



The Link between the practice limbs of Āsana, Mudrā, Prāṇāyāma and Dhyānam

One of the essences of Krishnamacharya's and Desikachar's teaching focused on the developmental and progressive integration of the different aspects of Āsana, Mudrā, Prāṇāyāma and Dhyānam into a single constantly evolving organism.

Thus in honouring the Paramparā it is not possible for me to separate these four practice components into four completely disconnected study topics to be learnt in any random order.

The way I was taught was that a knowledge of the practice and planning principles within Āsana are necessary to appreciate the practice and planning principles within Mudrā.

From there a knowledge of the practice and planning principles within Āsana and Mudrā are necessary to appreciate the practice and planning principles within Prāṇāyāma, and so with Āsana, Mudrā and Prāṇāyāma regarding Dhyānam.

So to summarise we need to be grounded in the practice and theory of Āsana in order to develop our study of the practice and theory of Mudrā. The same goes with the study of Prāṇāyāma being an extension of the practice and study of Āsana and Mudrā.

Finally the practice of Dhyānam is an extension of the practice of Āsana, Mudrā and Prāṇāyāma.

"What good is the sword of wisdom
to cut away the chains of illusion
if the holder is too weak to bear it."
– T Krishnamacharya

This was the message of Krishnamacharya's and Desikachar's teaching in that we are learning to practice Yoga as a developmental, progressive, holistic process, rather than the more compartmentalised, learnt in any order, boxes of postures, breathing and meditation so prevalent in today's Yoga market place.

This same message is seen within the teachings and texts of Haṭha and Rāja Yoga in that we need to develop step by step the practice tools of Āsana, Mudrā and Prāṇāyāma in order to be prepared for the demands of Dhyānam.