Importance Of Gomukhasana - Review Article

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ABSTRACT

An asana is a body posture, originally and still a general term for a sitting meditation pose, and later extended in hatha yoga and modern yoga as exercise, to any type or position, adding reclining, standing, inverted, twisting, and balancing poses. The yoga Sutras of Patanjali define “aasana” as (a position that) is steady and comfortable. Patanjali mentions the ability to sit for extended periods as one of the eight limbs of his system. Asana are also called yoga poses or yoga postures in English. Asana were claimed to provide both spiritual and physical benefits in medieval hatha yoga texts. More recently, studies have provided evidence that they improve flexibility, strength, and balance to reduce stress and conditions related to it, and specifically to alleviate some diseases such as asthma and diabetes.

INTRODUCTION

Asana originated in India. In Yoga Sutras, Patanjali describes aasana practice as the third of the eight limbs. (Sanskrit ashtanga from asht, eight, and anga, limb) of classical, or raja yoga. The word asana, in use I English since the 19th century, is from Sanskrit Asana “sitting down”, a sitting posture, a seat.

The eight limbs are, in order, the yamas (codes of social conduct), niyamas (self – observances), asanas (postures), pranayama (breath work), pratayahara (sense withdrawal or non-attachment), dharna (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), and Samadhi (realization of the true self).

Asana, along with the breathing exercise of pranayama, are the physical movements of hath yoga and modern yoga. Patanjali describes asana as a “steady and comfortable posture”, referring to the seated postures used for pranayama and for meditation, where meditation is the path to Samadhi, transpersonal self-realization.

Medieval Hath yoga texts make a variety of claims for the benefits brought by the asanas, both spiritual and physical. The Hath yoga pradipika states that aasanas in general, describes as the first auxiliary of hath yoga, give steadiness, good health, and lightness of limb.” Specific asanas, it claims, brings additional benefits: for example Matsyendrasana awakens Kundalini and makes the semen steady. Paschimottanasana “stokes up the digestive fire, slims the belly.
and gives good health”, Shavasana “takes away fatigue and relaxes mind”, Siddhaasana “bursts open the door to liberation”, while Padmasana “destroys all diseases”, and if done together with retention of the breath in pranayama confers liberation.

A single asana is listed for each pose, whether or not there are variations. Thus for Sirsasan (Yoga headstand), only one pose is illustrated, although the pose can be varied by moving the legs apart sideways or front-and-back, by lowering one leg to the floor, by folding the legs into lotus posture, by turning the hips to one side, by placing the hands differently on the ground and so on.

Physically, the practice of asanas has been claimed to improve flexibility, strength and balance; to alleviate stress and anxiety, and reduce the symptoms of lower back pain.

Claims have been made about beneficial effects on specific condition such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and diabetes.

In essence, yoga is a spiritual practice that is focused on bringing in harmony between the mind and body. Asans include all physical exercise. The classical meaning of asans is: Sthiram sukham aasanam: Steay, comfortable sitting. So asan means a stable and comfortable manner of sitting. Asana is something that we sit on. So, when we sit on our hips, they also become our asana.

**TYPES OF ASANA:**

- Gherand samhita 32 (2/3-6)
- Yogakundlinyupnishad-2
- Amritnadopnishad- 18
- Shandilyopnishad 8/9
- Varohopnishad-11
- Dhyanbindupnishad- asankhya
- Hathyog pradipika: 84 (1/34-36)
- Yogchudamanyupnishad -43
- Darshanopnishad- 9
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**TYPES OF ASANA ACCORDING TO POSITION:**

- Standing series
- Sitting series
- Prone series
- Supine series
- Inverted series
ABOUT GOMUKHASA (THE BOW POSE):

The name comes from the Sanskrit Go meaning "cow", mukha meaning 'face' or 'mouth' and asana meaning 'posture' or 'seat'. The pose is ancient as it is described in the Darshana upanishad, written around the 4th century. It is sometimes used for meditation and pranayama. The pose is entered from kneeling by crossing the legs; the heel of the upper leg is tucked in under the lower thigh near the buttock. The arm on the lower leg side is raised, the forearm bent down, while the other arm reaches down behind the back, the forearm bent up, so the hands can clasp between the shoulder blades. The sitting position can be modified either by putting a folded blanket on the heels, and if need be also one beneath them.

The pose stretches the shoulder the shoulders. The hand position can be modified using a strap to extend the reach for those who cannot bring the hands together behind the back. The pose is contraindicated for people with a rotator cuff injury.

Breathing: As usual

Procedure:

- Sit on the floor with the legs stretched straight in front.
- Place the palms on the floor and raise the seat.
• Bend the left knee back and sit on the left foot. Remove the hands from the floor, raise the right leg and place the right thigh over the left one. Raise the buttocks and with the help of the hands brings the ankles and the back of the heels together till they touch each other.

• Rest the ankles, keeping the toes pointing back.

• Raise the left arm over the head, bend it at the elbow and place the left palm below the nape of the neck between the shoulders. Lower the right arm, bend it at the elbow and raise the right forearm up behind the back until the right hand is level with and between the shoulder- blades. Clasp the hands behind the back between the shoulders.

• Hold this positions from 30 to 60 seconds breathing normally. Keep the neck and head erect and look straight ahead.

• Unclasp the hands, straighten the legs and repeat the pose on the other side for the same length of time by inserting 'left' for 'right' and vice versa. Then unclasp the hands at the back, straighten the legs and relax.

Portions Involved:

Chest, Hands, Thighs and Legs

Effects:

The pose cures cramp in the legs and makes the leg muscles elastic.

The chest is well expanded and the back becomes erect. The shoulder joint move freely and the latissimus dorsi are fully extended. (1. Light on yoga by bks iyengar forward by yehudi menuhin)

Gomukhasana tones the muscles and nerves around the shoulders and the cardiac plexus. The nadis in the legs are squeezed and the nadis connected with the reproductive organs and glands are also influenced, thus regulating the hormonal secretions. On a pranic level, gomukhasana affects the vajra nadi and prevents prana from flowing outward. Instead, prana is directed to and accumulated in mooladhara charkra. Because the fingers are interlinked prana also cannot escape through the hands. Gomukhasana creates a complete energy circuit flowing in the spinal region. In fact, the arm position is very significant as the arm form the shape of the figure eight. This represents the complete balance of prana, between the higher and lower forces and the positive and negative aspects. (2. Hath yog pradipika by swami muktibodhananda.)

Benefits:

• Chest is broadened
• The spine becomes flexible, stiffness, pain and
• Tenderness of the spine are relieved.
• Functions of Liver, Kidney, urinary bladder and
• the genital organs are improved
• Indigestion, Constipation and Intestinal gases are
• Relieved and Digestion is improved.
• Menstrual disorders in women are corrected.
• Prostatic function is improved.
• Beneficial in Low back ache, slip disc, strengthens
• The abdominal muscles and reduces abdominal fat.

CONCLUSIONS:
The purpose of Yoga is to create harmony in the physical, vital, mental, psychological and
spiritual aspects of human being. Asanas and Yogic exercises are best practiced between the
ages of 10 to 60 years by both the sexes. They are particularly useful for keeping the body
healthy. They do not take much loss of time and can be practiced at any hour of the day, most
suitable time is the early morning and the next best is just before retiring. Above all they make
the mind alert, improve concentration and help to maintain a buoyancy of spirit. Not only
Gomukhasana but one should include all the yoga and asanas in day to day life to improve
healthy lifespan.

REFERENCES:
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• https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asana.
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