

Aging and Yoga

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1. Introduction

This text is an excerpt of an article I have presented as part of my yoga teacher training at the Vivekananda ashram near Bangalore in the year 2000. The breathing and relaxation exercises offered in chapter 5 on pages 8-11 have not been part of that paper.

Human beings get born, grow up, are getting older and finally will pass away. After body and mind have developed to their greatest capability, usually in good health, a slow decay starts off. The body's defence mechanisms against various diseases will weaken and eventually it will die.

The process of aging affects man's physical, intellectual, mental and spiritual capacities. This article deals with some possible changes on the bodily and mental level and how yoga can help to live a healthier and content life. The focus will be on the bodily level while the articles regarding meditation (see chapter *About the Author* on page 12) provide helpful means on the mental level.

2. Changes of body and mind with age

2.1 Bodily changes and problems

Due to changes and a slowing down of the metabolism occurring with old age, muscle cells are no longer renewed as quickly as before and will increasingly transform to fat cells. The elasticity of the fibres and the tonus of the muscles are reduced. Decades of malnutrition and the use of intoxicants like tobacco and alcohol may have left deposits of plaque in blood vessels (arteriosclerosis, coronary heart disease), reducing the blood circulation, increasing the blood pressure. Sediments of various kinds affect the joints and will result in discomfort, pain and reduced flexibility; accidents and injuries may increase. In many cases the immune system is weakened, resulting in an increased delicacy against pathogenic agents.

The following diseases occur frequently with age:

- Hypertension, heart insufficiency, heart attack, stroke;
- Arthritis, arthrosis, rheumatism;
- Stiffness, weakness of joints and limbs;
- Back problems;
- Reduced performance of inner organs, constipation;
- Diabetes mellitus;
- Respiratory problems;
- Eye- and ear problems and other.

2.2 Mental, intellectual and emotional problems

Due to various reasons like degeneration of nerve cells, a lack of blood supply to the brain, changes of transmitter substances responsible to transport information between nerve cells in the brain, alterations in the hormonal system, dehydration and others, problems like

- A lack of concentration;
- Insufficient memory;
- Parkinson disease;
- Depression, neurosis and others may occur.

Additionally elderly people may get lonely and may face difficulties in finding something interesting and challenging to do after their retirement. They are said to be of little or no use for society anymore and therefore they lack respect in (western) society. This again may lead to worries, anxieties, isolation, depression, aggression etc. which in turn may result in developing bodily and mentally tension and disorders. A lack of self-confidence and unhappiness is not uncommon.

3. How yoga can help

Yoga has positive effects on the bodily and mental health of people. Though the focus is more on prevention than on curing, yoga therapy is successfully applied on chronic and stress related ailments like disturbance of blood supply, digestive and sleep related disorders, respiratory and back problems.¹

3.1 The preventive aspect of yoga in the course of aging

In recent years man in the industrialized countries are developing a more holistic approach in living life. Many have realized that human life is a complex interaction between body, mind, social and natural environment and sickness or health have to be viewed and dealt with considering all of these aspects. In dealing with sickness one has to take the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual facet of the patient into account, his past, his origins and culture, his environment. Offering chemical drugs, which in many cases will cure the symptoms but not the underlying root cause, will only bring temporary relief.

Practising the yogic system purifies the body, improves health, strengthens the mind, intensifies spiritual growth, balances emotions and thus leads to a fulfilled and healthy life. There are a large number of yoga methods catering to the needs of different types of people. Swami Vivekananda² classifies these methods as follows:

1. **“Karma yoga** or the path of work involves doing action with an attitude of detachment to the fruits of action. This makes man relieve himself from strong attachments and thereby brings a steadiness of mind which verily is yoga.
2. **Bhakti yoga**. The control of emotions is done by the path of worship. In the modern world, man is tossed up and down due to various emotional onslaughts. The path of bhakti is a boon to gain control over the emotional instability by properly harnessing the energy involved in it.
3. **Jnana yoga**. The age of science has made a man a rational being. Intellectual sharpness is imminent. Analysis is the tool. The path of philosophy is apt for keen intellectual and is centred on the analysis of ‘happiness’, the vital contribution of the Upanishads. Also, many other fundamental questions regarding the mind, the world outside and inside, and reality are taken up. Basic questions are risen even involving the intellect itself to reach the very basis of the intellect.
4. **Raja yoga**. Culturing of the mind is the key to success in almost all our endeavours. The yoga of mind culture or psychic control gives a practical and easy approach to reach higher states of consciousness.”

Yogic practices as given by Pantanjali and known as the “Eight limbs of yoga” or as Astanga yoga belongs to the group of Raja yoga. They consist of disciplines like

¹ Details on yoga therapy can be found for example at Literature / 1 /

² Modified according to Literature / 2 /, pages 69/70

- Asanas (bodily postures);
- Pranayama (the control of the life force through breathing exercises);
- Pratyahara (the restraint of the senses from their objects of enjoyment);
- Dharana (focusing the mind);
- Dhyana (meditation).

When talking about yoga in the West, people usually think of the bodily postures, the asanas, also known as Hatha yoga.

Hatha yoga offers a wide range of postures with different degree of difficulties. There is something suitable for everyone at every age. Depending on one's health and fitness one can start with very easy preparatory exercises and progress little by little. If practised in the right way, positive effects will occur almost immediately at any level of practice.

With continued practice the body will become more flexible and healthy. The training of the body, the breathing exercises and the practice of meditation will have very positive effects on the mind as well. It will become more quiet and calm by turning inward, the willpower will increase, unrest and anxieties will lessen, concentration will develop and become powerful, spiritual growth will take place leading to more and genuine happiness in due course. This happiness is achieved by turning the mind away from chasing external sense pleasures and looking inside instead.

All of the above mentioned effects may lead to a different view of life. People practising yoga may switch to a vegetarian diet, avoid intoxicants, being aware and taking care of themselves, the persons and the environment around them. Their change in attitude and behaviour will give a positive example for others and may inspire them to start practising as well. They may use their increased energy to serve others and the society, thus avoiding loneliness.

The practice of yoga cannot avoid death, but living life in a healthy body with a sound, free and content mind can be extended; death no longer is something one has to be afraid of. A trained body is less prone to injuries, and even if weakness, sickness, and pain of the body cannot always be avoided, the spiritual development will help to deal with them more wisely, with less suffering for the mind.

These are some of the methods and resulting benefits yoga practices may have on the aging process of mankind.

3.2 The healing aspect of yoga in the course of aging

If ailments and deficits on the bodily and/or mental level have already arisen, one should try to cure, at least to lessen them. Yoga therapy has proven particularly successful in treating chronic health problems like asthma, chronic bronchitis, high or low blood pressure, chronic diarrhoea or constipation, weakness of the immune system, etc.

The key principles of the integrated approach in yoga therapy are:

- Deep relaxation;
- Increasing the stamina and forbearance;
- Awaken and strengthen internal awareness.

By adopting the integrated approach, the affected organs and the whole body will be normalized, strengthened and revitalized. The application of suitable bodily exercises, breathing and cleansing tech-

niques, as well as emotional control through devotional sessions and meditation are the tools to put these key principles into practice.

Obviously different ailments require different treatments; different patients have to be treated in an individual way; many elderly persons suffer of multiple health problems. Every single case has to be treated according to his or her deficits in close cooperation with the doctors and therapists involved.

On the other hand it has proven that certain basic treatments will usually have positive effects on a range of different ailments.

The treatment of hypertension and less severe heart problems, both of which are very common amongst elderly people, may serve as an example of how yoga therapy may be adopted.

As this group of people must not perform vigorous exercises (asanas), one will start bodily exercises with:

1. Little movements to exercise the fingers, wrists and shoulders, followed by some walking (on the spot).
2. Next one would do some breathing exercises like the ones offered in the chapter *Breathing exercises* on pages 8 – 10, for example:
 - Welcome (hands in and out breathing);
 - Hands-stretch breathing;
 - Ankle / Body stretch breathing;
 - Tiger breathing;
 - Straight leg raising etc.;
3. Followed by applying a relaxation technique (see page 11).

These breathing exercises will both increase the strength and flexibility of the body and calm the mind, which is of vital importance for hypertension patients.

Other yoga asanas may be performed, but the choice of the asana is very much depending on the severity of the blood pressure or heart problem. A collection of easy to learn and to do exercises with different degrees of difficulty can be found in my book³.

Yoga asanas will vitalize the whole body, keeping or making it flexible and promote the blood circulation. Together with the deep relaxation it relaxes body and mind, nerves and muscles. Tiredness and fatigue will be released.

Cleansing exercises (kriyas) to clean the nose (Jale neti), the stomach (Vamana dhouti), the eyes (Trataka), the respiratory system as well as a stimulation of the brain cells by Kapalabhati (short, strong and forceful abdominal breathing) should be applied regularly.

Pranayama exercises (a certain kind of breathing exercises) will result in feeling a lightness of the body, the mind will calm down and be prepared for meditational practices which will add to the integrated methods of treatment, finally leading to happiness and spiritual growth as well as to a reduction or even cure of the root of the health problem instead of just dealing with the symptoms. Pranayama should be practised only under supervision of an experienced teacher.

Details on cleansing and pranayama exercises can be found for example in / 3 /.

The culturing of emotions should go hand in hand with the described treatments. A more harmonizing value system based on love, cooperation and bliss can be achieved through the path of Bhakti yoga or Loving Kindness meditation. This kind of meditation, maybe accompanied by chanting or reciting religious texts, are excellent tools to elevate the mind.

³ Enjoy Hatha-Yoga (see chapter *About the author* on page 12)

Rehabilitation

Another important aspect in the appliance of yoga therapy is the field of rehabilitation, eg, the rehabilitation of stroke patients or after accidents. In these cases an often long and intensive treatment is necessary. These patients very often will suffer of a lack of confidence in the possibilities to lessen their deficits or restoring their health. They get discouraged, sometimes depressive. An integrated approach which takes care of the bodily as well as of their mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs is most essential.

Diet

An important factor for man's health is his diet. Many bodily and mental disorders are due to malnutrition and the use of intoxicants. Dedicated yogis will stick to sattvic food only (freshly cooked vegetarian food, if possible organic, fresh organic vegetables, fruits, legumes, dairy, whole grain products, seeds and nuts, mild spices, no black or red pepper, no garlic, no leftovers), but people living in the world may fare already better than before when adopting a diet with little animal fat and meat, little salt, much fresh vegetables, fruits and grains to ensure a well-balanced supply of vitamins and minerals.

Very important is not only what one eats but how one eats. One should neither eat in a hurry nor eat very big meals. Several small meals distributed over the entire day and slow and mindful eating is required. The ancient yogic rule "Eat the fluids (do not gulp them down) and drink the solids (chew them thoroughly and carefully)" should be applied. A well balanced diet is of enormous value in the prevention of many ailments.

3.3 Aging, spiritual growth and yoga

Spirituality and wisdom are interconnected. Old age, if not associated with senility, is said to be interconnected with wisdom. Does this mean that the process of aging automatically lead to spirituality or to a growth of spiritual qualities?

What is spirituality?

Spirituality could be described as a turning away from the "outer" world perceived through the sense doors and as a move towards the "inner" world, as an inward journey in search for man's true nature, as a search for truth which may lead to lasting happiness instead of chasing impermanent pleasures.

What makes man searching for true happiness?

Humans tend to looking outside, to the outer world, to the environment, seeking happiness in the outside world by means of the sense organs. Chasing after sensual pleasure by running after delicious food, hearing alluring sounds, smelling fragrant odours, enjoying exciting body contacts, watching beautiful sights is all around. All of this may result in some kind of happiness, maybe more accurate to say pleasure, for some time but then it fades away, leaving us craving for another sense pleasure or for a repetition of the already experienced ones – chasing happiness endlessly.

One needs not to grow very old to understand these impermanent, ever changing processes intellectually. But to recognize this vicious circle of craving – struggling for satisfaction – fading away of the satisfaction – renewed craving merely intellectually will not help much and so we spend year after year, decade after decade in running after sense pleasures, in running after disappointment.

Few are able to get out of this cycle without experiencing a lot of pain. Most of us unfortunately will have to experience kind of catastrophe in life, like the confrontation with the death of a close friend or rela-

tive, the breaking up of a close relationship, a divorce, a serious health scare, etc. to question their way of living.

The older one grows, the more one has time and chance to experience the unsatisfactory nature of sensual pleasures, and the more likely one may experience one of the mentioned threshold experiences, which may lead man to the path of spirituality, to the search for true happiness and freedom from the attachment to sensual pleasures.

Some may need about all of their lives; they have to face their own death in order to question life, to ask themselves: “What is this life all about? Who am I? What happens after death?” Actually most have asked themselves these questions already but usually it did not bother us that much. Too difficult to answer, life is long – I will think about it tomorrow.

Meanwhile we are continuously tossed back and forth between chasing after sensual pleasures and experiencing the unavoidable disappointment, suffering, as Buddhists say, when the pleasure fades away, thereby missing the opportunity of experiencing true happiness and peace within us.

The methods to reach a state of true happiness, calmness and peace of mind are already known for thousands of years, but it seems it is not easy to follow the spiritual path. And those who strive and follow the spiritual path will know: As ordinary man keep collecting their disappointments in the outer world, so the spiritual seeker is collecting his or her disappointments in the inner world.

The methods of yoga and meditation can help us to avoid many traps and to advance more quickly on the spiritual path. It has already proven to be successful in aiding and guiding spiritual seekers to the final goal.

During years of practice we will get older and hopefully wiser as well. A spiritual teacher is very helpful; some say it is a must. A good teacher is ahead on the spiritual path and often ahead of age – it simply takes time to study the scriptures and to collect the necessary experiences.

Everyone will reach to the end of aging but only few to the end of spiritual growth. For most searchers after truth it is the task of a lifetime, but, according to religious belief systems like Hinduism or Buddhism, it may take as well a few million life spans more.

4. Summary

In the course of aging body, mind and spirit of man will undergo certain changes. Finally these changes will lead to the unavoidable death of the person. Before this is going to happen, very often avoidable and to increased aging and decay leading health problems will occur. This is frequently due to the fact that humans do not care for their true needs; instead they indulge in all kinds of sensual pleasures including malnutrition and the use of intoxicants. They overwork, do not exercise their bodies properly, and neglect their spiritual needs.

Man who will stick to the path of yoga and meditation will know that true happiness is not to be found anywhere outside but inside them. They will strengthen and purify body and mind; they will balance their emotions and grow spiritually, thus becoming contented, peaceful and calm. Of course they cannot escape decay and death, but they can delay it and lead a fulfilled life.

By fully implementing yogic methods in daily life, the preventive, the healing and to further (spiritual) development leading aspect of yoga can hardly be separated from each other; they will serve all of these three tasks. This yogic way of life, wisely applied, is beneficial at every age and every state of health.

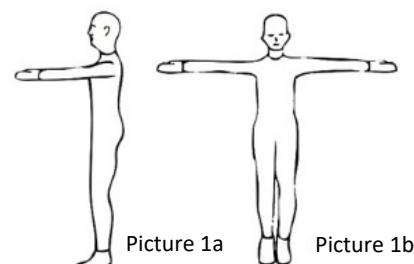
5. Breathing and relaxation exercises

5.1 Breathing exercises

The following exercises develop harmonious coordination of the breathing and bodily movements in an almost playful way and prepare you for more advanced exercises. They are very helpful for the untrained, for seniors and for people with medical conditions (after consulting their physician or the yoga teacher). The ensuing sequence will benefit the body and calm the mind. Some standing posture exercises are suitable for those needing to sit on a chair instead.

Welcome

- Starting position: Mountain posture (stand straight, arms hanging loosely by the sides of the body).
- Raise the stretched arms in front of the body and bring the palms together (Picture 1a).
- While breathing in spread the arms sideward (Picture 1b).
- While breathing out bring the palms together again.
- **Do this five times** slowly, continuously and synchronously with the breathing rhythm.
- Return to the starting position and be aware of the changes of the breathing and the sensation in the arms, shoulders and neck.



Hands stretch breathing

- Starting position: Mountain posture.
- Interlock the fingers and place them on the chest. Relax the shoulders (lower them) (Picture 2a).

a) 90° - horizontal.

While breathing in stretch the arms forward to shoulder level and twist the hands, palms facing outward. Stretch the arms completely without exerting too much effort (Picture 2b). While breathing out reverse the movement. Place the hands on the chest and relax the shoulders (**repeat three to five times**).

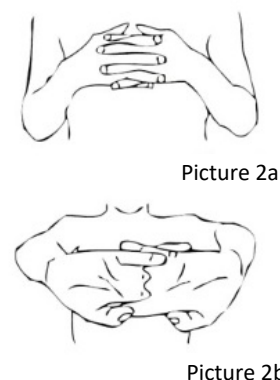
b) 135°

Do the same exercise but raise the straight arms an additional 45° above the horizontal plane.

c) 180° - vertical

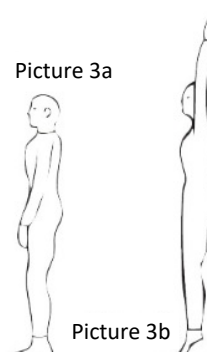
Do the same exercise but raise the straight arms to the vertical, hands above the head. Keep the hands close to the nose when moving the arms up and down.

- Coordinate the movements of the arms and hands and pay attention to breathing during the entire exercise.
- Return to the starting position and be aware of the changes of the breathing and the sensation in the arms, shoulders and neck.



Ankle / Body stretch breathing

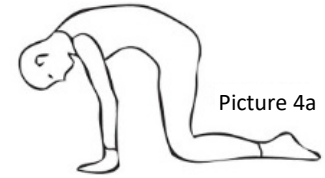
- Starting position: Modified mountain posture, palms resting on the thighs, eyes looking straight (Picture 3a).
- While breathing in, raise the straight arms to the vertical, come up on your toes and stretch the body (Picture 3b).
- While breathing out, return the heels to the floor and the hands to the thighs.
- **Do this five times** slowly, continuously and synchronously with the breathing rhythm.



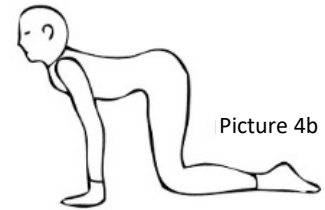
- Return to the starting position, let the arms hang loosely by the sides of the body and be aware of the changes of the breathing and the sensations in the feet, legs, arms and shoulders.

Tiger breathing

- Starting posture: Japanese sitting (sit on your heels). Lean forward and place the hands flat on the floor in line with the shoulders, fingers pointing forward. Hands, knees and heels should be about shoulder width apart. The arms and thighs are perpendicular to the floor, the back is straight.
- While exhaling arch the spine up-wards and bend the head downwards bringing the chin towards the chest, look towards your navel – Cat posture (Picture 4a).
- Inhaling raise the head and look at the ceiling, thus curving the neck downwards.
- Continue the movement by curving the spine vertebra by vertebra downward, thus making it concave – Cow posture (Picture 4b).
- Exhaling, starting at the lower back, vertebra by vertebra curve the spine upwards, finally bend the neck, suck the stomach in and look to your navel. Do not drop the head immediately when starting to exhale.
- Do not bend the arms or move the thighs forwards and backwards. Do not exert much effort – it is primarily a relaxation exercise.
- This is one round of Tiger breathing. **Do 10 rounds.**



Picture 4a



Picture 4b

Unsupported bridge

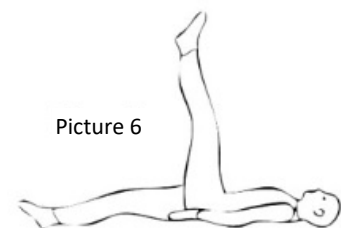
- Starting position: Lie on your back, feet parallel and hip wide apart close to the buttocks on the floor. Place the straight arms, palms down, close to the body on the floor or bring the straight arms, palms up, behind the head on the floor.
- While inhaling raise the buttocks 10-20 cm above the ground (Picture 5).
- Shoulders and feet are pressing firmly against the ground.
- While exhaling return the buttocks to the floor (**do 5 times**).



Picture 5

Straight leg raise breathing

- Starting position: Lie on your back, legs straight, feet and knees together, arms by the side of the body, palms down.
- While inhaling raise the straight left leg slowly as high as comfortable (if possible to the vertical). The right leg stays in contact with the floor (Picture 6).
- While exhaling return the leg slowly to the floor.
- Repeat with the right leg. This is one round. **Do 3-5 rounds** slowly and continually according to your breathing rhythm.
- If your back is healthy and after having trained it with the above exercise for some time you can now try to lift both legs simultaneously to the vertical (**3 times**).
- Rest in one of the relaxation postures while lying on the back and be aware of the changes of the breathing and the sensations in abdomen and lower back.



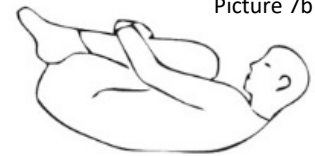
Picture 6

Nose to the knee

- Starting position: Lie down on your back, legs straight, feet and knees together, arms by the side of the body, palms down.
- Bend the right knee, place the left hand on the knee and the right one on top of the left, and pull the knee towards the chest. Keep the straight left leg on the floor. (Picture 7a). Breathe in.
- While exhaling lift the head off the floor and try to bring the nose to the right knee. While inhaling return back and head to the floor (**do 3 times**).
- Return the right leg to the floor and do the exercise with bent left knee (right hand on the left knee and left hand on top of the right).
- Bend both knees, grasp the knees with both arms and pull the knees close to the chest. Exhaling lift the head and try to bring the nose between the knees (Picture 7b). Inhaling return back and head to the floor (**do 3 times**).



Picture 7a



Picture 7b

Diagonal arm and leg lifting

- Starting position: Lie on your front, legs straight, feet, and knees together, straight arms in front of the head on the floor, forehead on the floor.
- While inhaling raise the straight right arm and left leg off the floor (not too high), forehead may be raised or kept on the floor (Picture 8).
- While exhaling return arm and leg to the floor.
- During the next inhalation raise the left arm and right leg etc. **Do this 5 times with each arm-leg combination.**
- Rest in one of the relaxation postures while lying on the front and be aware of the changes of the breathing and the sensations in the lower back.



Picture 8

Spinal twist - lying on the back

- Starting position: Lie on your back with the legs together and arms spread 90° sideways at shoulders level. Hands resting on the floor and palms should be facing towards the ceiling. Fold legs at the knees and place the feet on the floor close to the buttocks and inhale.
- While exhaling lower the knees to the right towards the floor as far as comfortable and simultaneously turn the head to the left, looking to your left hand (Picture 9). It is not important that the knees touch the floor, but it is important, that both hands and both shoulders and at least one foot stay in contact with the floor all the time.
- Then, while inhaling, raise the knees up to the vertical and bring the head to the centre.
- While exhaling lower both the knees to the left towards the floor and turn the head to the right, looking to your right hand.
- While inhaling, bring the knees and the head back to centre (to the starting position).
- This is one round. **Perform 10 times.**



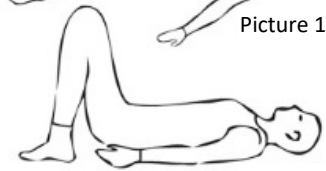
Picture 9

5.2 Relaxation

- Lie on your back, legs straight, feet a little apart and dropped relaxed to the sides. Arms by the sides of the body, a little apart, palms facing towards the body or towards the ceiling. Keep the neck comfortable without tension (Picture 10a).
- In case of back problems, make sure the lower back is in contact with the floor, bend the knees and rest the soles of the feet next to the buttocks on the floor (Picture 10b).
- Relax the body part, by part, from the toes to the skull.
- Mindfully relax feet, ankles, lower legs and knees, front and back of the upper legs, buttocks, and pelvis.
- The lower part of the body from the navel to the toes should now be totally relaxed and without tension. If there are still some tense parts, try to relax them.
- Mindfully relax lower back, middle back, shoulders, abdominal muscles, muscles of the chest, muscles around the collar bones, fingers, palms, wrists, forearms and elbows, upper arms, the shoulders, neck and throat.
- Middle and lower part of the body should now be totally relaxed and without any tension. If there are still some tense parts, try to relax them again.
- Mindfully relax chin, jaw, mouth, cheeks, ears, temples, eye-regions, nose, forehead, and skull.
- The entire body from the top of the head to the tip of the toes should now be totally relaxed and without any tension, with your breathing going smoothly and slowly and your mind being calm.



Picture 10a



Picture 10b

6. Literature

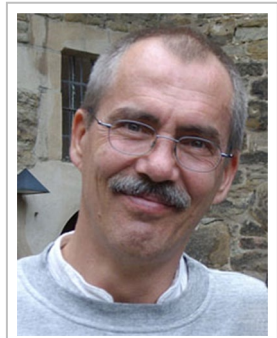
- / 1 / **Yoga the science of holistic living**
Vivekananda Kendra Prakashan Trust
Chennai (Bangalore), India
- / 2 / **Yoga - its basis and application**
By Dr. H.R.Nagendra
Swami Vivekananda Yoga Prakashana
Chennai (Bangalore), India, April 2000
- / 3 / **Yoga, asanas, pranayama, mudras, kriyas**
Vivekananda Kendra Prakashan Trust
17th Edition, May 2000, Chennai, India.

7. About the author

My name is Reinhard Hölscher. In Thailand I'm politely addressed as Khun Reinhard.

For many years now I'm living in southern Thailand, studying Buddhism, practising meditation, teaching yoga and sharing my knowledge and experience regarding both *Theravāda* Buddhism and Hatha-Yoga with a large number of foreign students.

In 1995 I've started to participate in the monthly 10-day meditation retreats at the International Dharma Hermitage of Wat Suan Mokkh, Chaiya, Thailand. First as a participant, then as a helper, yoga teacher and coordinator, and later I've given talks during these retreats. Between 1995 and today I've altogether spent more than seven years at the International Dharma Hermitage.



Khun Reinhard

Together with my wife I have offered the course 'Introduction to Buddhism and Buddhist Meditation' at a small meditation centre in Hua Hin (Thailand). These courses started in October 2010 and were offered 6 - 12 times each year. They have ended with the onset of Covid-19 and won't be revived again. The first edition of this book has developed from the talks given during these courses.

I have been (on and off) involved with teaching at the Dipabhāvan Meditation Centre on Koh Samui, Thailand since 2006 and (interrupted by Covid-19) teach there since the end of 2018 a 7-day retreat from the 11th to the 18th every month.

<https://dipabhavan.weebly.com>

Another interest of mine is yoga. I have practised Hatha Yoga for 48 years and taught it for more than 17 years after yoga teacher training in 2000 at the Vivekananda Ashram near Bangalore in India. During my lessons I have introduced more than 2,000 women and men to the basics of Hatha-Yoga. Most were taught in 10-day courses.

Information, articles and books regarding my meditation and yoga experiences are available on my website at:

<https://www.khunreinhard.com>

Publications

eBooks (available in PDF, EPUP, MOBI ... - format; in both English and German language)

- [Introduction to Buddhism and to Buddhist Meditation – 3rd Edition](#)
- [Enjoy Hatha Yoga – 2nd Edition](#)

Articles (PDF, free of charge, most but not all in both English and German language)

- [Non-Self and the Five Aggregates](#)
- [The Here-and-Now-Interpretation of Dependent Origination \(*Paṭiccasamuppāda*\) - An attempt to explain the arising of the self-concept in the human mind -](#)
- [Karma and Merit in \(Thai\) Buddhism](#)
- [Free will in Buddhism and Western Philosophy](#)
- [Bhikkhuni-ordination controversy in Theravāda Buddhism](#)
- [Meditation – postures and practices](#)
- [Meditation in daily life](#)
- [Aging and Yoga](#)
- [Breathing and Yoga](#) and more ...