

this is both exhalation and suspension (of breath). Similarly, the internal operation also is a combination of inhalation and suspension of breath. In some books it is stated that the suspension of breath after exhalation is a Tāntric form of Prāṇāyāma, and suspension after inhalation is the Vedic form of it. Thus, external operation etc. are not the same as pure Rechaka, Pūraka and Kumbhaka only as understood in modern times.

The ancient processes of 'Rechaka' etc., are similar to the processes described in the Yoga philosophy.

The particular form of effort, which brings about suspension, may be described as an effort at contraction in all the limbs of the body. When that effort becomes firm, suspension of breath can be maintained for a long time, otherwise it cannot be maintained for more than two or three minutes. This should be clearly understood. (By inhaling oxygen, suspension of breath—not the suspension of Prāṇa or vital energy—can be maintained up to eight or ten minutes.)

In the Haṭha-Yoga that effort is called Mūla-Bandha (contraction of the anus), Uddiyāna-Bandha (contraction of the abdomen), and Jālandhara-Bandha (contraction of the throat). The operation called Khecharī-Mudrā, is also similar. For the practice of this posture, the tongue has to be repeatedly pulled to elongate it gradually. Pressing the extended tongue into the nasopharynx and applying pressure on the nerves therein, or pulling them, it is possible to maintain suspension of breath and vital energies (state of catalepsy) for some time. As result of these efforts at contraction, the nerves being inclined towards suspension, the breath and life energy may be suspended. By the adoption of a particular form of diet, and practices performed with a healthy body, the nerves and muscles attain a Sāttvika form of alacrity with the help of which this strong effort can be made (Buddhists describe this alacrity as gentleness and dexterity of the body). This effort cannot be made with a flabby body which is not muscular, hence there are instructions to make the body strong and perfectly healthy by the adoption of various postures and practices.

This is how the function of the Prāṇa (vital energies) can be stopped with Haṭha, i.e. by enforced means. This, however,