

# **Mudra and Bandha teaching notes – for assignment W2.4**

Page 279-460 of the HYP covers Mudra and Bandha in great detail. In this assignment you will be writing about:-

What are mudra and bandha?  
In what ways are they used?  
Refer to classical and modern texts

The main classical text is the HYP. You should also refer to other classics like Light on Yoga etc etc and any other modern yoga books (John Scott is very good on bandha).

Remember to focus on the big picture – your general understanding of mudra and bandha and those practices that are likely to arise in a yoga class or your own practice. There are lots of strange mudras in the HYP which you should know about, but don't need to dwell on.

## **The big picture**

Mudras direct the flow of prana. They can be practices, postures or simply hand gestures (hasta mudras)

Bandhas also direct the flow of prana, but additionally build up pranic pressure by sealing or locking energy in the body.

According to the HYP, pg 289, perfection of mudras and bandhas leads to siddhis, or special yogic powers.

## **The three bandhas we are going to explore are:-**

Moola bandha – in the perineum. We will use Ashwini mudra to strengthen this area first.

Jalandhara bandha in the throat

Uddiyana bandha in the abdomen

This affects the relationship between prana-samana-apana

“When electricity is generated it is necessary to have transformers, conductors, fuses, switches and insulated wires to carry the power to its destination, as without these, electricity would be lethal. When prana is made to flow in the yogi's body by the practice of pranayama, it is equally necessary for him to

employ bandhas to prevent the dissipation of energy and to carry it to the right quarters without damage elsewhere. Without bandhas, prana is lethal". BKS Iyengar, Light on Yoga 1974 George Allen and Unwin pg 437

"The locks (bandha) are special body positions that are designed to retain the life force in the trunk and thereby stimulate it". George Feuerstein, Yoga, the Technology of Ecstasy 1989, pub Tarcher pg 291.

## **Bandha practice**

Pelvic floor + ashwini mudra

Moola bandha. Seals apana and redirects upwards, stimulates parasympathetic nerves in the pelvic area, relaxing the body, strengthens the supporting structure of the pelvic floor. Awakens Mooladhara Chakra. HYP pg 340

Jalandhara bandha – chin lock. Also stimulates parasympathetic nerves in the neck, affects carotid sinuses and may lower blood pressure, awakens the thyroid, parathyroid and thymus area. Stretches neck (shoulderstand and plough good preparation), stimulates Vishudhi Chakra. Seals prana and redirects it downwards to join with apana in the abdomen. Pressure cooker effect. HYP pg 352

Maha bandha – moola bandha and jalandhara bandha on an in-breath. Pg 298

Uddiyana bandha – upward flying bird of prana. Abdominal muscles drawn in on outbreath and then sucked up towards chest cavity. Strong stimulation of digestive system, stoking of agni, the digestive fire, awakening of Manipura Chakra, emotional release at solar plexus. HYP pg 332

Maha bandha on out breath – all three bandhas pg 298 HYP.

See also Moola Bandha: The Master Key by Swami Buddhananda, published by the Bihar School of Yoga, reprinted 1998.

## **Mudra Theory and Practice**

Maha Mudra – great seal with breath held in. Come into janu sirsasana and apply moola and jalandhara while holding the breath. HYP pg 291. Removes the kleshas and conquers death...."even the deadliest of poisons is digested like nectar" pg 296.

Maha Mudra – breath out. Whoosh breath out and engage all three bandhas to draw kundalini shakti up sushumna nadi to the eyebrow centre.

Maha Vedha Mudra – great piercing attitude. HYP pg304. In lotus, with jalandhara bandha on and breath held in, beat buttocks on the mat 3-7 times. Release throat lock and exhale and sit quietly. 3-5 rounds.

“This is maha vedha, and its practice bestows great perfections. Wrinkles, grey hair and the trembling of old age are evaded...” HYP pg 307.

Khechari Mudra – taking the tongue back and up into the head cavity. Read page 310 of HYP. Discuss. Benefits pg 313-330.

Vipareeta Karani Mudra – reversing attitude. HYP pg 363. See also Necta pg 361.

Vajroli Mudra – thunderbolt attitude. Vajra nadi is energy flow in the spine governing the sexual systems of the body. In tantra this sexual energy is transformed into ojas (vitality) and kundalini shakti. So sexual energy is redirected for a spiritual purpose through the practice of vajroli. Celibacy should only arise spontaneously out of practices and not be forced.

Pg 372 – read negative effects of ejaculation.

Vajroli – catheter, air, water, oil, honey and liquid mercury.

Sahajoli – Hyp pg 390. Smearing of ash onto the body.

Amaroli mudra – hyp pg 395. “Drinking the cool midstream of urine”. Reading pg 397.

Shakti Chalana Mudra – described on pg 429.

Shambhavi Mudra – Lord Shiva mudra. Sit with the eyes directed upwards to the third eye, ie cross eyed.

## **Hasta Mudras**

These can be any hand gesture. Eg obscene, or the story telling of an Indian dance.

Each hand mudra is said to affect the subtle energy circuits in the body, channelling and/or redirecting prana.

Work through hasta mudras on handout.....