

108 Saṃskṛta Core Concept Pointers – 14 – Apāna

अपान

Links to Related Resources & Longer Articles:

- A sample Parivṛtti and Paścimatāna Themed Group Practice
- Nāma, Rūpa, Lakṣana – The Name, Form and Characteristics of Āsana
- Studying, Practicing and Learning the Tri Bandha involves Theory, Techniques and...
 - The presence and actions of Prāṇa Śakti
 - The Viniyoga of Inversion as an Āsana or as a Mudrā.....

Collated Related Short Posts & Quotes:

"If a person can't exhale from the lower abdomen
then you can be sure their Mūla is gone."
– T Krishnamacharya

"Another simple posture is Adho Mukha Śvan Āsana.
the next step is to try them in some sitting postures such as Mahā Mudrā.
These Bandha can also be done in the headstand.
It is easy to do Bandha in this position because the lifting,
Uḍḍiyana Bandha, and holding up, Mūla Bandha,
of Apāna to the flame is almost automatic
because now the Apāna is above the flame.
If we can do the three Bandha in these postures,
we are ready to introduce them in our Prāṇāyāma."
– TKV Desikachar 'The Concept, Preparation and Techniques of Bandha' Religiousness in
Yoga Chapter Fourteen Page 197

"In the language of Yoga,
the seat of all impurities is the abdomen."
– TKV Desikachar 1984

"The lower abdomen is the dullest part of the spine,
it is the starting point for the exhalation."
– From study notes with TKV Desikachar England 1992

"Exhalation is the most important part of the breath,
it encourages the inhalation.
By increasing the exhalation we bring attention to the lower abdomen."
– From study notes with TKV Desikachar England 1992

"Actively contract the abdomen when exhaling to emphasise Apāna Sthāna.
Actively constrict the abdomen when inhaling to emphasise Prāṇa Sthāna."
- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"Forward Bends are back stretching Āsana in terms of Bhāvana.
Thus in Paścimatāna Āsana one of the foci is on avoiding pushing
from the lower back as you bend forward.
Thus move forward from the abdominal area by drawing it back,
to encourage the lower back to respond by lengthening.
If we push from the lower back in forward bends,
such as Paścimatānāsana, it can tighten this area,
thus inhibiting the focus on the quality of the Apāna Lakṣaṇa,
as well as transferring stress to the sacrum, hips and hamstrings."
- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"When bending towards the lower limbs during forward bend Āsana,
move firstly by as if rounding from the lower back,
before ultimately rounding from the upper back.
In terms of a Bhāvana during the movement,
the focus is on exhaling from Apāna Sthāna towards Prāṇa Sthāna.
Thus breathing as if from the lower abdomen towards the upper chest."
- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"When moving away from the lower limbs during forward bend Āsana,
move firstly by as if arching from the arms and upper back,
before ultimately arching from the lower back.
In terms of a Bhāvana during the movement,
the focus is on inhaling from Prāṇa Sthāna towards Apāna Sthāna.
Thus breathing as if from the upper chest towards the lower abdomen."
- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"Keep the arms up as you go down
Thus moving down from
Apāna Sthāna to Prāṇa Sthāna.
Lift the arms first as you come up.
Thus moving up from
Prāṇa Sthāna to Apāna Sthāna."
- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"Backbends disturb the length and quality of the exhale,
in that they impact the Apāna and push the Mūla downwards.
Thus we need to consider an appropriate Pratikriyā Āsana
to compensate for this disturbance to the Apāna Sthāna.
Hence Pratikriyā such as Apānāsana to restore the Apāna."
- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"With regard to Dvi Pāda Pīṭham, a key Bhāvana is on how we use the arms. In the beginning try exploring leaving out raising the arms as you come up, as shoulder movement means that people can start to move about on the mat. Here we need to focus on lifting the body upwards as many people slide backwards. Also many people will push up too much from the buttocks and distend the belly, which in turn will increase the abdominal pressure and disturb the Apāna Sthāna. So initially when learning this posture the Bhāvana of lifting from the feet is enough. Then adding the engagement of a Bhāvana on the arms, by making the arms active. Thus whilst lifting engage pushing the full length of the arms down firmly on the floor. Once the legs are active and the arms are active, the neck can lengthen more naturally."
- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"A key Bhāvana for Samasthiti is on the relationship of the feet to the ground with the intention of sensitising the Apāna Sthāna. We start by activating the soles of the feet by applying a focused downward pressure. This helps activate muscle tone in the legs, and can effect a drop in the sacral area, and causing a slight lift in the abdomen, whilst helping to lengthen the lumbar. All of which is a support and preparation for focusing on an active exhalation initiated from the Apāna Sthāna. You can practice getting people to as if turn on and turn off the feet and notice what can happen. Soggy feet implies both soggy legs and a soggy abdomen."
- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"In Practicing the Tri Bandha we engage with Haṭha teachings: In that, the inhale takes the Agni towards the Mūlādhāra. This effect on Agni increases with the Antar Kumbhaka, as the Antar Kumbhaka helps to intensify the fire. Following this process in bringing the Agni down, the exhale takes the Mūlādhāra towards the Agni. Thus the exhale draws the Apāna towards the Agni, plus adding Uḍḍiyana Bandha holds the Apāna up. This is the link with the effect on the Kuṇḍalinī, though in terms of practice, very hard to get. Here also, the coming down period is important. For example, do not eat just after, though you feel hungry. Uḍḍiyana Bandha is a heating process and Madhura Rasa, such as sweet rice cooked with milk is initially recommended."
- 108 Mudrā Practice Pointers

"With regard to the breath, inhale pushes down,
exhale brings up, Bāhya Kumbhaka tightens.
Then total effect should be in the Apāna area,
therefore exhale and Bāhya Kumbhaka important.
With regard to directional breathing,
if no Mūla Bandha then exhale can start from the navel.
If Mūla Bandha held then exhale from the navel is not possible."
- 108 Mudrā Practice Pointers

"Within the energetic processes in Haṭha Yoga
the concept of Candra is that which can direct
Prāṇa and Apāna in order to influence the activities of Sūrya."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"Bṛṃhaṇa Kriyā and Laṅghana Kriyā, as
expansive and contractive activities, are two
potentials explored through Āsana and the Breath.
Alongside the practice of Āsana, Mudrā and Prāṇāyāma,
they are actualised through a theoretical understanding of
the primary principles that inform Haṭha Yoga and Āyurveda.
The alchemical process underpinning this understanding
is the relationship between the two primary principles of
Prāṇa and Agni in order to influence Haṭha Yoga concepts such
as Prāṇa, Apāna, Sūrya, Candra, Nāḍī, Cakra and Kuṇḍalinī.
In terms of Bṛṃhaṇa Kriyā and Laṅghana Kriyā, the
Viniyoga of Bṛṃhaṇa effects a dispersion of Agni from
the core to the periphery and the Viniyoga of Laṅghana
effects a concentration of Agni from the periphery to the core.
Integrating the application of these two specific processes
facilitates access, through the Merudaṇḍa, Prāṇa and Agni,
to either energising or cleansing potentials, or as collaborative
outcomes within the practice of Āsana, Mudrā and Prāṇāyāma."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"Energetically, in terms of Prāna
and Cakra, we seek to expand
and lengthen the upper part of
the body above the diaphragm.
Energetically, in terms of Apāna
and Cakra, we seek to reduce
and shorten the lower part of
the body below the diaphragm."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

Bhāvana on Directional Breathing within Śikṣaṇa Practice

"When inhaling, start the movement in the Prāṇa Sthāna from the Viśuddhi Sthāna and move the inhale as if towards the diaphragm without distending the belly. When exhaling, start the movement in the Apāna Sthāna from the Svādhiṣṭhāna Sthāna and move the exhale as if towards the diaphragm without collapsing the chest."

- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"Bṛṃhaṇa Kriyā
has a Lakṣaṇa of
feeling brighter in
the Prāṇa Sthāna.
Laṅghana Kriyā
has a Lakṣaṇa of
feeling lighter in
the Apāna Sthāna."

- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

Different Types of Postural Activity in Āsana Practice

"Furthermore, the consideration of the roles of movement and stasis can be further developed through Krishnamacharya's teachings on application of Āsana. For example, whether for circulation or for purification, within both structural and/or systemic roles for Āsana. Regarding circulation, or what he called Rakta Calana. When you want to activate the circulation you move. Regarding cleansing, or what he called Śarīra Śodhana. When you want to activate a purificatory process you stay. Both presume there is competent access to the breath, working access to the concepts of Prāna, Apāna and Agni, and experience of how to direct the breath in the spine."

- 108 Yoga Planning Pointers

- The Viniyoga of Planning Principles Guidelines – Collected & Collated

"Krishnamacharya's approach to teaching children Āsana, was more about cultivating strength in Prāṇa Sthāna and movement in Apāna Sthāna. Whereas for teaching adults Āsana, the approach was now more about cultivating movement in Prāṇa Sthāna and strength in Apāna Sthāna."

- 108 Teaching Path Pointers

"Although the inhale is the exploratory means to learn more about the Prāṇa Sthāna, it is initially the exhale that will teach us about the Apāna Sthāna, and here is a primary means in the application of Āsana as a therapy."
– 108 Yoga Teaching Path Pointers

– Prāṇāyāma Theory Questions
"What are Kapālabhāti and Bhastrikā?
Compare and discuss their effects
on Prāṇa Sthāna and Apāna Sthāna"
To Download or View this Question as a PDF Study Sheet
– Yoga Practice Planning and Theory Questions – Collected & Collated

– Prāṇāyāma Theory Questions
"Compare and discuss the effects of
Samavṛtti and Viṣamavṛtti breathing ratios
on Prāṇa Sthāna and Apāna Sthāna."
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