padma Asana, with right foot on left thigh, and left foot on right thigh, palms of the hands are placed on the soles of the feet. In many Yoga Asanas, the palms of the hands are placed into contact with the soles of the feet deliberately to create closed circuits of Pranic energy.

Sometimes, various fingers are held together in particular positions, uniting one specific flow of Prana in a unique way with another, to produce a certain effect in the body. For example, a whole system



of Mudras has evolved which, when the fingers are held in a particular position, such as Chin Mudra, Chinmaya Mudra, Adhi Mudra and Brahma Mudra, the flow of air into specific areas of the low, mid, high and complete areas of the lungs respectively can be controlled. A Mudra used commonly for meditative and concentrative activities is the Jnana Mudra in which the tip of the thumb is united in a circle with the tip of the index finger, and the other three fingers held rigidly straight. The thumb represents the energy of the Atman (Universal Self; in physiological terms, the energy of the Central Nervous System or Sushumna Nadi) and the index finger represents the energy of Jiva (individual self; in physiological terms, the right and left peripheral nerves or the Ida and Pingala Nadis). In Yogic parlance, the energies of the individual self are united to the energies of the Universal Self and the high meditative state is achieved. The Hastha Mudra is both a symbolic, as well as a causative factor in producing that which it symbolizes. It sets the stage, so to speak, and points the way. It is the conscious, evolving aspect of mind speaking indirectly through the Mudras to the physiological function of the body, gesturing to the body the direction along which body energies should flow.

There are many such Hastha Mudras, each having its own particular effect upon the body, emotions, mind, nervous system and Pranic flow within the human organism, each Mudra carrying its own subtle message of evolution. Also in the Hatha Yoga repertoire are numerous Pada Mudras where the feet are kept together in various positions in order to affect energy flows. Sometimes the feet are used as a vehicle to apply pressure at a certain sensitive point in the body, producing the desired effect on the energy system.

Some Kaya Mudras (Body Mudras) include Yoga Mudra and Maha Mudra, but the most important of the Kaya Mudras in the Hatha Yoga system are the six Mudras known also as the Shat Mudras or the Oli Mudras. By placing the body into six distinct positions, using breath control and Bandhas, endocrine glands of the body are stimulated indirectly. Through this complicated series of body Mudras, the Tejas or fire power of the body (sexual energy) is transmuted into Ojas, or mental energy. This is a good example of how the higher mind speaks to the body through the medium of the Mudra. If the mind tried to verbally instruct the body to transmit Tejas into Ojas, the feat would be impossible. By placing the body into particular positions, controlling the breath in a particular way and using Bandhas, the Mudras acts as the communicative link between the higher mind's desire to create Ojas, and the body's ability to follow its direction. Thus, the Mudra becomes a subtle means of true communication between mind and body, a concrete way in which the body can implement the evolutionary commands of the mind. Mudra thus becomes the special language uniting mind and body.

Whereas Mudras in Yoga are used mainly by the Yogi to communicate spiritually within himself and with the Universal Self, the Mudras in Bharat Natyam are used by the artist to subtly communicate with her audience, creating a Rasa - a particular emotional state - or stimulating the perception of a spiritual truth or feeling directly, from soul to soul, without the cloying, degrading effect of verbal contact. The Mudra in Yoga is an intra-personal communication, where with hand, foot and body positions, the mind can communicate its evolutionary commands to the body via energy or Pranic flows. The Mudra in Bharat Natyam, however, is much more an inter-personal communication, a direct communion between the

artist and her audience. Subtle emotions, spiritual truths which cannot be conveyed verbally, can be expressed via the trained glance of the eye, face, the position of the hands, the feet or the body.

Many of the Bharat Natyam Mudras are also to be found in Yoga, as they are deeply rooted in the natural physical reaction of the nervous system to certain emotions and states of mind. For example, in Bharat Natyam a closed fist with the thumb up is called Shikara Mudra and is used to symbolize manifestations of the Divine Power - Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu etc. We have seen how in common usage the erect thumb position symbolizes triumph, success, "lordship" (compare the popular expression "thumbs up"). This corresponds well to Yogic thinking where the thumb symbolizes the energies of the Higher Self and in psychic and physiological terms, the Sushumna Nadi. The Namaskara Mudra, which literally gestures the meaning, "I witness that Supreme Force as manifesting in you", is common to both Yoga and Bharat Natyam, as is the Anjali Mudra, in which the Namaskara Mudra is lifted high over the head in a gesture of great respect to the higher authority, which could be God, Guru or King. The Jnana Mudra, the Gesture of Meditation in Yoga, is used also in Bharat Natyam to show the meditative state of Rishis or Tapasins.

An interesting example of a Mudra for the dance, which is deeply rooted in neurological truths, is the Mudra used to depict the Rakshasha or the demon. In the case of the Jnana Mudra, the Mudra of Meditation or Wisdom, the thumb which represents the Higher Consciousness is joined to the index finger which represents the individual Self and the three remaining fingers which represent the Tanmatras

(the essence of sensual experiences) are held straight and together in a controlled position. This represents a man in a meditative state. In the Mudra representing a Rakshasha or demon, the index finger is held against the base of the thumb, with the thumb stretched out, indicating that the individual self wilfully refuses to join itself to the Supreme Consciousness. The other three fingers representing all the senses are widely splayed apart, indicating that the senses of the Rakshasha are out of control. Neurologically, the hand position well represents a devil, a Rakshasha, a man who stubbornly refuses to submit his individual will to the Divine Will and whose senses are uncontrolled. This same kind of analysis could be applied to many other Mudras of the Bharat Natyam.

Another class of hand positions of the dance is more graphic and descriptive, and recreates salient features of the action / emotion / thought expressed by simulating the outstanding characteristics that are being expressed. It is like an abstract sketch of an object, hinting at its form. These Mudras are more obvious, such as those used to suggest carrying a pot of water, stringing flowers into a garland, closing and opening a door, eating butter and so on. The Kaya Mudras, holding the body in a defiant stance, an amorous stance, etc., play their part in communicating ideas and emotions as well.

The Pada Mudras reinforce the work of the Kaya Mudras. Chakshu and Mukha Mudras are the vital link between Hastha, Pada and Kaya Mudras and the Rasa to be created in the audience. The skilled, trained dancer learns to communicate with her eyes and subtle gestures of face, using facial muscles, eyebrows, eyelids and mouth to convey her point. The most exquisite communication is achieved without uttering a single word. Of

course, elaborate instrumental and vocal music and the collective Cultural Subconscious of the audience is also drawn upon to achieve the total effect. When that magic of shared spiritual insight and awareness occurs, as it often does in a Bharat Natyam recital, it is amazing to think that so much has been shared, so many emotions, so many thoughts, so many experiences with nary a word uttered by the artist or audience. The purifying and uplifting process of that type of artistic communion must be experienced to be understood. Mudra in this context acts as a catharsis and inspirator.

Through the science of Mudra, that rare moment of perfect and pure communion and oneness can be achieved, whether uniting man with man in a high spiritual level of consciousness or uniting man with the Supreme Force in that fleeting moment of spiritual insight. The Mudra "gestures" the energy necessary and "seals" that otherwise intangible and illusive moment, fixing it for all time in our heart and nerves, bones and blood, mind and body, soul and thought - creating a solid foundation stone upon which to build a spectacular spiritual life.

*The Mudra "seals" into our very cells that call to a Higher Life which can never again be denied! The Higher Self gestures to the lower Self-the Paramatman beckons to the Jiva - with the simple command "Come To Me" - an exquisite invitation which transcends all verbal language, a Cosmic Mudra which links man to God.*

*The following pages depict some of the important Hastha Mudras that are used in*

*Bharata Natyam, one of the Classical Dances of South India.*

ASAMYUTTA HASTAM (Single Handed Gestures)



**PATAKA**  
(Flag)



**TRIPATAKA**  
(Three Parts  
of the Flag)



**ARDHAPATAKA**  
(Half Flag)



**KARTARIMUKHA**  
(Arrow Shaft Face)



**MAYURA**  
(Peacock)



**ARDHACHANDRA**  
(Half Moon)



**ARALA**  
(Bent)



**SHUKHATUNDAKA**  
(Parrot's Beak)



**MUSHTI**  
(Fist)



**SHIKHARA**  
(Spire)



**KAPITTHA**  
(Elephant-Apple)



**KATAKAMUKHA**  
(Opening in a Link)



**SOOCHI**  
(Needle)



**CHANDRAKALA**  
(Digit of the Moon)

ASAMYUTTA HASTAM (Single Handed Gestures)



**PADMAKOSHA**  
(Lotus Bud)



**SARPASEERSHA**  
(Snake-Head)



**MRIGHASEERSHA**  
(Deer-Head)



**SIMHAMUKHA**  
(Lion-Face)



**KANGULA**  
(Tail)



**ALAPADMA**  
(Full Blown Lotus)



**CHATURA**  
(A Little)



**BHRAMARA**  
(Bee)



**HAMSASYA**  
(Swan-Face)



**HAMSAPAKSHA**  
(Swan-Feather)



**SAMDAMSA**  
(Grasping)



**MUKULA**  
(Bud)



**TAMRACHOOD**  
(Red-Orested Cock)



**TRISHULA**  
(Trident)



**SAMYUTTA HASTAM (Two Handed Gestures)**



**ANJALI**  
(Salutation)



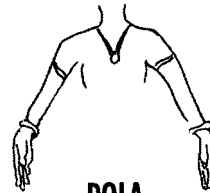
**KAPOTA**  
(Dove)



**KARKATA**  
(Crab)



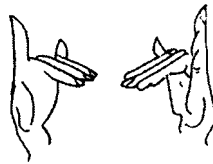
**SWASTIKA**  
(Crossed)



**DOLA**  
(Swing)



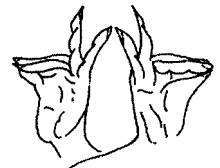
**PUSHPAPUTA**  
(Flower Casket)



**UTSANGA**  
(Embrace)



**SHIVA LINGA**  
(Shiva Linga)



**KATAKAVARDHANA**  
(Link of Increase)



**KARTARISWASTIKA**  
(Crossed Arrow Shafts)



**SHAKATA**  
(Car-Rakshasha)



**SHANKHA**  
(Conch)

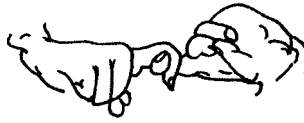
SAMYUTTA HASTAM (Two Handed Gestures)



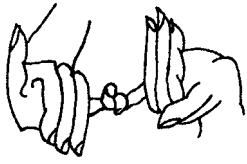
**CHAKRA**  
(Discus)



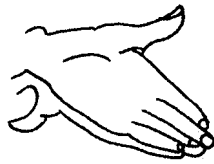
**SAMPUTA**  
(Casket)



**PASHA**  
(Noose-Enemy)



**KEELAKA**  
(Bond)



**MATSYA**  
(Fish)



**KOORMA**  
(Tortoise)



**VARAHA**  
(Boar)



**GARUDA**  
(Eagle)



**NAGA-BANDHA**  
(Serpent-Tie)



**KHATVA**  
(Bed)



**BHERUNDA**  
(Pair of Birds)



**AVAHITTHA**  
(Full Blown Breasts)

**ANANDA ASHRAM  
AT THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR  
YOGA EDUCATION AND RESEARCH  
(ICYER)**

This world famous Yoga Institute has been offering intensive Six Month International Yoga Teachers Training Courses from October 2<sup>nd</sup> through March 25<sup>th</sup> since 1968, without any break. Thousands of students from all over India and the world have been thoroughly trained in an intensive Yoga programme which starts at 4.30 am each morning and concludes only by 9.00 pm each evening. CLASSICAL RISHICULTURE ASHTANGA YOGA (GITANANDA YOGA) as expounded by the world famous Guru, Yoga Maharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj is taught in carefully graded steps. Swami Gitananda, a Medical Doctor born in India but who spent forty years in the West, taught Classical Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga (Gitananda Yoga) with a scientific, medical basis. The revered Swamiji, considered one of the leading world experts in Classical Ashtanga Yoga, attained Samadhi on December 29, 1993. Yogic cleansing practices and fasting, diet and nutrition are basic to the course. More than 108 Asanas, 44 Pranayamas and 56 Kriyas are taught in the six months. Thorough study of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Upanishads, Yoga Vashistha, Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita, Bhagavad Gita and other important Yogic texts is made. Training is also given in Carnatic Music, with emphasis on devotional Bhajans. Those interested may also study Bharat Natyam and Classical Instrumental Music. Training in Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga techniques are given, including elaborate work with Yogic relaxation, concentration and visualization practices. Seats in the course are limited to ten persons annually, who are accepted only after going through preliminary instruction with the Institute's trained teachers and participation in the 52 Lesson Correspondence Course, Yoga: Step-by-Step, which is the basic syllabus of the Six Month Course. The Institute has a traditional Gurukula setting, in an ideal garden atmosphere, on the shores of the Bay of Bengal. Students are also introduced to the Indian way of life, festivals, cultural programmes, community activities and Hindu rites and rituals, to cultivate an awareness of the culture from which Yoga has sprung. From October 2001, this course has been extended to an additional six months training, for those considered suitable, giving "hands-on" training in Yoga teaching and class organization as well as undertaking senior Yoga practices. Those eligible for this advanced

Yoga work will at the end of the one-year training receive a One-Year International Diploma in Yoga Education. ICYER has more than a 130 affiliated Yoga centres in 23 countries of the world. Thirty books have been published, as well as a monthly magazine, Yoga Life, which has completed more than 37 years of publication for a worldwide audience. The International Centre for Yoga Education and Research (ICYER) is also Headquarters for several worldwide organizations, including Vishwa Yoga Samaj, Yoga Jivana Satsangha (International) and the Society for the Preservation of Rishiculture Yoga (SPARC).

The International Centre for Yoga Education and Research is also the office headquarters for Sri Kambliswamy Madam, a 133-year-old Samadhi site of the great Ashtanga Yoga Guru Srila Sri Kambaliswamigal at Thattanchavady, Pondicherry. The Samadhi of its founder, Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj, is also located at Kambliswamy Madam and has become a world famous pilgrimage place. Dr. Swami Gitananda left his body in Samadhi at 2.20 am December 29, 1993, Arudhra Darshan Day and the full moon in the Tamil month of Margazhi. Daily Pujas are conducted at Sri Kambliswamy Madam, with elaborate Pujas from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. on Sunday. Sunday Pujas are open to public who wish to experience a traditional Hindu Puja. Grand Pujas for the Samadhis of the eight Gurus of the lineage are conducted throughout the year, as well as many Carnatic Music Festivals at the Sri Kambliswamy Madam.

The City Centre of ICYER is called Yoganjali Natyalayam and Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri established it in March 1993. The flourishing Centre of Yoga, Bharat Natyam and Carnatic Music with more than 400 actively enrolled students and more than 5000 alumni is located in Central Pondicherry, behind the Iyyanar Koil and near the New Bus Stand. It caters to the needs of the local populace as well as providing special individual and personally tailored lessons for passing Tourists and those visiting Pondicherry on a short-term basis. Yoganjali Natyalayam has developed a very popular Bharat Natyam troupe, which specializes in performance of the difficult acrobatic Natya Karanas, which are essentially a form of Yoga Asanas. The Centre presents a full three-hour length Bharat Natyam Dance Drama each year in July - August to celebrate the birthday of Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri. Its Annual Day is held in June each year and is a feast of spectacular music, dance and Yoga demonstrations. It is located at 25, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cross, Iyyanar Nagar, Pondicherry - 605 013. Ph: +91-413-2241561, e-mail: yognat2001@yahoo.com. Website: www.geocities.com/yognat2001

**FACILITIES FOR TOURISTS AND PERSONS STAYING  
A SHORT TIME IN PONDICHERRY**

Special courses have been designed to aid tourists who are staying only a short time in Pondicherry and who wish to learn something of the ancient science of Yoga. These courses are set up in Ten-class modules, and the timings and days can be adjusted to the tourist's itinerary. These courses are taken in sets of ten classes. If the student wishes, and if the time is available, they may enroll in the next set of ten lessons on completion of the first. Information on these special courses can be had by contacting either ICYER or Yoganjali Natyalayam. Special Lecture-Demonstrations of Bharat Natyam, Lectures on Yoga with Yoga Asana demonstrations or Lecture- Demonstrations of Carnatic Vocal and Instrumental Music can be arranged for Tourist groups on prior arrangement.

Yoga therapy is also offered by prior appointment with the Consultant Yoga Therapist, Yogacharya Dr. Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani.  
[www.geocities.com/yognat2001/ananda](http://www.geocities.com/yognat2001/ananda)

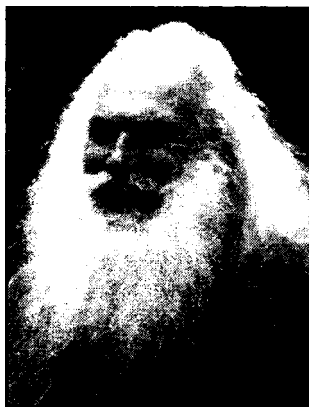


## THE FOUNDER

Yogamaharishi

Dr Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj

A Master Yogi and great Spiritual Teacher, Yogamaharishi Or Swami Gitananda Giri had the unique talent of infusing the mystic insights of the Rishis into practical life. The exponent of a Bengali Tantric tradition, which stretches back hundreds of years, Yogamaharishi Dr Swami Gitananda Giri, a medical doctor and scientist, was able to express the abstract ancient insights in practical modern terms. One of the greatest Masters of Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga in the twentieth century, Yogamaharishi Dr Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj of Pondicherry, India, was a brilliant and dynamic Guru known affectionately as THE LION OP PONDICHERRY. He taught hundreds of thousands of persons worldwide the intricate and demanding art and science of Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga, through his books, his magazine articles, his monthly magazine YOGA LIFE, and his nine world tours in which he lectured and taught hundreds of thousands of seeking spirits worldwide. His influence on the modern world of Yoga is immense. He was named Madathiapathy of Sri Kambaliswamy Madam in 1975 and carried out his religious duties scrupulously. He founded Ananda Ashram (1968) and later, the International Centre for Yoga Education and Research (1989) on the shores of the Bay of Bengal, eight kilometers north of Pondicherry. He also founded in March 1993 a flourishing City Centre, known as YOGANJALI NATYALAYAM, to teach the Hindu cultural arts of Bharat Natyam and Carnatic Music, as well as Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga to the local populace. Throughout, his approach was scientific, rational and systematic. In 1987 he was awarded the title, "The Father of Modern Scientific Yoga" by Vishwa Unnyanan Samsad of Calcutta. He was also one of the pioneers in bringing the concepts of traditional Yoga to the Western mind. On December 20, 1986, Swami Gitananda Giri was awarded the title "YOGA SHIROMANI" by the then



President of India Shri Zail Singh Ji, at the World Yoga Conference held in Asian Village, New Delhi. He personally taught an intensive Six Month International Yoga Teachers Training Course in his Pondicherry Ashram for twenty-five years from 1968. On March 10, 1986, Swami Gitananda was appointed to Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi. He served in this position till his Maha Samadhi. Swami Gitananda cooperated and served as advisor to Pondicherry Government in organizing the First International Yoga Festival in Pondicherry sponsored by Department of Tourism, in January 1993. Since then, the Festival has been held yearly from January 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>, and Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani continues to act as advisor for this grand event. Her services and that of Swami Gitananda are regularly and publicly appreciated by the Pondicherry Government at this festival. Swami Gitananda was given so many other honours, including the honour of being the First Vice-President of the All India Association of Mutts and Ashrams based in Kancheepuram, Tamilnadu to which he was elected in 1983. The organisation was headed by the Presidentship of the Shankaracharya of Kancheepuram. To name Swamiji's accomplishment would take volumes and indeed, volumes have been written on him. No history of Yoga in modern times is complete without reference to his name. He is the author of twenty-two books on Yoga, has conducted five World Conferences on Yoga, headed an international organisation with centres in twenty countries. More than 130 centres of Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga are established worldwide, with thousands of Yoga teachers trained by him now actively propagating not only Yoga, but also various aspects of Indian culture. He was part of the intellectual community of Yoga practitioners, and was the Chief Patron of the prestigious Indian Academy of Yoga, centered at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. He has done large amounts of scientific Research in Yoga, and has more than fifty scientific and semi scientific papers to his credit. His work is often cited as references in Yoga research projects worldwide. He is considered one of the five major authorities on Ashtanga Yoga in the twentieth century. The great Yogi attained Maha Samadhi on December 29, 1993, at the age of eighty-seven years.

## THE DIRECTOR

**Yogacharini, Yogamani, Pudukalaimamani  
SMT MEENAKSHI DEVI BHAVANANI**



Kalaimamani Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani was born September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1943 in the United States. She came to India in 1968 to study Indian Art and Yoga at the age of 25 and fell in love with the country and its culture. She has lived in India ever since, and received Indian citizenship on November 30, 1992. She describes the event, in her own words as "the proudest day of my life". She met her Guru in Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj, a world-renowned expert on Classical Ashtanga Yoga as well as a medical doctor, in 1968 in Pondicherry and since that time has devoted her life to his teachings and to institutions founded by him. She took up the study of Bharata Natyam under world renowned Guru Padma Shri Adyar K Lakshmanan in 1975, following the Kalakshetra style in Chennai. She was presented in Arangetram by her Master in 1981, and subsequently gave Bharata Natyam performances all over India.

She has been instrumental in training more than 10,000 village children in the art and science of Yoga and Bharata Natyam since 1975 through the Sri Kambliswamy Yoga and Fine Arts Programme. More than 150 of her students trained in this programme have taken up Yoga and Bharata Natyam teaching as full time careers. This programme was directed primarily for the backward classes of the community and all teaching was free. In addition, students were given food, clothes, medical and school supplies, scholarships and in every way, encouraged to advance themselves using Yoga and the Cultural Arts as a means of refining their personalities. They were also given scholarships for further education. Selected students were taken on All India Tours and given great opportunity to present their art on stage, financed solely by the Kambliswamy programme. Scores of Yoga Teachers were placed in good jobs and all round economic and social advancement was obtained.



**Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani is a journalist by profession and her articles and essays appear in national and international magazines and newspapers. She has been editor of the international magazine Yoga Life since 1968 and is Managing Editor of the Ashram's publishing unit Satya Press. She is Director of Studies (Ashram Acharya) for the Six Month International Yoga Teachers Training Course offered annually at International Centre for Yoga Education and Research from October 2nd to March 25th, as well as for the year-long international Diploma in Yoga Education offered from October 2<sup>nd</sup> through September 15<sup>th</sup> annually at ICYER. This course has been offered since 1968 without a break and is recognized internationally as one of the finest examples of traditional Guru Kula style training in Ashtanga Yoga. More than two thousand students have been trained in this course, coming from nearly every country in the world. Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani is a popular Conference and Seminar speaker. She attends as Invited Speaker, Chief Guest and Special Guest in her capacity as an internationally recognized Yoga authority numerous national and international conferences, seminars, workshops etc per year. She serves as Yoga Expert and Consultant to Government of India, New Delhi, in the Ministries of Health, Education and Human Resources.**

**She has been International Organizing Secretary for five major International Yoga Conferences, the most recent being the Fourth Decennial Millennium Meet of Teachers of Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga, January 23rd through February 5th, 2000 in Pondicherry. She is a prolific author and has written ten books, including two books of poetry. She has been recipient of many National Awards. She was awarded the title "Yogamani" in 1986 by the President of India Shri Zail Singh Ji at Asian Village, New Delhi. In 1997 she was awarded the National Award, Bhaskar Award by Bharat Nirman and Indian Trade Promotion Organisation, New Delhi, one of fifty eminent Indians so honoured during the 50th year of Indian Independence for their contribution to Indian culture and spirituality. In January 1999 she was given the highest award by the Pondicherry Government for an artist, the Pudukkal Kalaimamani Award for her work in Bharata Natyam.**

**She was the second artist so honoured. In December 1999 she was named as an eminent Yoga expert to the Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy, under the Health Ministry, Government of India, New Delhi and she was named to the Finance Committee of this Council in March 2000. She was named to the Academic Council, Pondicherry University, in March 2000. She has served on several inspection teams and several committees in her capacity as a member of this Academic Council. She was awarded a Gold Medal by Government of Pondicherry for her work in Bharata Natyam on February 26, 2001.**

**She is Director of Yoganjali Natyalayam, a popular City Centre in Pondicherry for the propagation of Yoga, Bharata Natyam and Carnatic Music. She has developed a famous Bharata Natyam troupe that appears regularly in prestigious festivals and also stages spectacular Bharata Natyam and Yoga programmes scores of times each year in Pondicherry. Yoganjali Natyalayam was founded in 1993 as a continuation of the Sri Kambliswamy Yoga and Fine Arts Programme that was begun in 1975. More than 30 faculty and 5 office staff members are working in this institution and another 10 faculty members and 3 staff members are working in the PONDY WEST BRANCH located in Thelashpet, Pondicherry-9. Yoganjali Natyalayam also has extension programmes running in Venkata Nagar and Anna Nagar. More than 3000 students have studied in the Natyalayam that boasts of a regular strength of more than 400 students. She has worked tirelessly to reinstate the ancient acrobatic Natya Karanas into the Bharata Natyam repertoire and has presented lecture-demonstrations on this topic at the ABHAI dance festivals in Chennai. She insists that all her Bharata Natyam students also study Yoga side by side and her students are famous for their strength, flexibility and devotion to the spiritual Yogic aspects of the Bharata Natyam. She and her students have performed Bharata Natyam recitals all over India including New Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore, Kodaikanal, Chennai, Karaikal and Chidambaram Natyanjali. She has also directed TWELVE FULL LENGTH DANCE DRAMAS and TWENTY - FIVE MINI DANCE DRAMAS in the last ten years: These dramas are all original music and choreography.**

The Major Dance Dramas include: Kannappa Nayanar, Karaikal Ammaiyar, Nandanar Charitram, Kamba Ramayanam (Two versions), Meenakshi Thiru Kalyanam, Nala-Damayanthi, Andal Charitram, Silappadikaram, Ramavathara, Homage to the Home Planet - Pancha Maha Bhutas and Jayadeva's Dasavathara: The ten incarnations of Lord Krishna. The Mini Dance Dramas include "Muruga Muruga", "Navagraha Vazhippadu", "In Praise of Bharata Natyam", "Dasavathara", "Thaye Yashoda", "Meenakshi Thaye", "Hanuman and Rama", "Thiraddavilayattu Pillai", "Vandhe Matharam", "Lingashtakam", "Pralhada Charitram", "Shivashakti Tandava", "Kalinga Narthanam", "Desire (Asa)" .and others. Her students have performed at the Tenth Anniversary celebrations of ABHAI (Association of Bharata Natyam Artists of India) at Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai, as well as for ABHAI Dance Festival in 1992 at Bharathiya Vidya Bhavan's in Chennai. They are often called to perform at Inaugural Functions for Government of Pondicherry as well as for South Zone Cultural Functions, all over South India, notably in Karäikal, Mahe, Tanjavur and Chennai. For example, they were invited by South Zone Cultural Department (GOI) to perform the Inaugural Function of the South Zone's' New cultural complex in Tanjavur and the National Folk Dance Festival on January 31, 2004 in Tanjavur. The function was attended by the Governor of Tamil Nadu and Governor of Andhra Pradesh. On September 7<sup>th</sup> 2002 Yoganjali Natyalayam presented a three-hour programme of Yoga, Dance and Music at the Narada Gana Sabha. The Programme was sponsored by the Arkaya Foundation, Madras Management Association the MGM Resorts and Amusement Park Chain. Yoganjali Natyalayam regularly performs at the leading Sabhas in Chennai, including Music Academy, Bharata Vidya Bhavan and Narada Gana Sabha. The Yoganjali Natyalayam Bharata Natyam Troupe has performed every year in the International Yoga Festival sponsored by Department of Tourism, Government of Pondicherry (1993 -2006), as well as performing for Food Festivals, DRDA Festival, Chidambaram Natyänjali Celebrations, Vinayagar Chathurthi Festivals (1991-2005), Fete De Pondicherry and Natya Vizhas, and many other programmes. Recently Amma has conducted the Bharata Natyam Arangetrams

for three of her students Miss Renuka Devi (2001), Miss Padma Prashanthini (2002) and Miss D Lakshmi (2005) who successfully completed the Nine Year Part Time Diploma Study in Yoga and Bharata Natyam offered by Yoganjali Natyalayam.

It is note worthy that four of her students Miss M. Niraimathy (2000), Miss N. Ratnya (2001), Master M. Ilaval (2002) and Miss Dhesh. M (2003) were selected for the Central Govt.'s Human Resource Ministry's National Best Child Awards from New Delhi for the years 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003. Niraimathy and Ramya had previously received State Best Child Award from the Education Department, Govt of Pondicherry. Master M Ilaval was the Pandy and Tamil Nadu State Top Ranker in 10<sup>th</sup> standard in 2003. Her student Miss D. Lakshmi was named "Best Outgoing Student" (from a class of 900) at Bharatidasan Women's College in Pondicherry in 2004. Her students at Yoganjali Natyalayam were selected for the prestigious International Yoga Scholarship awarded by the Yoga Research and Education Centre, California, USA in 2001 and 2002. Dr. Georg Feuerstein, an eminent Indologist and Yoga Scholar, heads this world famous foundation, and he issued citations praising the work of Yoganjali Natyalayam. Her students regularly win First Prize and "Champion of the Meet" awards in various Yoga competitions held all over India. For example, in 1999 Miss M. Niraimathy won "Champion of the Meet" at the International Yoga Asana Competitions held as part of Yoga Festival in Pondicherry. She outperformed more than 500 competitors from all over the world to become the only female Pondicherrian to obtain this title till date. The Yoganjali Natyalayam team regularly attends competitions all over India, and usually brings home at least 25 medals in different categories.

Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani also directed the Millennium Sun Rise Project on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000, at which 3,000 School Children from all over Pondicherry State performed Surya Namaskar in unison at the Gandhi Tidal on the Marina as the sun rose over the Bay of Bengal on the first day of the Millennium. This was done in conjunction with the Department of Education and Tourism. Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani was invited by the Pondicherry Government Department of Education to train 100 Physical Education Teachers of Pondicherry

**Government Schools in Yoga in August 1997 and again in August 2002. The one month intensive training was held at Indira Gandhi Sports Stadium and was held daily from 6 am to 6 pm. Yoga is now being taught on regular basis in many Government Schools officially since August 15, 2002.**

**She is the International Director of Yoga Jivana Satsangha and supervises the world-wide Network of 130 centres of Rishiculture Ashtanga (Gitananda) Yoga in twenty-three countries worldwide. Government of India calls her regularly to New Delhi for Conferences and Consultations in her capacity as a Yoga Expert by Ministries of Health, Education as well as the Human Resource Ministry. She is invited to and attends about twenty-five Yoga Conferences all over India each year as an invited Guest Speaker.**

**Smt Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani was honoured with the prestigious award of OUTSTANDING SENIOR CITIZEN by the Pondicherry Junior Chamber (Jaycees) on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 2003. The honorable Chief Secretary, Govt of Pondicherry presented the award at a glittering function on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 2003. She was awarded the Outstanding Achiever's Award 2003 by the Vinayagar Chathurthi Committee in recognition for her services in promoting Yoga and Indian Cultural Arts in Pondicherry. She was awarded the Bangalore Sundaram Gold Medal for her "Noble Contribution, Distinguished Service and Outstanding Merits in Yoga" by Asana Andiappan College of Yoga and Research Centre, Chennai, at Anna University, Chennai, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003. She is recognized as a leading intellectual expert in the deeper aspects of Yoga. In recognition of this aspect of her work, she was elected as Fellow of Indian Academy of Yoga, Banaras Hindu University, Banaras on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2003. The Indian Academy of Yoga is a prestigious body of nominated members from the medical, legal, judicial, professional and academic levels of Indian Society. It is an Academy, constructed on similar lines to the Indian Academy of Science, and membership is "by invitation only". Prominent professional men such as world-famous brain surgeon Brigadier Padma Shri Dr Sri B. Ramamurthy of Chennai are founding members. Its membership rolls read like a "Who's Who of**

Yoga and Science" and include such Yogic luminaries as Padma Bhushan B.K.S. Iyengar of Pune and Yogashri TKV. Desikachar of Chennai.

She was chosen by the Editor of Dina Malar along with leading Pediatrician Dr. Nalini of JIPMER to issue statements on importance of Mothers in its Mother's Day edition May 9, 2004. She was one of twenty-five eminent women of Pondicherry honoured by the Women's Child and Welfare Department at a function for International Women's Day on March 8, 2003. She was given from hands of Lt. Governor of Pondicherry His Excellency Shri M.M. Lakhera, the citation "Women Who Have Brought Fame to Pondicherry Award" (Puduvaikku Pugazh Sertha Pennamani) presented by Pondicherry People's Art Confederation and the Pondicherry Women's Development Corporation on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2004. She received BEST EDUCATIONIST AWARD from Pondicherry Psychology Association in collaboration with the All India Association for Educational Research at the Second International Seminar on Integral Yoga Psychology and the National Conference on Integral Education on Pondicherry on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

She received the MARUDHA RAMALINGANAR OUTSTANDING SENIOR CITIZEN AWARD from the YOUTH PEACE CENTRE on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2005 in recognition of her service to the people of Pondicherry and India in the field of Art and Culture. She has recently been awarded the PUDUVAI SHAKTI AWARD 2006 from the WOMEN TASK FORCE Y2K on March 4th 2006 in recognition of her yeomen service for the cause of Yoga and Indian cultural fine arts in Pondicherry.

Her permanent residence is at Sri Kambliswamy Madam, Thattanchavady, Pondicherry, where she supervises the rites and rituals connected with the care of the nine Sam<sup>^</sup>dhis of Ashtanga Yoga Gurus interred on this 133 year old Samadhi Site near JIPMER the famous central government Medical Institute.

## THE CHAIRMAN

Yogacharya

**Dr. ANANDA BALAYOGI BHAVANANI**

Yogacharya Dr. Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani was born to the world famous Yoga team of Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj and Pudevai Kalaimamani, Yogamani, Yogacharini, Smt. Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani on April 16, 1972, at Pondicherry, South India.



He was reared in the 'Gurukula' atmosphere of Ananda Ashram, first at Lawspet and then at Sri Kambliswamy Madam in Thattanchavady, Pondicherry where the Yoga Vidya (Knowledge of the Art and Science of Yoga) was imbibed as a 24 hour a day Sadhana and not just a few classes now and then. Nominated as his Guru Father's successor on his fourth birthday itself as Madathiapathy of Sri Kambliswamy Madam, Ananda took great interest in the Hindu Rites and Rituals, Mantra, Yoga and the Carnatic Fine Arts from a young and tender age. He has been trained in Rishiculture Ashtanga (Gitananda) Yoga from that tender age. He has assisted his parents in the Yoga training imparted at Ananda Ashram, Sri Kambaliswamy Madam and ICYER from that time onwards.

He began his studies of classical Carnatic Vocal Music at the age of four years under Pudevai Kalaimamani Shri V Manikannan. At the age of seven years he began arduous training in Carnatic Music under the tutorage of Kalaimamani Srengam-R. Ranganathan of Pondicherry, one of the most famous Carnatic Vocalists of South India. He continued his training for twenty years until his Guru's death in 2002. He has studied Mridungam since the age of five, beginning with world-famous Master Shri K M Vaidhyanathan in 1977. Later, Thiruvarur Shri R. Krishnamurthy, one of the most respected classical Mridungists of modern times, accepted him as a disciple. He began the study of

Bharata Natyam under his mother Pudukkal Kalaimamani Smt Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani in the Kàlakshetra tradition of RukmërihAftihdàlë when he was five years of age. At the age of eight, wûrtd-famôùs Bharata Natyam master Padmasri Adyar K. Lakshmanan of Chennai accepted him as a disciple. He treasures all these blessed relations with his Gurus that the Divine has bestowed upon him in his artistic evolution.

He has written a book on YOGA FOR CHILDREN at the age of 12 years itself and has written FIVE other books including 'YOGA AND MODERN MAN' that takes a look at various Yogic concepts with humorous cartoons and line drawings and "A YOGIC APPROACH TO STRESS" that deals with the Yogic explanations and management of stress. His "A PRIMER OF YOGA THEORY" that has also been published in Tamil as "YOGA VINA VIDAI THOGUPPU" has become a standard textbook for Yoga Sport events and is also prescribed in many academic Yoga courses. "YOGA: 1 TO 10" explains numerous concepts of Yoga and Indian Culture through a numerical codification using the numbers

He has recently co-authored a book in Tamil on the "Basic Hatha Yoga Lessons of Gitananda Yoga". He has had 18 scientific papers and 22 scientific abstracts on Yoga research published.

He has also scripted and presented 5 DVDs on Yoga with the famous Super Audio Company in Chennai that are being marketed for a worldwide audience in different languages

He undertook the Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses in Yoga at ICYER under the guidance of his Guru-father Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri in 1991 and following this he joined medical college in order to combine the best of eastern wisdom with the best of western science.

During his Medical Studies at J.N.M.C. Wardha (Nagpur University), he was the top student in a class of hundred. He secured Distinction in Surgery and a Gold Medal in Community Medicine in his final



year, topping about 500 students from the five Medical Colleges affiliated to Nagpur University. He was also the Student Representative at Medical College. Later he completed his internship at JIPMER Hospital, Pondicherry, India.

He has completed with distinction a two-year, Post Graduate Diploma in Family Health (PGDFH) from Sri Ramachandra Medical College (Deemed University), Chennai (2003). He has also completed a Diploma in Psychological Counseling as well as a Diploma in Stress Management from the Institute for Health Care Administration, Chennai in 2001.

He was one of the Star performers in the television serial YOGA FOR YOUTH that was first broadcast over New Delhi Doordarshan in November 1989. This series of twenty-five episodes is regularly re-broadcast on the National Doordarshan Channel even to date. His musical concerts and Mridungam have been regularly broadcast over Pondicherry television.

He was a performer of Bharata Natyam and has performed all over India and notably at the ABHAI National Dance Festival in 1992. Following his father's Maha Samadhi on Dec. 29-1993 he has stopped his dance performances and instead, focused his attention on Dance Choreography, especially in the rhythmic aspect for Yoganjali Natyalayam. He has helped to choreograph 6 Major Dance Dramas and 12 Mini Dance Dramas for Yoganjali Natyalayam in the last seven years. In the last few years he Co-directed the "Ramavathara" (2003), "Pancha Maha Bhuta" (2004) and "Jayadeva's Dasavathara" (2005).

As a Carnatic Vocalist he has released two albums of which "THE YOGA OF SOUND" has the unique blend of English lyrics with Carnatic Raga and Tala in an attempt, to bridge the gap between East and the West. The second Album 'TAMIL INBAM' is a collection of Tamil Compositions in Carnatic Music.

He has been a featured speaker at many Yoga conferences and is a regular featured speaker at the International Yoga Festival conducted by the Government of Pondicherry each year January 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>h</sup> since

1993. He has also been the Co-ordinator and Jury at the International Yogasana Competition held at the International Yoga Festival - Pondicherry annually and is responsible for organizing the more than 500 contestants who come from all over India to participate.

He is responsible for reviving the Pondicherry Yogasana Association (2000) founded by Yogamaharishi Dr Swami Gitananda Giri in 1975. He is currently the General Secretary of the Pondicherry Yogasana Association and a member of the Executive Committee of Indian Yoga Federation, Kolkata. He is an Advisor to the World Yoga Council and Member of the International Council for Yoga Sport in the International Yoga Federation, South America. He has been honoured as Vice President of the Asian Union of Yoga, New Delhi that is affiliated to the International Yoga Federation.

He has been instrumental in developing the concept of "Yoga Tableaus" as a performing art and has trained hundreds of young people in the difficult art of acrobatic Yoga Asanas. The Yoga-Asana Tableau Concept has been developed by Dr. Ananda a vital tool in inculcating the sense of "team spirit and mutual cooperation" into youngsters. His pioneering efforts in this field have been widely applauded. As well, Dr. Ananda has been a pioneer in the revival of the use of the acrobatic Natya Karanas (difficult, athletic and acrobatic postures of Bharata Natyam) into the modern dance repertoire. With his finely developed aesthetic sense, he tastefully weaves these acrobatic poses into his classical dance choreography and productions.

He has attended various Yoga Conferences and seminars at New Delhi, Bombay, Lonavla, Bhopal, Chennai, Kancheepuram, Madurai and other places along with his parents. He has assisted in the conduct of three International Yoga Conferences conducted at Pondicherry by Ananda Ashram under Dr. Swami Gitananda and Smt Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani.

As a Mridungist he has accompanied great artists like Padma Bhushan T.V. Sankaranaarayanan, Kalaimamani Srirengam Ranganathan, Kalaimamani Kulikkarai S.P. Vishvalingam, Smt Matangi, Shri Govindarajan,

**Kumbakonam M. R. Gopinath etc. on the Mridungam and is a 'B' Grade Mridungist recognised by All India Radio. He regularly plays for Yoganjali Natyalayam dance performances. He has played Mridungam for Sendhen Tamilisai, a Music Album by Kalaimamani Pulavar I Pattabhiraman in 2002 as well as Bhakti Mani Mala, a music album sung by Smt Jyothirmayi (2003). He has also played Mridungam in the Music Therapy Albums' of Dr Hariharan PhD.**

**He is a life member of the INDIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION; ABHAI (Association of Bharata Natyam Artists of India); Chennai, IAYT (International Association of Yoga Therapists; based in U.S.A); IYA (International Yogatherapy Association of the International Yoga Federation based in South America), APPI (Association of Physiologists and Pharmacologists of India), INDIAN ACADEMY OF YOGA, BHU, Varanasi and the PONDICHERRY PSYCHOLOGY ASSOCIATION.**

**He is the patron of the Sanathana Dharnia Sangha, the Hindu Movement in Italy and Europe as well as more than one hundred Rishiculture Ashtanga (Gitananda) Yoga centres all over the world. He is also Patron of the Gitananda Yoga Associations of Australia, Spain, Germany, United Kingdom and Italy.**

**Dr. Ananda is a Senior Lecturer in Mantra, Yantra, Yoga History and Philosophy and Yoga Physiology and Anatomy for the fully residential Yoga Teachers Training Courses at the International Centre for Yoga Education and Research (ICYER) in Kottakuppamy Tamil Nadu. TheSe full time residential courses, the Six Month International Yoga Teachers Training Course and the One Year Yoga Teachers Diploma Courses are well established- and presented to an international professional standard. These courses have been held annually since 1968 and students from all over the world attend these Yoga Teachers Training courses.**

**Dr. Ananda is a the Chairman of the International Centre for Yoga Education and Research (iCYER) in Kottakuppam, Tamil Nadu, an internationally acclaimed Yoga Institute established as "Ananda Ashram" in 1968. He is Chairman of Yoganjali Natyalayam , a world famous Institute of Yoga,**

Bharata Natyam, and Carnatic Music established in Pondicherry in 1993. He is also Director of studies for both these Institutes.

He has received the Marudha Ramalinganar OUTSTANDING YOUNG PERSON AWARD and Rolling Shield for the year 2002 from the Youth fpace Centre, Pondicherry and received the title award of "Yoga Vibhushan" from Tamil Nadu State Yoga Association and Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (Tuticorin) at the 15<sup>th</sup> Tamil Nadu State Yogasana Championship held at Kovilpatti, Tuticorin Dist, Tamil Nadu in August 2003. He received the title award of "YOGA BISHMACHARYA" from the Tirumoolar Yoga and Natural Diet Trust, Chennai and Tamil Nadu State Yoga Association at the Tamil Nadu State Yogasana Championship held at Chennai in November 2004. He has been honoured with the "YOGA CHAKRAVARTHY" title awarded by Gitanjali Yoga Centre on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2005. Other titles and awards received by himvarB'^Palkalaj Chemmal", "Sagala Kala Vallavan", "Isai Sevagan", "Puduvai Mannin Maindhan", "AchieverAward 2003" and "Jnana Vruddha".

He Worked for four years from 2000 to 2004 as a SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW in the Yoga Research Project conducted by the Department of Physiology, JIPMER under the auspices of the Union Health as well as Defense Ministries, New Delhi. He is involved in various research studies at JIPMER and has published / has under publication numerous scientific papers on these findings.

He is at present a MEDICAL OFFICER in the Village Health Programme and the Child to Child Health Education Programme run by the AUROVILLE HEALTH CENTRE in the International Township of Auroville, Tamil Nadu.

He is happily married to Yogacharini Devasena Bhavanani who has a Masters degree in Sanskrit in addition to being an eminent Yoga Expert, Carnatic Vocalist and Bharata Natyam Dancer, Teacher and composer. They have a daughter Dhivya Priya Bhavanani and a son Anandraj Bhavanani.

## THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Yogacharini  
Smt DEVASENA BHAVANANI,



Yogacharini Smt DEVASENA BHAVANANI, wife of Dr. Ananda Bhavanani, is a professional Bharat Natyam Artist and Carnatic Vocalist, as well as a well trained Yoga Teacher and demonstrator. She has a Masters Degree (MA) in Sanskrit from the Pondicherry Central University. Recipient of many awards and scholarships in dance, music and Yoga, she holds a Central Govt Young Artist Scholarship for Bharatanatyam (the only dancer from Pondicherry receiving this prestigious scholarship) from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi. Smt. Devasena Bhavanani is also the Director, Department of Dance, Music and Sanskrit at ICYER and Yoganjali Natyalayam. She has been performing Bharatanatyam programmes since 1985 under the guidance of her Guru Kalaimamani Yogacharini Smt. Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani. She also has the good fortune to be a student of Padmashri Adyar K Lakshmanan since the last ten years and is undergoing advanced training under the able guidance of Kalaimamani Smt. Jayashree Narayanan. She has assisted in the Choreography and Nattuvangam for 6 major and 8 minor dance dramas of Yoganjali Natyalayam and performed lead role in 8 major dance dramas.

She has successfully completed the P.G. Diploma in Yoga from Annamalai University and is currently Guest Lecturer and Examiner for Pondicherry University Community College and Semester in India Programme of Pondicherry University.

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MODERN SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE**

Yogamaharishi Dr. SWAMI GITANANDA GIRI Guru Maharaj had spent most of his eighty-seven years in the propagation of Classical Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga. The Paramparai (tradition) that he inherited is a fusion of Classical Ashtanga Yoga Promulgated by Yogamaharishi SWAMI KANAKANANDA BRIGHU of Bengal, and the South Indian Siddha Yoga tradition as exemplified by the Shakti, life and teachings of the great South Indian Siddha-Yogi, Srila Sri KAMBALI GNANANANDA DESIGA SWAMIGAL of Pondicherry. Satya Press proudly presents a wide range of illuminating manuscripts from the pen of this venerable and highly developed Yoga Guru and his foremost disciples, Kalaimamani Yogamani Yogacharini MEENAKSHI DEVI BHAVANANI and Yoga Vibhushan Yogacharya Dr ANANDA BALAYOGI BHAVANANI who are continuing this illustrious Living Yoga tradition.

. **YOGA LIFE: MONTHLY JOURNAL:** This International monthly journal in English was founded in 1968. Yoga Life is edited by Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani and is dedicated to expounding the teachings of Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda and articles by him on practical aspects of Ashtanga Yoga, as well as scholarly and philosophical aspects of various Yogic topics appear in each issue. Articles by Yogamani Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi on various Yogic ideas, as well as Yogic poetry, short fiction and essays are published. Yogacharya Dr. Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani, son and successor of Swami Gitananda, regularly presents scientifically based Yogic essays. Leading figures in the world of Yoga regularly submit articles for publication and news of happenings in the world Yogic community is also reported. The magazine provides a good link with India, the home of Yoga, expounding the science from within its cultural background.

- **YOGA: STEP-BY-STEP:** This correspondence course is the best basic training in Classical Yoga through the written word now available;. The Yoga: Step-By-Step Correspondence Course study is one of the requirements for those desiring to participate in the Six Monti International Yoga Teacher's Training Course held each year at ICYER from October 2 through March 25th. Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda developed this course in 1971 and the fifty-two weekly lessons are well illustrated with photographs and line drawings. It contains a practical, systematic step-by-step instruction in the integral practice of Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga. Students answer the weekly lesson-questionnaire and submit their papers to ICYER - Ananda Ashram for evaluation. Correspondence with the Guide Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani is encouraged. The Guru carefully goes through all papers and establishes a personal rapport with the students, through regular correspondence guiding each one through problems and difficulties. A Certificate of proficiency is awarded upon successful completion of the course. Included, as a bonus is a free three-year subscription to the monthly journal Yoga Life.
- **YOGA SAMYAMA :** A detailed course in the study of Chakras, Mandalas, Bindus, Nadis and the higher aspects of the Raja Yoga Sadhana written by Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri. Designed primarily for senior Yoga Sadhaks, it presents a beautiful system of mind training and spiritual sensitization through Raja Yoga practices. Complete with many photographs, line drawings, charts and esoteric information on structure of the mind as conceived in Hinduism and Classical Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga. Yoga Samyama can also be studied as a Correspondence Course, chapter by chapter, Working on the various concentration practices and reporting the experiences back to the Guide. This study is recommended only for those who have under taken in-residence training at ICYER or who have completed the Yoga: Step By Step Correspondence Course. Includes an one-year free subscription to Yoga Life.
- **YOGA LIFE ANNUAL:** Bound form of Ananda Ashram's international monthly journal Yoga Life from the years 1990 through 2003. Each annual volume containing twelve issues that are beautifully bound. Perfect addition to any Yoga library and a must for all students of Swami Gitananda'Giri as it offers an opportunity to read articles penned by the Guru decades ago. The perfect gift for a loved one on any special occasion.
- **YOGA WORLD WIDE DIRECTORY 1992 :** Edited by Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda and Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani. This is a Directory of internationally known Yoga Teachers, Swamijis, Yogacharyas

and their centres in India and around the world compiled for the Third decennial Convocation of Vishwa Yoga Samaj, Pondicherry, India in 1989. Many articles on debates, workshops and presentations at that memorable international conference along with hundreds of photographs including the First International Yoga Asana Competition is also documented with rare photos of the most esoteric and difficult Asanas. Articles by well-known Yoga teachers and presentations are also contained. A real contribution to any Yoga library and a must for Yoga teachers and Yoga enthusiasts who wish to expand their contacts in the modern Yoga world. Useful for persons planning International Conferences and a good guide for travelers seeking respectable Yoga centres and Ashrams.

- **SIDDHIS AND RIDDHIS** : By Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda. This is the second edition of Swamiji's exhaustive study of the phenomenon of Siddhis and Riddhis, psychic accomplishments and psychic prosperities. The author presents a learned exposition of the scope, dangers, and techniques leading to Siddhis and Riddhis as well as the physiological, psychological and spiritual back ground. A listing of the 108 commonly accepted Siddhis, and their description is a highlight. A practical Yoga Sadhana routine to obtain Siddhis is given.
- **YOGA FOR EXPECTANT MOTHERS AND OTHERS**: Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani presents this guide for women who wish to make their pregnancy a Yogic experience. Instruction in basic practical Pranayamas, Asanas and relaxation exercises especially pertinent for the pregnant woman, as well as advice on diet, psychological considerations, spiritual insights etc.
- **YOGA - ONE WOMAN'S VIEW** : A collection of essays, poetry and short stories by Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani. She deals with a modern woman's experience as a result of her practice of Yoga. Well illustrated with photographs and drawings. Special section on "The Yoga of Motherhood". An ideal gift for any woman traveling the Yoga path. Especially useful for expectant and young mothers.
- **YOGA AND SPORTS** : A pioneering effort by Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda and Yogamani Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani to bring benefits of Yogic thinking and physical disciplines to the modern sporting arena. The book gives a systematic guide to Yoga practices particularly useful for sportsmen as well as three complete routines outlined fully with photos. A syllabus to follow in teaching and practice is also given. A rationale for the use of Yogic techniques with sports persons is presented. A philosophical and rational argument for including Yoga Asanas as an Olympic sport is also presented with pros and cons. Rare photos of



highly difficult and complicated Asanas as photographed at the First International Olympic Standard Yoga Asana Competition in Pondicherry, India, in 1989 is a highlight. This book is a boon to sportsmen, both young and old, as well as a basic guide to good routines for Yoga practice with youth and persons desiring basic workouts in Yoga. Yoga sports, competition in Yoga Asanas, is a fast growing youth activity world wide. This book gives a rationale for this dynamic activity. A must for any Yoga teacher's library. More than 100 photos.

- **SURYA NAMASKAR** : An excellent book on this modern addition to the Yoga repertoire by Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri. Very useful for those wanting to learn more about the origin as well as the many different types of Surya Namaskar. The forms of Vedic Surya Namaskar and Rishikesh Surya Namaskar are well illustrated as also a brief look at the newer Chandra Namaskar.
- **YANTRA**: The Mystic Science of Number, Name and Form by Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri is a most unusual presentation of the deep meaning behind numbers, names and Mandalas geometric forms. A thorough discussion of individual biorhythms and how to chart them. The influence of name on personality is also discussed in depth, A must for senior students of Yoga.
- **TRIBUTE TO A GREAT GURU** : Memorial volume to Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri containing more than 100 photographs of one of the greatest Gurus of the 20th century in various stages of his spiritual evolution. The Memorial Volume contains biographical data of the Guru, tributes and reminiscences by his students and articles by the Guru expressing his unique Yogic worldview are also presented. A must for the library of any serious student of Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga and disciples of Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri.
- **A HEART THAT IS DISTANT** : A Collection of Poetry by Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani. This fine volume contains the prize-winning spiritual poetry of Kalaimamani Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani. A perfect gift for lovers of the spiritual life.
- **FRANKLY SPEAKING** : Dr Swami Gitananda answers questions from students on every topic under the sun, ranging from health problems, mental unrest, technical questions on Yoga practices, spiritual queries and metaphysical quests. Compiled by Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani from thirty years of question and answer articles as well as from Satsanghas with the Master. The book creates an intimate relationship with the Guru.

- **THE ASHTANGA YOGA OF PATANJALI** : A masterly exposition of the eight limbs of Patanjala Yoga is delivered by Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri. Swami Gitananda delves deeply into the inner meaning of each of the eight stages, as well as giving valuable hints for Sadhana. Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi are each discussed in great detail in the context of the concentrated search for Truth.
- **A YOGIC APPROACH TO STRESS** : An excellent treatise by Yogacharya Dr Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani on the Pathophysiology of stress, its prevention and relief through various practices based on Gitananda Yoga Teachings in the Tradition of Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga. Various Yoga techniques of Asanas, Pranayamas and relaxation practices are given in detail.
- **YOGA AND MODERN MAN** : A Humorous Journey through the Art and Science of Yoga as well as the Modern Yoga World. Various cartoons are used by Yogacharya Dr Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani to help the seeker visualize various Yogic concepts and laugh at the modern world of Yoga.
- **A PRIMER OF YOGA THEORY** : A detailed study of the art and science of Yoga in the form of question and answers by Yogacharya Dr Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani. A very useful guide for all levels of Yoga teachers and students and especially useful in preparation for theory examinations at Yogasana competitions and academic Yoga studies. It is also available in Tamil.
- **CORRECTION OF BREATHING DIFFICULTIES THROUGH RISHICULTURE ASHTANGA YOGA** : The original book by Dr Swami Gitananda Giri has been revised and edited by Yogacharya Dr Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani. It deals with causes of breathing difficulties and Yogic answers to them. The Hathenas, a series of forcing techniques unique to the Gitananda Yoga tradition are explained as also many pranayamas and relaxation techniques. An Ideal book for patients of breathing difficulties as well as Yoga therapists and Sadhakas of all levels.
- **ESSAYS ON YOGA PSYCHOLOGY** : Various essays on Yoga psychology from the pen of Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi have been condensed to form this book. An understanding of the Yogic concept of mind as well as Dharma, Karma and other such topics are covered in Amma's unique style of writing. These spiritual revelations are the result of more than 35 years of dedicated Yoga Sadhana by Amma and a boon to all sincere lovers of the Yoga tradition.
- **PRANAYAMA IN THE TRADITION OF RISHICULTURE ASHTANGA YOGA:** Various essays on Pranayama in the Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga

tradition by Dr Swami Gitananda Giri, Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani and Dr Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani have been condensed into this book. It offers a study of not only the classical eight pranayamas but also gives a brief understanding of the 120 pranayams as taught by Dr Swami Gitananda Giri. A must for any sincere student of wanting to expand their knowledge of Pranayama.

- **YOGA : 1 TO 10** : Concepts of Yoga explained in easy terms with reference to their relation to the numbers. Especially useful for those wanting to learn Yoga theory in an enjoyable manner and a great gift for children. It also contains an excellent introduction to the concepts of Yantra.

### **IN PRESS**

- **THE RISHI AND THE RAKSHASHAS** : This amazing book by Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani describes the journey of a spiritual seeker whose passion for India is tested in an extreme manner. Philosophical and spiritual questions are examined in an allegorical style. The story is laced with a large number of whimsical essays, which capture the bewitching qualities of this ancient land and its people. An amazing insight into the ancient culture of Hinduism, especially valuable for those seekers of Yoga who wish to understand the culture from which this mighty science has grown. Beautifully illustrated with line drawings by the eminent artist of Pune, Maharashtra, Sri S.D. Bapat.
- **THE HISTORY OF YOGA FROM ANCIENT TO MODERN TIMES**: This amazing encyclopedic compilation of material by Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani gives a thorough look into the history of Yoga from its origin in timeless, pre-Vedic ages, through the Vedic period and the medieval era, down to present times. The study also traces the role of Asana is Yogic lore, and how this concept has evolved and changed, through the ages. Various Yogic scriptures are examined and the spread of Yogic thought to the West is also discussed in detail as well as its effect on modern philosophers. Gurus in modern times are also studied with their impact on Yogic concepts. Written in an easy to understand language, this book will give a sincere Sadhak a wonderful overview of both Yoga's past as well as its present. It may well be Amma's magnum opus.



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**YOGANJALI NATYALAYAM**  
Productions  
AUDIO CDs and TAPES



- **PRANAVA SADHANA** : Excerpts from a Live Recording of the All Night AUM (Om) Chanting Performed on the Occasion of the 130<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Sri La Sri Swami Kankananda Brighu Guru Maharaj. (2<sup>nd</sup> February 2004) at Ananda Ashram (ICYER) Pondicherry, South India. Ideal companion for relaxation, contemplation and meditation.
- **PANCHAKSHARA JAPA** : Excerpts from a Live Recording of the Chanting of 1008 Om Nama Shivaya Mantras Performed on the Occasion of the Maha Shivaratri Puja Celebrations 2004 at Sri Kambaliswamy Madam, Ananda Ashram, Pondicherry, South India. The CD contains 504 chants of the Panchakshara Mantra. Ideal companion for timing Yoga practice as well as Puja, contemplation and meditation.
- **BHAJANS WITH SWAMIJI** : Wonderful Spiritual Music sung energetically by Yogamaharishi Dr Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj and the Ananda Ashram International Bhajans troupe (1988) Includes: Ganapathiye Varuvai, Paramapavana Krishna, Sharavanabhava, Kambliswamy Stuthi, Aiengarane, Pillaiyar, Ananda Guru Om and many other all times Ananda Ashram favorites.
- **THE YOGA OF SOUND** : Meditative Carnatic Music with English Lyrics Composed and sung by Yogacharya Dr Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani. Includes selections from Yogamaharishi Dr Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj's "Gita Inspirations". An Ideal way to learn to understand and appreciate the wonderful Carnatic Music Tradition of South India.
- **TAMIL INBAM** : Meditative Carnatic Music in Tamil Sung by Yogacharya Dr Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani. An Ideal way to enjoy the meditative quality of the wonderful Carnatic Music Tradition of South India.
- **BHAKTIMANI MALA** : A selection of many favorite compositions of classical Carnatic Music in sung melodiously by Smt Jyothirmayi and Selvi PVL Shailaja, music mistresses of Yoganjali Natyalayam. Dr Ananda accompanies them on the Mridungam. Ideal for all music lovers.

## **DVDs ON YOGA FROM ANANDA ASHRAM Pondicherry, India**

Ananda Ashram at ICYER, Pondicherry ([www.icyer.com](http://www.icyer.com))  
has embarked on a project of putting out various videos  
related to applications of Gitananda Yoga  
in association with the well-known music company  
SUPER AUDIO, Chennai ([www.musicandchants.com](http://www.musicandchants.com))  
who is a partner of UNESCO'S  
Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity.

- **10 LESSONS IN YOGA FOR STRESS REDUCTION AND SLEEPING DISORDERS (DVD)** produced as part of a CCRYN sponsored research project. Amma directed and scripted the DVD and she was a co-investigator in the project while Yogacharini Devasena Bhavanani was the Yoga teacher for the project and guided the patients. Ten lessons in Yoga practices for sleep disorders with voice over by Amma and performance of the practices by students of Yoganjali Natyalayam. Complete with 100-page book.
- **PRANAYAMA FOR HEALTH AND WELL BEING (DVD):** Contains 25 evergreen Pranayama techniques of Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga Presented by Yogacharya Dr Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani. This is the first time the Pranayama teachings of Yogamaharishi Dr Swami Gitananda Giri are being presented for a worldwide audience through this medium. The project is being produced by the well-known music company SUPER AUDIO, Chennai and will be marketed by them all over the world. ICYER recommends this DVD to all its students and alumni in order to grasp the importance of these vital practices that is much neglected in the modern Yoga world.
- **SATYAM-SHIVAM-SUNDARAM. (DVD).** Indian culture extols Satyam (ultimate reality), Shivam (eternal goodness) and Sundaram (universal beauty). Yoga, one of the gems of this ancient culture, worships the Divine through "living the Life Beautiful". Staff and students of Yoganjali Natyalayam, Pondicherry, India present their Yoga skills mingled with soothing music creating a Reality, Goodness and Beauty (Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram) that is a joy forever. Various Yoga practices of different levels of difficulty are depicted with stunning visuals shot on the lovely red earth and virgin beaches of Pondicherry, South India. A highlight is the courageous performance of Yogasanas on high hillocks as well as the meditative performance of Yogasanas with a lighted candle balanced on the head. This unique presentation is a treat for the eyes and will linger in your mind for a long time, inspiring all fortunate enough to view it to implement these high yogic ideals in their own lives. Coordinated and presented by Yoga Vibhushan Yogacharya Dr Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani.

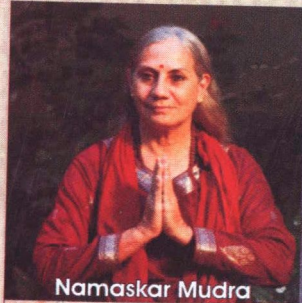
- **MUDRAS: *Yogic gestures of the hands, feet & eyes.*** Mudra is the ancient Yogic art and science of gesturing and sealing vital Pranic energies in the human body for health, well being and spiritual evolution. These are advanced techniques designed to improve neuromuscular coordination, culture human emotions and still the restless mind. Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri, one of the greatest Yoga Masters of the past century taught numerous Mudras in the Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga tradition and this presentation takes a comprehensive look at the various classes of Mudras such as the Hastha Mudras (gestures of the hands), Pada Mudras (gestures of the feet) and Chakshu Mudras (gestures of the eyes). This presentation is filmed in an artistic manner with pleasing visuals to go along with the wonderful depth of the Mudra teachings of Swami Gitananda Girji. A detailed exposition of the Sparsha Mudras is also given. These ten "touching gestures" are performed by placing the hands on different parts of the chest to facilitate the flow of Pranic energy to that section of the lungs in order to produce certain effects on different parts of the body. These Mudras are especially used to focus our awareness into the different segments of our lungs while performing Vibhagha Pranayama, the Yogic sectional breathing. A team of 30 participants from 12 different countries in the age range of 9 to 65 have participated in the demonstration of nearly 40 of these esoteric Mudra teachings.
- **BODY TALK: *Yogic Mudras of the human body.*** The Yogic art and science of Mudra is a means of non-verbal communication that is subtle and refined. It enables us to communicate intrapersonally with our inner self, interpersonally with others and transpersonally with the Divine. This presentation showcases important Yogic Mudras that can be done using the whole body as well as the head, neck and face. Different Mudras are used in various Hatha Yoga sequences and Kriyas to conserve and enhance the energy flow in the body as well as help attain a state of meditation in action. Concentration is improved and the mind settles into the body better when such Mudras are used. It also adds to the inherent benefit of the Asana or the Kriya. Important Yogic gestures of the head, neck and face are depicted with marvelous visuals of an international group performing the Brahma Mudra being the highlight. Various Mudras of the Hatha Yoga tradition are demonstrated with detailed explanation of the methods and benefits of each Mudra. Mudras "gesture" the energy necessary and "seal" that otherwise intangible and illusive moment, fixing it for all time in our heart and nerves, bones and blood, mind and body, soul and thought - creating a solid foundation upon which to build a spectacular healthy, happy and spiritual life. The Mudra "seals" into our very cells that call to a Higher Life which can never again be denied!

- **YOGA FOR BREATHING DISORDERS:** This presentation is a boon for patients of various breathing disorders such as Bronchial Asthma, Emphysema and Bronchitis. It offers an integrated approach of Yoga practices designed to eradicate the root cause of their suffering. The core of this presentation is an excellent depiction of the Hathenas, a unique set of Hatha Yoga practices from the Gitananda Yoga Tradition. These 'Forcing Techniques' help us to breathe consciously into different areas of our lungs by means of physical posturing coupled with deep and controlled breathing. The Hathenas develop strong, healthy, and robust lungs and help expand our lung capacity while developing efficient and healthy breathing patterns. Important Pranayamas and Yogic relaxation are also introduced as most modern disorders have a strong psychosomatic, stress-related origin. These practices will add a new dimension to your present practice of Yoga.
- **YOGA STRESS BUSTERS:** Modern life has become a 'rat race' and none is spared this whirlpool of stress. Frequent stressful experiences lead to the failure of our homeostatic, self-regulating mechanisms causing disease, premature aging and early or sudden death. Stress weakens our immune system making us more vulnerable to infection. Numerous psychosomatic diseases are caused, aggravated or worsened by stress. These include a wide variety of conditions ranging from the common cold to peptic ulcers, headaches, backaches, diabetes mellitus, bronchial asthma, insomnia and hypertension. Yoga, a wholistic science of life, deals with physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. Various aspects of Yoga help in the prevention and management of stress. This presentation highlights various Asanas, Pranayamas and Kriyas that produce a strong and resilient body capable of withstanding any amount of stress. Different Yogic 'Stress Relievers' unique to the Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga tradition of Yogamaharishi Dr Swami Gitananda Giri are also introduced to help relieve our 'pent up' emotions as well as 'temper' our reaction to stressful situations.

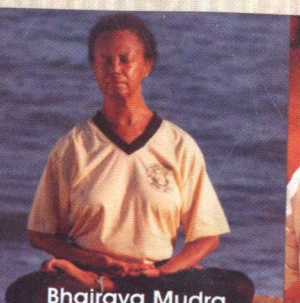
All Inquiries to:

**YOGA JIVANA SATSANGHA**

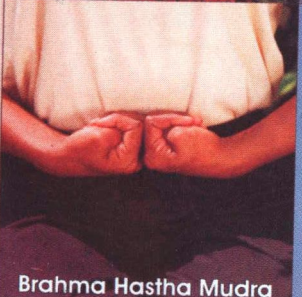
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 E-mail: [ananda@icyer.com](mailto:ananda@icyer.com)



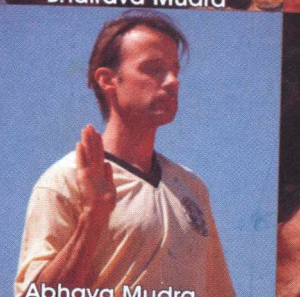
Namaskar Mudra



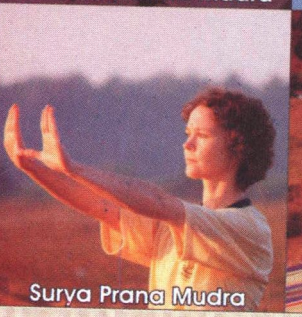
Bhairava Mudra



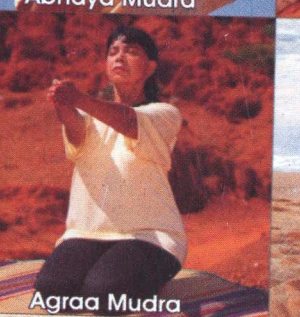
Brahma Hastha Mudra



Abhaya Mudra

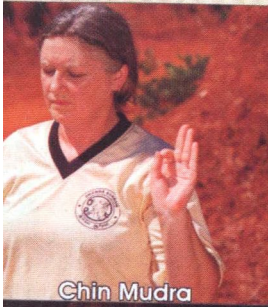


Surya Prana Mudra

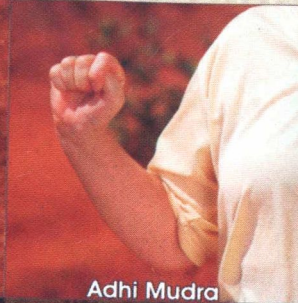


Agraa Mudra

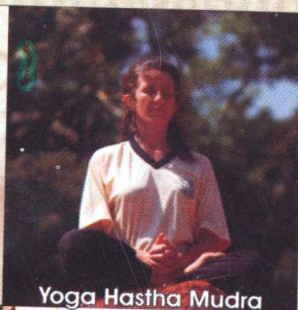




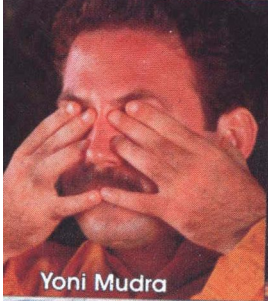
Chin Mudra



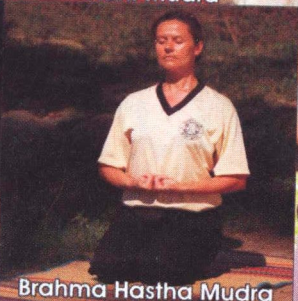
Adhi Mudra



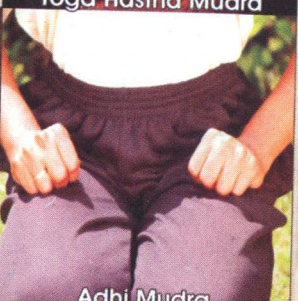
Yoga Hastha Mudra



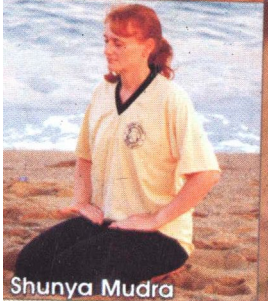
Yoni Mudra



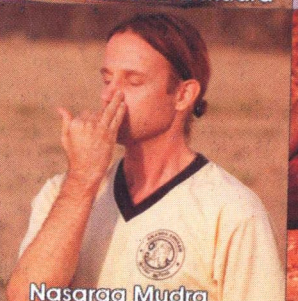
Brahma Hastha Mudra



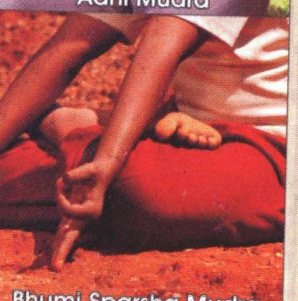
Adhi Mudra



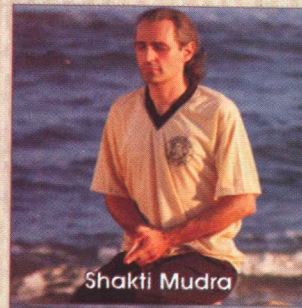
Shunya Mudra



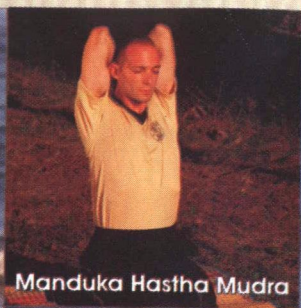
Nasarga Mudra



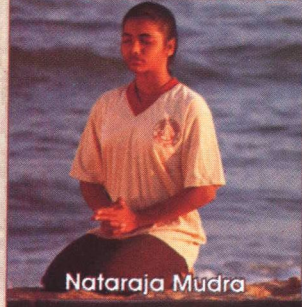
Bhumi Sparsha Mudra



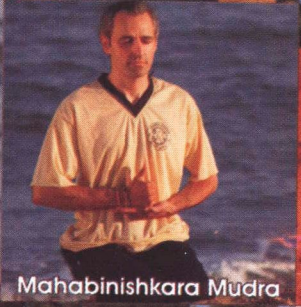
Shakti Mudra



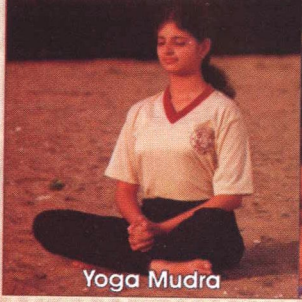
Manduka Hastha Mudra



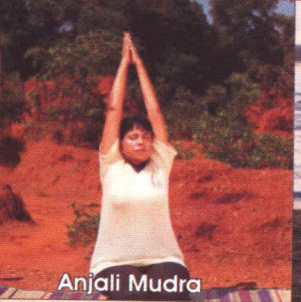
Nataraja Mudra



Mahabhinishkara Mudra

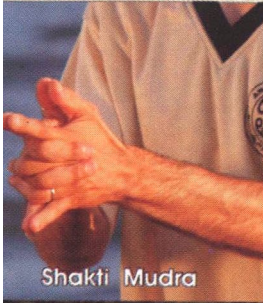


Yoga Mudra

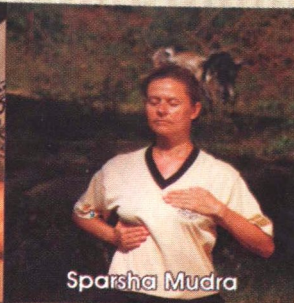


Anjali Mudra

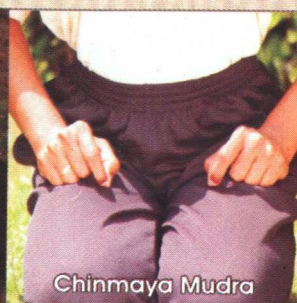




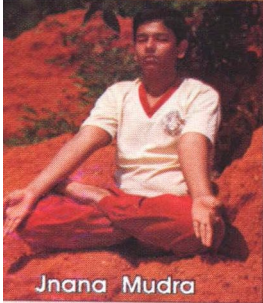
Shakti Mudra



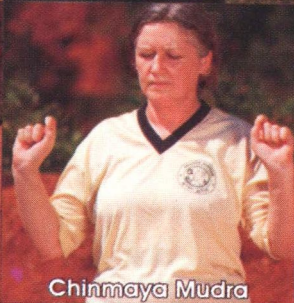
Sparsha Mudra



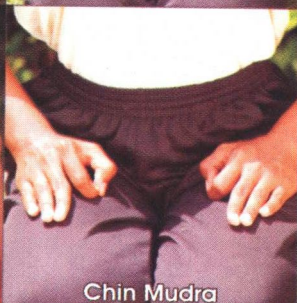
Chinmaya Mudra



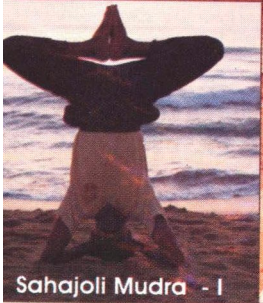
Jnana Mudra



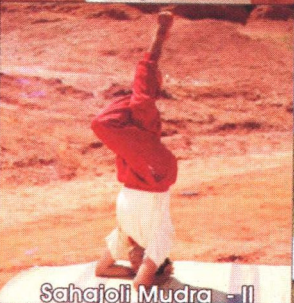
Chinmaya Mudra



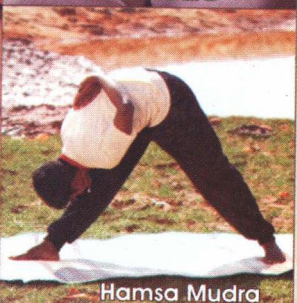
Chin Mudra



Sahajoli Mudra - I

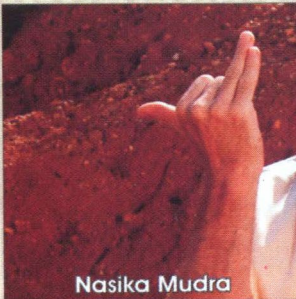


Sahajoli Mudra - II

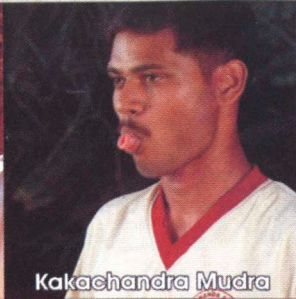


Hamsa Mudra

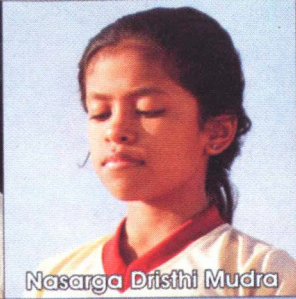




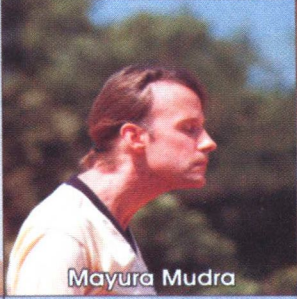
Nasika Mudra



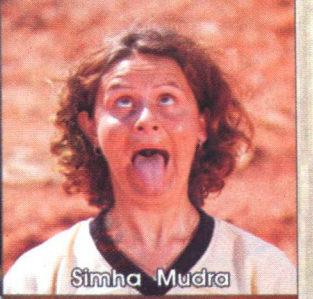
Kakachandra Mudra



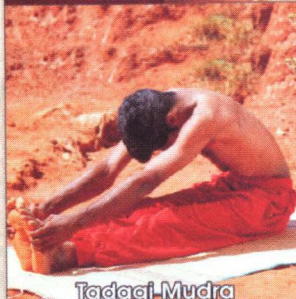
Nasarga Drishti Mudra



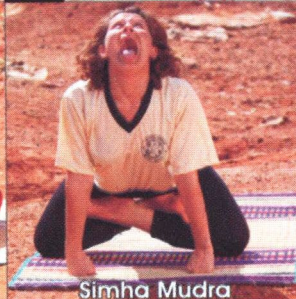
Mayura Mudra



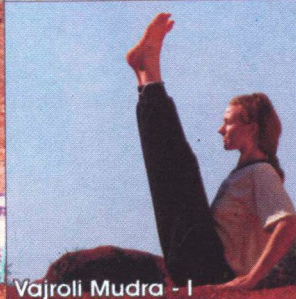
Simha Mudra



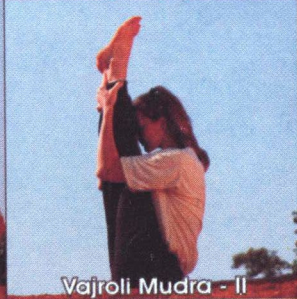
Tadagi Mudra



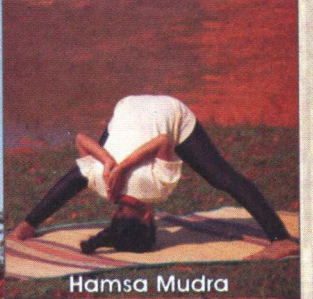
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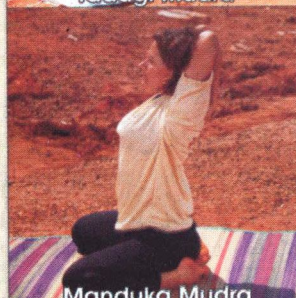
Vajroli Mudra - I



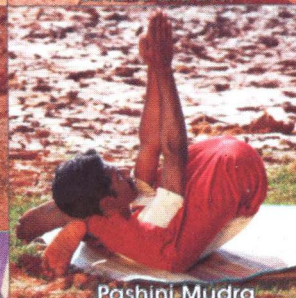
Vajroli Mudra - II



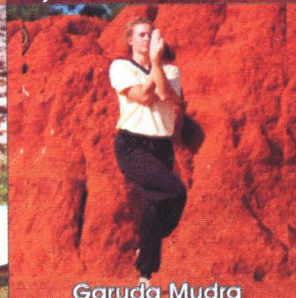
Hamsa Mudra



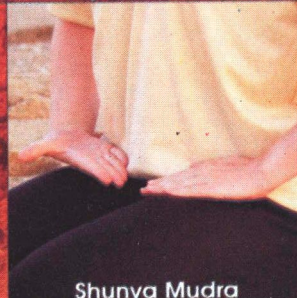
Manduka Mudra



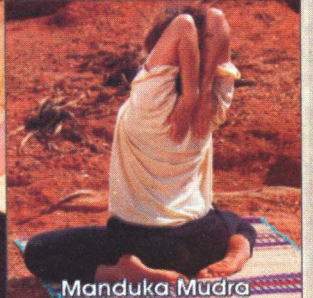
Pashini Mudra



Garuda Mudra

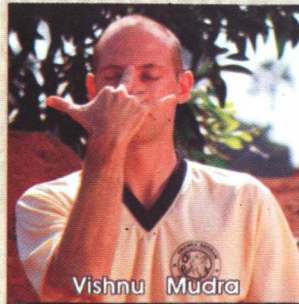


Shunya Mudra

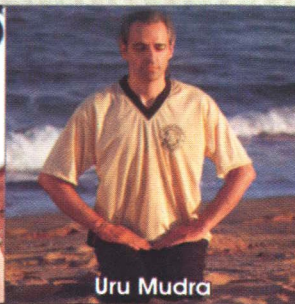


Manduka Mudra

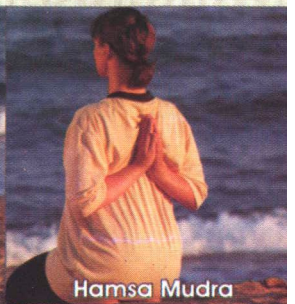




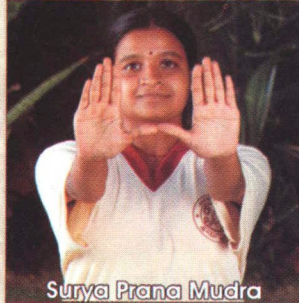
Vishnu Mudra



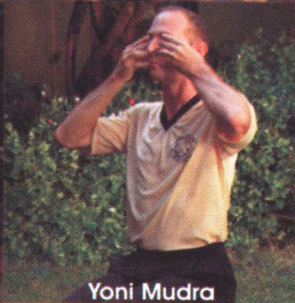
Uru Mudra



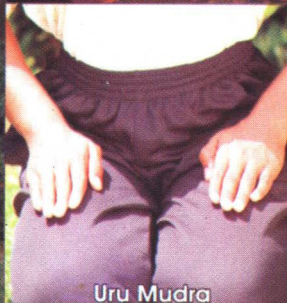
Hamsa Mudra



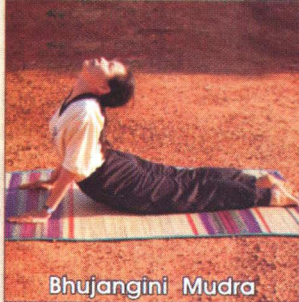
Surya Prana Mudra



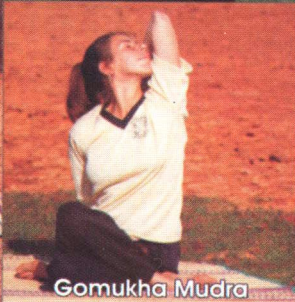
Yoni Mudra



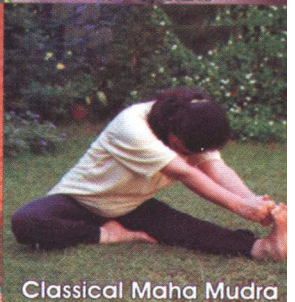
Uru Mudra



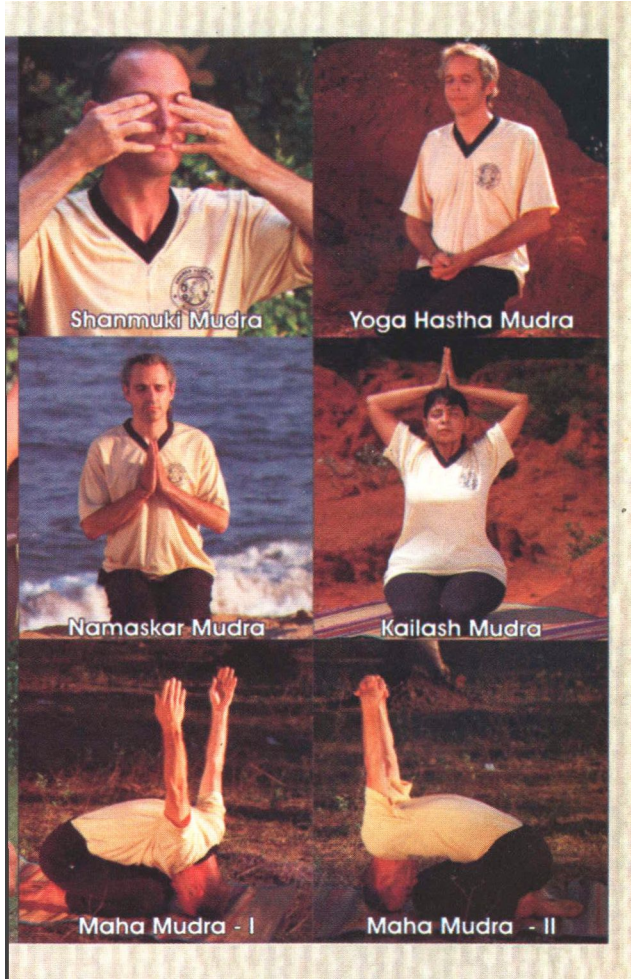
Bhujangini Mudra



Gomukha Mudra



Classical Maha Mudra



Shanmuki Mudra

Yoga Hastha Mudra

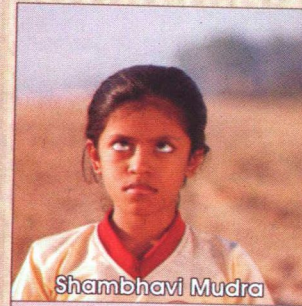
Namaskar Mudra

Kailash Mudra

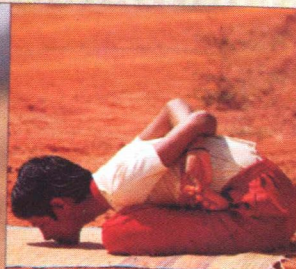
Maha Mudra - I

Maha Mudra - II

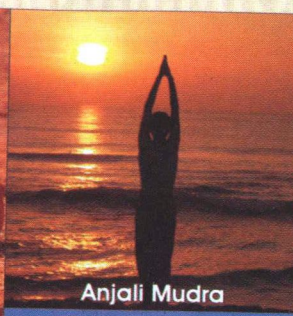




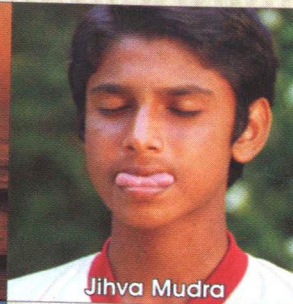
Shambhavi Mudra



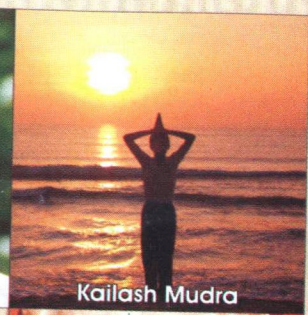
Yoga Mudra



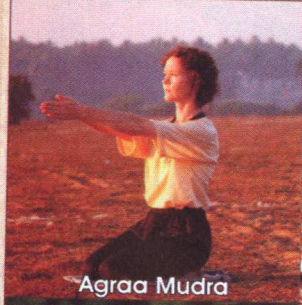
Anjali Mudra



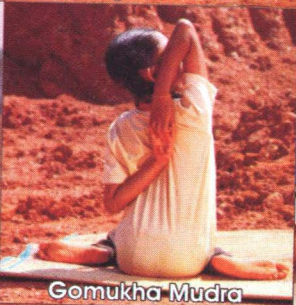
Jihva Mudra



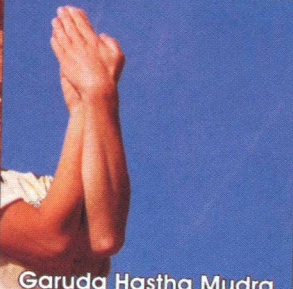
Kailash Mudra



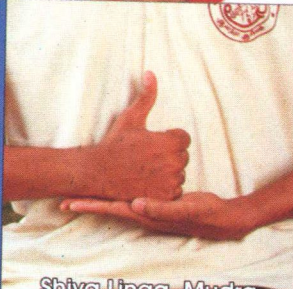
Agraa Mudra



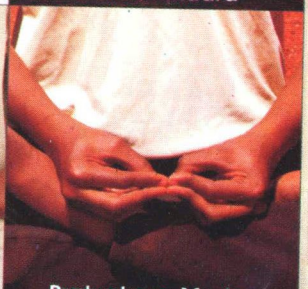
Gomukha Mudra



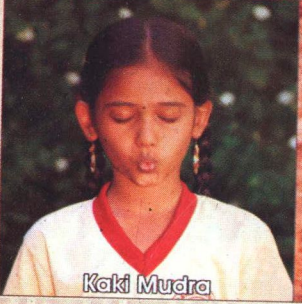
Garuda Hastha Mudra



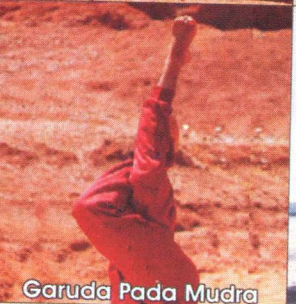
Shiva Linga Mudra



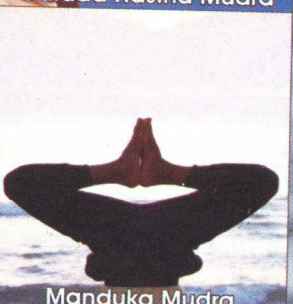
Pratyahara Mudra



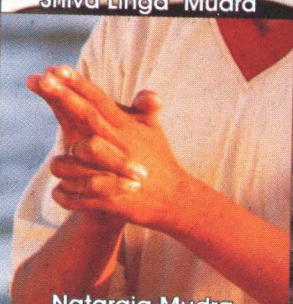
Kaki Mudra



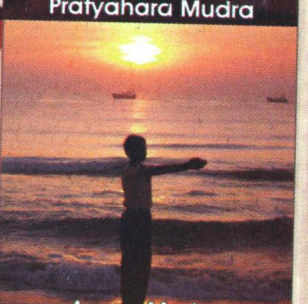
Garuda Pada Mudra



Manduka Mudra

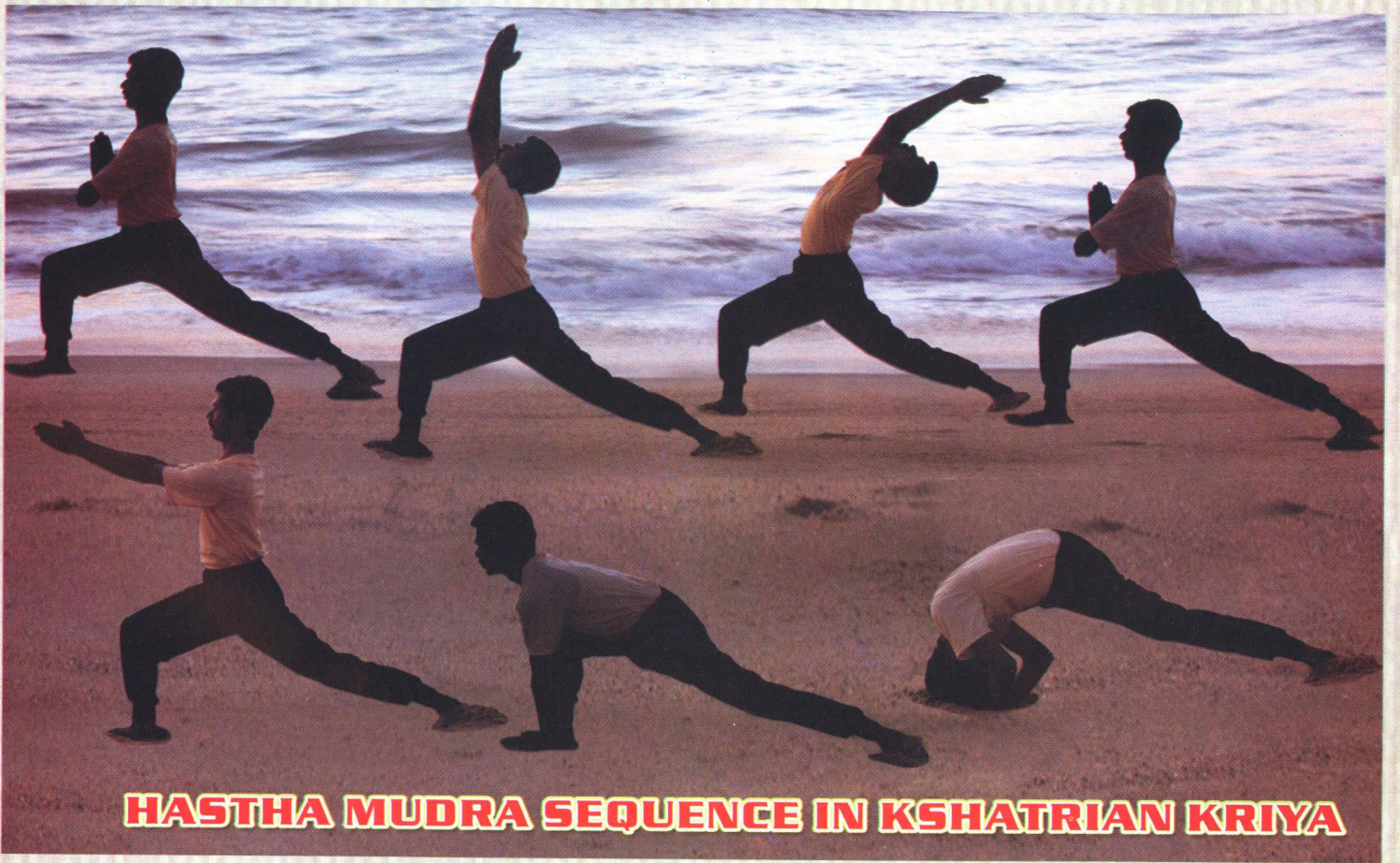


Nataraja Mudra

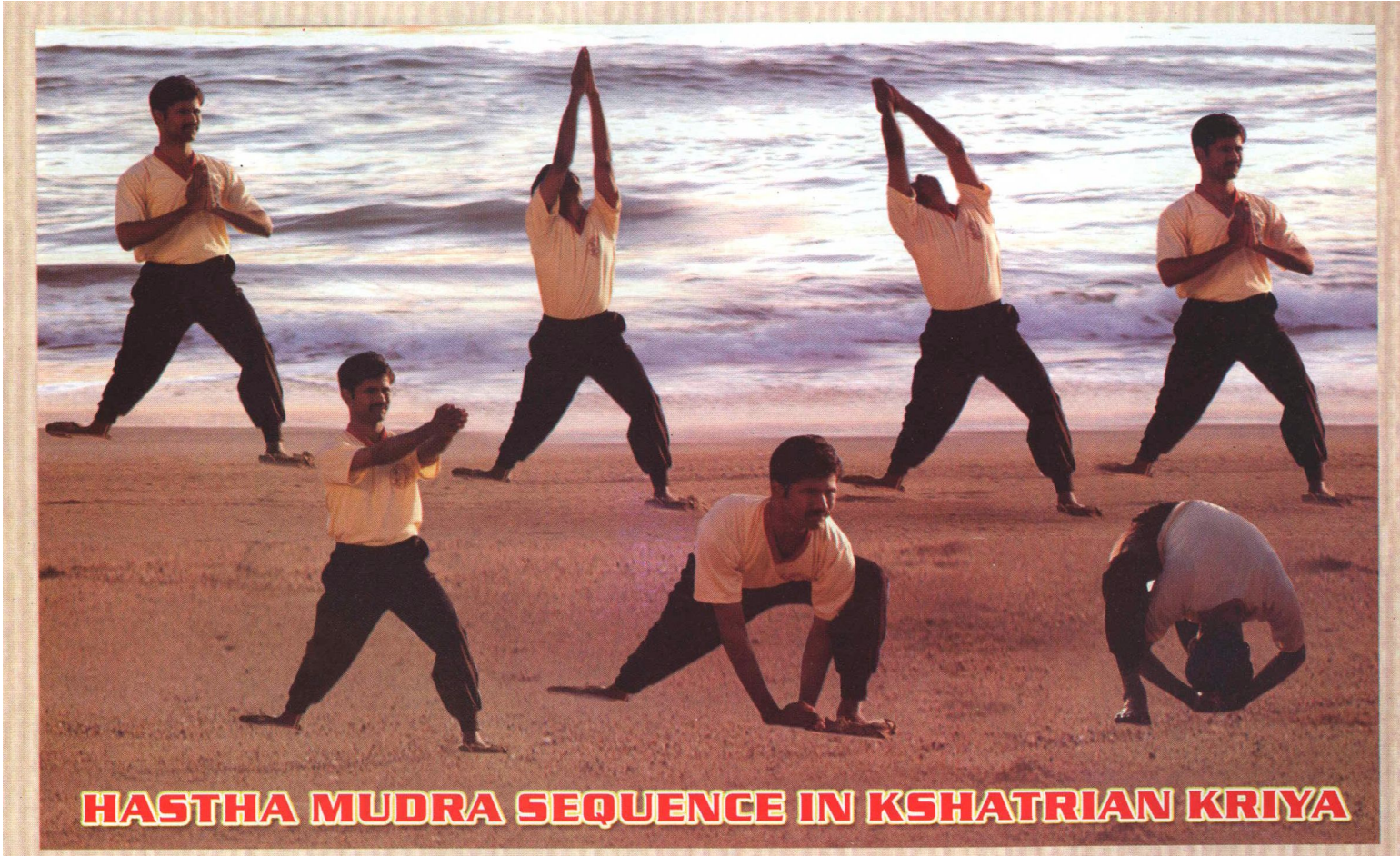


Agraa Mudra



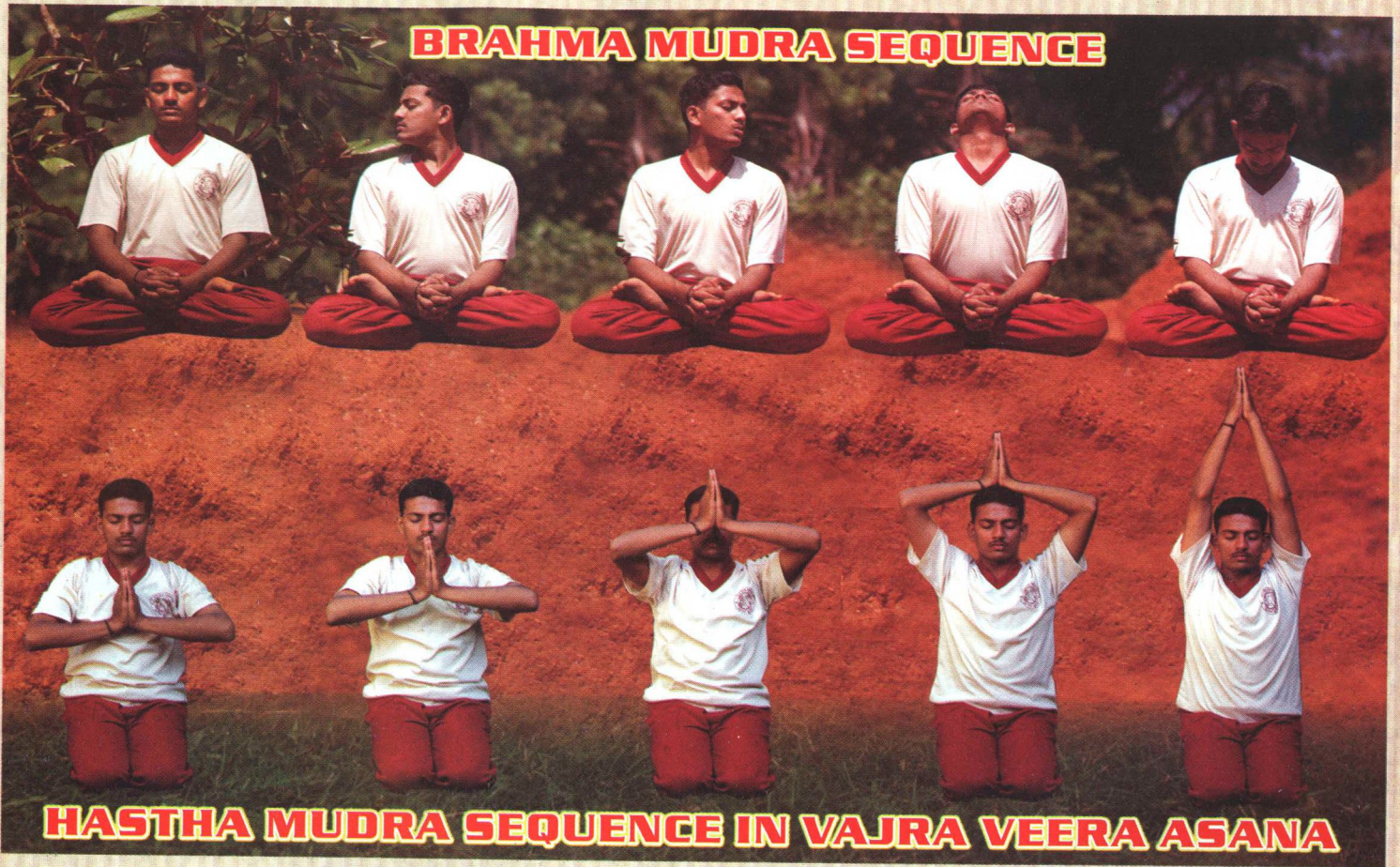








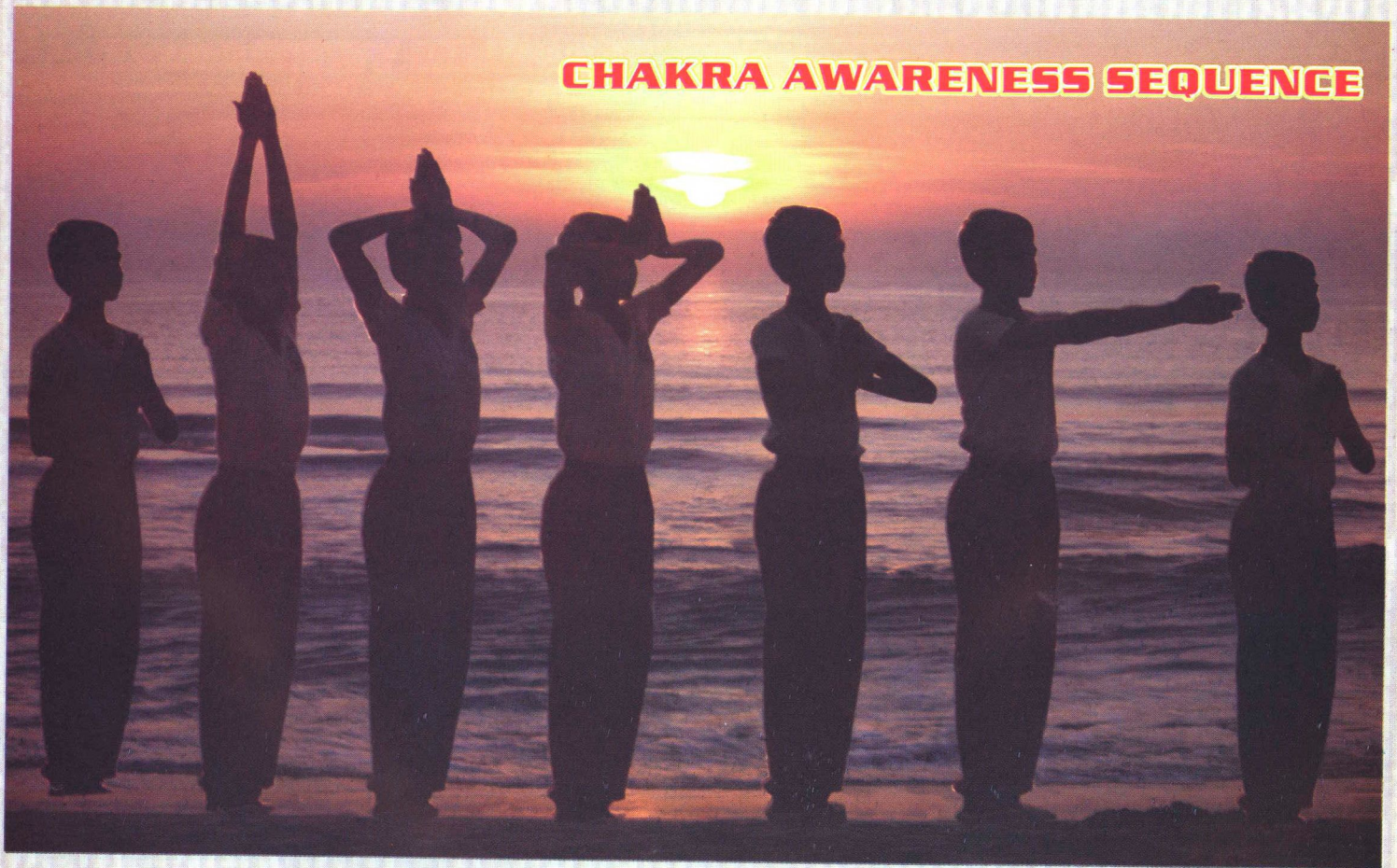
**BRAHMA MUDRA SEQUENCE**



**HASTHA MUDRA SEQUENCE IN VAJRA VEERA ASANA**



**CHAKRA AWARENESS SEQUENCE**

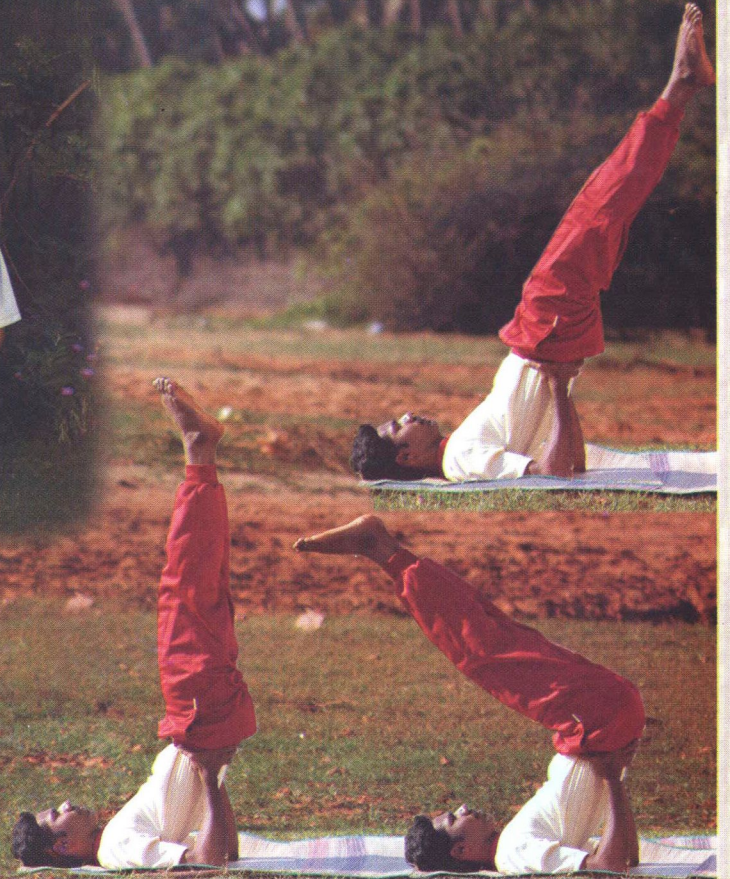




**TRIMURTHY MUDRA**



**VIPARITA KARANI MUDRA**

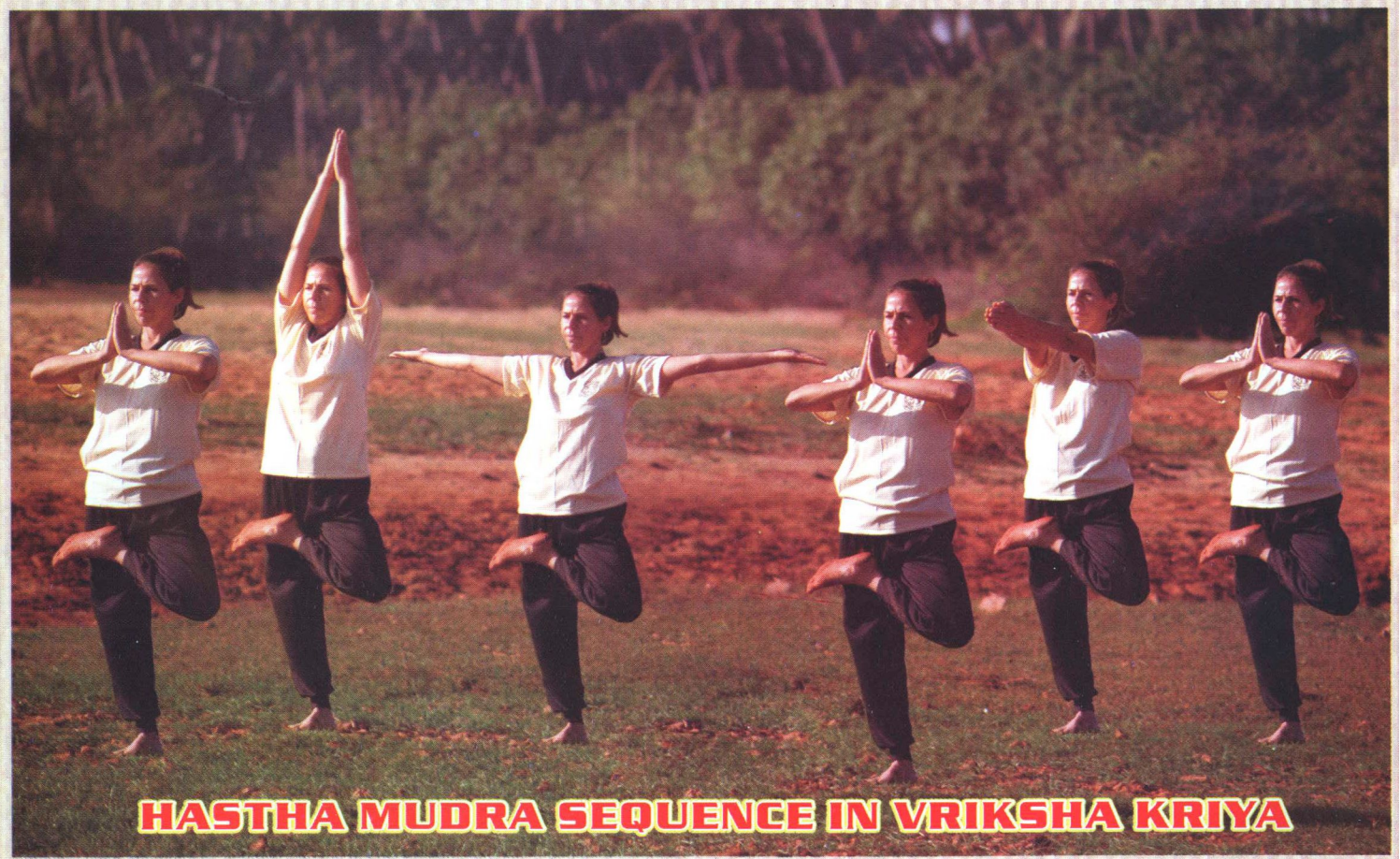




# HASTHA MUDRA SEQUENCE IN SURYA PRANA MUDRA







**HASTHA MUDRA SEQUENCE IN VRIKSHA KRIYA**



