



Top Outside: *The Tree of Yoga* (written by BKS Iyengar with Forward by Patricia Walden)
– emphasizing leaves of tree to introduce topic of Prāṇāyāma

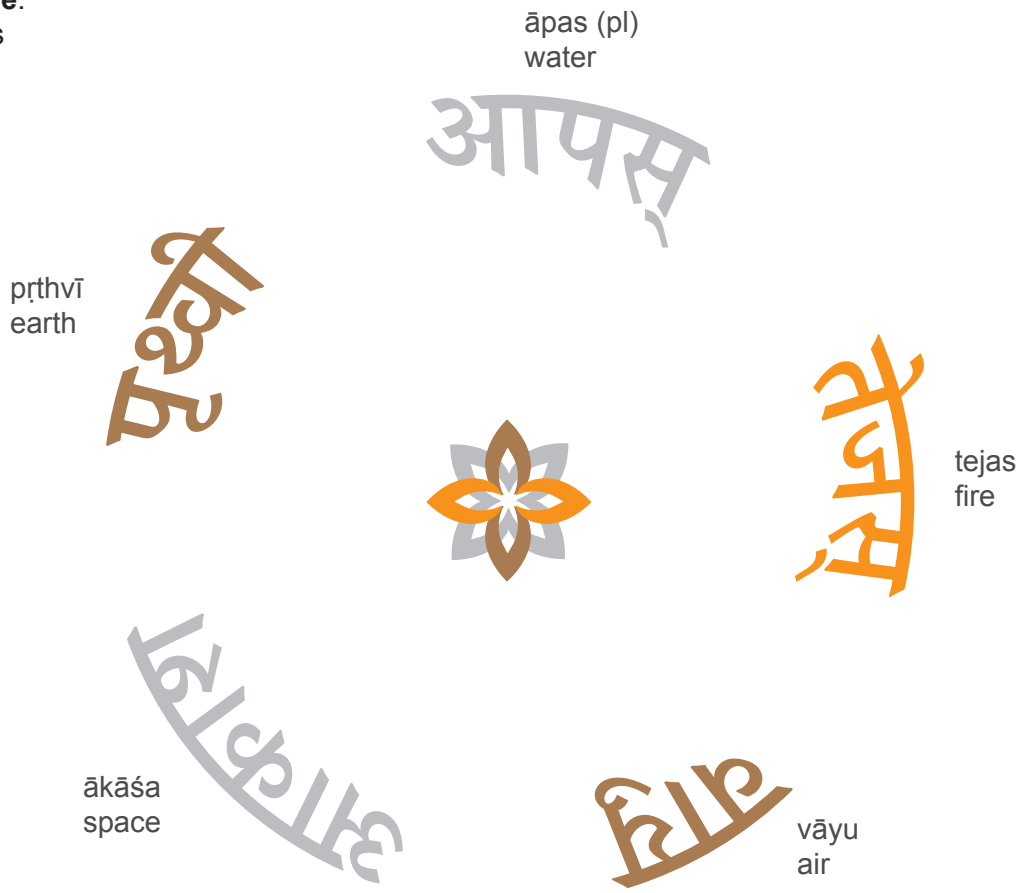


Bottom Outside: Kūrma (& the production of prāṇā)

- avatar of Lord Viṣṇu, who takes the form of a tortoise in order to crawl under and lift Mt. Meru so that the angels and devils can use the mountain as a churning rod to produce amṛta (nectar of immortality, elixir of life, prāṇā)
- Lord Viṣṇu as Kūrma symbolizes Puruṣa (seer, soul, Lord of the Body), the piece of divinity or of Universal Spirit that exists in each of us
- our body represents Prakṛti, nature, and becomes the fountain for the production of prāṇā, while the Lord of the Body (Puruṣa) is its generative force
- Atman acts as the tortoise, who lifts and keeps our diaphragm floating upward, bringing our breath into contact with the five inner elements of the body and its seven constituents, as well as the ten types of vital energies in our body.
- through this contact, and with the help of the seer (Puruṣa), our spine, and our breath, prāṇā (the elixir of life-force) is produced in our body
- since prāṇā is a self-energizing force, it generates more power through the process of Prāṇāyāma



Bottom Inside:
Five elements



Inside Panels: Ten Vital Energies



प्राण

prāṇa (ingestion)



अपान

apāna (elimination)



समान

samāna (digestion)



उदान

udāna (expression)



व्यान

vyāna (dissemination)



नाग

nāga



कूर्म

kūrma



कृकर

kṛkara



देवदत्त

devadatta



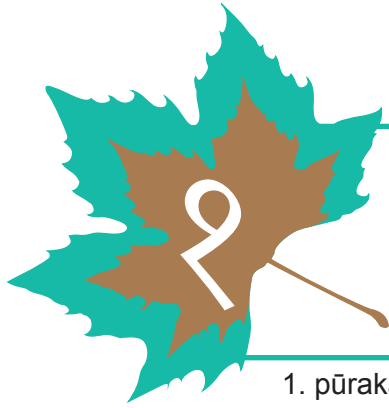
धनंजय

dhanamjaya



Outside Panels: Four Elements/Movements of Prāṇāyāma

Note: in Sutra II.49, Patañjali uses the word **śvāsa** for inhalation, **praśvāsayoḥ** for exhalation, and **vicchedaḥ** for stoppage, but I chose the words BKS Iyengar used in *The Tree of Yoga*.



पूरक



1. pūraka (inhalation)



रेचक



2. recaka (exhalation)



कुम्भक



3. kumbhaka (retention after inhalation and exhalation)



निर्बीज



4. nirbīja (seedless, unsupported); pranayama that takes place by itself and has become natural and effortless



Top Inside: Two main characteristics of Prāṇāyāma encircling Mohinī, a second avatar of Lord Viṣṇu in the Churning of the Ocean Allegory

दीर्घ

dīrgha (long, deep)



सूक्ष्म

sūkṣma (subtle, acute)

Mohinī: form that Lord Viṣṇu takes of a beautiful dancing woman who discerningly distributes the amṛta (prāṇā, nectar of immortality) only to the deserving. Just as amṛta is the product of the churning of the ocean, one product of the practice of Prāṇāyāma makes is the purifying of the blood (referred to as ‘a constituent of jewels’ or ‘the jewel of blood’ [ratna pūrīta dhātu]). Full use in Prāṇāyāma of this absorption and re-absorption of energy will allow one to live a hundred years with perfect health of body, clarity of mind, and equipoise of spirit. That is why the practice of Prāṇāyāma is considered to be a great science and art. (*Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, p. 164)



