

Pranayama for Well-being

Based on the teachings of
Sri Vasudeva



Blue Star Canada

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Outline

- Pranayama introduction
- Energetic aspect: Prana
- Proper breathing: Complete Yogic Breath
- Practises:
 - Kapalabhati
 - Bhastrika
 - Ujjayi
 - Anuloma Viloma
 - Microcosmic Orbit
 - Wu-Chi
- Take-away points
- Wrap-up

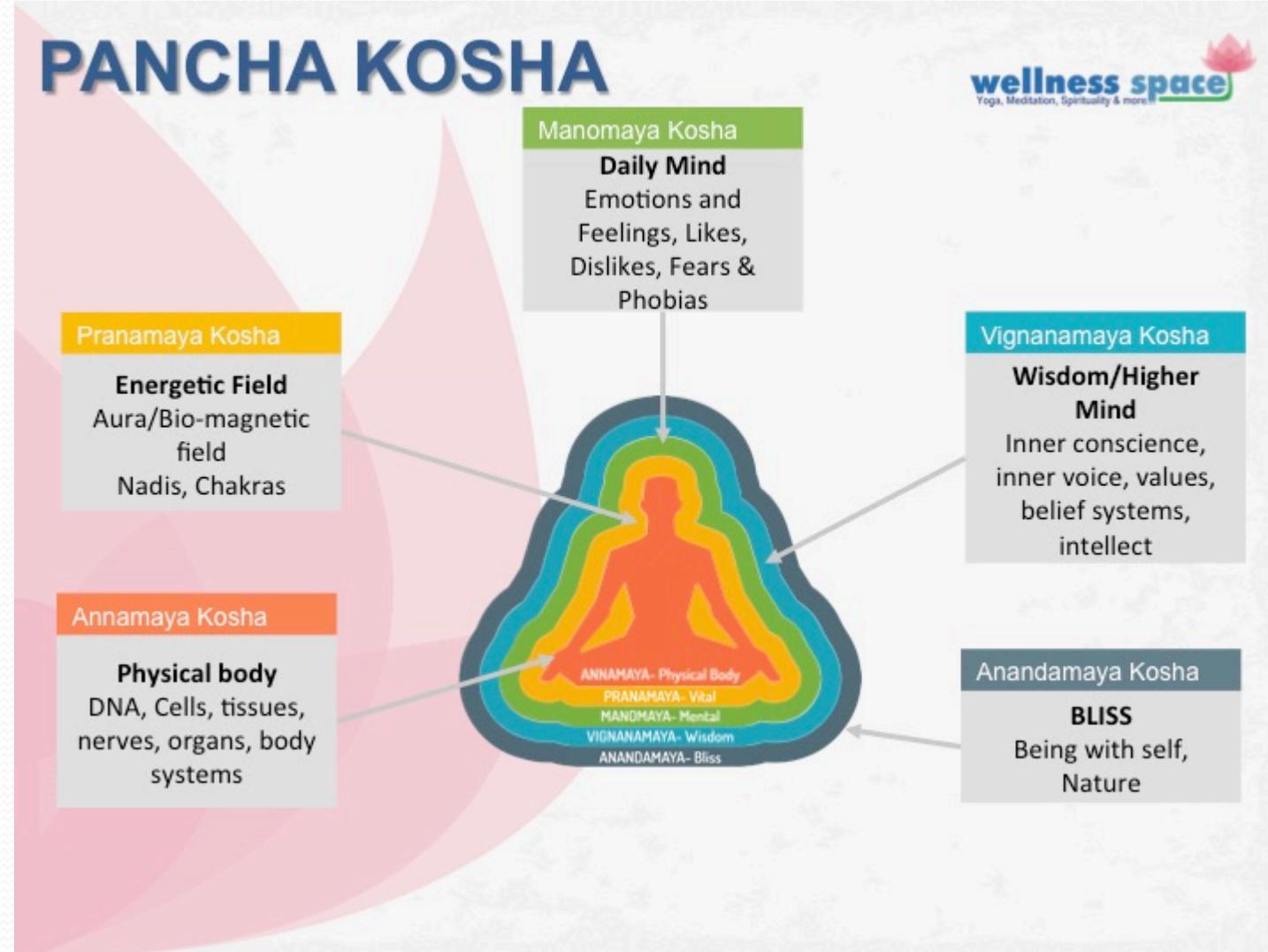
Pranayama

- **Prana – ayama**
 - Prana: Life Force
 - Ayama: Extension of
- **Two aspects:**
 - Physical breathing
 - Energetic: Prana distribution throughout body

Energetics of Breathing: What is Prana?

- Life-force (inside & outside body)
- Qi (“Chi”)
- Universal energy
- gravity, electricity, nerve currents, atoms
- Outside body: found in food, water, air
- Inside body: from Kundalini, lies coiled at base of the spine
- Pranic storehouse: solar plexus

Multidimensional Being: Pranamaya Kosha



Prana vayus

- ▶ Our subtle body can generate energies through the five prana vayus: udana, prana, samana, vyana, apana
- ▶ *Before I even eat or drink, I charge up my body with prana. It makes my thirst and taste better, it makes my drinking better, it makes my eating better because the samana energy in the navel gets more charged up. It brings all the experiences of the senses to a more empowering action or activity.*
Sri Vasudeva

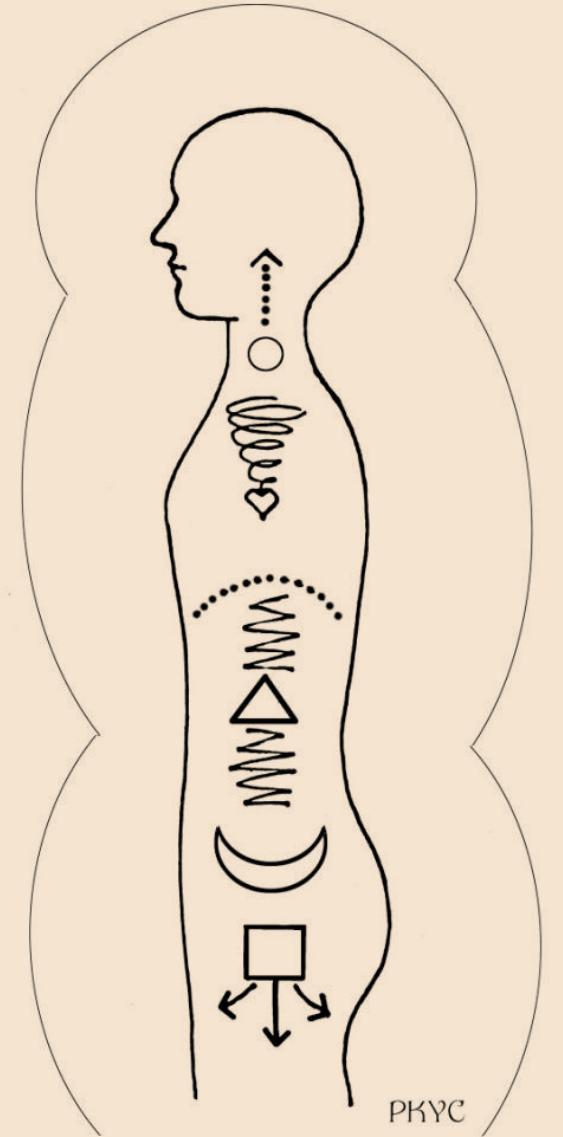
Udana
Throat to head
Upward moving energy:
Speech, memory, intake,
will, effort, mental strength,
balance, sensing, intelligence

Prana
Chest
Life giving energy, vitality:
Respiration, circulation,
sensory-motor, temperature,
feeling, thinking

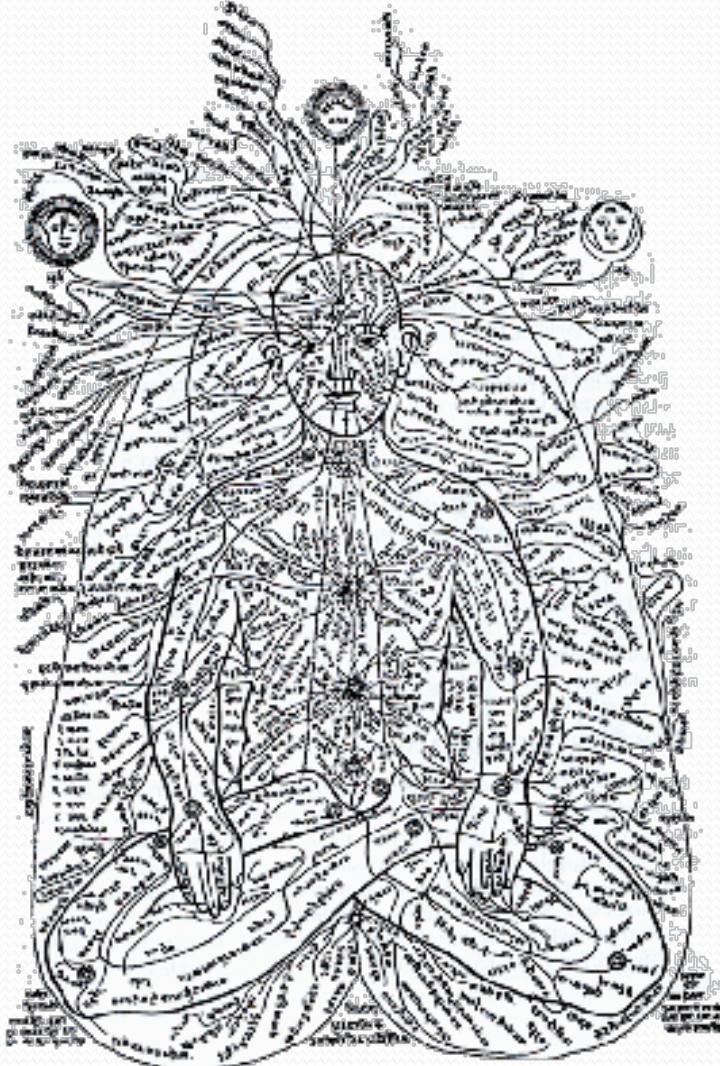
Samana
Abdomen
Balancing the four other vayus: Digestion,
distribution, nourishing,
integration

Vyana
Whole Body (Aura)
Diffused energy, movement,
nerves, heartbeat, circulation,
joints, muscles

Apana
Pelvis to feet
Downward moving energy:
Excretion, urination, menstruation,
ejaculation, birthing
Kandarpa – Apana in Muladhara

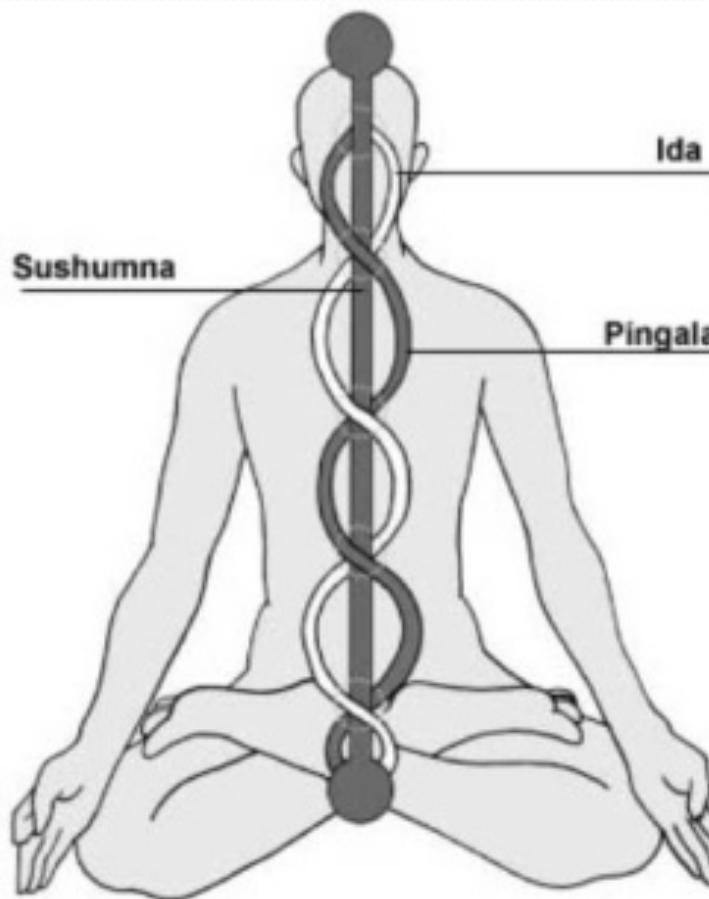


Pranic Channels (Nadis)



- Prana flows through our system of energy channels (nadis or meridians)
- What happens if our nadis are blocked?

Main Pranic Channels: Ida, Pingala, Sushumna



Ida - Left nostril has a cooling effect, influences right brain and is associated with the moon, mind, spatial thinking

Pingala - Right nostril has a heating effect, influences left brain and is associated with the sun, digestion, intellectual and rational thinking

Sushumna – Central channel that connects the chakras. With spiritual awakening, can draw prana from inner space to supplement or even replace prana from outside

Proper Breathing: Complete Breath

- Do we really know how to breathe?
- Exercise: Take 3 deep breaths right now
- Proper breathing: Yogic breath
 - Abdominal, Chest, Clavicular
- Why is Proper Breathing important?

Effects of conscious breathing

Revitalizes your physical

- cleanses and oxygenates the lungs and the entire body
- restores and enhances the vitality

Helps the mind and emotional being to become stable

- excited → calm; tensed → relaxed; confused → clear
- deeper level of awareness

Essential preparation for every day

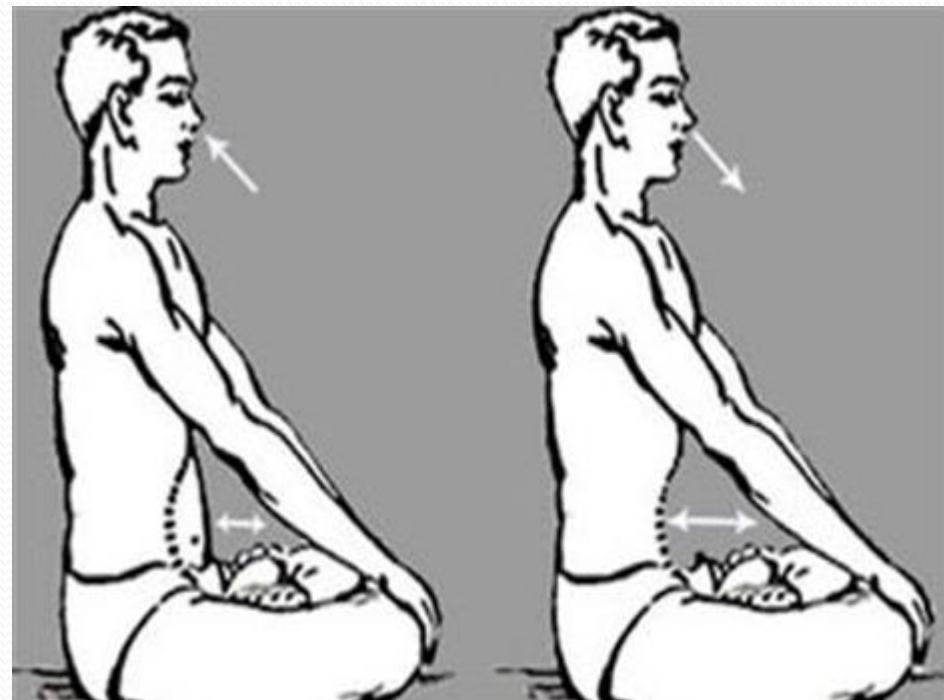
- at the end one looks better, feels better, ready for the day

Practise: Complete Yogic Breathing



Practise: Kapalabhati

- Kapalabhati: “Skull Shining”
- Cleansing exercise or *kriya*
- Releases toxins

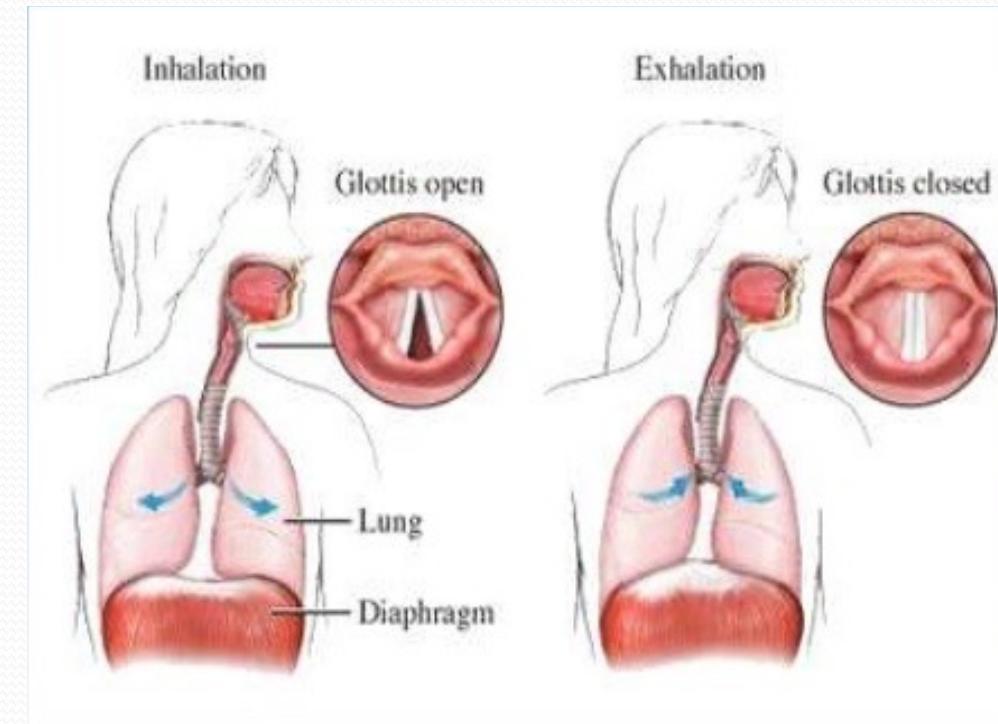


Practise: Bhastrika

- Bhastrika: “Breath of Fire” or “Bellows Breath”
- Energizing exercise

Practise: Ujjayi

- Ujjayi: “Victory Breath”
- Calms mind and body
- More meditative



Practise: Anuloma Viloma

- Anuloma Viloma: “with the (natural) grain (of breath)”
- Regulating the cycle of breathing through the nostrils balances the entire system



Prana: A Holistic Approach

- Pranic awareness: more than just breathing or breathing techniques!
- Full body overview:
 - Continuous monitoring
 - Take stock – where are you?
 - Centering from inside: hold body
 - Drive pranas using mental domain
- Learn how to drive prana for keeping the body vital, well, healthy and mind relaxed
- We carry the body in our consciousness; it is a gross experience in our consciousness

Beyond Breath: The Breathless State

Offering the inhaling breath into the exhaling breath and offering the exhaling breath into the inhaling breath, the yogi neutralizes both breaths; thus he releases prana from the heart and brings life force under his control.

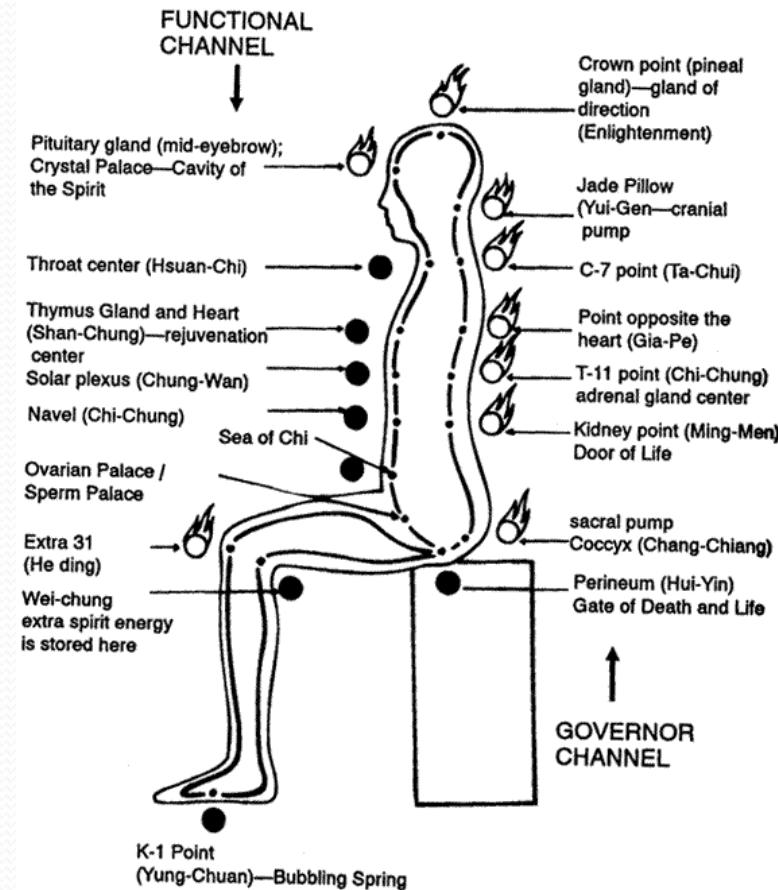
~Bhagavad Gita

When the breath stops effortlessly, without either rechaka (exhalation) or puraka (inhalation), that is called Kevala Kumbhaka.

~Hatha-Yoga Pradipika

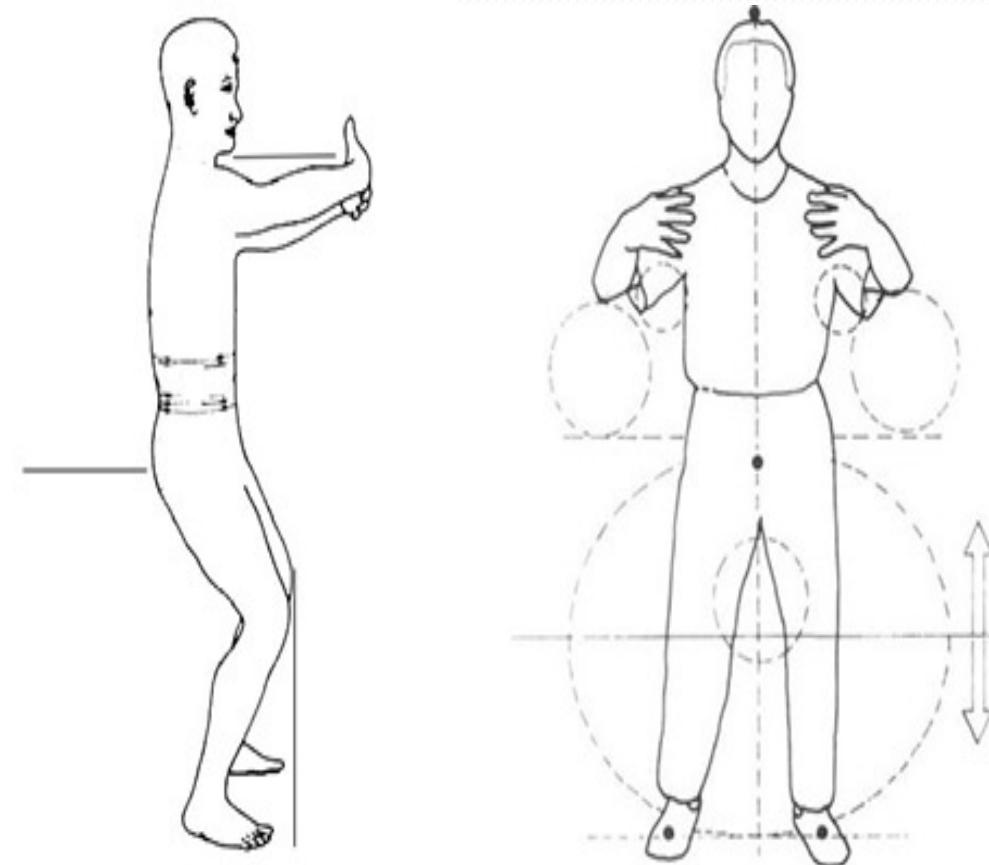
Practise: Microcosmic Orbit

- In our being, we have the Microcosmic Orbit constantly spinning, with the center along the spine
- We do not see the source, but energy is continuously coming from there
- Prana is coming into the microcosmic orbit both from outside and from inside



Practise: Wu-Chi

- ▶ The Wu Chi first position is also known as the position of primordial energy
- ▶ This opening position, if correctly practiced, holds the key to unlocking the storage house of your great internal energy reserves
- ▶ Pay careful attention to any tension within your body and its effect upon the nervous system



Suggested Takeaway Practice

- Just before your practice, do at least 10 minutes of warm-up yoga and pranayama including alternate nostril breathing on an empty or partially empty stomach
- Each day in your meditation practice(s) use “Breath Awareness” with any of the techniques described (e.g. Microcosmic Orbit)
- If the mind wanders, simply bring it back to witnessing the breath by observing the in-breath flowing into the out breath
- Practice for 15 minutes, then journal your experiences

Reflection & Panel Discussion

- Compare and contrast the experience of pranayama from the start of the workshop to end?
- Do I feel more pranically aware after this session?
- How could I bring this awareness to my life? Beyond doing breathing exercises only?
- One thing I want to remember is...
- One question I still have is...