

The triangle (*trikoṇāsana*) and the wish for relationship

Article by Manuela Maria Walbrühl, September 2020

To associate yoga with social life may sound unfamiliar at first. In the West yoga is often known as a relaxation- and body-method to gain energy, become or stay more agile, calm, concentration and healthy. It is usually directed towards the personal well-being of the individuality.

The *New Yoga Will* by Heinz Grill, author and founder of a spiritual training path, goes beyond these positive effects and wants to make a contribution to social life in his holistic approach. This article describes by the example of the yoga exercise of the triangle, *trikoṇāsana*, how it can be.

The human being as an individual and social being

The human being is an individuality and at the same time a social being. The psychologist and psychoanalyst Fritz Riemann describes these two characteristics as follows: *"On the one hand, we should become a unique individual, affirming our own identity and setting ourselves apart from others, and we should become distinctive personalities, not interchangeable masses."* (1) On the other hand, this is contrasted by how contradictory and yet at the same time complementary, *"that we should open ourselves to the world, to life and to our fellow human beings, trusting them, that we should get involved with the non-I, the foreign, that we should enter into an exchange with that which is not us."* (2)

The human being with his creative potential is able to respond to these two aspirations in ever new ways.

For social coexistence in a society, the formation of relationships and communication are two fundamental prerequisites. The sociologist and futurologist Harald Welzer says: *"What holds the human world together at its core is communication, or more precisely the inexhaustible and specifically human potential to establish relationships of a direct and indirect, close and loose, closer and distant nature with other people"*. (3)

Relationships with other people, oneself, the animal kingdom and the natural world are among the basic human needs. If we have to do without them, we will weaken ourselves physically, mentally and spiritually. Contact and exchange with others contributes to our well-being, our health and our further development.

The yoga exercise, the triangle (*trikoṇāsana*), refers to this basic human need with its mental-spiritual symbol. *"The wide reaching out corresponds to the wish for advancement, for learning, for growth and finally for an orderly being in relationship."* (4)

The image of the triangle

In the practice of the triangle we see a wide movement in space. The flanks stretch and open outwards. *"It is the image of expansiveness and extent."* (5)

How can we experience this image? For this purpose the following thoughts can be chosen for practice.

Different thoughts for experiencing the space

1. With the lateral movement we feel far into the space outside.
2. We experience the lateral flank, which expands and opens up to the space.
3. At the beginning of the practice we can perceive the outer space, which surrounds us with an infinite expanse. This feeling transfers to the expansion of the entire ribcage.

The practice of the triangle

1. If we select one of the three aspects we imagine the movement from the beginning until the end of the position.
2. Then we take an equilateral triangular position with our legs and observe:
 - a) the calm, stable stand
 - b) the middle with solar plexus in the upper abdomen, where the lateral movement will start
 - c) the relaxed upper body with loosened shoulders and neck.
3. The breath flows freely and unhindered in its rhythm to the flanks and abdomen. It flows freely and naturally during the whole performance so that it remains independent of movement. Thus breath and movement get the greatest possibility to develop to their capacity and wideness.
4. With the chosen content we create the triangle. One arm leads to the side, the other straight up next to the head. The movement starts far into the area of the solar plexus. The ribcage lifts up slightly and is carried to the side over the iliac crest.
5. We hold the final position for a few free breaths, with advanced practice also a little longer. The consciousness remains in a relaxed overview to the body, to the space and to the chosen content.
6. After completion we practice the other side in the same way. It is recommended to repeat three times on each side.



The experience of the space

The term "space" contains many different ideas. In this context, the term mainly refers to a space for meeting, perception and communication. This space is physical as well as mental and spiritual.

The three-dimensionality with length, width, height, the cosmic, universal space and the air and breathing space are also taken into account.

The breathing space

The triangle is directly related to the air and breathing space. The wide lateral flexion acts on the largest breathing muscle, the diaphragm. This area is stretched so that tension can be released. Breathing begins to flow further and more freely. This allows the organs to relax more easily and subsequently carry out their activities better.

When, on the other hand, breathing is tight or restricted, this puts a strain on the body's functions. A disharmonious body feeling can occur with longer restrictions. The person does not feel quite as well physically and mentally. If a person doesn't feel well, their interest in others can decrease.

A wide and unhindered breathing means *"in relation to life, a natural, orderly and sensitive relationship with others"*. (6)

The meeting place

In the picture of the triangle we see the wide lateral movement out into space. The flanks open up for the experience of space and the perception of the surroundings. This surrounding space is not empty. In it people move with their thoughts, feelings and actions. The animals, nature and objects also exist in this space. A visible and invisible communication is possible.

With the lateral movement we approach the other. *"The wide reaching out corresponds to the wish for advancement, for learning, for growth and finally for an orderly being in relationship."* (4)

The practice of the triangle with a thought to the symbol

The design can be extended and intensified with the above symbol. For this we select one aspect:

1. *"The wide reaching out corresponds to the wish for advancement, for learning, for growth..."* (4)
2. *"The wide reaching out corresponds to the wish ... for an orderly being in relationship"*. (4)

After the practice we look back. Has the movement and the experience changed through this content? How has it been shown? Has the movement been lighter and wider? What was the expression of the position?

The expression can also change if we first think only the content, observe it in life and implement it. The experiences we make are reflected in the next version of the triangle.

The triangle and the relationship life

If we look at the attitude and movement of the triangle, we see a division into three areas:

1. The upper body and the shoulder region are light and relaxed.
2. The middle of the body with the solar plexus gives the active impulse for movement.
3. The stand forms a calm, stable base.

The middle of the body is very active. On the one hand it motivates movement, on the other hand it gives a hold at the same time.

When we enter into a relationship, our attention and perception expand towards the person opposite. At the same time we want to maintain an independent hold within ourselves. *"Hold and sensitive expansion show a kind of relationship order."* (7)

A relationship order also includes a harmonious structure of thinking, feeling and wanting:

1. Thinking observes and forms real conceptions starting from the other person. In this way projections and quick judgments can be avoided.
2. Feelings arise which deepen the impressions.
3. The will maintains the perception to the other person and the theme. It keeps a free space open for others, ourself and the content of communication.

Especially the handling of the will seems to be something essential in relationships. How often does it happen that people meet each other with a certain expectation? Or they want to win the other over in favour of their own needs and convictions? Or they dump something on the other person that they want to get rid of? If will impulses are put into meetings, it will be able, that the other person will withdraw or go into confrontation. This makes further dialogue more difficult.

A prerequisite for a constructive dialogue is a free space for all participants. Here everyone has the opportunity to express their ideas, conceptions and wishes. They can be mutually perceived. The presentation of the one is equal to the presentation of the other. They are respective expressions of one's own will intentions. These can sometimes have the opposite effect. Looking at both sides can be interesting and broaden one's mind.

An art in communication is not to retreat into polarising positions but to have the courage to look at a common interest and find a common goal. This possibility can open up content and levels that have never seen before. The perspective is widening and expanding. The resulting wideness is a soul feeling. With this new point of view our consciousness and thus our personality expand.

Relationship ability

The ability to relationship has various characteristics from which a wide range of ideas can be developed. In conclusion, I would like to sketch a picture based on a thought by Heinz Grill. Some of the above mentioned aspects can be found in it. *"The relationship ability would also include being able to treat people in a liberating and harmonising way"*. (8)

Being able to treat people in a liberating way is shown by the fact that fears, depressions and suggestions recede and a new space for a topic or clarification is opened up.

The ability to relationship in the sense of a harmonious interaction with each other is created by leaving the polarising level. The perception turns to a suitable content and possibilities. A thought directs the sensory process so that the freedom and dignity of the human being is preserved or elevated.

Outlook

Yoga exercises with a soul and spiritual content provide inspirations and perspectives. The triangle shows with its wide lateral movement a relation to the outside in the space. The movement expresses the wish for relationship.

We can form our own ideas what an orderly, harmonious and healthy relationship could be. We have the ability to implement these with our creative powers.

References

- (1) Riemann, Fritz: Grundformen der Angst, Eine tiefenpsychologische Studie, Ernst Reinhardt, GmbH & Co. Verlag, München, 1961, 1995, Seite 13, „ *ein einmaliges Individuum werden sollen, unser Eigensein bejahend und gegen andere abgrenzend, dass wir unverwechselbare Persönlichkeiten werden sollen, kein austauschbarer Massenmensch.* “
- (2) Ebenda, Seite 13, „*daß wir uns der Welt, dem Leben und den Mitmenschen vertrauend öffnen, uns einlassen sollen mit dem Nicht-Ich, dem Fremden, in Austausch treten sollen mit dem Außer-uns-Seinenden.*“
- (3) Welzer, Harald: Alles könnte anders sein, Eine Gesellschaftsutopie für freie Menschen, Fischer Verlag GmbH, Frankfurt am Main, 2. Auflage Februar 2019, Seite 157, „*Was die menschliche Welt im Innersten zusammenhält, ist Kommunikation, genauer gesagt das unerschöpfliche und spezifisch menschliche Potential, Beziehungen direkter und indirekter, enger und loser, näher und ferner Art mit anderen Menschen herzustellen.*“
- (4) Grill, Heinz: Der freie Atem und der Lichtseelenprozess, Heinrich Schwab Verlag GmbH & Co. KG., Argenbühl, 2017, Seite 84, „*Das weite Hinausgreifen entspricht dem Wunsch nach Vorwärtkommen, nach Lernen, nach Wachstum und schließlich nach einem geordnetem In-Beziehung-Sein.*“
- (5) Grill, Heinz: Ein Neuer Yogawille und seine therapeutische Anwendung bei Ängsten und Depressionen, Synthesia-Verlag, Vaihingen/Enz, 2010, Seite 61, „*Es ist das Bild der Weite und Ausdehnung.*“ (5)
- (6) Grill, Heinz: Der freie Atem und der Lichtseelenprozess, Heinrich Schwab Verlag GmbH & Co. KG., Argenbühl, 2017, Seite 81, „*auf das Leben bezogen ein natürliches, geordnetes wie auch empfindsames In-Beziehung-Stehen mit Anderen.*“
- (7) Grill, Heinz: Kosmos und Mensch, Stephan Wunderlich Verlag, Sigmaringen, 4. vollkommen neu überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage 2015, Seite 102, „*Halt und sensible Ausdehnung zeigen eine Art Beziehungsordnung.*“
- (8) Grill, Heinz: Initiatorische Schulung in Arco, Gemeinschaftsbildung und Kosmos, Lammers-Koll Verlag e. K., Niedern-Öschelbronn, 2003, Seite 127, „*Beziehungsfähigkeit würde auch einschließen, mit Menschen befreiend und harmonisierend umgehen zu können.*“

Translation of the quotations: Manuela Maria Walbrühl