

Whatever happens
stay with the practice

Notes 6th weekend – Friday

Questions

1. Exam: There will be an exam practice weekend (number 10). This weekend is for students to practice together, ask the last questions, cover any subject that we still have questions about. We can design this whole weekend. There will be a Q&A with Natalie – if you ask for it.
2. Subjects that could be in the exam: Anything that we discussed in the weekends. This exam is a written exam with no time limit. Questions will be asked about how we interpretate certain things like the ahimsa ourselves. This exam is designed in a way that it's possible to check how far we have come and what we have learned during the training.
3. There will be an option to retake the exams (practical and theoretical parts).
4. The Anatomy exam will be held *before* the retreat. The practical exams will be held during the retreat, where everyone has to give a 1 hour class and also teach some more practices (pranayama practice etc.).
5. There were also a lot of questions about the theory that could be asked and questions about how much indebt we need to know about particular topics.

Class by Melody and Patricia

Some general feedback that I thought was helpful for everyone:

1. Make sure to talk people out of a pose.
2. Try to use as less words as possible in faster paced sequence parts like the sun salutations.
3. Be precise in your instructions, which both of them did really well!
4. In Cobra pose, you have the tops of your feet still on the floor. You can check if people are not going too far in the pose by asking to lift their hands from the floor, but this is not how the traditional cobra pose is done.
5. Remember to give active ques for coming back to your breath. "Come back to your breath"
6. It's difficult to go from a standing pose (tadasana) to a high lunge. It's easier to get in a high lunge from uttanasana or from adho mukha svanasana. Both poses also facilitate the right step distance. If you're stepping back from standing, it's quite hard to measure if your legs are far enough apart to continue with other poses.
7. Remember that you have 15 breaths in 1 minute. Therefore, think about breath counts to measure time.

8. If you start a pose with an modification, such as in crow pose a block under your feet or with the seated forward bend, tell the group you are showing or using a modification of it. In general you want to first show the pose and then add modifications if needed.
9. Don't use blocks for a seated twist.
10. The silence in shavasana was great!
11. Raise your voice when in a reclined position. Due to magical ceilings it's much harder to hear your voice.
12. Avoid words as: "try to ..." and "make sure ..." Give direct instructions what you want them to do.

Short class by Lahma

To show the new poses for this weekend, we did a very brief class with Lahma. We covered some of the details of these poses.

Pranayama

Some things you can talk about, and somethings you have to experience to understand. In this 30-minute pranayama section, we practiced an Anuloma Pranayama. Lahma will share the details of this one after the weekend.

Hatha yoga pradiipika

The title of this book is very interesting do dissect. Hatha is a concatenation of the words Ha (sun) and tha (moon) and yoga or yug is translated to the word join. Pradiipika means light or to illuminate. You could say that the title of this book is: light on joining the sun and the moon. In the introduction of the book this is beautifully described on page 13: "*The ultimate object of hatha yoga is to experience yoga*".

In the Hatha Yoga Pradiipika, Swatmarama compiled all yoga wisdom in one place. He eliminated the yama and niyama, which are the starting points in the Buddhist and Jain systems. Patanjali was a contemporary of Buddha and the system that Patanjali came up with is heavily influenced by the Buddhist philosophy. The Hatha Yoga Pradiipika was written many centuries later (~1350), at a time where the influence of Buddha was declining, and reform of the old systems was needed. The main difference between Patanjali's Sutra's (Raja yoga) and the Hatha Yoga Pradiipika is that Swatmarama starts with purification of the body (shatkarma), while Patanjali starts from the mind. According to Swarmarama this is a dangerous practice (page 6): "*Why do we fight with the mind first? You have no power to wrestle with the mind, yet you wrestle with it, thereby creating a pattern of animosity towards yourself.*"

This doesn't mean the Hatha Yoga Pradiipika is truer than the Yoga Sutra's. Both just have a different view on how to practice yoga and reach Samadhi. The thing is, that if you keep on practicing, you will experience more different things. We all know the feeling and we have experienced glimpses of something that you could call Samadhi. There are more words than Samadhi to describe the same thing. We have so many because we are not there yet. It's difficult to explain something that we haven't really experienced ourselves. Also, when someone reaches enlightenment, there appear to be layers there as well. How to reach this

is different for everyone. Some people like to start from belief or faith in a certain practice where the experience will follow. For others, it's the other way around. They experience things and the belief or faith follows from these experiences. There is no good or bad in either one of these paths. Follow the path that suits your needs and feels most natural to you. As long as you stay with the practice. More practice will lead to more experience.

In the Hatha Yoga Pradipika the objective is to create absolute balance in body, mind and energy. When union of these occur, great things happen. This is the awakening of higher consciousness. In the book it's described as the union of the mental force (manas shakti) and the vital force (prana shakti). These forces are also known as Ida and Pingala. Ida corresponds to the moon/the mental/negative force and is about internal awareness, while Pingala corresponds to the sun/the vital/positive force and is about external or bodily awareness. Union of these opposing forces will make them neutral. Just like wave interference where two identical waves produce a zero amplitude, or complete cancellation. Through Sushumna nadi a neutral force already flows; this is the flow of spiritual energy.

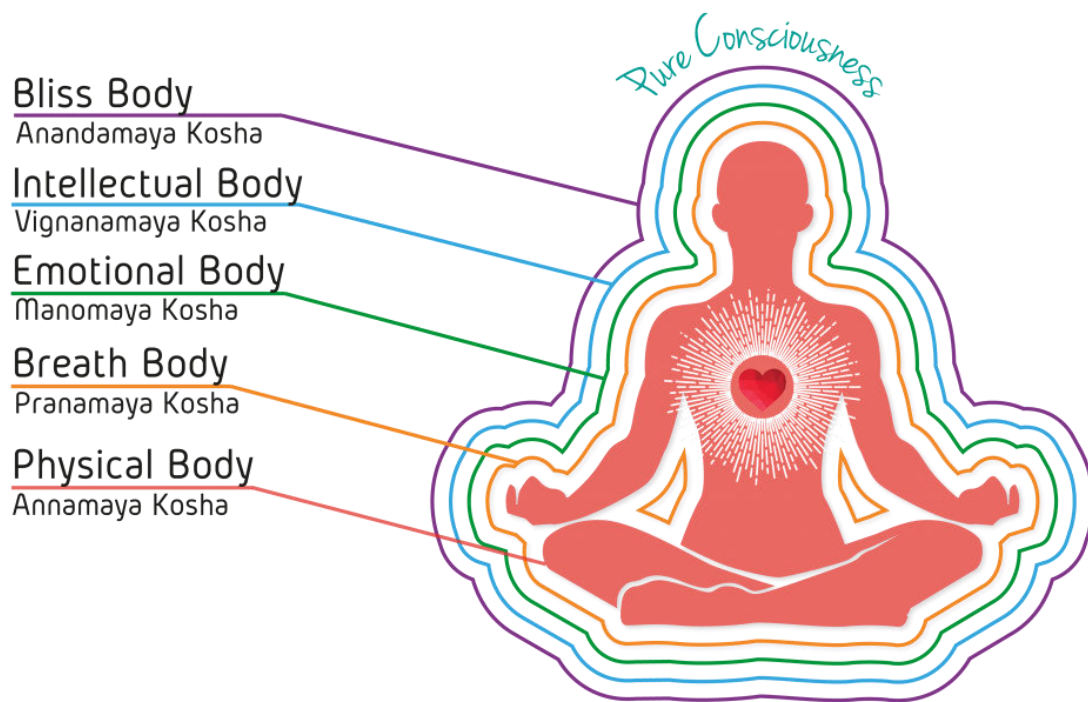
When practicing Hatha yoga, a union between ida, pingala and sushumna takes place. When practicing Hatha yoga, the kundalini shakti is activated, which resides in your mooladhara chakra. When kundalini awakes, it ascends to the higher realms of consciousness. When kundalini is established in the sahasrara chakra, that is what yoga is. **There is a difference between yoga and Hatha yoga!** When the kundalini energy rises through Sushumna nadi and unites with Ida and Pingala in Ajna chakra, that is what we call Hatha yoga. After this first union, the Kundalini energy will push through to sahasrara chakra, where it unites with the supreme consciousness, this is called yoga, the ultimate union.

Hatha yoga is a science of health, a method of purifying and energizing the vital and mental energies to prepare the system for spiritual awakening, self-realisation or samadhi.

Kosha's

In Hatha yoga, there are 5 bodies or sheets (kosha's) of the self to work with. The subtleness increases with each layer. Starting with the gross layer, your physical body or Annamaya kosha.

1. **Annamaya kosha:** Food body, we can work on this layer with asana practice.
2. **Pranamaya kosha:** This is where your life energy (prana) is flowing, feel the vibrations and warmth flowing through your body. Access it with pranayama practices.
3. **Manomaya kosha:** Your emotions and mental process reside in this layer. This is our undercurrent that subconsciously affects the things we do in life. We spend a lot of time in this layer. Access it with meditation practices.
4. **Vijananamaya kosha:** This is where your inner guide sits. We all have that wisdom inside of us that tells us what to do without really knowing why.
5. **Anandamaya kosha:** The heart center where pure consciousness resides. This consciousness is still within your own body. This is the individual pure consciousness that eventually goes up in the universal consciousness.



We can explore each layer of the self to discover our gifts and our patterns that we follow in daily life. Exploration is all about becoming more aware of the self.