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Role of Indian yoga in psychophysical development of Polish society.

1. Introduction.

In Poland interest of yoga started with the beginning of last century, however, its development with support of state organisations should be dated at the turn of the sixties and seventies. With the beginning of eighties method worked out by B. K. S. Iyengar reached our country what caused big popularity of yoga practise.

2. How is yoga understood?

The word yoga has two basic meanings. One of them is “subjugation” and the other is “union”. The oldest written transmission on this topic is the collection of aphorisms attributed to Patañjali and originated about 200 years BC. In this transmission “subjugation” concerns the subjugation of conscious phenomena. So when translating into language of contemporary human being of our European civilisation it concerns such control of our senses in order to manage our senses and do not allow them to manage us. „Union” is however the process of building in yourself harmony of body and mind (some add also spirit).

Archaeological excavations date first souvenirs, figures of persons in „strange poses” at 3500 years back. Since, more or less, that time humankind of contemporary India has been engaged in various types of exercises, both physical and intellectual in order to achieve aims mentioned before.

3. Which systems of work with body and intellect invented since that time are accepted by European science and culture?

Not all such ancient systems of exercises are recognised by present civilisation science. It is because often they require from practitioner too many sacrifices. The number of people practising in such a way is not big and in connection with this contemporary science has not given voice on such systems, not having enough material for researches. Everyone should approach experiments on own body and intellect with great caution. However, in seventies of last century in Poland have been started systematic researches on influence of exercises from varied yoga systems on human body. That is in our country these pioneering researches started Professor Tadeusz Pasek, by grouping around these issues famous Polish authorities from world of medicine, psychology and from other disciplines of knowledge [3]. Regardless of this fact at the same period its contribution into recognition what is yoga philosophy has Ph. D. Leon Cyboran [1]. Currently particularly strong development of these researches is observed at the Academies of Physical Education (particularly in Katowice, Krakow and Wroclaw). Researches on adaptation of yoga exercises system for people from west civilisation go on also in other not European countries, particularly in USA. Obviously, also from tens of years researches on these issues in all aspects are conducted in research institutes in India.

4. What system of practising yoga found the biggest recognition in Poland and Europe?

The biggest recognition among people practising yoga at European continent and also at American continent has the system created by Master B.K.S. Iyengar, acknowledged by specialists as the supreme yoga man of the 20th century. This system's main feature is very precise performance of physical and breathing exercises. The author of the system in genial way worked out the work of body when performing asanas, owing to this fact he aroused admiration among biochemist and antropomotrics – scientists dealing with researches on human movement mechanisms.

5. How is organised yoga teaching in Poland?

It should be mentioned that we are in the lead of the world as for the clarity of procedures in this scope. In seventies of last century thanks to enormous work of Professor Tadeusz Pasek through the Physical Culture Promulgation Society it was possible to get to know with this exercise system. Independently on this, lasted trainings of instructors of relaxing – concentrating exercises. At present, from some years yoga is classified by the Ministry of Education and Science as movement recreation system under the name kinezopsychoprophylaxis or fitness - psychophysical exercises. There is possibility to receive adequate diplomas which authorise to carry on practical lessons from this scope after successful completion of suitable course. These courses are organised from many years by the Academy of Physical Education in Katowice in co-operation with the Czestochowa University of Technology. Independently of this, established some years ago Polish Iyengar Yoga Association carries on series of specialist teaching courses. So, possibilities to get educated as a highly qualified yoga teacher are in our country tremendous. What is more, other west countries (considering recognition in Europe of our diplomas) have already undertook negotiations with our training centres in order to educate their citizens.

6. Which publications bring closer the results of Polish scientific researches on influence of yoga on human?

Scientific researches on influence of yoga practice on human were started in Poland at the turn of sixties and seventies last century. As first scientific elaboration of these issues should be mentioned the book (many times reissued) published under editorial office of Professor of medical sciences Roman Grochmal [3] under the name „Relaxing – concentrating exercises” and published by the National Medical Publishing House Institute. This position was created with great help of Professor Tadeusz Pasek. In it were included results of the time researches carried out on application of relaxing – concentrating exercises modelled on yoga. In particular there was showed their application in rehabilitation and work medicine, in psychophysical human education and their influence on his state of consciousness. From that moment particular attention deserve research works carried out by Professor Szyszko-Bohusz [10] and also Ph. D. Lesław Kulmatycki [4-6] concerning different further aspects on issues mentioned above. In 2004 at the Czestochowa University of Technology was published the book under the title „Yoga for health” [8]. In it are included not only the basic principles of asana practise (how technically correctly perform them) but also are described biomedical mechanisms of hatha-yoga exercises, their influence on selected aspects of psychophysical functioning and coping with difficulties and also results of carried out researches connected with influence of yoga exercises on mood of people who practise yoga. In book are also included basic definitions of classical Indian yoga. Thus it includes entirely issues connected with yoga. To this book was also produced movie which presents how to perform exercises described in the book. In 2005 for greater popularisation of yoga was written the book „Yoga,

movement-breath-relax” [2]. In it are described basic yoga positions, how to prepare for them and how perform them. Together were presented 75 asanas: standing, sitting, forward and backward bends, twists, inverted positions, laying positions, different positions and dynamic arrangements. In book were also given scientific basis what is breath and relax. There was also presented the number of breathing and relaxing exercises together with principles and ways of their performance. This book can be the compendium of basic knowledge on topic how to retain health, good physical and psychical condition. Moreover, in 2004 were organised in Czestochowa two scientific conferences (among this one was international) where plenty of time was devoted to contemporary results of researches on influence of yoga practice on human [7, 9]. In this city were also organised a big number of workshops from yoga practice scope and their guests were distinguished representatives of school of Master B. K. S. Iyengar with Ph. D. Geeta Iyengar in the lead.

7. What results of researches on influence of yoga practice on human were received in Polish scientific institutions?

Received results of researches on yoga practice influence on human in Polish scientific centres showed among practising people:

- – higher stress resistance,
- – more realistic assessment of encountered life difficulties,
- – distance to appearing life problems,
- – increase of inner calmness,
- – higher optimism and mood improvement,
- – improvement of one’s image,
- – higher assertiveness, courage,
- – easier decision taking,
- – improvement of interpersonal contacts with other people,
- – increase of emotional balance,
- – increase of one’s body consciousness,
- – health improvement,
- – body’s fitness and flexibility improvement,
- – fitness and endurance improvement,
- – higher endurance in tasks which involve big effort,
- – attention increase, higher mind concentration,
- – easier regeneration of physical and psychical strengths of the body after effort,
- – regular sleep,
- – better day organisation.

These results forcibly prove positive influence of yoga on people. This is the role of Indian yoga in psychophysical development of Polish society.

8. Summary.

This knowledge causes that in Poland and also in Europe and all around the world grows interest in this ancient Indian knowledge.

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