

# YOGA RESEARCH

The Yoga Research Society Newsletter

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## The Mystery of Prâṇa

**PRÂṆA:** Chi, Ki, Qi, Breath, Strength, Energy, Wind, Power, Vitality Spirit, Life.

There are two principles: Prakṛti, the body and Puruṣa, the spirit. The body has different stages, signified by the words Sthûla, Sûkṣma, Avyakta. From the gross to the subtle, everything is the body, the place wherein the spirit dwells. The word is Śarîra meaning place or covering.

There are two principles, the resident and the residence. Everything has one gross form and one subtle form.

Our body is a gross form; fifty years ago it was minute. At that point it was in its subtle stage.

The gross body can be seen by our eyes; the subtle body, Sûkṣma, can only be guessed. Then there is a stage in which nothing can be seen or guessed, but one must believe in it. This is known as Avyakta, unmanifested form.

Everything is unmanifested and becomes manifest in two stages: subtle and gross.

Altogether there are three stages. A

few people know the subtle stage. Everything in the gross stage consists of the evolution of the subtle stage. When these two stages are accepted, it is necessary to accept the third stage, the absolute condition.

We can see the gross form. Though it is manifest, it had to be non-manifest at one time. Thus we have the gross (Sthûla), the subtle (Sûkṣma), the absolute, Prakṛti and Avyakta.

We see the gross body and guess the subtle body, the inner man. All these things are evolving from one unmanifested condition.

Evolution takes place due to the spirit. Consciousness is spirit. The same spirit is present in all three stages, as a base.

It was present even when there was only Prakṛti since it had its own activity based on Consciousness (Ātmanya). On this base, Prakṛti was beginning to evolve from subtle to gross.

The combination of the two leads to activity. A murder is an activity and it is done with the help of the hands. The same hands are used for Pûjâ (worship). Prayer is an activity done with the help of the

tongue. Every act is present in a latent stage, and thus everything is eternally coming out of one thing.

In Yogic practices we tackle the subtle and gross body, but we must have some training which will begin with the gross body and effect the inner body.

We cannot reach the absolute stage, the latent stage. We can only reach the first two stages.

All the activities of our outer body are governed by our inner body which is controlled by Prâṇa. Without breath we cannot kill or pray.

Breath is the most important governing element in our gross body. The same thing is working in the inner and outer body, known in **Hatha Pradîpikâ** as Prâṇa and Śvâsa. They are literally one.

All the processes are aimed toward controlling Śvâsa and indirectly Prâṇa. Everything a Yogi does should be directed toward controlling these two elements.

Why is drinking prohibited in Yoga? Because this will disturb the connection of the inner body with the outer body. We want to be connected with the activity going on in our inner body. But the activities around us are usually so great that we rarely are aware of what's going on inside.

The inner activity is reflected in the outer body. All that prevents the connection is prohibited for the Yogi.

A milk diet, for example, is good since it has the least toxins and the most dilute protein. A low protein diet, though less advantageous for the external body, is good; and more of carbohydrates is the best thing.

The inner man is the starting point of our activity. The same Prâṇa when it arrives to the outer body is called breath. When it is dormant yet doing some activity, we call it Prâṇa.

The best place for the activity of Prâṇa is the spinal column; for the outer activity it is the nose. That which is playing the role in the inner body is called Prâṇa whose manifested form is Śvâsa.

Everything we do must lead to the training of Prâṇa. But you can't puncture the spinal column and train it, so you do it

*continued*



### YOGA MIND MEDICINE

19TH ANNUAL YOGA RESEARCH SOCIETY CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 9 & 10, 1993 PHILADELPHIA USA

Dr. Candace Pert ~ Ven. Khenpo Könchog Gyaltzen  
Dr. Hunter "Patch" Adams ~ Dr. Aladar Kogler ~ Dr. V. Pratap

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*"Then the Lord God formed man  
of dust from the ground, and  
breathed into his nostrils  
the breath of life..."*

Genesis 2.7, The Holy Bible

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## The Mystery of Prâṇa, *continued*

through the nostrils (Prâṇâyâma - a training of Prâṇa through the nostrils).

Only those Âsanas which are used for the training of Prâṇa in one way or another are Yoga Asanas.

A diet which helps only the outer body will not help in the training of Prâṇa. Thus a Yogi should eat so as not to disturb the activity of Prâṇa.

We may not be aware of Prâṇa immediately, but after some time we can become aware of it in the spinal column. Prâṇa is the unmanifested form of Śvâsa.

Our movements should be in such a

manner that the Prâṇa is not disturbed; not too much walking, talking or wandering. Too much sleeping creates a disturbance of Prâṇa activity as well. For a Yogic life, we must believe in seclusion.

Prâṇa can be created only when there is the correct atmosphere inside. The criteria for Yoga activity is based on whether or not it will disturb the Prâṇa.

You must practice Mayûrâsana for a long time in order to awaken the Kuṇḍalinî. The rising of Prâṇa is achieved by this Âsana because it gives a pressure at a certain point thereby stimulating the

activity of Prâṇa.

If Siddhâsana is done for twelve years, the Kuṇḍalinî will rise up as well.

Any posture which will train the Prâṇa and divert its activity upward will be called Yogic. Otherwise it is called non-Yogic. Outwardly it may appear the same, but it won't have the same results. If the results don't lead to an awareness of Prâṇa, then it is not called Yogic.

The word which indicates the idea of Prâṇa in movement is Prâṇasañcâra. If the feeling is strong, there is another technical term, Kuṇḍalinî.

A Yogi who practices for a long time will feel something. It is not a thing to be shown, but to be experienced. Everything that is geared toward that experience is Yogic. Everything that doesn't is non-Yogic.

Prâṇâyâma is the main criterion in every Yogic school. There are two openings for the Prâṇa - the right and the left nostril. The main idea is to train the Prâṇa through the vehicle of breath.

Our aim is not the external thing, but the internal. That is why in all Yoga literature we come across the training of Prâṇa along with the code of life.

From a series of lectures given  
by Swami Digambarji at Lonavla,  
INDIA, beginning October 15, 1970.



太極拳

**T'AI CHI  
CH'UAN**

A Workshop with  
**Dr. Joseph Cheu**

Saturday, April 24, 1993  
11 am to 3 pm  
at Friends Select School  
Admission - \$35

Dr. Cheu was the 1992 Grand Champion in National and International T'ai Chi Ch'uan Competition.

Participants in this workshop will be taught basic stances, movements, postures, traditional guided imagery, meditation exercises, and breathing techniques.

The program will also include a discussion of the philosophy of T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

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