

Kanda in Sanskrit Hatha Yogic and Allied Texts: A Textual Study*

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Abstract

An effort has been made in the article to develop a plausibly adequate understanding of Kanda by reviewing 42 Sanskrit Hathayogic and allied texts, on the basis of i) various names, forms, and its location in the human body as well as, ii) with reference to Susumnā, Kundalini and Cakras. Physical and spiritual effects of Yogic practices involving Kanda have also been mentioned. Such an understanding may guide Yoga researchers and Yoga practitioners to understand and practice Hathayoga in a far more effective way.

Key words: Kanda, hathayogic texts, textual study.

Introduction

Voluminous attempts have been made to clarify the concepts of *Susumnā*, *Kundalini* and *Cakras*. However, there are certain points of controversy among the scholars persisting to this date about the same. Inadequate knowledge of Yogic anatomy could be one of the main reasons behind the non-unanimity. We may understand or explain these concepts more explicitly if we undertake the study of the Yogic Anatomy. We get a clue in the Hathayoga literature that in the human body there is a central point around which the pranic activities revolve and with which *Susumnā*, *Kundalini*, *Cakras* etc. are closely associated. Therefore, before any attempt at understanding the Yogic Anatomy, we will have to first understand the aforementioned central point known as *Kanda*, etymologically a "bulb".

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It is widely accepted that *Prāṇa* can not flow through *Suṣumnā* without first tackling the *Kanda*. Not a single effort has been made, so far, to study *Kanda* in details with a view to understand the Hathayogic curriculum as a whole. Unless we are equipped with all possible knowledge about understanding its nature and functions, dealing with the concept of tackling *Kanda* will be something like shooting in the dark. An effort is made here to develop a plausibly adequate understanding of *Kanda* on the basis of 42 Sanskrit Hathayogic and allied texts with a hope that this will help in guiding yoga researchers and Sadhakas to understand and practice Hathayoga with a better sense of purpose and approach.

Materials and Method

The work began with the Sanskrit Hathayogic books and manuscripts easily available in our institutional library. However, during the course of preliminary work, books on other disciplines expected to describe yoga were also scrutinized. The details of the scrutinized books and manuscripts are as under-

	No. of Books Scrutinized	No. of Books mentioning Kanda	No. of Books not mentioning Kanda
A. Hathayogic	28	18	10
B. Hathayogic manuscripts	7	5	2
C. Yogopanishad	20	10	10
D. Puranas	11	2	9
E. Tantras	8	7	1
TOTAL	74	42	32

As the table makes it clear that out of 67 books and 7 MSS (Manuscripts) scrutinized, only 37 books and 5 MSS have either described or referred to *Kanda*. The name of the books and MSS

mentioning and not mentioning *Kanda* are listed in Appendix I and II respectively.

The important points with reference to *Kanda* as found in different sources were classified under the following suitable heads:

I. Various Names of Kanda

II. Form of Kanda:

- a) Shape.
- b) Size.
- c) Colour.

III. Location of Kanda in the Human Body.

IV. Kanda with reference to other concepts:

- a) With reference to *Nādis*.
- b) With reference to *Suṣumṇā*.
- c) With reference to *Kuṇḍaliṇī*.
- d) With reference to *Cakras*.

V. Importance of Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Mudra and Prāṇadhāraṇā as related to Kanda:

- a) Āsanās.
- b) Prāṇāyāmas.
- c) Bandhas.
- d) Mudras.
- e) Prāṇadhāraṇā/ Vayu Dhāraṇā.
- f) Dhyāna.

VI. Effects of Yogic Practices involving Kanda:

- a) Physical Effects.
- b) Spiritual Effects.

VII. Spiritual Importance of Kanda

VIII. Conclusion.

I. Various Names of Kanda

We find different names of *Kanda* in Yogic literature such as:

1. *Ādhāra Kanda*:
Kanda is said to be *ādhāra* i.e., base of the human body. (STT XX/35).
2. *Mūla Kanda*:
i.e., root or (YK I/246, TRT 27, 36, KT XXII/p.8 BP page 9 KIII/1, p.262).
3. *Kanda Yoni*:
i.e., origin place (G 16, GP I/25, YCU 14).
4. *Nāḍī Kanda*:
The root of *Nāḍīs*, Cluster of *Nāḍīs* [TSB (M) 66 p.134, KU 8].
5. *Nāḍī Mahā Cakra*:
OR the great circle of *Nadis* (YCU 14)
6. *Nāḍī Cakra*:
[YSU V/16, 17; HR IV/35, YSU III/27; AP 214/1, DBU 50; VU V/22; TSB (M) 60; VS II/19; VY IV/25; YC p.81 & 84; GP I/28; HP II/5, 41, HR II/2].
7. *Nāvi Kanda*:
Central point [TSB (M) 149; DU IV/11; JDU IV/11; YSU III/29; p.130; TSB (M) 109; DU VII/12; JDU VII/12; BVU 22].
Nāvi Cakra
Pivotal point of the base circle (YSU V/21; SAU I/7; YSU III/29; Bh.P. 4-4-24).
8. *Mūla Cakra*
Basic circle on which human body rests; VS II/14; YY IV; Ybh quoting YY).

Comments

Here we see that the names 1, 2 & 8 give the clue to understand the importance of *Kanda* as it is said to be the base of human body and 3 to 7 give the idea of its functional aspect so to say the origin of all the nadis. In other words, it is a base circle of twelve spokes which supports the human body. The individual self moves in this circle motivated by its merits and demerits until it discovers the truth. It is instructed in the literature that the knowledge of *Kanda* is unavoidably essential so as to enable the *Sādhaka* to achieve the highest end of Hathayoga, though the need to undergo certain other hathayogic practices cannot, by any means, be underscored.

II. Form of Kanda:

A. Shape of *Kanda*

The shape of *Kanda* is described differently in the literature, viz., -

- This *Kanda* with an oval shape is surrounded on all sides by fat, marrow, bone and blood. [VS II/12-13; YY IV/17; TSB (M) 59; VU 21].
- This *Kandamūla* (bulbous root) is like the egg of a bird. (K III/1; BST I/14).
- This is said to be an egg of a hen covered with skin (616; YM16; GPI/25; DBU 50; YCU14; BP Page 13; HR IV/33; YSU V/21; DU IV/4; JDU IV/4).
- *Kanda* is like a ball of flesh (BP Page 13).
- This *Kanda* is circle like the root of the Banana tree (YSC III/29).
- It is a beautiful circular (STT XX/29).
- Like a lotus where gods play (BST I/14).
- *Kanda* is like a ball (YC page 89).
- This base of body is a beautiful triangular in form (STT XX 35).
- Soft and looking like a covering garment (HP III/109 GP page 29; KII/53; J III/113; YSU I/8).
- A space like a bulbous root (SS V/56).
- This *nāḍī cakra* is circle having twelve spokes [VU22; SAU I/7; YC page 80; VS II/13; YY IV/19; YM 15; SPI/24; YCU B-14; TSB (M) 60-61].

Comments

Here we have seen that the shape of *Kanda* is narrated differently. But most of the texts are unanimous that *Kanda* is of the shape of an egg and therefore we may consider it as elliptical.

B. Size of *Kanda*

Kanda is said to be-

- a) twelve fingers in height and four fingers in width (HP III/109; GP page 29; K II/53; K III/1).

b) having four fingers height and breadth (SS V/56; SAU I/5; YC page 80; TSB (m) 50; VU21; VS II/11; DU IV/14; JDU IV/14; YY IV/16).

c) two fingers in height and four fingers in width (STT XX/28).

Comments

Most of the texts are unanimous about the size of *Kanda* four fingers in height and width, and therefore, we may consider the size of *Kanda* as four fingers in height and girth.

C. Colour of Kanda

a) It is said to be soft and white in colour (HP III/109; BP page 29; K II/53; J III/113).

b) Having white belly and surrounded by filament of white lotus (BST I/14).

c) Appearance of *Kanda* is like fire (YC Page 89-90).

Comments

As regards white colour we find in Hathayoga, in *Mūladhāra* there is seat of *Śiva in the form of Jīva* where the *Kanda* is situated. The Sattva-prodominant *Sādhakas* experience the white colour therein, and therefore, with all probabilities the texts speak about the white colour of *Kanda*.

As for the appearance of fire, it gives the idea to the Yogis that this *Kanda* is surrounded by *Kuṇḍalinī* i.e., *Śakti* or *Prāṇa*, i.e., vital force. Wherever there is *śakti* or *prāṇa* it gives, analogically, the appearance of fire. Thereby it may be said the yogi might experience the colour of *Kanda* like that of a fire. Fire is symbolic of upward movement. One should start working from that point for upward movement to get the desired goal.

III. Place of Kanda in Human Body

A. With Reference to Ādhāra/ Mūlādhāra

1. *Below the Level of*: The place of Kanda in human body is said to be below the level of *adhara* or *mūlādhāra* (SST II/2).
2. *At the Level of* : a) There is a *Cakra* (Kanda) in *Mūlādhāra*. From there all *nāḍīs* are said to have evolved and therefore, it is referred to as *Nāḍī Cakra* (HR IV/33; YSU IV/27). b) There is a Lotus in *Mūlādhāra*. *Kanda* is situated in that lotus (YR page 44).
3. *Above the Level of* : a) The place of *Kanda* in human body is nine inches above the level of *Muladhara* (DVS page 1; JDU IV/3; DU IV/3; HP III/109; K II/53; YSU 8; BP page 29). b) The *Kanda* is twelve finger breadth (*angula/s*) above the level of *mūlasthāna* i.e., the anus (J III/113). c) Standing in the triangle of the *Mūlādhāra* is the *Suṣumṇā* of twelve digit lengths, that is the *Nābhi Cakra* on the Central point (YSU V/16-17).

B. With Reference to the Dehamadhya

1. *At the Level of*: a) *Nāḍi Kanda* is situated in the middle of the body TBS (M) 66. b) Two *āṅgulas* above the anus and two *āṅgulas* below the genitals in the middle of the body is said to be the place of *Kanda*. (YSU page 39; K III/1). c) Two *āṅgulas* above the anus and an *āṅgula* below the *Medhira* i.e., penis, there is a square shaped *Kanda* (SS V/56). d) Two *āṅgulas* above the anus there is a *Kandamūla* i.e., the root of *Kanda* (BST I/4). e) The place of *Kanda* is said to be between the anus and the *Medhira* (SS V/57). f) Between the anus and the pelvic region (STT xx/28).

2. *Above the Level of*: a) *Kanda* is situated in the body nine fingers above from the middle of the body (VS II/11; YY IV/16 TSM (M) 58; YC page 80; SAV I/15. b) Two *āṅgulas* above the anus and an *āṅgula* above the middle of the body. The *Kanda* is nine *āṅgulas* from the middle of the body (J III/113).

C. With Reference to Medhra

- a) Nine aṅgulas above Medhra is the place of Kanda (VU 20).
- b) Above *Medhra* and below the naval there is a *Kanda* (G 16; YM 16; GP I/25; DBU 50; YCU 14; BP page 13).

Comments

Here we find that there is difference of opinions in the literature related to the place of *Kanda* in the Human body.

It is difficult to explain as to why there is difference of opinions? It may be because of the varying experiences of different yogis. But if we think rationally the place of *Kanda* in the human body should be at the level of *Mūlādhāra* as *Kanda* is said to be the bulbous root and the root should be the starting point.

If we consider the place above the level of *Mūlādhāra* or the middle of the body or above the middle of the body or between the navel and *Medhra* as *Gorakṣa* tradition shows then this point is to be considered as the starting point of *Cakras*, because *Cakras* are said to be situated in *Suṣumṇā*, and *Suṣumṇā* is the central nāḍi originating from the *Kanda* at the level of *Mūlādhāra* which is at the point from where the spinal cord starts. Another point to support this idea is that in *Hathayogic* practices (like *Asanas* etc.) it is advised to tackle that particular area, i.e., the pelvic region. Tackling of *Kanda* can take place at the level of *Mūlādhāra* and therefore we may consider the place of *Kanda* at the level of *Mūlādhāra*.

IV. Kanda With Reference to Other Concepts

IVA. With Reference to Nadis

- a) From there all *Nāḍis* are evolved (HR IV/33; K III/4).
- b) The source from which 72000 *Nāḍis* originate (G 16; YM 16; GP I/25; DU 50; YCU 15; DBU 51; BST I-15).
- c) *Kanda* is the source of all *nāḍis* and therefore said to be a (like yoni) a bulbous root (BP page 13).

- d) All the *Nāḍis* evolved from that point out of which three are important (STT XX/29).
- e) *Nāḍi Cakra* is the origin of all the nadis which run obliquely or downward (YC page 84).
- f) Place of all the *nāḍis*, having different names, is at the middle of the body (S.SVA 31-32).
- g) *Nāḍis* come only from *Kanda* [TSB (M) 74].
- h) 72000 *nāḍis* are situated at the navel region some goes obliquely straight upward and downward navel region is surrounded by them (AP 214/2).
- i) *Kanda* is said to be the sum of *Nāḍis* (VU 20).
- j) It is to be understood that all *Nāḍis* come from the central point of the circle i.e., *Kanda* (BP page 14).

Comments

In Hathayogic literature all are unanimous that *Kanda* is the root of *Nāḍis*.

A.1. *Kanda* with Reference to *Suṣumna Nadi*

- a) The *nāḍi* resting at the middle of *Kanda* is called *Suṣumṇā* all other *nāḍis* stay around *Suṣumṇā* only (VS II/19).
- b) *Suṣumṇā Nāḍi* is said to be the path of Liberation and always bears the universe (body) resting at the middle of the *Kanda*. It goes up to the head through the spinal cord [DU IV/5; JDU IV/5; TSB (M) 68; YY IV/24; VS II/25; YY IV/30].
- c) *Suṣumṇā* is resting in the spinal cord attached to the head. It goes up to *brahmarandhra* and the path of liberation (YY IV/30; RY page 6).
- d) *Suṣumṇā* is resting in the spinal cord. It goes from *Mūlādhāra* to *Brahmarandhra* where the 1000 petal lotus is resting in downward position (K III/1).
- e) In place of the *Kanda* there is a *nāḍi* called *Suṣumṇā* that is as bright as a streak of lighting (YK I/246, RY page 1).

Comments

In Hathayoga the *Suṣumṇā* is the most important nāḍi as it is said to be the path of liberation which proceeds from the middle of the *Kanda* to the Crevise of the *Brahman* through the spinal cord. This *Suṣumṇā* is as bright as a streak of light. *Kuṇḍalinī* moves upward through this nadi and merges with *Śiva* at the *Sahasrāra*. It is essential to the *Sādhakas* that they should understand the importance of this nadi.

IVB. Kanda with Reference to Kuṇḍalinī

- a) The *Kuṇḍalī Śakti*, sleeping above the region of *Kanda*, is for the liberation of the yogis; it binds the ignorant. One who knows her is the knower of yoga. The *Kuṇḍalinī śakti* remains always with its face covered (the *Suṣumṇā nāḍi*) the orifice leading to the door as the *Brahman* through which orifice is to be reached perfectly safe door leading to the *Brahman*. The great Goddess (the *Kuṇḍalinī*) sleeps with her face closing that door [HP III/103; B 30; YM 36, 45; GP I/47, 56, 48; K II/53; DBU 73; YSU VI/155; YCU 36, 37, 44; YK VIII/199; TSB (M) 63, 64].
- b) The *Kuṇḍalinī Śakti* sleeps above the *Kanda* (J III/107).
- c) Above this (basic circle) transversely above and below the navel, there is a place of *Kuṇḍalinī* (VS II/15; YY IV/20; YC PAGE 80; TSB (M) 62; SAV I/8).
- d) The place above the *Kanda* from which all the nāḍis spring up, is connected with *Maṇipūra Cakra* where *Kuṇḍalinī* stands (BP page 18).

B.1 a) Between the space (two fingers above the rectum and finger below the liṅga, four fingers in width, is a space like a bulbous root) is the yoni having its face towards the back that is called root, where dwells the Goddess *Kuṇḍalinī*. Its tail in its own mouth, it rests in the hole of the *Suṣumṇā* (SS V/56-57).

b) There alone is situated the twelve spoked *Nāḍī Cakra* where with the body it is held in its normal condition; there abides the *Kuṇḍalinī* (VU 22).

c) The *Mūlādhāra* which is Triangular in shape, is situated in the interspace between the anus and the genitals. It is said to be the seat of *Śiva* in the form of the *Jīva*, wherein is established the requisite power known as the *Kuṇḍalinī* (YSC I/169).

B.2 Two *aṅgulas* below the navel is the *Kanda*, the seat of the *Kuṇḍalinī* (DU IV/11; JDU IV/11).

B.3 If the *Kuṇḍalinī* rests below the *Kanda* it binds (the *Jīva*). If it goes above the level of *Kanda* through the path of *Suṣumṇā* it gives the liberation to yogis (common YCU 44).

Comments

Most of the texts are of the opinion that *Kuṇḍalinī Shakti* i.e., THE SERPENT POWER is sleeping above the place of *Kanda*, its tail being in its own mouth, resting in the mouth of *Suṣumṇā*. It gets awakened through tackling the *Kanda* and move upwards through *Suṣumṇā* nadi up to *Sahasrāra* where *Śiva Shakti* get merged thereby availing liberation to yogis so long as it does not get awakened it binds the ignorant (to worldliness). Therefore, the knower of her is the knower of Yoga.

We find that the *Kuṇḍalinī* is closely associated with *Kanda*. The awakening of *Kuṇḍalinī*, some way or other, depends upon the tackling of *Kanda* and thereby the role of *Kanda* becomes clear in the hathayogic curriculum.

IV.C *Kanda* with Reference to *Prāṇa*

- a) The most important *prāṇa* is confined at the below of *Kanda* (VS II/44).
- b) The *prāṇa* moves downwards in this *Mūla Cakra* i.e., basic circle (VS II/14; YY IV/20; YC page 80).
- c) The universal *prāṇa* stays below the navel of the *Kanda* (VS III/48).
- d) *Prāṇa* moves above and below the *Kuṇḍalī* (SAU I/II/13).

IV.D Kanda with Reference to Cakras

1. Related to Adhara Padma

- a) In *Mūlādhāra* there is lotus having four petals, wherein is situated a *Kanda* having a triangular shape (YRP 44).
- b) All this is called the *Ādhār-Padma* (the support, lotus) the yoni (origin) of which is *Kanda* (SS V/63).
- c) *Mūlādhāra Cakra* is said to be from *Kandamūla* to *Paramśakti* i.e., up to *Kuṇḍalī* power (K III/1).
- d) The seat of *Kanda* is nine digit lengths from *Mūlādhāra* (the root support) (DU IV/3; JDU IV/3).

2) Related to Svadhisthana Cakra

One should meditate on *Kanda* which gives the appearance of a fire, having fire within and the place is said to be the *Svādhiṣṭhāna Cakras* (YC page 90).

3) Related to Manipura

- a) At the *Nābhimāṇḍala* (area of umbilicus) there is a *Kanda* which is pierced through by the *Suṣumṇā* as a bead is sewn by a thread. At this centre there is a *Cakra* called *Maṇipūr* (G 15; YM 15; GP I/23; YCU 12-13).
- b) In *Nāḍikanda* where the *Maṇipūra* is supported (Comm. on KU 8).
- c) *Kanda* is like having a shape of a ball is connected with the pericarp of *Maṇipūraka* lotus (GP page 18).

4) Related to Anāhata / Hrtpadma

- a) Within the arrangement of *Anāhata* grown from the middle of the *Kanda*, having the twelve *aṅgulas* long stalk and two *aṅgulas* its mouth downward (YCU p.41).
- b) Within the *Hrtpadma* (heart lotus) bearing eight petals, grown from the middle of *Kanda* having the twelve *aṅgulas* long stalk (YY IX/12; VS IV/26).

5) Related to Ajñā Cakra

That (Brahmanāḍī i.e., Suṣumṇā) starts from the Kandamūla and goes up to Ajñā Cakra where its roots, having the brightness are connected with the root of the Brahman (K III/1).

6) Related to Sahasrara

The Nāḍī (Suṣumṇā) goes from Mūlādhāra to Brahmarandhra which starts from Kandamūla and goes up to the head where the thousand petals lotus is situated having the position of its mouth downward (K III/1; RY page 6).

Comments

Kanda is closely associated with Cakras also, as these Cakras are said to be situated in Suṣumṇā that starts from the middle of the Kanda to the head wherein the thousand petals lotus is situated.

So here in point No.IV.A. is the original place of all the nadis out of which Suṣumṇā is most important. In B., Kuṇḍalinī is said to be above the Kanda. In C, Prāṇa rests below the Kanda. In D, Cakras are also connected with Kanda. To understand these concepts like Kuṇḍalinī, Nāḍis and Cakras it seems that the knowledge of Kanda is essential on the basis of which we can develop yogic anatomy which may in turn facilitate the Hāthayogic Sādhana.

V. Importance of Āsanas, Prāṇāyāma, Mudrās & Prāṇadhāranā as related to Kanda

V.A. Asanas

a. *Kandapīḍanasana*: Bend both the legs at the knee. Both the foot should be kept below the navel. Now rest your right palm on left knee and left palm on right knee this type of sitting is said to be Kanda-Pīḍanāsana (K page 248).

a.1 Ūrdhva Kandapīḍanāsana

After performing Kanda Pīḍanāsana keep a little distance between both the knees. This is called Ūrdhva Kandapīḍanāsana (K page 248).

b. One should place the left heel under the knot of the navel and the other heel over it, with his back, head and body in line. This is known as the *Vajrāsana* posture (YKU I/6).

b.1 Seated in the *Vajrāsana* and holding firmly the two feet near the ankles with the two hands, the *Kanda* should be pressed hard at that spot (where the heel touches the body) (HP III/110; GP page 29; YK VIII/169; K II/53; YKU I/49).

b.2 Seated in the *Vajrāsana* hold firmly with the hands the feet near the ankles and thereby put the pressure below the *Kandanābhi* (J III/114).

b.3 Fixing left ankle above the penis and the other ankle over that is *Siddhāsana*. Others call it *Vajrāsana*, some call it *Muktāsana* while some others call it *Guptāsana* (HP I/36-37).

The position of these āsanās give a clue that those who are having idea about the place of *Kanda* at the Navel region, seem to manipulate the navel region but the manipulation of *Kanda* is essential.

Comments

We see that manipulation of *Kanda* is done through *Kanda Pīdanāsana* or *Ūrdhva Kanda Pīdanāsana* below the level of umbilical area. We see these āsanās rarely in *Hathayoga*. *Siddhāsana*, *Padmāsana* are accepted as the most important āsanās in *Hathayoga*. The position of these āsanās show the pressure at the level of Pelvic floor. It seems that tackling of *Kanda* can take place at the level of *Mulādhāra*, here the pressure given at the pelvic floor motivates the prana to move upward through the *Suṣumṇā*. Therefore, these āsanās are the most important in *Hathayoga* curriculum and tackling of *Kanda* can take place at this point and thereby the manipulation of *Kanda* is important.

V.B. Prāṇāyāma

a) Control of breath (Prāṇāyāma) should be regularly practiced with a mind in which the *sāttvika* (pure) elements prevail till the *Suṣumṇā nāḍī* is free from impurities (HP II/6).

b) When groups of *Nāḍīs* are purified by a regular practice of *prāṇāyāma*, *Maruta* penetrates the mouth of *Suṣumṇā* and moves upward with ease (HP II/41).

c) After giving up *recaka* and *pūraka*, the yogin with a sharp intellect taking his stand in the *Kumbhaka* and having attained equilibrium in the region of the middle of *Kanda*, should bring about the control of *Prāṇa* and *Apāna* (Vital airs) (BVU 21-22).

d) Within the heart lotus, bearing eight petals grown from the middle of *Kanda*, blossomed with *Prāṇāyāma* and having the inner stalks full of tendrils (VS IV/26; YY IX/12).

e) Having the stalk in the form of knowledge, having *Kanda* in the form of *Mahat*, awakened by *Prāṇāyāma* (VS IV/33).

Comments

i) In the *Pranayama* the most important part is to be noted that *Suṣumṇā* is to be purified so that *prāṇa* revolving below the *Kanda* can penetrate the mouth of *Suṣumṇā* and moves upward with ease.

ii) One should attain the *Prāṇa* and *Apāna* equilibrium in the middle of the *Kanda*.

iii) The *Cakras* are the stalk in the form of knowledge, awakened by *prāṇāyāma*. This cannot be understood without tackling the *Kanda*. Thereby the role of *Kanda* becomes important in Hathayoga.

V.C. Bandhas

a) By simultaneous contraction of the pubic region (*Mūlabandha*) and the throat (*Jālandhara bandha*) and retracting the abdomen towards the back (*Uḍḍiyānak*) *prāṇa* courses through the *Brahmanāḍī* (*Suṣumṇā*) (HP II/46; SAU I/12).

b) Contracting the throat (in the *Jālandhara bandha*) and the anus (in the *Mūlabandha*), at the same time, and by stretching back the navel area (in the *Uddiyāna bandha*) the prāṇa flows through the *Suṣumṇā* (J II/46).

c) After performing the *Jālandhara bandha* and *Mūlabandha* stretching backward the area below the navel is the *Uddiyāna bandha* (J II/47).

Comments

Here we find the rich potentiality of *bandhas* to move the prāṇa upwards through the contraction and stretching. This stretching of the whole of the posterior part i.e., above, around and below the level of the navel gives the idea of manipulation of *Kanda* which directs the prāṇa to move upward through *Suṣumṇā*.

V.D. Mudrās

a) *Śakticālana*: Seated in the *Vajrāsana* pose and holding firmly the two feet near the ankles with the two hands the *Kanda* should be pressed hard at that spot (where the heels touch the body) (HP III/110).

b) After performing the *Vajrāsana* pose hold firmly, with the hands, the feet near the ankles and thereby put pressure on the *Kanda* below the navel (J III.114).

b) *Uddiyāna*: Effortfully stretching is described above and below the navel.

Comments

Through these above observations, it becomes aptly clear that manipulation of *Kanda* is the most important technical aspect for rising of the prāṇa or for the movement of *Kundalinī*.

V.E. Prāṇadhāraṇā/ Vāyu Dhāraṇā

- a) The yogin should project and hold his vital force (*Prāṇa*) along with his mind on navel region the tip of the nose and the big toe of the foot with great effort during the evening twilights or always [TSB (M) 109].
- b) One should retain the breath and concentrate in the middle of the *Kanda*, in the middle of the heart, at the root of the throat, at the palate, between the eyebrows, in the forehead and in the head (DU VII/12; JDU VII/12).
- c) With the concentration at the middle of navel region one should practice till the mind merges there (VS III/49).

Comments

From the above description, it shows that different places are described for the retention of *prāṇa* out of which retention of *prāṇa* in the middle of the *Kanda* is most important because the process of upward movement of *prāṇa* can take place from that point only. Therefore, it is instructed that one should practice this process till the mind merges there.

V.F. Dhyāna

- a) One should meditate on the *śakti*, i.e., power in *Kanda* in the form of burning fire (SSS II/2).
- b) There is a *Kanda* which gives the appearance of fire. One should meditate on the power below the *Kanda*.
- c) Heart lotus bearing eight petals, grown from middle of the *Kanda* having twelve angulas long stalk four angulas broad at its face one should see (meditate) with *Vāsudeva*, the lord of the Universe in mind (VS IV/26-27).
- d) One should attain equilibrium of *prāṇa* and *apāna* in the region of the navel. Eagerly drinking the nectar stored in the head in a state of mental abstraction (BVU 21-22).
- e) *Mūla Cakra* is said to be existent from *Kandamūla* to the place of the great power called *Kuṇḍalinī*, the Yogin becomes good speaker,

- extraordinary man, lover of knowledge, always in pleasure and superior by meditating at this level (K III/1 page 762).
- f) *Kundalinī* is to be meditated upon below (the *Kanda*) (YC page 89).
 - g) Mind is to be fixed there (HP III/1B-19).
 - h) Through the meditation the *mahānādi* i.e., *Suṣumṇā* having the nature of power gives the desired fruit (YK I/247).
 - i) One should effortfully meditate below and up of the navel (YR VIII/72).

Comments

From the above observation it seems that by meditating the area around the *Kanda*, gives the sensation of *Kuṇḍalinī* with which the mind gets attached and the *Sadhaka* becomes the extraordinary one.

VI. Effects of Hathayogic Practices involving *Kanda*

VI.A. Physical Effects

- 1) By holding the vital air in the knot of the navel diseases of the belly will be cured and longevity and lightness of the body will be attained. [TSB (M) 110].
- 2) One who brings under control the union of the *prāṇa* and *apāna* at the region of navel at *Kanda* attains the state of perpetual existence (BVU 22-23).
- 3) Through the knowledge of *Kanda* one knows bodies, elements, all the seven dhatus and their path and the existence of embodied soul (K III/29 page 130).

VI.B. Spiritual Effects

- 1) By untiring practice of *Asana*, *Prāṇāyāma* and *Mudrās* the middle *Nādi* (*Suṣumṇā*) becomes an easy course for *Kuṇḍalinī* to travel (HP III/120).
- 2) Then that igneous *Nāga* (*Kuṇḍalinī*) gets awakened (VS III/50).
- 3) Awakened by the contact of fire and consciously fanned with the vital breath, she rises along the *Suṣumṇā* (G 31; GP I/49).
- 4) One gets all types of *Siddhis* i.e., Powers (BP page 9).

- 5) The Yogin, who has awakened the *Kundalinī* above the knot of the navel, is a fit receptacle for the accomplishment of Yoga (DBU 73).
6) Yogin becomes extraordinary man (K III/1 page 262).

VII. Spiritual Importance of Kanda in Hathayoga

- a) A circle of twelve spokes support the body. In this circle the individual self moves motivated by merit and demerit (VS II/13; YY IV/19; SAU I/7; YC page 80).
b) The great *Cakra* having twelve spokes devoid of all merit and demerit in which individual (*Jīva*) moves till he knows the highest truth (YM 15; GP I/24; YCU 13-14).
c) There is the twelve spokes *Cakra*. The Vishnu and other Gods reside in the spokes. I (Isvara) taking my stand there and causes the spokes to whirl with my own power of *Māya*. The *Jīva* whirls among the spokes one after the other. The *Jīva* moves due to the vital air without which the existence of *Jīva* cannot be imagined [TSB (M) 61].
d) The twelve spoked plexus of *Nāḍīs* where with the body is supported, abides the *Kundalinī* (VU V/22).
e) The Universal *prāṇa* lays herein (*Kanda*) (VS III/48).
f) *Prāṇa* moves downward in this *Mūla Cakra* (basic circle) of the *Jīva* just as the spider moves in the middle of cobweb (VS II/14).
g) One can realize the *Hari (Isvara)* through the knowledge of this *Kanda* (AP I/214).

Conclusion

1. We may consider the 'Kanda' as the nucleus or the pivotal point around which the pranic activities revolve in the human body.
2. 'Kanda' has been variously named in the Sanskrit literature with its structure and form or its role and function.

3. 'Kanda' is an egg shaped bulbous structure serving as the point of origin of all the nadis.
4. Majority of the texts have considered the location of 'Kanda' at the level of *Mūlādhāra* or *Dehamadhya*, as against at/ below the level of umbilicus, which seems to be more appropriate in order to give a rational explanation of other concepts like *Cakras*; '*Kuṇḍalinī*' etc.
5. As regards the location of '*Kuṇḍalinī*' most of the texts determine its position at or above the level of 'Kanda' which seems rationally acceptable in order to understand arousal and movement of '*Kuṇḍalinī*'.
6. According to Hāthayoga spiritual attainment cannot be possible without tackling the 'Kanda' and for that purpose one single practice cannot be sufficient and therefore, a composite view of all the practices should be considered.
7. Through the understanding of 'Kanda' the yogic anatomy may be developed which is expected to help the Yoga Sadhakas to understand the concepts like '*Kuṇḍalinī*', '*Cakras*' etc.
8. There is a need to study '*Nāḍīs*'; '*Cakras*' and '*Kuṇḍalinī*' in the same form in order to make them more and more clear for Yoga Sādhakas.

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