

“Asana or did you say Aasana?”

“Is it true that the word ‘asana’ is plural and the word ‘asan’ is in the singular? I am quite sure that the word ‘asanas’ is an English adaptation. Shouldn’t we be using ‘correct’ Sanskrit when we teach?”

Aasana is the Sanskrit word for posture that we are talking so much about. It has various endings that we just couldn't be bothered about because if we scratched our head that much our hair would fall out. The word aasana is in its singular form. If you want it to be the subject of your sentence you should say aasan**am**. The plural subject form is aasana**ani**, now tell me when is the last time you heard that?

Of course if you are talking about two, you'd better say aasane**e**, but only if it's the subject or object of your sentence. Because if you want to say ‘by my aasana’ or ‘due to my aasana’ you'd better say aasan**ena**. Of course if it's ‘due to my aasana-**s**’ then please say aasan**aih**. Unless again, you wish to refer to only two, then to help us understand, please use the form aasana**abhyaam**. Aasana**aat** is the form you'd better use if you want to say that you got something ‘from your aasana,’ and if it were two a a s a n a - **s** then again use aasana**abhyaam**. If you want to ask your class to go (or do

something) ‘in or inside the aasana-**s**’ (plural), use the form aasan**eshu** if it was just ‘in an aasana’ then simply say aasane**e**. Okay but if it is specifically two aasana-**s** you are referring to please use aasan**ayoh** for clear understanding. To do something ‘for an aasana’ the form aasana**aaya** must be used, but again be careful because in the plural use aasane**bhyah** and in the dual use aasana**abhyaam**. Notice the same dual form was used thrice to signify different things, this helps to keep it simple.

Let's go onward. Say that you want to do an aasana ‘belonging of the shiirshaasana’ series. Then use the form shiirshaasana**asya**, unless there are two series then you must use shiirshaasana**ayoh**, let's not forget plural which is shiirshaasana**aanaam**.

If you want to get technical the word aasana should only be used if you were calling your aasanam to come over to you or if you wanted to get your aasanam-s attention. In Sanskrit it would sound quite exactly like "Hey Aasana!" That's perhaps what we are doing when we say a particular posture because it always ends in ‘a’ i.e. Viirabhadraasana etc. “Hey! Viirabhadra!” “Bring your stance over to me! Let me rest in your seat! I want to know you from that depth

of experience! As I hold my body in your position, let your spirit merge with mine! I will meditate on only you and you can hold my body in the position! As long as I meditate on you, I need not struggle with this posture!" "Oh, Viirabhadra! (Great Warrior.) Life and Death do not disturb you! You fret not about the past, worry not about the future! In this moment you are, ever focused, this moment, this breath, that is the force of your life! Full vibrancy, ever free, I connect with you there!" In actuality we are using the stem of the word when we say aasana or taadaasana, so the above is just a way of looking at it.

The word "aasanas" is not found in Sanskrit at all. We always add an 's' to Sanskrit words because, well the truth is that once we start using it, it is no longer Sanskrit, it becomes an English word. That is unless you are proficient in using all the forms above with their verbs, usage etc. So as we use them more and more they will get introduced into our language because face it we are not going to learn to speak Sanskrit anyway. Yoga is now an English

word, so is karma. So what is the hullabaloo really all about? We can just as well add Bhujangaasana into the English language. Because the form Bhujangaasana**ena** is of no use to us in English, we will never need it.

Now how attached are you *really* to using *all* of these correct Sanskrit forms? Better not teach for a while. In ballet, all the terminology is in French. You never hear a ballet student saying that they love to dance but will quit if the teacher doesn't stop using French terms. Much of our language has already come from Sanskrit; obviously much more is going to enter our language. When teaching, as best as we can we should use the words that our students will understand and identify with. That doesn't mean that they can't learn new words for their vocabulary. If the student is sharp they will love the new dimension. If you have students that are more dull, you don't have to challenge (irritate) them in this way. Besides, many students may have too much else to think about in their lives. Be easy.

'Aasan' in Sanskrit has nothing at all to do with aasana. It means 'to gain or to obtain.' It could also mean 'mouth.' However in Hindi 'aasan' is the equivalent to 'aasanam' in Sanskrit, or what we refer to as 'asana' in English.

The meaning is 'Sitting in a particular posture according to the custom of devotees; halting; stopping; the manner of sitting forming part of the eightfold observances of ascetics.' It comes from the root 'aas' 'To sit; sit down, rest, lie; to be present; to exist; to inhabit, dwell in; to make one's own

abode in; to sit quietly, abide, remain, continue; to cease, have an end; to solemnize, celebrate; to do anything without interruption; to continue doing anything; to continue any situation to last.'

'Asan' in Sanskrit means 'blood' but will only be seen in one form and that is 'asrj.' In other words you will never hear the word 'asan' for blood only 'asrj.' But asan in Hindi is used to mean 'a chair or a seat offered in respect as to a guru or teacher etc.'

'Asana' in Sanskrit is used when 'throwing or sending a shot; One who throws or discharges; a missile; an arrow.' The root is 'as.' 'Asana' also is 'the name of a tree.'

Sanskrit:

Aasana: sitting in a particular posture.

Asana: throwing or sending a shot; name of a tree.

Aasan: to gain or to obtain. It could also mean mouth.

Asan: (asrj) blood

Hindi:

Aasana: N/A

Asana: N/A

Aasan: sitting in a particular posture.

Asan: seat offered in respect.

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