

## 108 Saṃskṛta Core Concept Pointers – 2 – Viniyoga

# विनियोग

### Links to Related Resources & Longer Articles:

- Āsana Mudrā & Prāṇāyāma  
– Collected Viniyoga of Practice Planning Principles
- The Viniyoga of Vinyāsa Krama in the principles of Āsana, Mudrā and Prāṇāyāma practice.....
- Finding your starting point within Āsana to set a direction and route towards a goal...
- How do we apply Viniyoga to students already set in a particular mode of Āsana practice?
- Laṅghana Kriyā is a Viniyoga Methodology that has two functional dimensions...
- Physiological and psychological considerations around the practitioner's starting point...
- The breadth, depth and potential of Desikachar's teachings on the Viniyoga of practice.....
- The Viniyoga of Yoga is the application of the principles that...
- T Krishnamacharya's accomplishments should not be defined just by his more well known characterisations.....
- Viniyoga Vignette 1 – Antar and Bāhya Kumbhaka in Āsana
- Viniyoga Vignette 2 – Combining techniques in Prāṇāyāma
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- Viniyoga Vignette 3 – Śītalī and Anuloma Ujjāyī Prāṇāyāma within Āsana
- Viniyoga Vignette 4 – Combining Prāṇāyāma within Āsana
- Viniyoga Vignette 5 – Introducing Uḍḍiyana Bandha within an Āsana practice
- Yoga as a View, Practice and Tool – Part Three on Viniyoga
- We need to consider the process that surrounds one's Āsana practice...
- What is the meaning and origin of the concept 'The Viniyoga of Yoga'?

## Collated Related Short Posts & Quotes:

"To derive Siddhi through  
Saṃyama Dhāraṇā or  
Savikalpa Samādhi,  
Dhyānam and Samādhi  
have to be practised.  
These practices should  
also be practised  
according to one's capacity."

– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 6

"This is what Patañjali says in that everything must be given step by step.  
Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 6 reflects this idea."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 6

"People come to study Yoga for many reasons,  
however it comes into two groups.

1. They come to learn or study (Śikṣaṇa).
2. They come to us for support rather than to study (Rakṣaṇa).

So the Yoga we offer to the person who is inquiring  
is not the Yoga we offer to the person seeking protection.  
Therefore one can give the wrong advice (Asat Viniyoga) to the right person  
and vice versa (Asat Viniyoga).

This can do more harm than if the person had not come.  
The intention must be right as must be the execution."

– TKV Desikachar Switzerland 1978

"The Ācārya has to examine the Sat Viniyoga or Asat Viniyoga,  
the right offering or the wrong offering.  
If the teacher is able to solve this problem  
and establish that the students are serious,  
then this is Sat Viniyoga."

– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"To give the right thing to the right person  
at the right time is Sat Viniyoga.  
Don't look at the file, look at the student!"

– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"Sometimes we try to transmit  
what we cherish.  
This is not Viniyoga."

– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"Even in the case of Śikṣaṇa Krama the ancient teachers had steps in the teaching:

- Yukta Śikṣaṇa

The teaching must be appropriate to the intelligence of the individual.

- Grahaṇa Śikṣaṇa

Also able to absorb correctly what you have understood.

You must test them, confuse them to see if they have.

- Yukta Smaraṇa

The teacher should find out how much the person remembers what they have understood.

- Yukta Abhyāsa

Is how much a person practices what he is given.

To see if he has learnt, understood and practiced.

- Yukta Anu Bhāva

Even practice can be mechanical, even if it is regular.

So how much you have learnt from the practice.

What it has taught you.

- Yukta Pracāram (skilful spreading)

Finally, you ask the person to transmit what they have received.

The transmission shows the Siddhi of the Sādhana.

This is Viniyoga.

These outlines are valid whether Śikṣaṇa or Rakṣaṇa Krama.

If what is given is mechanical it is not Viniyoga.

That is why the Viniyoga spirit is very important these days."

– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"Even with my students, they teach a posture because it has been taught to them.

Like a rubber stamp.

This is not Viniyoga.

People have rigid ideas.

For example, why Cakravākāsana for this lady after Śīrṣāsana, whereas something else,

say Mahāmudrā for somebody else.

So it does not follow what is good for me is good for everybody."

– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"Viniyoga is an offering.

Every offering presents two aspects: what is offered and the way it is offered.

Each of these aspects has two sides:

to give and to receive.

When there is harmony between these two sides,

the offering is perfect; it becomes Viniyoga,

like the Viniyoga of Prasādam in a modest temple in India."

– TKV Desikachar 1983

"It is not possible for everyone to reach the same level of meditation (Dhyānam), even meditation should be taught or presented in stages (Viniyoga). It should be used at a level suitable to the student and gradually increased, start simply and increase in complexity. This is dependant on the growth of the student and according to the purpose."  
– From study notes with TKV Desikachar England 1992

"The Spirit of Viniyoga is starting from where one finds oneself. As everybody is different and changes from time to time, there can be no common starting point, and ready-made answers are useless. The present situation must be examined and the habitually established status must be re-examined."  
– TKV Desikachar

"Yoga is a mystery. It does not mean the same thing to each and every one. In spite of the vast field it covers curing chronic ailments, extra-sensory perception, etc, hardly anyone is able to define it in simple terms. Where is then the hope of experiencing its true significance? What about the risks of inappropriate use of Yoga methods and practices? Why are so many people all over the world taking the word and the substance of Yoga so lightly, so ridiculously? Like everything, Yoga must be presented intelligently. It should be spoken of carefully and offered according to the aspiration, requirements and culture of the individual. This should be done in stages. Systematic application of Yoga, be it concerned with physical exercises, deep breathing, relaxation, meditation, lifestyle, food, studies, is the need of the day. This I believe – is what the word Viniyoga represents."  
– TKV Desikachar

"It is very sad that the style has become more important than the individual".  
– TKV Desikachar

"When considering the Viniyoga of Pratikriyāsana within a student's personal practice, it may help to look at the integration of their intended role from three perspectives.

- Firstly their intended role as a counterposture, thus more from a physiological perspective.
- Secondly their intended role as a compensation, thus more from a psychological perspective.
- Thirdly their intended role as a transition, thus more from a sequential perspective.

Appropriate integration of these three principles constitute an essential component in the Vinyāsa Krama utilised within practice planning."

- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"Within the teachings of T Krishnamacharya, as transmitted to TKV Desikachar, the role of Śavāsana within an Āsana practice was as a transitional link pose between categories of Āsana. For example between Standing and Lying Āsana, or Lying and Inverted Āsana, or Inverted and Prone Backbends, or Prone Backbends and Seated Āsana, or Seated Āsana and Sitting Practices. The extent of its use and length of rest at each stage, when transiting from one category to another within our Āsana practice journey, was dependent on the facility of the practitioner and the intensity of the practice. Within this individualised variance is the guiding principle that the role of Śavāsana is to facilitate a smooth transition for the flow of the breath and also the pulse through and beyond the Āsana practice, as a marker for the practitioner's state of mind. However according to Desikachar the Viniyoga of Śavāsana was seen in terms of recovery from the fatigue of the preceding aspect of the practice rather, than say recovery from the preceding aspects of one's life. Regarding the approach for the recovery from the preceding aspects of one's life, amongst other things such as Āhāra and Vihāra, the wider purpose, content, duration and frequency of the Āsana practice must be carefully reconsidered."

- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"Within the application of Cikitsā Krama  
Śavāsana is a position for relaxation.  
Within the application of Rakṣaṇa Krama  
Śavāsana is an Āsana for resting.  
Within the application of Śikṣaṇa Krama  
Śavāsana is an Āsana for observation."  
- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

Bhāvana on Śavāsana within a Śikṣaṇa Āsana practice.  
"Inherent within the application of Śavāsana  
as an Āsana within a Śikṣaṇa Krama practice,  
is the active cultivation of a quality of Nirodha,  
or what can be described as 'witness awareness'.  
As in the notion of the Cit observing the Citta.  
Thus, a key to directing the attention in  
Śavāsana, is to intentionally cultivate  
a quality of passive observation."  
- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"The Breath is the activating force in all aspects of the Āsana.  
For example, when comparing a dynamic performance  
of an Āsana with the static performance of an Āsana,  
the difference is in the degree or extent of the movement.  
Thus, from a Viniyoga or application of Āsana perspective,  
whether the extent of the movement is what is seen  
as long-range, mid-range, short-range, or even micro,  
the activating force of the Breath is integral to the Āsana.  
From a developmental viewpoint, as in a longer-term  
Vinyāsa Krama, this a journey from those Āsana that  
mainly favour long-range movement, towards those Āsana  
and Mudrā that mainly favour micro-range movement.  
Within this developmental refinement in the relationship  
of Breath as the activating force, sit the place and roles  
of mid-range movement and short-range movement."  
- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"One aspect to the art of modification in Āsana,  
is in order to sustain a specific direction of Candra  
according to the primary Lakṣaṇa of and in an Āsana,  
amidst a contrary potential to stimulate a dispersion  
of Candra, because of the demands of the secondary  
Lakṣaṇa overpowering that of the primary Lakṣaṇa.  
This also implies that we have personally embedded  
a theoretical and experiential understanding, through  
study of the process in the Viniyoga of Āsana, according  
to their inherent primary and secondary characteristics."  
- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"When looking at the means to explore the art of improvisation within the choice and application of Āsana, we need to be specific in our intention.

For example,

we could look through the lens of two questions:

1. What are the areas that we wish to investigate?
2. What are the ways to explore these in Āsana?

If we are specific in regard to the first question, as in what is the area or areas to be investigated, then we can explore these in the second question, through utilising the art of improvisation in Āsana."

- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"At the heart of the Viniyoga of Āsana process around the practice of Āsana, is the experience of moving as if you have not already experienced the Āsana and are, as if, meeting it for the first time. When it comes to staying in the Āsana, then staying as if you already know the Āsana, and are once again greeting an old friend."

- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"The application of modification within the choice of Āsana relates more to the purpose of the Āsana. Whereas, the application of variation within the choice of Āsana relates more to the purpose of the practice."

- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

"As with Prāṇāyāma, the role and practice of Mudrā needs to be considered from two distinct, but complementary and developmental viewpoints. In other words, there are Mudrā that are primarily utilised within the context of Haṭha Yoga and there are Mudrā that are utilised within the context of Rāja Yoga. Within these two viewpoints, there are also those Mudrā that can be applied in either context, depending on the Saṃkalpa and Bhāvana employed by the practitioner."

- 108 Mudrā Practice Pointers

"When reflecting on the intimacy of the relationship between Prāṇāyāma and Āsana experientially, we could consider exploring the practice of Prāṇāyāma and its developmental conjunction with Āsana, via the following reference points. Within the age-old coalescence of Prāṇāyāma and Āsana, Prāṇāyāma can have three potential roles in influencing the physical, energetic, psychological or emotional effects arising from the prior practice of Āsana. In this context the application of Prāṇāyāma can be from one of three directions. It can be used to either pacify, or to stabilise, or to intensify, the various experiences arising from the practice of Āsana."

- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"As an adjunct or extension to the Āsana element of a practice, Prāṇāyāma can be applied to either enhance, stabilise or reduce the impact of accumulative effects arising from the Āsana element. The skill is being able to choose which is appropriate for that day, in relation to where we are coming from in terms of that day's Āsana, and our personal choices as to where we are going to need to be after."

- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"One of the key concepts in the Viniyoga of Āsana is how to facilitate movement in the spine rather than just movement of the spine."

- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"The ABC of the Viniyoga of Yoga is the bespoke long term cultivation of a personalised, pertinent and progressive Āsana Practice as a foundation for a separate Breathing Practice with its own identity alongside a Chanting Practice to honour teachings and transmission. Dhyānam is the fabric that time weaves from these related threads."

- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"The art of Viniyoga is being concerned with what happens during the movements between the Āsana rather than just the movements during the Āsana."

- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"The art of Viniyoga is about how you bring life to the Āsana rather than expecting the Āsana to bring life to you."

- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers



"The art of Viniyoga is about  
how you bring life to the Mudrā  
rather than expecting the Mudrā  
to bring life to you."

- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"The art of Viniyoga is about  
how you bring life to the Prāṇāyāma  
rather than expecting the Prāṇāyāma  
to bring life to you."

- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"The art of Viniyoga is about  
how you bring life to the Dhyāna  
rather than expecting the Dhyāna  
to bring life to you."

- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"The art of Viniyoga is about  
how you bring life to the Mantra  
rather than expecting the Mantra  
to bring life to you."

- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"The Viniyoga of Yoga is a methodology  
that offers a depth of tools, rather than  
just a breadth of tools; however, the tools  
also sit a bit like Russian dolls in that one  
must be opened before the next reveals itself."

- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"One of the potentials in the Haṭha Yoga teachings of Krishnamacharya and Desikachar is the understanding around the Viniyoga or application of Bṛṃhaṇa Kriyā and Laṅghana Kriyā in terms of their potential to enhance sensory stimulation or to diminish sensory stimulation.

Both approaches can be used where appropriate to impact on how we are stimulated by the world through the senses and thus be more drawn to interact with it in a more extravert way, or how our sensory stimulation is quietened and thus we are more easily able to withdraw from the activities of the senses.

Both approaches are valid and applied according to our changing age, life situation and life stage. Here the role of a teacher is helpful in learning the skills of self application within our practice planning.

We can learn how we can fine-tune our practice according to our basic nature and where it needs to be within day to day living and its demands.

This alchemical process would also be difficult to explore other than in some very generalised way within a weekly group class given the mix of the age, gender, interests, needs, potentials and core physiological, energetic and psychological natures of the students.

Let alone where they are in their life circumstances, external demands, work roles and life stage or even the teacher having time and situation to explore each student personally to gain some insight into what is happening at that life moment within the small window offered by time and group size.

Hence, throughout Krishnamacharya and Desikachar's teaching life, apart from formalised group classes for children and young adults, they taught personal practice only through individual lessons."

- 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

"Progressing from Movement to Stillness,  
as in from Dynamic Āsana to Static Āsana,  
is a perceived goal within every Yoga practice.  
However, within the Viniyoga of Āsana, this is not  
a purposeful goal to expect within every Āsana."  
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"Another lesser-known facet to the practice tool of Pratikriyāsana  
is the application of it in the practice planning steps, not in the  
more usual sense of its perception as a postural counterpose,  
rather its application in order to reduce a negative state of being  
and the impact that we are currently experiencing, whether at a  
physical, energetic, psychological or emotional level of being.  
In this context, Pratikriyāsana means the practice planning steps  
when choosing and arranging Āsana that will effect an counter action  
on our current state of negativity expressing itself and impacting on  
our sense of well-being, whether body, mind, energy or emotions.  
Thus, opposite action Āsana to a currently unhelpful sense of being."  
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

General Guidelines for Practice Planning:

"In terms of practice planning the spirit of Viniyoga  
is achieved by two broad means:

1. The selection of practice material that is appropriate  
to the needs and circumstances of the student.
2. The intelligent use of Vinyāsa Krama."

- 108 Yoga Planning Pointers

- The Viniyoga of Planning Principles Guidelines – Collected & Collated

General Guidelines for Choosing Āsana:

"The principles we utilise through  
the Viniyoga of Āsana practice are  
a fair attempt in this direction."

- 108 Yoga Planning Pointers

- The Viniyoga of Planning Principles Guidelines – Collected & Collated

General Guidelines for Setting Practice Aims or Learning Outcomes:

"Finally, whatever the Practice Aims,  
or the Intended Learning Outcomes,  
try to conserve the Spirit of Viniyoga.'

- 108 Yoga Planning Pointers

- The Viniyoga of Planning Principles Guidelines – Collected & Collated

Different Types of Postural Activity in Āsana Practice  
"Linking Dynamic and Static Āsana within a Vinyāsa Krama.

In this respect the application of the principles of both dynamic and static work, when planning for Āsana practice, allows for a more efficient use of the body and respect for the variables such as time of day, time of year, time of life, preceding or following activities, the length of practice, the role of practice, our practice needs, etc."

- 108 Yoga Planning Pointers

- The Viniyoga of Planning Principles Guidelines – Collected & Collated

Different Types of Postural Activity in Āsana Practice

"Amongst the technical learnings of the different possibilities for Āsana are topics such as, the developmental application of Āsana within the refinement of the practice from more movement towards more stasis.

This involves an exploration of the immediate or longer-term potentials for different Āsana:

- When used with long-range movement
- When used with mid-range movement
- When used with short-range movement
- When used with micro movement."

- 108 Yoga Planning Pointers

- The Viniyoga of Planning Principles Guidelines – Collected & Collated

Different Types of Postural Activity in Āsana Practice

"This would also involve a theoretical study of the Lakṣaṇa of individual or groups of Āsana.

This is supported by exploring the advantages and disadvantages of movement or stay in specific Āsana.

All of which to help in appreciating which Āsana are best used dynamically, or which Āsana are best used statically and which Āsana can serve the practice in both a dynamic and a static application."

- 108 Yoga Planning Pointers

- The Viniyoga of Planning Principles Guidelines – Collected & Collated

### 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

### Different Types of Postural Activity in Āsana Practice

"Furthermore, the consideration of movement or stasis sits within a relationship to the deeper purpose of Āsana within our journey through the body and the breath, to the mind and beyond, through considerations such as:

In relation to the fluctuations of the Guṇa.

Ideally, dynamic work is a state of still movement, rather than a state of active movement, as in Rajas.

Equally, static work is a state of bright stasis, rather than a state of dull stasis, as in Tamas.

Thus, in relation to the Guṇa, the application of both movement and stasis in Āsana need to be appropriately supported by a quality of Sattva.

As in a quality of stillness within dynamic work and a quality of brightness within static work."

- 108 Yoga Planning Pointers

- The Viniyoga of Planning Principles Guidelines – Collected & Collated

"The art of Viniyoga is about how you bring life to the Yoga Sūtra rather than expecting the Yoga Sūtra to bring life to you."

- 108 Yoga Study Path Pointers

"TKV Desikachar did not teach different people different things.

Nor did he just teach the same thing to different people.

He taught different people the same thing in different ways.

The same could be said of T Krishnamacharya's teaching.

Hence the context of the phrase the Viniyoga of Yoga."

- 108 Yoga Teaching Path Pointers

TKV Desikachar taught the Viniyoga of Yoga,  
or application of Yoga according  
to state of life, place, time and circumstance  
to optimise the student's potential within  
that situation as seen from his  
own, forever evolving, innovating and  
maturing, developmental teaching thread.  
- 108 Yoga Teaching Path Pointers

"The art of Viniyoga presumes that  
the five application principles of  
what is being taught,  
why it is being taught,  
when it is being taught  
where it is being taught and especially  
how it is being taught,  
are personally applicable and  
socially relevant to  
who is being taught."  
- 108 Yoga Teaching Path Pointers

"The Viniyoga of Yoga is about a system to teach to a student,  
rather than about students to teach a system to."  
- 108 Yoga Teaching Path Pointers

"The Viniyoga of Yoga is the art of  
learning how to practice,  
rather than what to practice."  
- 108 Yoga Teaching Path Pointers

"Viniyoga is not a term that can be  
applied to group class teaching."  
- 108 Yoga Teaching Path Pointers

"The Viniyoga of Yoga perspective  
is that the role of Śavāsana is  
its specific use as a transition  
from the fatigue of the Āsana,  
rather than its general use as a  
recovery from the fatigue of life."  
- 108 Yoga Teaching Path Pointers

"The Commercialised in-Corporation of Viniyoga  
is in danger of becoming a parody of  
the Personalised incorporation of Viniyoga."  
- 108 Yoga Teaching Path Pointers

"It is ironic when a collective term used to describe  
an approach to teaching an individual,  
becomes an individual term used to describe  
an approach to teaching a collective."  
- 108 Yoga Teaching Path Pointers

"Sat Viniyoga  
is about learning to do more with less.  
Asat Viniyoga  
is about learning to do less with more.  
Whether Āsana or Students!!"  
- 108 Yoga Teaching Path Pointers

"My Āsana study with Desikachar was shaped around forming  
a deep appreciation of specific core principles that underpin  
the planning and practice of Āsana and their application to  
the individual student's constitution, psychology and need.  
Amongst these dozen or so core principles,  
the first group when looking at any Āsana in depth,  
were the concepts of Nāma, Rūpa and Lakṣaṇa, or the  
name, form and characteristics of that particular Āsana.  
Obviously, the Nāma is a useful tag point for identification  
and the Rūpa is vital as a reference point for the Sat Viniyoga,  
or right application of the Āsana within overall considerations of  
initial direction and outcomes through such as the Śikṣaṇa Krama,  
Rakṣaṇa Krama or Cikitsā Krama application of the forms used.  
However, I do feel these days that our understanding in Āsana  
practice is more dominated by the Nāma and the Rūpa with  
little emphasis on the Lakṣaṇa or inherent characteristics of the  
Āsana and how understanding this aspect can have a profound  
effect on the approach, application and outcome of the overall or  
accumulative impact of the Āsana within the student's practice.  
The teachings of Krishnamacharya around Āsana included  
an in-depth appreciation of the Lakṣaṇa, especially around  
the thirty or so primary and secondary support Āsana such as  
Uttānāsana, Jaṭhara Parivṛtti, Bhujāṅgāsana or Januśīrṣāsana."  
- 108 Yoga 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