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FOUNDED IN 1925 BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

Veranda of Self-Realization Fellowship Headquarters, Los Angeles, California, viewed from inside the front entrance

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Paramahansa Yogananda, Xochimilco, Mexico, 1929

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—*Indian Air Force*

MOUNT EVEREST IN THE HIMALAYAS

Top of Mt. Everest, highest peak in the world, reached in 1953 by climbers Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tenzing Norkay of Nepal

The Himalayas -- "Abode of the Snows"

By K. M. PANIKKAR

The geographical feature that dominates India is the Himalayas. There are no mountain ranges anywhere else in the world that have contributed so much to shape the life of a country as have the Himalayas in respect to India. It is not only the political life of the people but their religion, mythology, art, and literature that bear the imprint of the great mountain barrier.

To the Hindus the Himalayas have been a perpetual source of wonder and veneration. To the peoples of the south — 1500 miles away, to the men of the seacoast, to the dwellers of the desert land of Rajputana, to the inhabitants of the Gangetic valley, the Himalayas are the symbol of India.

The majesty of the snow-clad peaks, visible from afar, the inaccessibility of even the lesser ranges, the mysteries of the gigantic glaciers, and the magnificence of the great rivers that emerge from its gorges have combined to give to the Himalayas a majesty that no other mountain range anywhere can claim. The Hindus have invested it with an element of the divine: it is *devata* — a fraction of supernal majesty.

It is the abode of the gods to the Hindus: not the friendly Olympus of the Greeks, but the inaccessible seat of the great Shiva. From one end to the other, it is studded with sacred places of pilgrimage: Amarnath, Jwala Mukhi, Hardwar, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Pasupath, and the rest; and above all the magnificent and isolated peak of Kailas, the unapproachable domain of Lord Shiva himself.

Parvati, the consort of Shiva, is the daughter of the mountain god. One of the great peaks, Gauri Sankar, identified in the popular mind with Mt. Everest, is held sacred as the place of her penance.

The holy Ganges River takes its rise in the Himalayas and girdles it for over 500 miles before it streams into the plains of Hindu-

stan to fertilize and sanctify its soil. The Jumna, the Saraswati, the Brahmaputra, the Indus, and most of their tributaries on which depends the life of India, all have their origin in the Himalayas. Well might Sri Krishna claim in the *Gita*: "Among mountains I am the Himalayas."

Himalayas Known to Hindus for Millenniums

When the story of India unfolds itself we find flourishing Hindu kingdoms already established in Kashmir and Nepal, both being valleys ensconced in the Himalayas. The kingdoms of Dwigarta, Trigarta, and Madra in the sub-Himalayan regions are already famous in the time of the *Mahabharata*.* In the story of Rama there is but little allusion to the Himalayas. It is true that the spot of Lakshmana's penance is in the lower valleys of the Himalayas, a few miles to the north of Hardwar, but the mountain range itself does not figure in the *Ramayana*. On the other hand, in the *Mahabharata* story allusion to the Himalayas is frequent. The Pandava brothers, it is stated in the epic, marched northward and "beheld with heaven-aspiring hearts the mighty mountain, Himavat. Beyond its lofty peaks they passed toward a sea of sand." The holy lake of Manasarowar and the great Kailas itself, both on the Tibetan side, had become familiar to the people of India long before the Christian era.

The establishment of the great Hindu centers of pilgrimage from Amarnath (14,000 ft.) in Kashmir to Pasupath in Nepal could not have been later than the first century A.D. Long before this they had become popular centers of religious worship; holy men made their *ashramas* in spots where the scenery was majestic and life secluded, far away from the crowds of cities.

Gradually the entire range of the Himalayas, where human habitation was possible, became dotted with holy places. One of the most frequented of these, which attracts thousands of pilgrims every year, is Badrinath, 15,000 ft. above sea level. Between Hardwar and Badri there are literally hundreds of sacred spots, each hallowed by some legend. The extent of the sanctification of the Himalayas may be inferred from the fact that on the fifty-six-mile route from Kalka (Kalika) to Simla (Shymala) every important point is named after a temple dedicated to the Devi (Goddess Parvati).

The gorges and the routes across the Himalayas were also known

*About 3100 B.C.

Teakwood dressing table inlaid with mother-of-pearl once owned by Sarah Bernhardt; Yogananda Museum, SRF Lake Shrine.

Nun's Ashram, Self-Realization Fellowship World Brotherhood Colony, Encinitas, California. Site overlooks steep palisades near Pacific Ocean.

and explored by that time. Kalidasa* in the *Meghaduta* gives a description of the gorges through which a cloud has to pass to cross the Himalayan range and reach the mysterious city of Alaka, which mythology locates near Kailas. In the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, we have ample literary evidence of Indian rulers annexing Himalayan kingdoms. Bana's description in *Harsha Charita* of the conquest of Kashmir and Nepal by Sri Harsha shows that these kingdoms had long ago been incorporated into the historic conception of the homeland of the Hindus.

Himalayas the Inspiration of Many Poets

The importance of this great mountain range in the mind of the Hindus has only increased with time. Many epic poems describe its glory. The *Puranas* describe it with awe and veneration. Two of Kalidasa's major works are dominated by the spirit of the Himalayas. *Kumarasambhava* is *par excellence* the epic of the mountain. The first canto opens with a thrilling description of the mountain god, and the magic of its presence is conveyed by the poet through all the major events of the epic. *Meghaduta* (The Cloud Messenger) is no less a tribute to the majesty of the Himalayas. The theme of the poem is a message that a Yaksha (a resident of Alaka near Kailas, living a life of exile on the Vindhyas) sends to his beloved through a cloud. It is through the Himalayas that the cloud has to pass, and some of the most beautiful verses in the poem describe the cloud's ascent from the plains to the Himalayan heights.

The scenes of Bharavi's epic are laid in the Himalayas. *Kathasaritsagara* (Ocean of Stories) contains numerous passages describing the beauty of the great mountains. Nor is this interest confined to the literature of continental India. Wherever the Hindus colonized, they took with them love for the Himalayas. In the *kavi* literature of Java, *e.g.*, in *Smara Dahana*, the same lingering admiration for the snow-clad mountain is seen. The temple in Siam in which the King is crowned is known even today as Mount Kailas.

The Himalayan system, strictly defined, extends from the Indus River to the Brahmaputra: a length of 1500 miles. This is, however, only an artificial distinction. The two props, the Hindukush in the west and the Lushai hills in the east, are continuous with the great central belt to which geographers at the present time confine the name.

---

*Fifth-century poet, "the Shakespeare of India."

It has an average width of 150 miles, and within this enormous area the central range attains an average height of 20,000 feet, eternally snowbound, magnificent in its virgin whiteness. Rising above this huge rampart are the great peaks: Everest, Godwin Austen, Nangaparbat, Kinchinjunga, and Dhaulagiri — many of them unconquered by human endeavor and challenging the resources of man to climb them.

To the south of the central range is a second mountain series where the elevation is between twelve and fifteen thousand feet, also snowcapped and majestic but more friendly to human contacts and less inaccessible to pilgrims, explorers, and *sannyasis*. Gradually these mountains descend into another range: the outer Himalayas and the Sewaliks, pleasant, cool, and finely wooded.

Kashmir, the Happy Vale; Kulu, the Valley of Gods; the Doon, with the sacred city of Hardwar, and the hallowed *tapovan* and Nepal are but a few of the idyllic pleasances of this mountain region, while the new cities that stud the lower ranges from Gulmarg to Darjeeling, the pilgrim centers of the modern age, are but her guesthouses.

"These (the Himalayas) are," says an English writer, "the supreme mountains of the earth, tossed high in some convulsion of the primal age, and stricken immobile, a frozen ocean of lava waves whose crests are on the outer fringes of space, whose depths and hollows are the secret places of the earth, unknown and inaccessible; rock-cut gorges set about by forest swamp and interlocking jungle within whose grim recesses life may pullulate shut off forever from the outer world — Himalaya, the abode of snow.

Wide Variations of Climate

"This mountain continent makes its own variations of climate from the cold, arid heights to dark, steamy, sunless deeps, glaciers whence torrents run through caverns measureless to man, down to the sun-parched plains of India. Here the Ganges, the Indus, the Brahmaputra, the Alakananda burst smitten from the bound rock to wind a hundred miles through hidden valleys, subterranean gorges, and leagues of treacherous Tarai marsh to spread their healing waters on the plains and so to find the ocean and the end of all things: reabsorption in the Infinite, reincarnation and rebirth — the very symbol of the pantheistic cults that give them adoration."

Geologists claim that the Himalayas came into existence as a result of the crumpling of the earth's crust. It is said that there is conclusive geological evidence that some portion of the Himalayas must

have been under the sea at some far-distant date. These are matters of scientific interest, but the essential geographical fact with regard to this mountain system is that it is the culmination of a vast elevated plateau, Tibet, the average height of which is 15,000 feet above sea level.

The mountainous area to the north of India has to be considered strategically as one, a great quadrilateral, the middle of which is an elevated plateau 15,000 feet above sea level, and the southern ramparts an invulnerable range of an average height of 20,000 feet. The area enclosed is 500,000 square miles, frightening and formidable in its geographical features: an arid waste, windswept and waterless where trees do not grow — snowy steppes inhospitable to man.

In the Himalayas so far surveyed there are:

74	peaks	over	24,000	feet
48	"	"	25,000	"
16	"	"	26,000	"
5	"	"	27,000	"
3	"	"	28,000	"

in all, 146 peaks that are among the highest in the world. "This vast 2000 miles of mountain sprawl," says Macintyre, "would stretch from Calais to the Caspian sea; valley, plateau, and pinnacle, nature in her most savage and most gentle moods: hot hells of steaming jungle lands, cold hells of the high reaches; lovely flower-carpeted valleys, bleak windswept plateaus, deep gorges where glaciers 1000 feet thick have cut the mountainsides, ice ledges overhanging frightful precipices from which they crash with cataclysmic force; incalculable variations of weather and climate." This is the Himalayas.

The English East India Company, interested as it was originally in trade and later in loot, concerned itself but little with the Himalayas. It was only in the time of Warren Hastings when dreams of Empire began to trouble the Company's statesmen that the Himalayas attracted attention. In 1774 Warren Hastings sent Bogle into Tibet, and the first modern attempt to establish trans-Himalayan relations began with this unheralded move. It was, however, the Gurkha War (1814-1816) that brought the British directly into the Himalayas.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the Gurkha Kingdom included practically the whole of the central Himalayas, from Sikkim in the east to Simla in the west. The Hardwar valley and Dehra Dun

(Continued on page 44)

and then decrease it slightly until he feels he is sitting with a straight spine *(Fig. 6c)*. Practicing before a mirror is helpful; or one may ask a friend to check his position.

Sitting with the lumbar spine slightly forward as in *Fig. 6c* not only assures proper posture of the whole spinal column but also proper circulation of the blood in the legs, as explained above.

The Role of the Nervous System

The nervous system plays a major role in the mastery of the Lotus Pose, for it is the medium through which the necessary relaxation of the buttocks muscles is achieved. We have seen that the major obstacle to the successful performance of *Padmasana* is not the elongation of the ligaments of the knees and ankles, but the stretching of the powerful hip muscles that maintain the equilibrium of the trunk on the legs during walking.

Stretching these muscles results in a reflex contraction (Sherrington's stretch reflex). If the tension is checked by means of conscious relaxation,* then the hip muscles "give" and the Lotus Pose may be more easily assumed.

Some practitioners have noted that in spiritual company one can easily get into yogic postures that were difficult to achieve under other circumstances. Presumably the mental vibrations of calmness emanating from spiritual persons have a relaxing effect on the mind and body of the performer, enabling him to attain *Padmasana* with ease.

The role of relaxation in this pose also points to the importance of mastering *Savasana*, the Relaxation Pose, before attempting *Padmasana*.

Summary of Key Points in Mastery of Padmasana

Summing up this detailed exposition on the mastery of the Lotus Pose, let us briefly review the major points:

(1) The best preparatory pose for *Padmasana* is the Stone Pose, in which one or both legs are placed behind the head. This pose stretches the *gluteus* muscles of the hips and thus permits the outward rotation of the thighs that is essential for success in *Padmasana*.

(2) Attempt at, not necessarily mastery of, the Stone Pose is helpful before each practice of the Lotus Pose. So is *Paschimottan-*

*A technique taught to students of Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons. See also *Self-Realization Magazine*, March 1962, p. 19. *(Editor's Note)*

asana, the Posterior-Stretching Pose. Both poses loosen those hip and thigh muscles that are strengthened (and hence tightened) by walking.

(3) *Savasana*, the Relaxation Pose, and an inverted pose, *Viparita Karani* or *Sarvangasana* or *Sirshasana*, are also good adjuncts to one's preparation for the Lotus Pose.

(4) The ligament-stretching methods used for mastering the Lotus Pose should be applied with patience, gentleness, and only after having first warmed up the legs. Sudden force should always be avoided.

(5) Always bend the first leg and draw it toward the torso with the knee straight up, till the knee touches the chest, before placing the foot on the thigh of the opposite leg and lowering the knee to the side.

The Lotus Pose is an asset to — not a condition of — yogic meditation. The essential condition for effective meditation is a straight spine. When one assumes *Padmasana* for meditation, straightness of the spine should always be given first attention — a point often over-

Brother Anandamoy *(standing)*, SRF minister, with students who attended in February a series of six classes in Self-Realization Fellowship teachings, Lafayette Hotel, Long Beach, California

Soul Whispers

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Adored of the Angels, with the first fervor of true lovers may I cherish Thee ever!

✠

In all experiences of Thy children it is Thine omnipresent consciousness that enjoys and suffers. Thou didst bestow riches on Thyself (in the forms of the wealthy) as an intricate human test to see how charitable Thou wouldst be to Thyself (in the forms of the needy).

✠

May I pass from the boundaries of family affection into a larger realm of friendship and service to all. Let me not tarry, fascinated by rewarding feelings of usefulness, in even those noble regions — the farthest reaches of human solicitude. Inspire me to enter the infinitudes of love divine.

✠

Teach me to find my joy not in the world but in Thee. Discovering Thy presence in the joy born of meditation and good actions, I shall feel no need for pleasures born of the misguided senses.

✠

By my sacred perseverance, guide me to discover in the most secret waters of consciousness the Pearl of Great Price.

✠

Divine Majesty, Thou art sitting on the throne of all hearts. Inspire us with spiritual understanding, that we

overcome fear and hate. With faith in Thee, may we be steadfast in the path of righteousness.

✠

We thank Thee that no sin is unforgivable, no evil insuperable; for the world of relativity does not contain absolutes.

✠

O Transubstantial Light! Thou are unseen, imperceptible, whether in warm rays of the sun or in cool moonbeams. The skyey lamps disclose only Dame Nature, not Thee.

✠

Thou has issued the commandments of righteousness to safeguard our happiness. May we shun the path of wrongdoing, which always leads to suffering. Let us see that virtue is infinitely more charming than vice.

✠

O Patient Physician, Thou art always near with the unguent of forgiveness and love. Teach us to heed Thine inward admonitions, that we give to Thee gladsome songs, instead of helpless cries as we writhe in unnecessary pain.

✠

No matter what our activities, let us hear our soul speaking of Thee. O God, O Father! may our hearts ceaselessly repeat Thy wondrous Name.

✠

May I never tremble at the thought of death. Help me to remember that for this body the Summoner shall arrive only once; and that, through his mercy, when my time is come I shall not know of it nor care.

Teach me, O Infinite Spirit! that whether I am awake or asleep, alert or daydreaming, living or dying, Thine all-protecting presence encircles me.

Sri Daya Mata, SRF president, and Mrinalini Mata meditating at Santiniketan in Bolpur, India, 1961. They are seated by a memorial built around a tree under which Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, father of Rabindranath Tagore, often meditated. Here Devendranath first envisioned the founding of a school, which was later established, in 1901, by Rabindranath. It is now the famous Visva-Bharati University.

A lakeside path at SRF Lake Shrine, Pacific Palisades, California

Sri Rajendra Prasad, First President of India

India's first President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, died of pneumonia at the age of seventy-nine in Patna on February 28, 1963. Sri Daya Mata sent the following cable to his successor, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan:

"The members of Yogoda Satsanga Society and Self-Realization Fellowship join me in extending deepest sympathy at the passing of Sri Rajendra Prasad, India's first President. God bless you, his successor, and God bless our beloved India."

The late President was a close friend of Mahatma Gandhi. In 1920 Sri Rajendra gave up his law practice and thereafter devoted himself exclusively to Gandhi's nonviolence movement and the goal of India's independence.

Sri Rajendra was elected President of the Republic of India in 1950, served a second term, and resigned in 1962 because of failing health. During his years as President he traveled to several foreign countries on goodwill missions and to return earlier visits from Heads of State; was official host

A lakeside path at SRF Lake Shrine, Pacific Palisades, California

(Left) Banyan tree at Rai Ghat, Serampore, India, where Mahavatar Babaji appeared miraculously before Sri Yukteswar, guru of Paramahansa Yogananda (*Autobiography of a Yogi*, p. 346).

(Right) Veranda of Yogoda Ashram, Dakshineswar, India, decorated for a visit from Sri Daya Mata, SRF-YSS president, in 1961. On wall is garlanded portrait of founder, Paramahansa Yogananda.

A SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE *BHAGAVAD-GITA*

(India's greatest scripture, a part of the "Mahabharata" epic)

By PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

Chapter XIV, Stanza 20

Having transcended the three modes of Nature — the cause of physical embodiment — a man is released from the sufferings of birth, old age, and death; he attains immortality.

By meditation the yogi goes beyond flesh consciousness and thus beyond *Prakriti*, the Cosmic Principle whose three *gunas* create the body and the world of change and transitoriness. He establishes himself in his true identity: eternal Spirit.

Chapter XIV, Stanza 21

Arjuna said:

O Lord, what signs distinguish the man who has transcended the three modes? What is his behavior? How does he rise beyond the triple qualities?

Arjuna here calls Sri Krishna "Prabhu" (Lord or Master). The devotee, realizing his divine Guru as the repository of all wisdom, seeks further light on the nature of a *jivanmukta*, "one freed while living" in a body.

Chapter XIV, Stanzas 22-23-24-25

The blessed Lord said:

O Pandava (Arjuna), he who does not abhor the presence of the gunas — illumination, activity, and ignorance — nor deplore their absence;

Remaining like one unconcerned, undisturbed by the three modes — realizing that they alone are operating throughout creation; not oscillating in mind but ever Self-centered;

Unaffected by joy and sorrow, praise and blame — secure in his divine nature; regarding with an equal eye a clod of clay, a stone, and gold; the same in his attitude toward pleasant or unpleasant (men and experiences); firm-minded;

Uninfluenced by respect or insult, treating friend and enemy alike, abandoning all delusions of personal doership — he it is who has transcended the triple qualities!

In these four stanzas Lord Krishna points out the characteristics of a "free soul" — one liberated while still in the body. The *jivanmukta* has seen through the stupendous plot of Nature and has disassociated himself from her world of flux and unsubstantial seemingness.

An ordinary mortal is continuously stirred by the triple qualities while witnessing the motion picture of life. But the calm yogi observes the scenes without feeling hate or love; he is not emotionally involved with a mere picture.

Personal experience of the dualities does not affect the detached, desireless yogi, whether he receives pleasure or pain; or encounters agreeable or disagreeable persons and experiences; or is allotted acclaim or censure, honor or disgrace; or meets friend or foe; or gains a piece of land or a stone mansion or a mass of gold — all experiences that may occur in the motion picture of daily life. The yogi beholds all mundane scenes with undisturbed tranquility, knowing them to be only lights and shadows: changing vibrations of the Cosmic Beam and the "technicolored" triple cosmic delusive qualities.

Land and stone and gold seem to him to be similar, made of the same light-shadow fabric. It is not that he fails to understand the value of gold as being different from the value of clay, or that he does not discriminate between pleasant and unpleasant persons. But he no longer has a personal interest in the phenomenal world even though he lives in it; he beholds all creation in its reality: passing shadows of atomic change.

Metal sculpture of legendary phoenix, ancient symbol of resurrection and immortality. Yogananda Museum, Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine, Pacific Palisades, California.

Various editions of *Autobiography of a Yogi* at International Book Exhibition, Milan, Italy, December 1962. Yogananda's book has been translated into twelve languages.

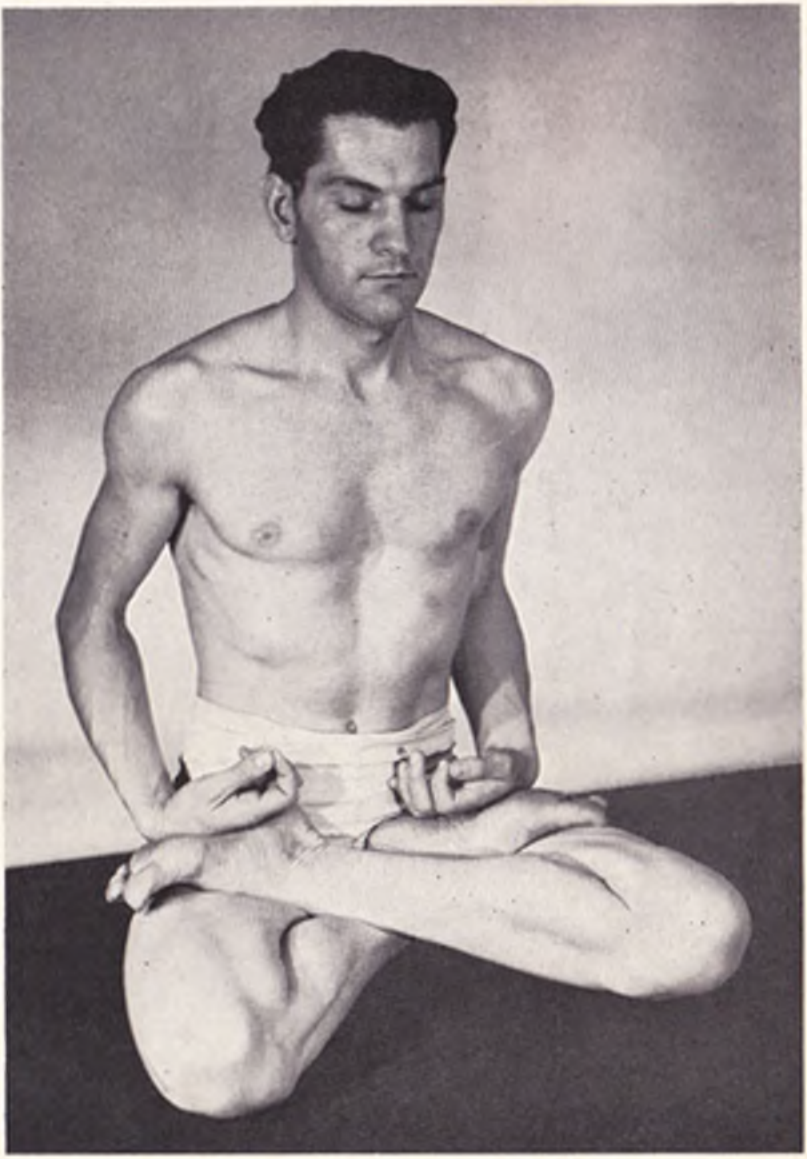

FIGURE 1 – PADMASANA, THE LOTUS POSE

Yoga Postures for Health

By B. TESNIÈRE, M.D.

MASTERING PADMASANA, THE LOTUS POSE

Theory and Technique

(Continued from the previous issue)

Of the several factors relating to mastery of the Lotus Pose, two have thus far been discussed — the type of skeletal frame; and the elongation of the knee and ankle ligaments: a widely used procedure, but one that should be followed with caution, first warming up the legs, and always adhering to the other safety rules outlined.

Additional factors in conditioning the limbs for the Lotus Pose were also mentioned briefly. These factors, which involve certain muscles, blood vessels, and nerves of the lower extremities, will now be examined in detail.

Stretching the Muscles Protects the Ligaments

As a rule the movements of a joint are limited primarily by the tension of the muscles around it. Only when the muscles are stretched to a certain extent is there tension in the ligaments to prevent further movement of the joint. Put another way: the movements of the joints are checked first by the tension of active organs (the muscles), and then by the tension of passive organs (the ligaments).

The unusual direction of pull on the knee joint in assuming the Lotus Pose does not permit this physiological law to operate: the twist of the knee prevents the buffering action of the neighboring muscles, which control only the flexion and extension of the knee. It is left to the ligaments of the joint to limit the twist of the bent knee; consequently there is a possibility of damage to the ligaments.

Since the twist of the knee in *Padmasana* thus eliminates an important safety factor (the muscles controlling the movements of the knee), and since reliance on the elasticity of the ligaments is at best risky, a physiologically sound alternative is to increase the stretching capacity of the hip muscles. If these can be limbered through appropriate exercises, the mobility of the thigh is increased, thus reducing the amount of twist required to put the leg in *Padmasana*.

Which muscles of the hip are stretched in *Padmasana?* and which asanas (aside from *Padmasana* itself) lengthen them?

To answer these questions, three experiments were made: practice of various preparatory postures by a group of volunteers, examination of a human skeleton arranged in Lotus Pose, and palpation of the muscles of a practitioner seated in *Padmasana* and similar poses.

Ten volunteers (five males and five females) ranging from twenty-two to thirty-seven years of age were examined. They were all able to assume *Padmasana,* although their ability to remain in the pose varied greatly. They were asked to assume several other postures that stretch the muscles of the hips and neighboring regions.* The degree of mastery of each pose was carefully noted.

Mastery of Lotus Pose Related to Mastery of Stone Pose

On examination of the results, it was found that the ability to sit in the Lotus Pose for one hour or more could not be related to ability to sit in any of the other poses selected, with one exception: the Stone Pose.

Prastarasana, the Stone Pose, is assumed by placing both feet behind the head *(Fig. 2).* It is also called *Dvipada-Sirshasana,* the Two-Feet-to-the-Head Pose. Its simpler form is *Ekapada-Sirshasana,* the One-Foot-to-the-Head Pose.

Dvipada-Sirshasana was easily accomplished by four of the five persons who could sit in *Padmasana* for one hour. The other five volunteers, who could sit in Lotus Pose from only five to thirty minutes, were unable to perform the Stone Pose. As for the easier *Ekapada-Sirshasana,* all of the first group could assume it, but only one person in the second group could.

This sharp differentiation between the abilities of the two groups to perform the Stone Pose was in great contrast to the mixed results obtained with all the other poses tried. In their ability to perform these other poses, two or three subjects of each group were good performers, and the rest were poor performers. Therefore, although the experiment was carried out with only ten subjects, it seems valid to conclude that mastery of the Lotus Pose is closely related to mastery of the Stone Pose.

---

*These poses were: *Paschimottanasana* (Posterior-Stretching Pose), *Chakrasana* (Circle Pose), *Supta Vajrasana* (Supine Diamond Pose), *Anjaniyasana* (Forward Split), *Vistritapadasana* (Side Split), *Gorakhasana* (Gorakh's Pose), and *Prastarasana* (Stone Pose). This list includes the usual postures considered by various schools of *Hatha Yoga* to be preparatory to the Lotus Pose.

Role of Gluteus Medius Muscle in Mastery of Padmasana

The second step of the analysis was to identify the particular muscles that are stretched in the Stone Pose. The thighbone of a human skeleton was placed in the *Prastarasana* position for examination. It was found that there is considerable distance between the attachments of the *gluteus medius* and *gluteus minimus* muscles to the thighbone and their insertions in the pelvic bone. From this it was inferred that these muscles are greatly extended in the Stone Pose.

The human skeleton was then arranged in *Padmasana.* Examination indicated that the two *gluteus* muscles must be considerably stretched in Lotus Pose also, although to a lesser extent than in the Stone Pose. This inference was tested in the third step of our analysis: direct palpation of the muscles of a person performing *Prastarasana* and *Padmasana.*

The *gluteus medius* and *gluteus minimus* can be felt on each side of the hips, two inches below the bone that lies directly below the waist. Palpation at this point disclosed that these muscles are hard as stone in the Stone Pose, and relatively hard in the Lotus Pose *(Fig. 2).* As stretching increases the hardness of a muscle, this experiment confirmed the preceding inference that the Stone Pose stretches the *gluteus medius* and *gluteus minimus* even more than the Lotus Pose.

(Courtesy Presse Médicale)

Since complete mastery of the Lotus Pose apparently enables one to perform the Stone Pose (first experiment), and since the Stone Pose stretches these muscles more

FIGURE 2 – THE STONE POSE

Attempts at (not necessarily success in) the Stone Pose for a few minutes before practice of the Lotus Pose render the latter easier to perform. Explanation in text.

In addition, preparatory stretching of the hip muscles in the Stone Pose enables one to sit in Lotus Pose for a much longer time than would otherwise be possible without pain in the knee and ankle joints.

than does the Lotus Pose (experiments two and three), it logically ensues that mastery of the difficult Stone Pose should assure mastery of the easier Lotus Pose.

Even though the Stone Pose is more difficult than the Lotus Pose, an attempt to accomplish it is worthwhile because it gives the hip muscles the elongation needed for success in the Lotus Pose *without any strain and consequent risk of damage to the knee joint* (described in detail in previous installment).

Further, since the Stone Pose gives *more than enough* elongation of the *gluteus* muscles to assure success in the Lotus Pose, one who has mastered it should be able to sit in *Padmasana* for an hour at a time without feeling any pain in the knees.

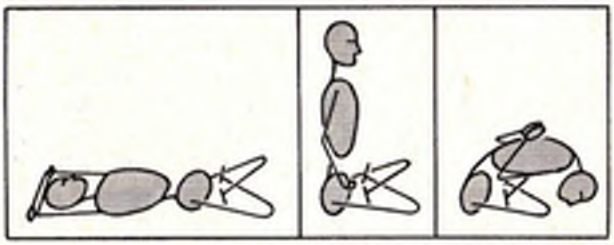

FIGURE 3 – LOTUS POSE and TWO VARIATIONS

(a) *Matsyasana* (Fish Pose), represented here as described in the *Gheranda Samhita*, is easiest of the three poses shown; the *gluteus medius* and *gluteus minimus* muscles of the hip are soft at palpation.

(b) *Padmasana* (Lotus Pose), more difficult than *Matsyasana*. The hip muscles are relatively hard in this pose.

(c) *Yogasana* (Yoga Pose), which closely approximates the Stone Pose. The hip muscles are very hard, being stretched to a greater degree than in *Matsyasana* or *Padmasana*.

Another encouraging fact emerged from an experiment in which five volunteers were asked to sit in Lotus Pose after having attempted (not necessarily succeeded in) the Stone Pose for a few minutes. This group essayed first the half pose, then the full pose. After this preparatory exercise they were able to sit in *Padmasana* much longer than usual without feeling any pain in the knees and ankles.

From these various experiments one conclusion definitely emerged: the best asana to practice to hasten mastery of *Padmasana*, the Lotus Pose, is *Prastarasana*, the Stone Pose.

Advantage of Stretching Hip Muscles

The *gluteus medius* and *gluteus minimus* are abductor muscles of the buttocks. We employ them whenever we "abduct" the leg, *i.e.*, extend it sideways from the body *(Fig. 4a)*. During walking we use these muscles in the "supporting phase," that part of the stride in which the bodily weight is carried briefly on one leg. The contraction of these muscles during this phase prevents the pelvis from tilting toward the nonbearing leg; their role is to keep the pelvis horizontal *(Fig. 4b)* and to maintain a straight and balanced gait.

When these muscles are weak, or paralyzed on one side, the trunk leans toward the opposite side during walking, resulting in a limping gait called the "abductor" gait *(Fig. 4c)*.

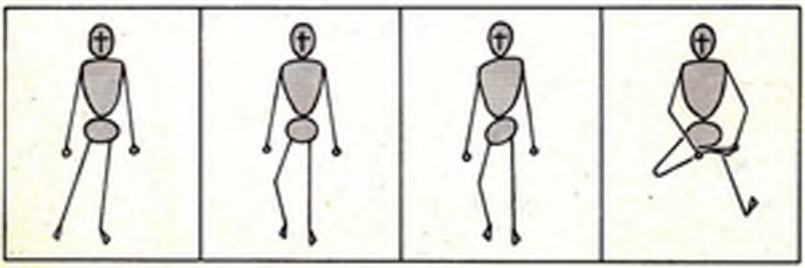

FIG. 4 – ABDUCTOR MUSCLES OF HIP HAVE VARIOUS FUNCTIONS

When normal support of the pelvis is removed on one side, as in standing with the right leg extended (a) or in walking, during the interval when the right foot is off the ground (b), contraction of the *gluteus medius* and *gluteus minimus* muscles in the *left* hip holds the pelvis horizontal. The same two muscles in the *right* hip are responsible for drawing the right leg out sideways (a) but are not involved in the frontal lift of the right leg in walking (b).

If these two muscles are weak in one hip — the left hip, for example — the pelvis sags on the right side whenever the right foot is off the ground (c), thus causing a limping gait.

In *Padmasana*, when the right foot is placed on the opposite thigh (d), the *gluteus* muscles of the right hip are elongated (instead of contracted) by the inward rotation of the right thigh.

When the leg is abducted *(Fig. 4a)*, and is at the same time flexed at the knee *(Fig. 4d)*, as in the Lotus Pose, the abductor muscles have another function — one that is not, to our knowledge, mentioned in works on anatomy: the *gluteus* muscles prevent, by their tension, the outward rotation of the thigh — the very movement necessary to enable one to pull the foot comfortably onto the opposite thigh in *Padmasana*.

Since the tension of these muscles hinders the outward twist of the leg, there is a great pull on the ligaments of the knees and ankles when beginners at the Lotus Pose place the foot on the opposite thigh. Conversely, as shown by our experiments, the looser these *gluteus* muscles are, the less strain there is on the ligaments of the knees and ankles and the easier it is to assume the Lotus Pose.

In the previous installment it was mentioned that the wider the shaft-neck angle of the femur (thighbone), the easier it is to sit in Lotus Pose. A close relationship exists between the abductor muscles

(Continued on page 46)

Sri Daya Mata *(right, chanting)* with meditating YSS devotees on outing in 1961 at Gautamdhara Falls near Ranchi, India

Because Thou Camest

BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

Because Thou camest to me, O Lord, many doors miraculously open before me. At Thy footfall, everything shines with life. Spirit-resurrected by Thy touch, dumb matter speaks. A marble floor on which I stood one day thrilled me because of Thy presence within it.

I have discovered Thy silent sanctuary, O Divine Indweller! long hidden behind a rocky fortress of seeming inaccessibility.

Incense breezes bear to me Thy perfume of bliss. On an altar stone of sacredness plays Thy fountain of joy. With palm cups uplifted in craving, I catch and drink Thy solacing waters; and realize I need thirst no more.

O Thou Blue Sky

Facsimile *(reduced)* of a page in enlarged edition of Paramahansa Yogananda's *Cosmic Chants*, just off the press

Chaitanya and Nityananda, medieval Indian saints, singing the glories of God

(Above) Sri Daya Mata, SRF-YSS president, and Mrinalini Mata on elephant during a ride on Oct. 31, 1961, through Puri, India — a customary ritual in Puri to honor the arrival of the spiritual head of a religious society.

(Below) Elephant kneels for Daya Mata and Mrinalini Mata to dismount at Yogoda Ashram. Students of the Ashram school, carrying flags and playing flutes and drums, had led the hour-long procession through the streets of the ancient holy city.

News of SRF-YSS Centers

Swami Atmananda (1895 - 1963)

After a long illness Swami Atmananda Giri, former secretary of Yogoda Satsanga Society, died at his home in Calcutta, India, on February 17, 1963.

"Never the Spirit was born; the Spirit shall cease
to be never;
Never was time it was not; end and beginning
are dreams.
Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth
the Spirit forever;
Death hath not touched it at all, dead though
the house of it seems!"

— *Bhagavad-Gita* (tr. by Edwin Arnold)

SRF Classes in South America and Puerto Rico

Yogacharya J. M. Cuaron of the Mexico City SRF Center and Brahmachari Melvin of SRF Headquarters in Los Angeles are visiting several South American countries and Puerto Rico during April and May to conduct classes in Self-Realization teachings and to give *Kriya Yoga* initiation to eligible SRF students. Their itinerary includes: Bogota and Cali, Colombia; Lima, Peru; Santiago, Chile; Cordoba and Buenos Aires, Argentina; Montevideo, Uruguay; Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Caracas, Venezuela; and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Well-Attended Asana Classes in Detroit, Michigan

Yogacharya J. Oliver Black, leader of the SRF Center in Detroit, met Paramahansa Yogananda twenty-five years ago. Since that time Mr. Black has done much to advance the SRF cause. He conducts SRF religious services each Sunday at 11 a.m. in the Detroit Institute of Arts building. Lectures and classes in SRF teachings are given there each Thursday night.

The following extracts are from a long, illustrated article about SRF activities that appeared on January 27, 1963, in *The Detroit News*, Detroit, Michigan:

The first public *Hatha Yoga* (physical-health postures) class in this area began three years ago, with thirty students. This month nineteen *Hatha Yoga* classes opened in Detroit and suburbs for the winter term. More than 200 enrolled. And to date there are more than 600 Detroiters and suburbanites who practice yoga.... After an initial class, students practice at home and follow one or more of the several paths of yoga, including *Hatha*, "perfecting the body and conditioning the mind," *Laya*, "absorbing the mind in the thought of God," *Karma*, "performing service to others," *Bhakti*, "bestowing love and devotion," and *Jnana*, "obtaining knowledge through concentrated study."

"Most students turn to yoga for health and relaxation," said Mrs. Helen Swan [supervisor of SRF *Hatha Yoga* teachers in Detroit]. "This is the first attraction. Some, however, advance deeper, perfecting themselves as yogis and seeking a spiritual unity with the Infinite Consciousness.... Yoga is a path away from illness and frustration. It is beautiful and good, and leads to health and peace of mind. We hope that someday everybody will be practicing yoga."

"Yoga is a science and not a religion," Mr. Black said. "The student's sense of physical well-being is re-established. By continued practice of yoga poses, the student begins to create a sense of inner peace and content."

SRF India Center Celebrates Twelfth Anniversary

Sri Daya Mata, president of Self-Realization Fellowship, presided at a banquet attended by 150 SRF Lay Disciples on April 8th at SRF India Center, Hollywood, California. They were celebrating the twelfth anniversary of the founding of the center by Paramahansa Yogananda. After a short talk by Sri Daya Mata, the meeting closed with meditation and prayer.

VISITOR AT SRF HEADQUARTERS

Mr. Kunnabiran M. Pillay, Hindu newspaper publisher from Durban, South Africa, visited SRF headquarters on February 11th. He is president of the Natal Indian Blind Society and chairman of the Arthur Blaxall School for the Blind. He came to the United States to study institutions that aid the physically handicapped.

Letters From SRF Students

"The SRF Lessons have saved me from a mental breakdown. When I started I was very ill, with stomach troubles and arthritis. The exercises corrected my physical condition. Meditation has changed my mental attitude almost completely. For the short time I have practiced your instructions I have accomplished wonders. One of my friends has registered for the Lessons, and there are more who want to take them. The only 'propaganda' has been the change my friends have observed in me." — *G.G., Montreal, Canada.*

"We in the New York area have just had the privilege of attending the inspiring classes and meditations of Brother Anandamoy. I had not thought that I could be helped so much in just a few days. A highlight for me was the opportunity to see the movie of the dedication of the Lake Shrine. I had long wanted to see a movie of Paramahansa Yogananda, and this was an answered prayer. After viewing the film I could better understand what is meant in the Bible when it is said that Jesus spoke as one who had 'authority.' " — *J.M., Westfield, New Jersey.*

"Upon my arrival home, the feeling of depression of a year ago started to creep into my consciousness. I immediately prepared to do the exercises and *Kriya*. The travel altar that I had ordered had arrived in my absence, and I placed it in front of me. Even the period of meditation following *Kriya* was clouded by my sadness. I finally opened my eyes and looked at the altar; immediately a feeling of release flooded me. It seemed that each tiny picture was standing out in its own halo of love. I *pronamed* to each of our Gurus, and at that moment I could hear clearly Brother Anandamoy singing the 'rose' song. I realized it would be just about that point in the initiation ceremony being held that evening in New York. I felt transported. And that was the end of my depression." — *B.B., Washington, D.C.*

"My life has been greatly influenced by Master's instruction from the time I first read his life story nine years ago. I have always been a very nervous person, tormented by what the early Fathers of the Church would doubtless have considered demons. I have learned in the last nine years to wage the 'unseen war' with some hope of victory. The SRF Lessons have aided me, of course, but most of all I have been helped by the inspiration of Paramahansa Yogananda's

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Prayers for Divine Healing

Renunciants of the monastic Self-Realization Order send healing vibrations by prayer each day to SRF students and all others who request help in healing and liberating themselves from the threefold suffering of man: physical disease, mental inharmonies, and spiritual insecurity.

Any person who wishes to be included in the daily healing prayers may write, telephone, or telegraph SRF headquarters, Los Angeles.

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life and personality, shining like a star in the dark night of my soul." —*E.R., Chicago, Illinois.*

"I have attended services at SRF Lake Shrine and have been most impressed with the sincerity and calmness with which the message is presented. I find that any time I think about the services and prayers I have heard at the Shrine, an inner peace pervades me." —*S.T., Los Angeles, California.*

"When I started following the teachings of SRF Lessons I felt they were immeasurably helpful and I looked forward to each new one as to a new adventure. Since I started with *Kriya Yoga,* words can't express the satisfaction I feel from the practice of this sacred technique. It's as if, after being held by a cord, you are suddenly thrown a rope; all the confidence that goes with the possession of the rope is yours. I feel a closeness with our beloved Guruji and the line of Masters and with God that I never knew before. Many, many times I thank God that He sent this teaching to us. Humble and grateful, I can never sufficiently thank the Lord and our loving Master, who gave us all these Lessons. As soap washes away the dirt, the Lessons bathe away the grime of ignorance and let each of us shine forth as God wishes us to be, His loving children." —*S.P., Bronx, N.Y.*

"As the inner peace becomes deeper and deeper, I am increasingly successful in drawing the senses within and in feeling the presence of God. In outer life I have experienced a wonderful help. I had suffered for twenty years from unpleasant living conditions. With all strength I prayed, but no help came. When I absorbed myself in the SRF Lessons of Paramahansa Yogananda I understood that the spiritual resolution in Lesson 2 may also find application in emergencies of daily life:

" 'Heavenly Father, hear my prayer: I do not care for permanent possessions, but give me strength to obtain by will what I need daily. O Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved God, I will reason, I will will and act. Guide Thou my reason, will, and activity, that I may do the right thing.'

"So I started, trusting in God's help, to act confidently. I knew that if I had another apartment, it would be possible for me to study the Lessons in peace and quiet. The wonderful rose petals I had received from SRF Mother Center I took with me as a talisman on the difficult and seemingly useless search; and behold, in the simplest

way, the affair that had been knotted for years was untangled. We were able to move into a small apartment, completely isolated in a nice house, with gardens such as one sees at a summer residence. I am able now, in quiet and joy, to review one SRF Lesson after another, and to proceed more intensively with the exercises." — *H.E., Goggingen b./Augsburg, Germany.*

"I had suffered much from a state of restlessness, but now I feel much calmer, especially after reading and rereading Lessons No. 12 and No. 15, practicing the Recharging Exercises, and of course meditating. In fact, I cannot say which one of the Lessons is more interesting or helpful; all are so full of wisdom." — *N.B., Columbus, Ohio.*

"There is nothing like meditation and *no* substitute for it. Meditation is a cure for every problem (mental, physical, or spiritual). If you are a worrier, it helps you to overcome worry; if you don't feel well, meditation remedies that; and if you are lonely and want the companionship of God, really want to feel His presence, meditation supplies that. Meditation gives relaxation and peace and refreshes your soul. It's as if one goes up on a mountain and finds coolness and refreshment from the cares of a hot, busy day. Meditation not only refreshes one to do his work afterward but also gives poise and assurance in all undertakings. After an hour of meditation on the Lord, material things do not seem important. One no longer has the desire for things of this world that he had before." — *T.L., San Jose, Calif.*

"I have great love for the blessed Master, Paramahansa Yogananda. I have felt his presence strongly during meditation. He also came to me in a dream and spoke to me. At last I have found my true guru. I have always felt a great love for India and its teachings. For twenty-nine years I have been searching; I feel at last I have come home." — *M.C., El Monte, California.*

"Always some desire of mine is fulfilled in the magazine. Having visited two summers at the SRF Retreat in Encinitas, the tranquillity of that lovely spot has deeply impressed me. The September-October 1962 issue is generously filled with pictures of that beloved place. The picture of Master inside the front cover made tears of joy come to my eyes. For a year I had been wanting a copy of that photograph, which I had seen in the Encinitas SRF Hermitage drawing room. Today the magazine came, and there is the picture." — *H.T., Salem, Oregon.*

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I read it, ever so many of the little golden threads in my small storehouse of understanding began to weave themselves into place. Paramahansa Yogananda's explanation of the polarity or duality of phenomenal existence helped me. In all my search I never before found so much inspiration and hope as I did on reading *Autobiography of a Yogi*. I felt so at home, no strangeness anywhere, on reading it. Paramahansa Yogananda has indeed enlightened our Western world." — *H.M., Medicine Hat, Canada.*

"I read and reread the *Autobiography*. The words of Yogananda strengthen in me the hope to realize God in this lifetime." — *M.B., Florence, Italy.*

"Never before have my wife and I experienced such a spiritual greatness as we felt in the words written by Yogananda in *Autobiography of a Yogi*." — *G.H., Seattle, Washington.*

"It came as somewhat of a surprise to me that Yogananda and others like him could develop such high spiritual stature. I had thought such a goal unattainable. He gives one hope to do likewise." — *R.S., San Anselmo, California.*

"*Autobiography of a Yogi* opened my eyes to God in a way that I can understand and believe." — *C.P., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*

"An inspiration that words cannot describe." — *K.W., Hammond, Indiana.*

"It was my good fortune, when walking down the street in Munich one day not long ago, to turn my steps into a bookstore where I found on display the *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda. I bought the book. I read it slowly to prolong the time, because it was as if I were talking to him and he to me." — *R.Z., Rosenheim, West Germany.*

"This amazing book is difficult to put down!" — *H.O., Chicago, Illinois.*

"I was deeply impressed as I read the *Autobiography*. A certain freedom or tranquillity that I had sought for years is now nearer." — *M.K., Munich, Germany.*

"I have read *Autobiography of a Yogi* a number of times. It is the most marvelous book in the world." — *R.S., St. Louis, Missouri.*

(Continued from page 8)

and the area up to Simla formed part of this great Hindu State. By the treaty that ended the war, the territories of the British in India included for the first time the Himalayan valleys of Garhwal and Kumaon. The rulers of the Himalayan States up to Kangra were brought under the paramountcy of the Crown. The Nepalese also evacuated Sikkim, which became a British protectorate.

A period of notable activity in Himalayan exploration began with the acquisition of Simla and its gradual transformation into a summer resort of the Government of India.

The Sutlej gorges were first explored, and in 1818 Alexander Gerard crossed into Tibet along the route that was later developed into the "great Hindustan-Tibet road." The cutting of this road, which is undoubtedly a great engineering feat, might be described as the first attempt to connect India with the trans-Himalayan plateau. The "great Hindustan-Tibet road" belying its name is but a bridle path, but it passes through some of the most difficult terrain ever trodden by man. It has four natural divisions. The first is from Simla to Narkanda. In the second stage it descends into the Sutlej valley past Rampur and again rises at Gaura. Then in the third stage it continues along the mountainsides, through forests of deodar, crosses the Sutlej at Wangtu bridge, and ascends to Oorni. At the last stage from Oorni to Pangay, a distance of twenty-five miles, the road runs on a height of about 9000 feet. Today a fair road connects Western Tibet with the Simla region.

Beauties of Leo Pargial Peak

The junction of the Sutlej and Spiti rivers takes place between unapproachable mural precipices. The boundary between India and Tibet at this point runs over the Leo Pargial peak, which is truly one of the wonders of the Himalayas.

The following is a description that a traveler has left us. "Even more memorable than the Kailas, this inaccessible mountain suggested an inaccessible dwelling place of the gods: a fortress shaped by hands, but not human hands; and if the scene was impressive by day it was absolutely overpowering at night, when the moon, itself unseen, was slowly rising behind the dark precipice on which we midway stood.

"The moon's white light illuminated the deep gorges of the Spiti River and threw a silvery splendor on the marblelike towers and bat-

tlements of Leo Pargial. It did not at all appear as if any external light were falling, but rather as if this great castle of the gods, transparent as alabaster, were lighted from within and shone in its own radiance, throwing a supernatural light around." — *From "Bhavan's Journal," Bombay, India.*

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(Continued from page 28)

and the shaft-neck angle of the femur. When a child learns to walk, the abductor muscles are put into action; they pull on the upper end of the femoral shaft (trochanter), which tends to close the shaft-neck angle. From the time a child is one year old to the end of his second year, that angle decreases almost ten degrees (146 to 138) — its greatest reduction throughout the growing period of life (Shands and Steele).

Conversely, individuals who have had paralysis of the abductor muscles early in life have a wide shaft-neck angle in their thighbones. This is a constant finding (Inman, 1947).

The beginner at the Lotus Pose can choose from several possibilities, with regard to loosening the *gluteus* muscles for easier practice of the Lotus Pose.

One way is to abstain from much walking, as is sometimes advised in *Hatha Yoga* books, a caution which, in our opinion, is extreme. Walking does strengthen (and hence tighten) the muscles in the hips and thighs, thus making it more difficult to assume not only *Padmasana* but *Paschimottanasana*, one of the best preparatory poses for *Padmasana*. However, suppleness of the hip and thigh muscles is quickly restored by practice of both these poses, together with the Stone Pose.

FIG. 5. Bodhisattva *(Avalokitesvara)* *(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)*

Another possibility for loosening the hip muscles is to practice standing with the weight on one leg, which tends to decrease the tone of the abductor muscles. By way of compensating for the shift of

weight, the hip of the relaxed leg automatically sinks into a lower position. This easy stance is commonly seen, and has been frequently depicted in Hindu art *(Fig. 5)*. Because of its stretching effect on the abductor muscles, this stance is a good preparatory pose for *Padmasana*. However, it is not recommended as a habitual posture, as it may cause temporary lateral deviation of the spine and eventually permanent lateral curvature of the spine (Bowen, 1949).

A third possibility is to strive at assuming the Stone Pose (both the half and the full pose), a method of preparation that appears to be safest.

Another plausible reason for the advice of *Hatha Yogis* against much walking before *Padmasana* practice is that a great deal of walking and standing on the legs increases the volume of blood in the lower extremities, and hence their thickness. As a result one must twist the ankle, knee, and hip joints more than is usually necessary to get the feet in the lotus lock. Swelling of the legs due to accumulation of blood after long standing or walking can be speedily eliminated by practicing an inverted pose (Dorsalstand, Shoulderstand, or Headstand) before attempting the Lotus Pose.

Persons who have large muscular thighs and calves (such as weight-lifters, cyclists, and athletes in general) find it difficult to assume the Lotus Pose. To minimize this drawback, such persons can push the calf inward before folding the leg for *Padmasana*.

Blood Circulation: Overcoming Numbness of the Legs

An important factor in the mastery of the Lotus Pose is the maintenance of blood circulation in the legs. When the pose is assumed by beginners, the legs go to sleep after a certain length of time, which varies with the perfomer. The foot of the leg that is crossed first always produces a greater pressure on the opposite thigh than does the foot of the other leg. The numbness experienced apparently results from compression of the femoral artery, major blood vessel in the leg.

In order to restore circulation in the extremities, one may temporarily unlock the legs and, when numbness leaves, resume the pose. In this way one can prolong the time of sitting in *Padmasana*.

Another method consists in lifting the first foot and placing it farther out from the trunk, on top of the thigh muscles; because it is when the foot is placed close to the body, near the groin, that it presses on the femoral artery.

In addition to the femoral artery, which lies in the front part of the thigh, there is in the back of the thigh a series of smaller arteries that also bring blood to the leg. No doubt these posterior vessels are also compressed when one experiences numb legs in the Lotus Pose.

Three of our volunteers who could sit in Lotus Pose for an hour found that instead of changing the position of the legs — a disturbance to meditation — one may simply tilt the pelvis forward slightly. This relieves the compression of the posterior arteries and restores circulation in the legs in a matter of seconds.

Importance of the Proper Pelvic Inclination

The proper position of the pelvis is essential to successful performance of *Padmasana*. Beginners usually have the pelvis tilted backward because such a position is easier to retain (it produces less tension in the *gluteus* muscles of the hips). Since the pelvic bones encircle the sacrum, the base of the spinal column, a backward tilted pelvis automatically gives the base of the spine a backward tilt. To compensate, one moves the back and neck forward, which results in a slumped, caved-in posture *(Fig. 6a)*. This position is detrimental to success in meditation, which requires an erect spine.

To correct the backward tilting of the pelvis in the Lotus Pose *(Fig. 6a)*, the practitioner should exaggerate the forward tilt *(Fig. 6b)*,

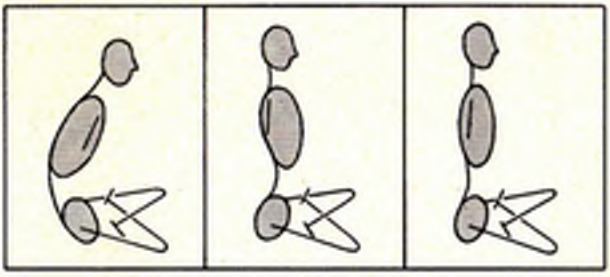

FIGURE 6 – RIGHT AND WRONG POSTURE

Sitting with slumped spine (a) is detrimental to physical health and to success in meditation; sitting "straight" but with an exaggerated lumbar curve (b) requires too much muscular tension to be conducive to meditation; sitting with pelvis tilted slightly forward and lumbar spine slightly caved in (c) is healthful and ideal for meditation.

looked by beginners. If one is unable to hold the spine erect in a cross-legged position, it is better, for meditation purposes, to sit on a chair in the Western way. However, a man who cultivates the habit of holding his spine straight whenever he is sitting on a chair will tend to maintain erect posture in a cross-legged position on the floor. The stability of the Lotus Pose makes it well worth the effort and practice necessary to sit with straight spine in this ancient yogic meditation posture.

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YOGA POSTURES

The asanas mentioned in this article have been described and illustrated in *Self-Realization Magazine*, as follows:

Chakrasana, the Circle Pose, November 1960 and January 1961.

Paschimottanasana, the Posterior-Stretching Pose, January 1956. See also *Padahastasana*, the Jackknife Pose, March and May 1962.

Sarvangasana, the Shoulderstand, July and September 1961.

Savasana, the Relaxation Pose, November 1962.

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