

Examples of Vinyāsa Krama for Sitting Āsana within a Single Practice...



As Desikachar actually had very few long term students, many peoples views around such as his Āsana teaching, or views on Yoga in general are formed from experiencing him teaching within a group situation, either at a seminar, lecture or retreat.

Actually he really was not very comfortable teaching mixed public groups in these situations, and in relation to teaching practices, what practices he could present had to be very generalised and therefore sometimes even contrary to the principles he taught according to what he learnt from his father.

On the other hand as a private student the Āsana practices I was exposed to had a precision and intensity offering a breadth and depth impossible to emulate within a group class environment.

As an example I am offering an extract from the seated section of a practice he taught me. The Āsana in this section are Daṇḍāsana, Ardha Matsyendrāsana, Mahā Mudrā, Buddha Koṇāsana, Paścimatānāsana and as a Pratikriyā Āsana, Dvi Pāda Pīṭham.

There were two options for practice, a lighter application or a more intense one. In the lighter version the balance of repeat or stay was as follows:

- Daṇḍāsana - Repeat 4 times
- Ardha Matsyendrāsana - Stay 4 Breaths each side
- Mahā Mudrā - Stay 8 Breaths each side
- Buddha Koṇāsana - Stay 8 Breaths
- Paścimatānāsana - Repeat 4 times and Stay 4 Breaths
- Dvi Pāda Pīṭham - Repeat 8 times

This aspect of the Āsana practice totals over 50 breaths and as such will take at least 25-30 minutes. In reality this is already as much as many take for their entire Āsana practice. In the more intense version we have:

- Daṇḍāsana - Repeat 6 times
- Ardha Matsyendrāsana - Stay 6 Breaths each side
- Mahā Mudrā - Stay 12 Breaths each side
- Buddha Koṇāsana - Stay 12 Breaths
- Paścimatānāsana - Repeat 6 times and Stay 6 Breaths
- Dvi Pāda Pīṭham - Repeat 12 times

This aspect of the Āsana practice alone totals over 78 breaths and as such will take at least 40 minutes. In reality this is already as much as many take for their entire practice let alone just the Āsana part.

Also within this there are still further developmental aspects that could be considered such as breath ratios and breath lengths within each of the Āsana and the employing of additional techniques such as Bandha.

However as it is, it offers a glimpse into the interest and precision that Desikachar had in teaching Āsana with an intensity and dedication towards their practice and their transmission as an important aspect of Krishnamacharya's Paramparā.