

# The THONSE Effect

*A Nature Cure experience*



*By Ramesh Ranjan*

*Bangalore, 31 Dec 2014*

I have heard a lot about Nature Cure treatment , Pancha Karma, Jindal treatment etc. and I was tempted to try it out but did not have the gumption to try it for some reason. Call it fear of the unknown, whether I would stand the test of it (diets) or is it worth it. However there was a lingering desire to go through one such experience.

Naturopathy is a natural healing technique using the healing powers of nature. The principle of Naturopathy is that the accumulation of toxins is the root cause of all diseases. Prevention and elimination of toxins is the route to health. Treatments are based on the 5 great elements of nature that have immense healing properties. There is no role of internal medications in the nature cure system.

The Five great elements of nature and the treatments based on them are:

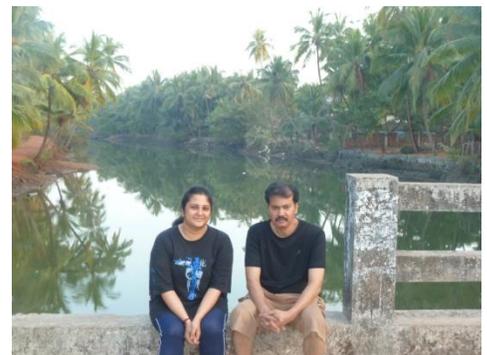
1. Earth - Mud baths, Mud packs,
2. Water - Hydrotherapeutic methods in the form of Baths, Jets, Douches, Packs, Compresses, Immersions
3. Air - Breathing exercises, Outdoor walking, Open air baths
4. Fire - Sun baths, Thermoleum baths, Magnetised water, Colour charged oils / water
5. Ether - Fasting therapy

This multi disciplinary approach uses the healing power of natural resources like foods, herbs, earth, water, air, sun and magnets to allow the body to heal itself. It helps in degenerative and chronic conditions like asthma and arthritis, gastro-intestinal problems and hypertension.

On 20<sup>th</sup> Dec, I had the shock of my life, my fasting blood sugar had shot up to 240 on empty stomach. I decided “That’s It”. I was getting tired, with stress catching up rapidly. Started putting up weight (72+ kg) and was starting to look older than my normal self.

The year end block closure at Office was fast approaching. That meant that I would have around 2 weeks of free time (sort of vacation time off). My team member and colleague at office, was tempting me with an offer for some time. Tripthi Shetty, who is part of my team was sharing with me her experience of Nature Cure treatment for her illness (maintaining confidentiality for sensitivity) at a place near her home viz. Thonse Nature Cure Centre. She used to narrate her experience and the benefit that she derived from it. Daily Massages, different baths, diets etc.

She was sharing that come December she would again be going through a Nature Cure treatment at Thonse. That’s when, coupled with my trigger that I decided that I would jump into it and almost in a jiffy told Tripthi, that I would join her to Thonse.



I packed my bags almost overnight and early morning 5 am was driving down to Udupi along with Tripthi, her brother Tushar and myself in a Alto. We wound past Tumkur, Hassan, Charmadi Ghat, Karkala, Dharmasthala and then landed at Santha Kate, at Tripthi’s home. The journey was mostly on good roads except after Charmadi ghat. Towards the end it became an un-ending journey and

**The Thonse Effect** by *Ramesh Ranjan*

started to tire us down. I was feeling bad for Tushar as he was driving for nearly 9 hours. Finally after a journey of 9 hours, we reached Santha Kate, a nice town near Udupi and was impressed with the surroundings. The gated community in Bangalore would be put to shame. Houses located in large plots (min 10 cents - around 4000 sq ft) and with plenty of greenery around mostly coconut trees. Very clean and very refreshing.

We were received by Tripthi's father - a retired Bank Officer and he welcomed us with a welcome drink - Tender Coconut juice. Very refreshing and cooling after a tired journey of around 9 hours. To my surprise her father offered me lunch - Curd rice with pomegranates, grapes etc. I enjoyed eating it and then the taxi arrived to fetch me to Thonse Nature Cure Health Centre.

I was suddenly all alone being ferried to a unknown place about to embark on an unknown experience. Tripthi was to join after a couple of days. So I was going to be inducted all alone. After a few winding roads through some scenic places lined with Coconut trees and near Malpe beach, I finally arrived at the place. Its located at Thonse a small Muslim hamlet. At first glance I was a bit sceptic and a bit worried. But after I entered the Thonse Nature Cure Health Centre, I was greeted with a pleasant surprise- the Centre is located on the banks of a beautiful river - more like a large lake lined with islands and coconut trees. I was wondering did I land in the wrong place or in Kerala - the original Gods Own Country.

Thonse hamlet is situated in Kemmannu and is an enchanting land of islands, backwaters and coconut palms, i have no hesitation to say that Kemmannu can be considered as a blend of Goa and Kerala. Meanwhile, I could see boatmen moving on the backwater canal transporting commodities including dry woven coconut palms which are used by the people living nearer to the sea to cover the front portion of their houses to prevent rain water hitting their front doors and walls. As most of the Kudrus are not connected with motorable roads, small bridges and the boats are the only means of transport to the many households situated on these widespread small islands.

Thonse Health Centre is a Natural Holistic Hospital. Service to humanity is their motto. At Thonse health, it is a journey back to nature with their humble service to prepare the platform as therapeutic nature cure hospital in the midst of lush green nature with all modern eco friendly facilities. Their dream is to convert Natural Thonse Island into Health Island and to provide peaceful health seekers in all earnestness.

Its been started and run by B. M. ZAFFER, a differently enabled person who recovered from a Polio attack in his early days. He is a finance professional currently working in Dubai but passionately runs the Thonse Health Centre with a team of dedicated staff led by Dr. Shrutha, the Chief Medical Officer. We had the chance to meet him during our stay and he was seen to be a very humble person and a person with a vision to "serve humanity". He was very keen to hear our experience, seek our feedback & suggestions and came across as a very nice person. He hails from a good family background and is very passionate & proud of the Thonse town and was keen to "give back to his native village" through this Thonse Nature Cure Centre. He has helped many a local families by giving them employment and developing the place into a place of reckoning.

Its an island located in Thonse-Hoode near Kemmannu in Udupi Taluk and on the banks of the Suvarna River.



It is a Centre that looks like an Apartment at first glance from outside. Its built on a 3 acre plot with lots of greenery on the front side on the banks of river Suverna. It has a nice row of cement benches alongside the river for one to sit down and enjoy the beauty of the river with birds flowing through and occasionally catch up with some fisher man fishing. Towards the evening a slight wind blows through the river. Inside the building you have a lobby with the reception at the front and then you have a courtyard with an open space. On 4 sides you have the 3 floors of the Health Centre. Behind the reception you have the Chairman's office, CMO-Dr Shrutha's consultation room, duty Doctors consultation room, the Laboratory, Physio therapy room and a few other rooms.



On the first floor on one side you have the Sauna & Hydrotherapy room, Colon Detox room & the Powder vibrating rooms. It also houses the female massage room and a few rooms. On the second floor you have the CC Jet room, the Douch room and the Male massage room and a few rooms. I used to reside on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor we had the Yoga room and the masjid besides a few rooms. In all I understand that this Centre can accommodate nearly 75 people when packed. On an average there are about 15-20 people through out the year.

The rooms are very clean, well maintained, airy with wide windows, large & clean western toilets equipped with good sleeping mattresses and a Color TV in each room. It could also be used a cheap alternative to a hotel but believe me its cheap by the price but not in terms of quality or the experience. The only thing that we can complain about is the poor internet connectivity and at times the mobile connectivity. Airtel is

well connected but not so the others. We must understand that we are on a island on the tip of the Indian continent near the Arabian Sea.

We used to often wonder how are they managing it financially given the fact that they charge a meagerly sum.

The receptionist welcome me did the joining formalities and then took me to Dr. Shrudda, the Chief Medical Officer and about whom Tripthi had highly spoken about. She was a young, pretty lady, very soft spoken, humble and confident in her dealings. She was almost treating me with circumspect because she was informed that I was Tripthi's boss and she must have told her about me. Dr. Shrudda was very cautious and treated me with utmost care & respect to the the extent I was feeling very embarrassed. She used to ask me daily about my welfare, my stay and kept enquiring if I was feeling at home and comfortable.

I had carried my Medical History records and shared it with her and then she checked my blood pressure, my BMI (body mass index) and also my fat content. She enquired about my objective of coming to this place and the objective of the treatment. It was almost setting up the goals. We jointly discussed and agreed for the goals to be as follows :

1. Detoxification
2. Rejuvenation
3. De-stress
4. Diabetes management
5. Resultant weight loss of atleast 4-5 kgs

If all these were accomplished on the 10<sup>th</sup> day, we could say the Treatment was successful. So clear SMART Goals were set and were tracked every day.

She then prescribed my daily routine , my treatments and charted out my diet. She was again being very cautious and enquiring if I am comfortable with the prescribed diet. It was a long list of treatments, activities and diet. I was a bit confused to start with.

She then checked my preference for the room. There is the standard room, the deluxe room and the Cottage. The deluxe room and the Cottage come with Airconditioning facility. I was comfortable with a Deluxe room and had two requests - Aircondition & river facing room. They upgraded me to the Cottage room but with the Deluxe rate. I was delighted and was soon ushered into the room on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. A large room with a Bed and a attached toilet and a very large balcony (as big as the room itself) overlooking the river sofa and then a private Treatment Room with my own massage table, steam bath cabinet etc. But the sad part was the balcony was dirty as it was being frequented by Pigeons and hence the place was filled with Pigeon droppings. They had tried to cover it with a Net but apparently the breeze and the Pigeons had managed to tear into it break the barriers. I also found that being the top most floor it was exposed to the terrace and therefore the heat from the Sun. Hence it would get very hot and even the AC was not able to cool down considerably. After a hot massage & steam bath living in a hot room was even more uncomfortable. I was getting a bit disappointed and tired.



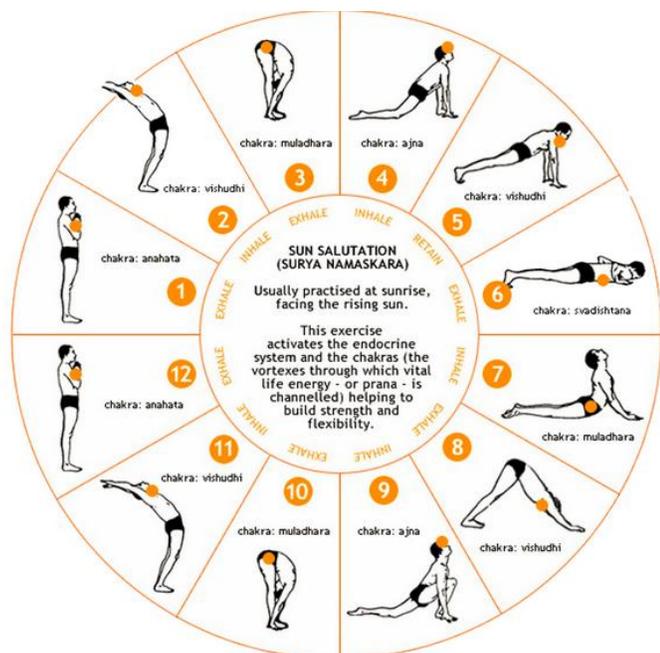
What I liked most of my room was that it overlooked the river and I could see the wonderful scenery from the confines of my bed.



I had landed with a niggling cough and since I had a long tiring day, I had also developed a head ache - sort of sinus I suppose. After my admission I was given a good oil massage and steam bath. Felt a bit relieved from the tiredness. For dinner I was served 2 chappatis with some soup and Ladies finger curry. I didn't get much sleep due to a combination of issues - my sinusitis headache, hot room, nagging cough and may be a new place. I tossed on the bed and even changed direction mid night but no avail.

Suddenly there was a knock on the room and it was the watchman and he said wake up its time for Yoga. The time was 5.15 am. I brushed my teeth, jumped into my track pant and went briskly to the Yoga room on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Mr. Murali Bhat, the Yoga teacher greeted me and welcome into the room. I was soon joined by a couple of other inmates - two hefty guys.

I was soon inducted into Yoga and was trained on different forms of asana's - sitting, sleeping, kneeling, bending etc Here are some glimpses :



Soon I was taught the most important aspect of Yoga ie. **Surya Namaskar**.

If you are pressed for time and looking for a single mantra to stay fit, here's the answer. A set of 12 powerful yoga asanas (postures) that provide a good cardiovascular workout in the form of Surya Namaskar. Literally translated to sun salutation, these postures are a good way to keep the body in shape and the mind calm and healthy. Surya Namaskar is best done early morning on an empty

stomach. Let's begin with these simple yet effective Sun Salutation steps on our way to good health.

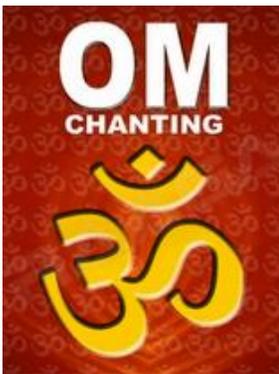
Each Sun Salutation round consists of two sets. These 12 yoga poses complete one set of Surya Namaskar. You might find several versions of doing Sun Salutation. However, it is best to stick to one particular sequence and practice it regularly for best results.

Besides good health, Surya Namaskar also provide an opportunity to express gratitude to the sun for sustaining life on this planet. Do 12 rounds of Sun Salutation and then rest deeply in yoga nidra. You might just find that this could be your mantra to stay fit, happy and peaceful. A mantra whose effects last through the day.

This very well explained in the Art of Living website @ <http://www.artofliving.org/in-en/yoga/yoga-poses/sun-salutation> and also very well explained and demonstrated @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQn-QHLqNvI>

It was a bit confusing and very tiring to start with but by the end of 10 days I had mastered it and found it very invigorating and even relaxing. It is like a T20 match. Within a span of 12 steps you almost exercise all parts of your body. We were required to do 10 Surya Namaskars every morning and it really set the pace for the day.

The Yoga master worked with clock like precision. He would start sharp at 5.30 am irrespective of how many people were there in the room. He would sharply complete all asana's by 6.10 am and then start the Suryanamaska sharply at 6.10 am every day and would end it up with Bramhavari and recital of the Om Chanting for 5 counts. He was at times mechanical. I would hear him repeat the same words like a parrot and go through the motions - switch of the lights for the meditation & relaxation sessions.



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FoA3pc23p\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FoA3pc23p_o)

And would round up with recital of Om Shanti.

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः ।  
सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।  
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु ।  
मा कश्चित् दुःख भाग्भवेत् ॥

om sarve bhavantu sukhinah  
sarve santu nirāmayāḥ  
sarve bhadraṇi paśyantu  
mā kaśchid duḥkha bhāgbhavet

*May all be happy  
May all be healthy  
May all experience prosperity in everything  
May all be free from suffering*

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।  
*om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ*

This was my first tryst with Yoga and chanting of Sanskrit slokas and I thoroughly enjoyed and started to realize the fruits of this.

After the Yoga session was the Kriya session. It was again a unique first time experience.

## Jala neti kriya



More commonly referred to simply as neti is a simple procedure for maintaining nasal hygiene by means of irrigating the nostrils with warm salty water. Neti effectively removes dirt and bacteria filled mucus from the nasal passages. It is an ancient yogic purification technique that is all the more relevant and helpful in our modern times where air pollution and airborne pathogens are becoming increasing health risk factors. By practicing neti you can breathe clearly and freely, thus enhancing your quality of life.

The nostrils are filled with tiny hairs called cilia whose role it is to prevent large particles entering the respiratory system. Sometimes, due to a gradual build up of dirt they can become clogged. Practicing neti with warm salt water keeps the mucus moist. The cilia hairs are stimulated and encrustations, dust and

allergy provoking substances are effectively removed.

The nasal passages and upper respiratory tract are covered with a layer of mucus. This mucus is secreted from within the mucus linings and its function is to trap smaller foreign particles and bacteria that the cilia haven't managed to catch. The sinus passages are an even finer mechanism of filtering which, if infected, secrete a runny mucus to evict the germs. Cleansing the nose with warm salty water activates these mucus membranes and also others in the stomach and in the eyes and removes bacteria and dust laden mucus from the body.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6u7GMqnTEcc>

I was a bit loathe to try it out. But after I saw others doing it and tried out the first time, I felt comfortable and relieved to do it. I felt very relieved and could for the first time breathe fresh air and with a light feeling. All the mucus in my nose & area around it was relieved and I felt really light.

After this it was time to go down and weigh yourself. Our weight would be recorded every day. Every day our conversation around the breakfast (!) table would start with “how much weight, did you loose since yesterday” and we would be competing with each other. While some faces would be lit up because they lost a few extra weight (grams!), some would have a dejected face as they did not loose as much as they would have desired.

Then we would proceed to the Diet Centre (Canteen), the place most of us would detest going but had to continue to survive in this world. We would start the day at 7 am with Menthya Kashaya. Irrespective of what ever diet plan you were or for any treatment all would have to start the day with this. It would be bitter and tasteless. Best taken when hot and god save you if it becomes cold. So early risers would be rewarded with a hot glass of this kashyam. Late risers would have to make good with cold one and one could see from their faces how much they detested. It is supposed to help you in cleansing your stomach, deworm you, help you in digestion and also help those with diabetes. It was basically a detoxing kashayam.



After that we would go on a long beach walk. I especially loved this and enjoyed the early morning walk along the beach. I would normally walk for about 40-50 minutes in the morning and around 1 hour in the evening. I normally would have some company and on a few occasions would go ahead with it even without company.

We had to take a gate pass to move out of the facility. The walk would start within the Thonse hamlet winding through a narrow winding road thro the largely Muslim community hamlet and then would hit the main road.

On one side would be the Arabian Sea and on the other side we would have the Suvarna river. There were houses with the Arabian Sea in the front and the Suvarna river at the back. What a beauty and I used to envy them daily as I would wind my way thro this area. There was road dividing the beach and the river and the road would be lined along with coconut trees. What a walk and what a scenery. You could hear the thud of

the waves of the Arabian Sea one side, the chirping of the birds, the clatter of the leaves and the crowing of the Crow.



Only thing I would feel worried, scarred or detested was the possibility of crow shit dropping on your head. The coconut trees (hundreds of them) would always be perched with crows and other birds. One could hear the constant crowing and chirping of the birds. I was shit scared and used to literally walk criss cross always trying to steer my way away from the birds shit. Luckily not one day did I get blessed with the droppings of the crow shit.

When you read the newspapers or watch the TV one would get a bit depressed and start to become cynical of the Indian society. One would wonder if we have become an Intolerant Society what with so much of talk around communal divide and polarization of the society on communal lines - caste, creed & religion.

Thonse reaffirms the faith in humanity and in secularism. It brings back positivity in our society. The hamlet just like how the river & the sea wind their way alongside, also has a large contingent of Hindu & Muslim population. One house would be inhabited by a Muslim and the other house by a Hindu family. I would largely identify this by the tulsi plant being reared in the front of the house and the smell of the agarbathi emanating from the Hindu homes. The road is dotted with temples and mosques. We have a Hanuman temple on the left side of the road along the beach and you have a Muslim prayer hall just opposite it on the right side of the road alongside the river. One time you would hear the Muslim Namaz and Allah chanting and at another time you could hear the Venkatasuprabhatam, the Vishnu sahasranamam reciting going on. It was religious harmony / secularism at its best - probably a model to the world and rest of the society of how you could co-exist peacefully professing the religion of your choice and yet be tolerant to your neighbor who professes to choose another path of religion.



I strongly believe that the common man is not bothered about religion, caste, creed or colour. It's the politicians who are causing the divide and polarizing the society on communal lines. Its time we all Indians rose and shun them out.

Its too good to be true.

On many days I would stick to the road about 20-50 meters from the beach and on some occasions I would walk along the sea on the sea shore. This I did because I feared that I would contract sinusitis because of the cold sea wind but soon I realized that this was an antidote for cold & sinusitis.

After a long brisk walk for about 40-50 minutes (we used to have a landmark - Arabian Waves ) we would return back to our abode. After our morning chores, we would wait for a knock on our doors sharp at 8.30 am. The massagers would come in and then wrap our stomach & eyes with the cold mud pack. One would feel a chill pass by your spine and the head as soon as the massagers placed the cold mud pack. The mud pack would be placed for about 20 mins. Incidentally every activity would last around 20 mins.

Understand that the mud pack is very good for acidity, gastric trouble and even ulcers. An abdomen mud pack helps in all kinds of indigestion. It is very helpful in decreasing intestinal heat and stimulates peristalsis.

The cold mud pack on your eyes is to cool you down - your head & also your tired eyes. An eye mud pack helps in relaxing the eyes; especially good for those who require to sit in front of a computer for long hours. Therapeutically, it reduces irritation, itching or other allergic conditions such as conjunctivitis and hemorrhage of the eye ball. It also helps in correcting refractive errors like short/long sightedness. It is effective in Glaucoma, where it works to reduce the eye ball tension.

A mud bath helps in increasing the blood circulation and energizing the skin tissues. It thus helps in cleansing and improving the skin condition generally. Regular mud baths may be considered as natural beauty treatment procedure as it also helps in improving skin complexion and reducing spots and patches, possibly the result of some skin disorder like chickenpox or small pox. Mud baths are useful in many skin diseases such as Psoriasis, Urticaria, leucoderma, Leprosy and other skin allergic conditions.

After a refreshing mud pack, we would proceed for Breakfast which would be ready sharp 9 am. Everything worked with clock work precision at the Centre.

At the Diet Centre (Canteen) you would be greeted by Ruksana - “hello sir” and she would hand over our Diet as charted out by CMO Dr. Shrutha.

It’s a sight to believe. One could see the dejected faces reluctantly accepting the plate from Ruksana and hogging whatever little is provided. At the table it was a diverse group of crowd with diverse diets. You would have some one who is on liquid Diet (like Triphthi), some on fruit diet, some on limited diet, some of ganji (like me) and some on normal diet. Our mouths would water when we see those on normal diets enjoy the hot Dosa being served and the most painful would be see those on liquid Diet.

The food served was Satvik Food, pure natural food and 100% vegetarian. One of the reasons I was reluctant to try out this Nature Cure Treatment was I wasn’t sure if I would be able to cope up with the Diet.

It was mostly kashaya, ganji, juices, different types of Dosa (with zero oil), green salads, chapatti and sabji’s cooked without oil. The vegetables largely were beans, long beans, bitter gourd, snake gourd, cucumber, carrot, tomato, rarely as small portion of onions, ladies finger, lime, honey (non diabetic only) and to add spice to your taste, ginger, black pepper and black salt (limited).



massage. Then you are turned upside down (facing down) and they start with the massage of the shoulders, the back - they literally run you down the spinal chord with their knuckles, the back as a whole, the hip and then proceed to the foot, calf muscle and the thighs. At the end of each sub session they end with claps that land you hard like a slap on your muscles and can be heard quite a distance. After the full body massage, you are placed in a wooden chair, sitting erect and then they pour oil on to your head and then give you a head massage followed with a neck & shoulder massage.

It can be a tiring & painful experience to start with. You need to give feedback to the massagers. Depending on their skill and their feelings of your body reactions, they will adjust their pressure and reinforce areas that needs extra attention. Once they understand your body, your tolerance for pain and your comfort level they will stretch your limits.

Wow, it's a exhilarating experience.

After that you are placed in a Steam Box. A sort of a pressure cooker. Your head is placed outside the steam box and below your neck you are locked into the steam box for 15 minutes. Your body is literally cooked and it's a great feeling. The steam bath enables the medicated oil to be absorbed into your skin as you profusely sweat and all your pores open up and all your toxins are literally flushed out. You literally shed a few pounds after the Steam bath and also can get dehydrated. Its important that you know your limits. Some of them feel giddy and even faint after a steam bath / sauna bath due to dehydration.

Similarly in a Sauna bath you are seated full body in a wooden bathroom and hot dry air blows across the room (you don't feel the air blowing) and you start to profusely sweat in about 5 minutes head to toe.



After the steam / sauna bath, the massagers keep hot water ready in the bathroom and you have a hot water bath. Its preferable that you don't use green gram flour dough to clean up rather than soap.

The whole process of oil massage, steam/sauna bath & hot water bath takes about 1 hour - 20 minutes each.

At 11.30 am its lunch time. We all meander to the Diet Centre for lunch and Ruksana is ready to welcome you and serve your lunch. For me it was Ragi Ganji (porridge), moong dhal (green gram) sprouts, raw soaked raagi, a few soaked raw ground nut seeds, a few soaked raw chick pea /channa seeds with Butter Milk. There was absolutely no Butter in the Butter Milk. It was more a white water drink. All fat has been skimmed off or Butter Milk diluted to the last end. However it used to taste great. Ruksana ensured that she made it tasty and spicy by adding spinach, mint, ginger, curry leaves & jeera in the Butter Milk. After a bland Raagi Ganji, the Sprouts & the Butter Milk was very refreshing.

The head starts spinning. Drowsiness starts and you then go upstairs and enjoy a good afternoon siesta. Something we would all love to do because we would quickly gulp the lunch, with no energy to have any meaningful conversation (after the 1 hour massage drill) and quickly disappear into our rooms.

At 2pm sharp again the Massagers would knock on your doors. (Most of us would sleep with our doors open for most part of the day and lock our rooms only at 10 pm in the night after the Doctors visit to check our

**The Thonse Effect** by *Ramesh Ranjan*

blood pressure. Such was our trust in the safety of the place). Its time for another round of Mud Pack for your abdomen & eyes. Another 20 minutes ritual every day in the morning & evening.

In addition I would be given a hot & cold pack every afternoon at 2.30pm immediately after the mud pack session. Cold ice gel pack would be placed below my spinal chord near the hip and a hot water bag would be placed on my stomach - one day on the left side and the other day on the right side. You could feel the cold ice pack at the bottom and the warm hot water bag on the top. A unique diverse application of temperature to activate your internal organs. It helps in energizing the stomach, the intestines, kidney, liver, pancreas etc.

Then again you wait in the que for your turn for the afternoon session of Therapies. I had the following Afternoon therapies :

1. Powder Massage + HotCold pack+Face Pack+Foot Reflexology
2. Sauna Bath + HotCold pack+Face Pack+Foot Reflexology
3. Deluxe Hydro Massage+ HotCold pack+Face Pack+Foot Reflexology
4. Sauna Bath + HotCold pack+Face Pack+Foot Reflexology
5. Pinda Sweda Massage
6. Ganji Turmeric Massage
7. Mud Bath
8. Detan - Coffee Massage

Let me try and explain each one of them :

## 1. Powder Massage



Also known as Udwarthanam is special therapeutic deep tissue massage using herbal powders. Udwarthanam means to elevate or to promote. This massage involves upward stroking, where the powder is rubbed forcibly on the body. Classical treatises on Ayurveda explain this procedure as a daily routine.

### Procedure:

The herbal powder is applied on your body and then the massagers will massage your body using a vibrator.

There are different vibrator heads of various shapes & sizes and used depending on where the massage is being done. The massage is done in the opposite direction to hair follicles by two therapists. The procedure is performed in different postures all over the body. In the beginning you could feel a bit ticklish but after a few minutes you will start enjoying the powder massage. The duration is for a period of 20-30 minutes. You could choose to follow the massage with a bath with warm water or just walk off like that. Most of us would prefer to walk off without a bath. You would come out glowing all over.



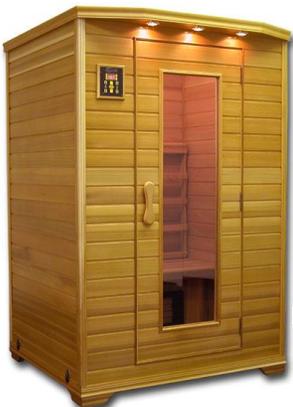
## Benefits:

- Pacifies the aggravated Kapha dosha
- Reduces the excess fat accumulated in the subcutaneous tissues
- Softens and exfoliates dead skin cells, thereby giving a lustrous glow to skin
- Detoxification, purification, toning the skin
- Eliminates bad body odor
- Improves mobility of joints
- Strengthens and tones up the muscles
- Refreshes and rejuvenates the body
- Takes care of conditions due to improper blood supply
- Improves the circulation; opens up the body channels (Srotus) increasing the basal metabolic rate.
- Tones up the skin and muscles after the child birth
- Removes cellulite and helps in weight reduction
- Improves the sense of touch
- Makes the body and mind alert; gives a sense of lightness of the body
- Reduces the blood cholesterol

The dry powder massage is useful in the following conditions:

- Motor Neuron Disorders
- Parkinsonism
- Muscular dystrophy
- Multiple sclerosis
- Hemiplegia
- Sciatica
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Cerebral palsy
- Skin diseases
- Diabetes mellitus
- Obesity

## Sauna Bath



Much has been made of the health benefits of sauna bathing. With good reason. Physically, nothing is more reinvigorating than a deep, healthy sweat every day. Tension fades. Muscles

by *Ramesh Ranjan*



unwind. Mentally, we emerge relaxed, revived and ready for whatever the day may bring.

A few minutes a day is all it takes to look and feel better. The body's response to gentle, persistent heat is well-documented and proven day in and out by people all over the world. Which is why more and more doctors are recommending its purifying benefits.

- Saunas relieve stress.
- Not surprisingly, sauna bathers most frequently cite stress reduction as the number one benefit of sauna use. Medical studies often determine that stress in our daily lives can negatively affect our health. In fact, the vast majority of disease (i.e. heart disease) is at least partially stress-related. Heat bathing in a sauna provides stress relief in a number of ways. It's a warm, quiet space without any distractions coming from the outside. As we like to say, "Step into a Finnleo sauna, and close the door on the rest of the world." The heat from the sauna relaxes the body's muscles, improves circulation and stimulates the release of endorphins. Endorphins are the body's all-natural "feel good" chemical, and their release provides a truly wonderful "after sauna glow."
- Saunas relax muscles and soothe aches/pains in both muscles and joints.
- Under the high heat provided by a sauna, the body releases endorphins (see health and wellness benefit #1). Endorphins can have a mild, enjoyable "tranquilizing effect" and the ability to minimize the pain of arthritis and muscle soreness other from, say, an intense physical workout. Body temperature also rises from the heat of the sauna.. This causes blood vessels to dilate, therefore increasing blood circulation. This increased blood flow in turn speeds up the body's natural healing process via soothing aches and pains and/or speeding up of the healing of minor bruises or cuts. After participating in physical sports, use the heat and/or steam of a sauna to promote muscle relaxation by helping to reduce muscle tension and eliminate lactic acid and/or other toxins that may be present.
- Saunas flush toxins.
- Many - if not most - of us do not actively sweat on a daily basis. Deep sweating, however, has multiple proven health benefits. Benefits derived from a deep sweat can be achieved via regular sauna bathing. Due to the heat of a sauna, the core body temperature begins to rise. The blood vessels then dilate, causing increased blood flow (see above). As heat from the blood begins to move toward the skin's surface, the body's nervous system then sends signals to the millions of sweat glands that cover the human body. As the sweat glands become stimulated, they produce sweat. Sweat production is primarily designed to cool the body, and is composed of 99% water. However, deep sweating in a sauna can help reduce levels of lead, copper, zinc, nickel, mercury and chemical - which are all toxins commonly absorbed just from interacting with our daily environments. There is no shortage of books from Doctors and practitioners, who describe the benefits of detoxifying our bodies regularly. As many doctors will agree, a big reason for the popularity of saunas is that they are one of the best ways to detoxify our bodies.
- Sauna cleanses the skin.
- Heat bathing is one of the oldest beauty and/or health strategies in terms of cleansing one's skin. When the body begins to produce sweat via deep sweating, the skin is then cleansed and dead skin cells are replaced - keeping your skin in good working condition. Sweating rinses bacteria out of the epidermal layer and sweat ducts. Cleansing of the pores has been shown to improve the capillary circulation, while giving the skin a softer-looking quality. Dr. Ben H Douglas, a professor at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and author of "Ageless: Living Younger Longer," attests that

"Sweating is a way of energizing the skin almost the way exercising a muscle energizes it." He goes on to explain that, when you sweat, the rush of fluid to the skin "bathes skin cells with a liquid rich in nutrients," which "fills in the spaces around the cells" and even "plumps up" tiny wrinkles. He also mentions that the nutrients and minerals in sweat "are essential to maintaining the collagen structure of the skin." Bathing skin in sweat on a fairly regular basis, therefore deters collagen breakdown that can ultimately result in wrinkles and sags. By continually flushing body waste through individual cells, one eventually brings back vitality, tone and a healthy glow to the skin. Sauna usage is certainly not a cure for acne, but it can very often help - due to the deep cleansing it provides from a deep sweat (that is, cleaning the pores from the very inside out - instead of just cleaning the top of the skin).

- Saunas can induce a deeper sleep.
- Research has shown that a deeper, more relaxed sleep can result from sauna use. In addition to the release of endorphins (see above), body temperatures, which become elevated in the late evening, fall at bedtime. This slow, relaxing decline in endorphins is key in facilitating sleep. Numerous sauna bathers worldwide recall the deep sleep experiences that they feel after bathing the the calming heat of a sauna.
- Saunas bring about recreational and social benefits.
- While the social benefit is rarely talked about, it's really actually quite important. The sauna can be a private, personal area of relaxation and solitude. However, it can just as easily be a relaxing environment for socializing with family, friends and soon-to-be friends. The sauna room environment is conducive to open, intimate and quiet conversation.
- Saunas improve cardiovascular performance.
- In the high temperatures of a traditional or infrared sauna, skin heats up and core body temperature rises. In response to these increase heat levels, the blood vessels near the skin dilate and "cardiac output" increases. Medical research has told us that the heart rate can rise from 60-70 bpm (beats per minute) to 110-120 bpm in the sauna (140-150 with more intensive bathing), and can often sink to below normal after the cooling off stage. With regular sauna useage, we not only train our heart muscles and improve the heart rate/cardiac output, but we also help the body's regulatory system. Even more cardiovascular conditioning takes place when the sauna bathing is taken in multiple "innings", with sessions in the sauna separated by a cool shower or a quick dip into a cool pool or lake. Each time you rapidly change temperature (from hot to cool or vice-versa), your heart rate increases by as much as 60%, which is very comparable to the increase experienced during moderate exercise..
- Saunas burn calories.
- Outlandish claims are often made by some sauna sellers (primarily those who sell infrared saunas) to promote saunas as an end-all weight loss tool. While some individuals may experience high amounts of calorie burn at first - particularly those individuals in poor shape to begin with - over the long term, saunas are simply treated as one of many tools in our arsenal when it comes to burn additional calories. The sweating process itself requires a notable amount of energy. That energy is derived from the conversion of fat and carbohydrates in a bodily process that burns up calories. According to U.S. Army medical research (Ward Dean, M.D.), "A moderately conditioned person can easily sweat off 500 grams in a sauna in a single session, consuming nearly 300 calories in the process." The body consumes said calories due to the acceleration of heart activity (the cardiovascular section). As heart activity increases and as these processes demand more oxygen, the body begins to convert more calories into usable energy.

- Saunas can help fight illness.
- German sauna medical research shows that saunas were able to significantly reduce the incidences of colds and influenza amongst participants. As the body is exposed to the heat of a sauna and steam (in the case of traditional saunas), it produces white blood cells more rapidly, which in turn helps to fight illnesses and helps to kill viruses. In addition, saunas can relieve the uncomfortable symptoms of sinus congestion from colds or allergies - especially when used with steam (tip: add eucalyptus to the water for added benefit and overall enjoyment). The steam vapor action helps to clear up unwanted congestion and is a wonderful aspect of the Finnish sauna experience.
- Saunas just feel good.
- A sauna not only feels good, it's good for your body. Whether it's the physiological changes that occur during the warmth of a sauna, or if it's simply the time spent in the calming and still retreat of the sauna, every seasoned sauna bather agrees - it feels wonderful! As we progress through our stressful everyday lives, the sauna provides a pampering retreat - where we can relax and restore body and soul. Sauna bathing truly makes you "Feel Better", "Look Better" and "Sleep Better"!

### 3. Deluxe Hydro Massage



Hydromassage is a spa treatment that uses high-pressure water jets as massage tools. According to the Good Spa Guide website, the jets are more powerful than those found in a standard whirlpool tub or a Jacuzzi, and the water temperature is warmer.

Hydrotherapy, involves the use of water for pain-relief and treating illness. Hydrotherapy is proven to be a highly effective form of natural therapy which works by stimulating the endorphins which in turn helps you to control pain and alleviate tension. Good circulation also brings the benefit of good lymph drainage which helps to clear the body of toxins, detoxing regularly,

leads to a stronger immune system which is able to cope with controlling viruses, bacteria and infections.

The hydrotherapy applications includes different packs and baths at various pressure and temperature like hip bath , sauna bath, steam bath, spinal bath, spinal spray, deluxe hydromassage, kidney pack, hepatic pack and so on.

#### Stress Relief

Hydro massage has been shown to reduce physical tension and mental stress, according to the Caldera Spas website. Immersing the body in warm water may reduce the secretion of cortisol and other hormones associated with stress. A study conducted by Washington State University's Bruce Becker, M.D., showed that soaking in a 102 degree F tub for 25 minutes produced relaxation and an accompanying decrease in anxiety.

## Improved Sleep

Hydrotherapy can help reduce insomnia and promote restful sleep, according to the Caldera Spas website. This may be because the body's internal temperature rises during hydrotherapy, then drops afterward. The internal temperature drop cues the body to get ready for sleep. Hydrotherapy can also improve sleep by relieving pressure on the body's joints and muscles, which reduces nighttime discomfort.

## 4. Pinda Sweda



Shashtika shaali pinda sweda also known as Navarakkizhi is a Kerala specialty of treatment in which the whole body or any specific part is made to perspire by the application of heated medicinal rice (Navara) puddings externally in the form of boluses tied up in a cotton cloth in a specific manner for specific period of time. These procedures are very commonly used in Keraliya Panchakarma.

'Navara' means special rice which is harvested in 60 days. 'Kizhi' means bolus bag.

Benefits of Patra Pinda Sweda: It strengthens and rejuvenates the back and spine, strengthens the dhatu shakti (tissue strength and integrity), increases circulation, removes dirt and unwanted tissues, provides color and complexion to the skin, induces good sleep and reduces stress in spite of reducing pain, stiffness and inflammation.

Uses: Patra pinda sweda is effectively prescribed in - Back pain chronic, Back pain chronic, Back pain low, Lumbar and Cervical Spondylosis, Arthritis, Joint stiffness and swelling, Muscular and soft tissue pains, Sciatica, sprains and cramps etc...

## 5. Ganji Turmeric Application

Here a concoction of rice ganji & turmeric is prepared and then the paste is tied up in a rice bag and the rice bag is pounded on your body. As the pounding happens the rice-turmeric ganji oozes out and sinks into your skin. The Massaseurs also massage the body on top of this to ensure that the application sinks into the body. After about 20 minutes of massage, you are left to dry. The ganji hardens as it dries and your skin gets a thin layer of ganji much like a film coating. It helps tone up the muscle and rejuvenates it. Rice & turmeric have medicinal properties and helps soothen the skin, cure any skin disease and nourishes your pores. After about 15 minutes of drying up you clean yourself with a hot water bath and come out refreshing and energized with a smooth and glowing skin.



# Mud Bath



Of the five elements of nature, mud represents Earth and has tremendous impact on the maintenance of health and prevention of diseases. Minerals and trace elements present in the mud are known for its renowned effects and healing properties. Mud also has the remarkable property of holding moisture for a long time, which has a cooling effect on the part of the body applied.

Everyone deserves to be pampered once in a while, and few things are more relaxing than a trip to the spa. It may feel strange to submerge your body in a tub full of warm dirt and water, but mud baths do have several health benefits. For thousands of years, people all over the world have believed in the healing powers of mud, and natural hot springs were popular long before the creation of the modern health spa.

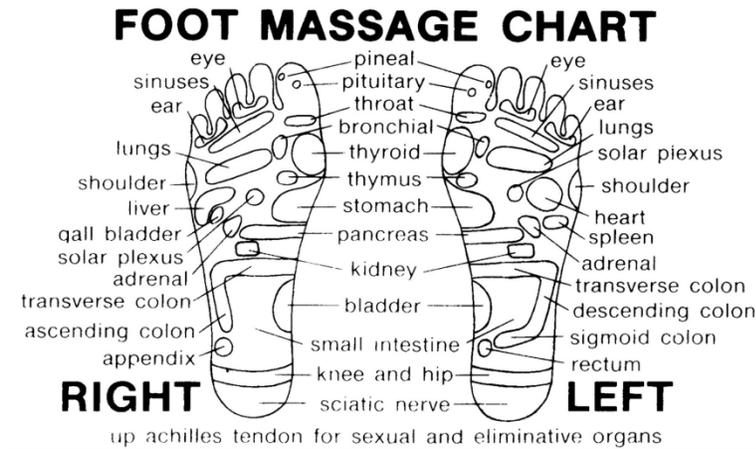
One benefit of mud baths is their anti-inflammatory properties -- soaking in mud and its minerals can help alleviate aches and muscle pains. Another mud bath advantage is the soothing effect mud and its minerals -- including sodium, magnesium and potassium -- can have on the skin. Soaking in mud baths can even help relieve the symptoms of many conditions such as psoriasis and rosacea. However, people with these conditions should be careful that the mud isn't too grainy -- it can irritate their skin. Studies show that mud baths can even improve spinal symptoms in patients with spondylitis, a painful disease caused by inflammation of the vertebrae.

- Helps improve circulation and relax the muscles
- Improves the digestive activity and sets right the metabolism
- Local application helps relieve inflammations, swellings and reduces pain
- Excellent in skin conditions without open lesions
- Helps bring down blood pressure
- Nourishes the skin
- Conditions the hair
- Specific kind of application relieves the stiffness of joints

## MUD PACKS

Frequent application of mud helps in improving the complexion of the skin by getting rid of spots and patches, which appear in various skin disorders. Mud baths are also generally recommended for all skin diseases, including psoriasis, leucoderma and urticaria and other allergic conditions of the skin.

## Foot Reflexology



An Oriental healing technique used to relax the nerves and release the trapped energy. There are energy zones that run throughout the body and reflex areas in the feet that correspond to all the major organs, glands and parts of the body. Based on the principle that reflex points in the feet and palms correlate to individual organs and parts of the body, manipulations on these reflexes help stimulate the organs. It helps those suffering from insomnia, menstrual problems and pains. Reflexology

- Reduces stress and induces deep relaxation
- Improves circulation
- Cleanses the body of toxins and impurities
- Brings the whole system into balance
- Vitalises energy
- A preventive healthcare by enhancing the immune system
- Helps encourage healing in combination with specific treatments

## Coffee Bath



Baths! They evoke different emotions in different people. For some, a bath is an exercise in self-indulgence - candles, scents and oils. To most, it is just a hygienic necessity. And finally, there are those for whom it is a sacred ritual. I believe there is a really good use for coffee, and no, you don't drink it! How about using coffee for detoxification?

### How it works?

Caffeine is absorbed by the skin and into the first couple layers of fat. The caffeine will then raise the metabolism of these cells causing them to use more energy. It really tightens the skin more than melts away the flab, Coffee can uplift your spirits in a moment to discharge deep-rooted tension

hence promoting energy flow and restoring balance in addition to overall well being. Coffee fights fatigue and helps beautify the skin.

Coffee can keep your skin healthy in a lot of different ways. Coffee has anti-oxidant ingredients that can help in:

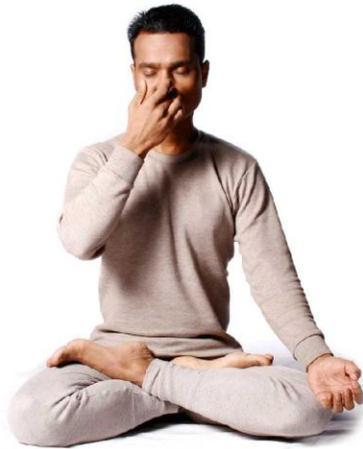
- Your skin be free of different radicals that can cause acne, eczema and other skin diseases
- Improve the circulation
- Break up fat which cause those ugly cellulites
- Clear up your skin of acne and other blemishes
- Act as sunblock and prevent sunburn and wrinkle

It has been said that coffee is an effective treatment from the recovery of fatigue, and also adds beauty to the skin. The aroma of the coffee will also perk up your senses. So What are you waiting for?? Soak in and take in the rich aroma which will life up your spirits!

So after the afternoon sessions its time once again to the Diet Centre at 4 pm. For me 1 Dosa would be provided as evening snack.

At 4.30pm its time for aerobic exercise or gymnasium and at 5 pm its time for Pranayama.

## Pranayama



Pranayama is derived from 2 Sanskrit words - Prana (life force) and Ayama (control). Therefore, in its broadest description, Prananyama would mean the control of the flow of life force. To most, control of breath is Pranayama. However, this is a result of wrong interpretation.

For a rightful interpretation, it must be understood that 'prana' is an energy or life force that is universal in nature - it is omnipresent. A portion of that prana is also present in the human body. It flows at a superficial level to maintain the body and its organs.

The goal of Pranayama is to increase the quantum of this life force (Prana) so that it can reach out to 'hidden' recesses of the brain. This helps in expanding the human faculties and retarding degeneration.

Benefits of pranayama are both tangible and intangible. God has provided prana, the supreme source of power free of cost to all human beings. Proper utilisation of this free source of energy can make remarkable changes to our health, vitality and self confidence. We cannot simply equate prana with oxygen present in the air, the air we breathe is also filled with vital energy known as prana.

All benefits of pranayama cannot be written down, there are lot of subtle changes like mental peace and clarity of thought that occur in our mind.

## Benefits Of Pranayama

### Reduced Breathing Rate

With yoga breathing you can train yourself to breathe more slowly and more deeply. You can reduce your breathing rate from about fifteen breaths a minute to 5-6 breaths a minute, which amounts to reducing the breathing rate by one third. Reduced breathing rate leads to:

- Slowing down the heart rate as more oxygen can be pumped even with less number of breaths. Follow the ration of 1:2 for inhalation:exhalation.
- Reduced wear and tear of internal organs.
- Lowering of blood pressure, relaxation of body tensions and quieter nerves.
- Pranayama Practice Increases Life

As per yoga philosophy, longevity depends on your breathing rate. Lowering of breathing rate is likely to increase your life. For example, a tortoise takes four to five breaths in a minute and it lives up to 200 years or more.

### Blood Circulation Improves

As a result of breathing, the freshly oxygenated blood (during inhalation) travels from lungs to the heart. The heart pumps it via arteries and blood vessels to every part of the body, where in turn it seeps into every tissue and cell. This improves the blood circulation and more oxygen/ prana or cosmic energy reaches all parts of your body.

### Pranayama For Healthy Heart

Our heart is the most industrious organ of our body. The heart beats 100,000 times a day. It is pumping blood day in and day out non-stop all your life. The health of your heart determines your life expectancy and quality of life in old age. More oxygen in the blood means more oxygen to muscles of the heart.

### Benefits Of Pranayama For Functioning Of Body Organs

- Better functioning of autonomic system improves the working of lungs, heart, diaphragm, abdomen, intestines, kidneys and pancreas.
- Digestive system improves and diseases pertaining to digestive organs are cured.
- General irritability due to lethargy/ fatigue vanishes.
- By pranayama practice all body organs gets more oxygen, toxins are removed from body, therefore onset of various diseases is prevented. Pranayama strengthens the immune system.
- Better Mental Health
- Pranayama practice provides freedom from negative and harmful mental conditions like anger, depression, lasciviousness, greed for money, arrogance etc.



- With pranayama fluctuations of mind are controlled and it prepares the mind for meditation. With practice of pranayama, you will start experiencing lightness of body, feeling of inner peace, better sleep, better memory and better concentration whereby improving the spiritual powers/ skills.
- Better Breathing Improves Quality Of Life In Old Age

As a person with sedentary lifestyle reaches middle age, lung tissues tend to grow less and less elastic and lung capacity decreases. Pranayama can help to reduce the effects of following old age problems:

- Loss of vitality.
- Accumulation of uric acid in the blood stream which often leads to frequent joint pains and discomfort.
- Backaches, headaches, rheumatism, stiffening muscles and joints.
- Proper circulation of blood is impeded by a sluggish diaphragm or hardening arteries.
- It is recommended to start learning pranayama from a yoga teacher without any delay in order to experience the immense benefits of pranayama. Benefits of yoga breathing can be realised only by experience. Establish a daily routine of yoga breathing exercises. If you want to start on your own, first start with rhythmic deep breathing to get into the rhythm.

After Pranayama its time for Beach walk again. As the sun starts to set on the Arabian Sea it's a beautiful experience as you walk on the sea shores of the Arabian Sea. The sunset lits the environment into a golden colour and with azure blue sea, white sand it's riot of contrasting colors so pleasing to the eye and adds that much of comfort to your walk both physically & mentally. This time around the beach is a little populated on the Thonse Beach side. With a slight cool breeze it's a cool walk. As the sunsets in and the darkness descends on the area, we finish walking for an hour and retire to our abode.



We usually gather around the benches alongside the fence on the banks of the Suvarna River and catch up with what had happened during the day or call up our near & dear ones and update the days proceedings with them and enquire their well being.

At 7 pm, its Dinner time and we usher into the Diet Centre once again. Ruksana is once again there serving our menu for the Dinner. For me it would be 2 Chappati's with Sabzi. No oil but tasty subzi on most of the days. Plus a little bonus - Soup. It would be mostly a combination of tomato, dhal, carrot and on some days it could be spinach soup.

At the Dinner table its once again time for all of us to recapitulate our days experiences, our pains & gains and comforting each other. Mr & Mrs Devendra Sha usually used to keep our spirits alive with their witty humor and interesting conversations. The little one Avishi used to also keep us awake with his PJs, puzzles and curiosity. It took some time for Sachender to open up and Mrs. Rekha Devendra Shah literally goaded him into talking and open up with the team. It was like a family dinner around the dining table and we would really enjoy every moment of our assembly in the Diet Centre every day on each occasion. On most occasions we would wait for each other to come and have a group breakfast or lunch or snack or Dinner. So when people used to drop off, we could see a

pall of gloom descending. First it was Gopi who backed off, then Tripthi dropped off after 5 days, then Sharat and finally Mrs. Renu, Avi & myself were dropping off after 10 days. One could see the disappointment on Mr & Mrs Devendra Shah and also Sachender. But then life can be cruel at times and we had to part to move on in our journey of life.

However all of us were committed to coming back again in December 2015 around the same time nearing Christmas for another round of rejuvenation.

We would normally retire around 7.30 pm because Mrs. Rekha Devendra Sha wanted to catch up with a particular TV serial. Some of us would stay back for an extended chat or would also retire back to our rooms. I would spend some time catching up on my emails - though the internet connectivity was pathetic both of Thonse NHC and also my Tata Photon Dongle. It would be a frustrating experience waiting for the page to refresh or to move from one activity to another.

I would usually watch the News channel to catch up with what's happening on the outside world and mostly watch Comedy Channel (Udaya Comedy or Aditya, Siripoli) to lift the sagging spirits and tiring bodies - low calorie diet, 2 hours of walk, 2 rounds of massage therapy, 1 hour of yoga, half hour of Pranayama. When I look back wonder how my body took to this arduous routine every day at this age. But I would spring back to action next day at 5.15 am when the watchman or the alarm wakes you up for "its time to Yoga".

At 9 pm the duty Doctor would knock on your doors to check your blood pressure and also enquire your well being. I could see a constant decline in my blood pressure levels every passing day. Nothing to worry but ensuring that I don't cross the border line and end up with low blood pressure.

I would normally retire by around 9.30 pm and quickly slip into a deep sleep only to be waken up by the watchman or the alarm clock at 5.15 am. I had the added comfort of the AC keeping me cool after a tiring day.

This used to be my routine day in and day out for the next 10 days. It takes a lot of effort to succeed. It requires the will to go through the grind, live without your normal food that you usually crave for, follow the routines with discipline, exercise with Yoga and walking and watching your progress on the Goals set. I used to motivate myself and others by quoting that "there is no gain without pain". We put our bodies & minds through this test willfully and were determined to come out successfully and not give up mid way half through.

We had different types of people. One person was so obese that he weighed 165 kgs and was almost immobile. He was so huge that it was very difficult for him to move around. Hence he was mostly confined to his room with his attendant. Another youngster was weighing 116 Kgs when he checked in and to his misfortune, he injured his back while working out in the GYM and was immobilized and confined to his room for almost 3 days. He was my neighbor and I used to wonder how he managed to hang on.

We had an interesting foreigner a British who claimed to be more Indian than we are. He was an old person with long flowing hair and a flowing beard. He used to apply the sandal paste on his Tilak and would get up at 4 am in the morning and listen to bhajans mostly Krishna bhajans. He would on many occasions be seen with Kacha Panche/Dhoti. He claims to have been an ISKON devotee and once was even the personal chauffeur for Prabupada the founder of ISKON. He claims that he could recite the geeta, the veda's and has spent most part of his past 30 years in India. He is a musician and claims

that he has worked with the Beatles and was closely associated with George Harrison, John Lennon and other Beatle stars. He was here for a unspecified period and working on his next album and even told us that he was in touch with Bollywood for composing music for a Bollywood movie. An interesting character to talk to and also watch his movements and behavior. He was a regular visitor to the Thonse NHC.

We had another foreigner - a lady who used the centre mostly as a cheap stay and used to surf on the Thonse beach every day.

We had a elderly couple, a lady with her son, a few youngsters and people from all walks of life, regions and religion. All in all it was a diverse mix of people coming together for a common cause.

Only on one occasion we had the luxury of venturing into a picnic - the visit to the Sangamam where the Suvarna River would merge with the Arabian Sea. We were a group of 7 - Mr & Mrs Devenra, Renu, her son Avi, Sharad, Tripthi and me. We hired the Thonse Xylo vehicle and went to visit the Sangamam at around 5 pm. It was on Christmas Day, 25<sup>th</sup> December.

We went through our usual walking route, winding through the road alongside the beach with coconut trees lined on both sides. As we drove ahead we could see the roaring Arabian Sea towards the left and the calm Suvarna River towards the right and the road in the middle of the strip of land lined with fishermen's houses and covered with coconut trees. After about 7 kms we reached the spot. It was a dead end with rocks piled up before us. The driver then told us to take to the left through a small gully to reach the beach.

Lo behold when we went through the gully and reached the beach it was a breathtaking view of the white expanse of the Arabian Sea beach. Pure white pristine sand almost untouched by any one. Hardly any crowd and we were only a few (I could literally count on my fingers) at the place.



To the right we could see a small lagoon and beside it was the Suvarna River and to the rear side we had rocks lined up to prevent the river/sea to enter on to the main land. We had to go round the lagoon to reach the Suvarna river banks and from there you could see the wonderful sight of the Suvarna river merging with the Arabian Sea. The river would flow in one direction and the waves would flow in the opposite direction. The river's flowing currents would gently oppose the waves of the sea and it was a breathtaking sight. I have seen many Sangamams (merger of 2 or more rivers or sea) but this was the biggest and the best any where in the world. The river was so wide that it almost looks like a large lake or a sea by itself.

Sharad and me sat on the sea shore/river bank and did our daily Pranayama routine. Wow inhaling the fresh/pure air from the sea and filling our lungs was a exhilarating experience something that I will cherish for years to come.



We spent an hour over there before we started our return journey. On the way back we visited the small port/dock yard /barge area. It was a welcome relief from the daily grind and we carry back happy memories of the time spent and also witnessing the great phenomenon of the river merging with the sea.

## The END

Finally it was 29<sup>th</sup> December and was time for us to wind up. I went through the usual grind till lunch time before I left of Mudupi to visit a friend of ours.

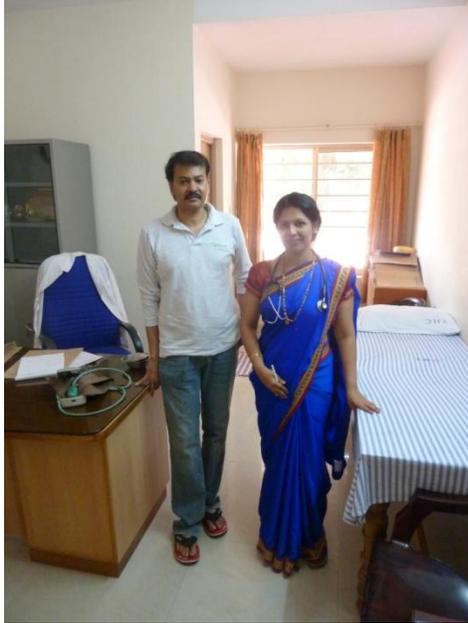
I met up with Dr. Shrutha one last time to take stock of our progress. The **results** were outstanding and too good to be true.

Parameters	20-Dec-14	29-Dec-14	Difference
Weight	72.2 kgs	67.7kgs	-4.5kgs
Fasting Blood Sugar	242	84	-158
Fat Content	30.20%	26.40%	-3.80%
BMI (body mass index)	23.30%	21.80%	-1.50%

Dr Shrutha was very happy to see the progress and also complimented me for my unwavering determination to stick to the plan and succeed. I was faithful to the diet / acitivity plan. One could easily cheat. There were a few who would cheekily slip out and eat out in nearby restaurants (though there were hardly any nearby) or had brought along some Khakra's/Thepla's/Biscuits or ate from the neighbors plate. I never once during the 10 days wandered. There were many who skipped the early morning Yoga or the evening Pranayama session. We were only about 3 or 4 who would religiously go out for the Beach walk morning & evening. I guess the results in the end says it all. I probably got some of the best results from amongst the people around at that time and really proved that "there is no gain without pain".

The staff at Thonse NHC were a bunch of very dedicated staff, passionate about their work and truly embodying the spirit of their Chairman - Mr. Zaffer ie. "serving humanity". Not once there was a talk of any payment. Before I checked in I enquired if I need to give any advance and they said no. When I checked in on Day 1 they did not take any advance from me nor swipe my credit card and block some funds. Not once during the 10 days did they ask for any money. I was enquiring how to pay them and they said I could pay in cash, credit card or even bank transfer. I did not carry heavy cash, so I was contemplating paying by credit card and they discouraged from doing so because I would need to shell out additional 3%. I said that as the internet was a bit slow it would be difficult to do a internet bank transfer. They said "no problem - you could go back to Bangalore and then transfer the funds".

Wow - we have such people doing business in this day. Cant believe - its too good to be true. When I checked with Mr. Zaffer as to how do they meet their ends and do they really make some profit out of this venture, he said that he does not care about profits as long as he able to break even and meet his ends. He said that he revered the good will of people, positive feedback and experiences of his customers and the dedication of his staff much more than money. He said that he was fortunate that God has given him to strength to serve mankind and bestowed wealth on him to share his prosperity with his people. He was more than happy to have ploughed back some of his wealth to the Thonse hamlet/village and providing livelihood to many people. On my last count there were nearly 20 people employed at Thonse and many more depending on the success of this Health Centre.



Mr. Zaffer and Dr. Shrutha and their staff are a rare breed of Entrepreneurs in todays material world. Always smiling and at your service not once concerned about money. Even the staff who are not paid much are still faithful and loyal to Mr. Zaffer and Dr. Shrutha because of how they treat their people and the positive & congenial environment that they have created at the work place. It once again proves that “money cannot buy happiness”. It’s a point that all HR Professionals should learn from that you can retain people only by paying top notch salaries.

Even mentally and spiritually I felt a new found spring in my body, attitude and could feel the energy levels flow all over. Offcourse my body especially the outer skin was treated to a feast over the last 10 days what with a daily dose of oil applications, steam bath, sauna bath, hydrotherapy, amla, mud, rice ganji, ginger turmeric, coffee etc. Offcourse my stomach would crib that it was fed with satvic bland food ( I love spicy food) and was craving to taste some normal spicy food.

As I wander and meander back to my home in Bangalore, I carry nostalgic memories of my first tryst with Naturopathy and the wonderful experience that I went through and offcourse very satisfying to note that all the pain really resulted in some gains.

This experience also gave me an opportunity to pamper myself and especially my body (organs) which must have been abused for over 50 years now. Understand that there was something in it for every organ viz. the brain, the head, eyes, nostrils, throat, neck, lungs, kidney, liver, pancreas, spinal chord, the hip, thighs, calf muscles, the ankle, foot etc. The skin in general had a party with concoctions of rice, turmeric, amla, ginger, mud, coffee, various oils etc.

Just as they say that “prevention is better than cure”, just as we faithfully get “preventive maintenance” done for all equipments, just as we regularly at periodical intervals give our car for service, its important that we also give our body, mind & soul to have preventive maintenance & servicing done at periodical levels. Almost all of our friends at Thonse NHC - Mr&Mrs Devendra, Renu, Avi, Sharath, Tripthi, Sachendra have agreed to meet again around the same time in December 2015 for another round of pampering ourselves and for preventive maintenance & servicing of our Body, Mind & Soul.

This experience also helped me spend some time in solitude. I guess I spent more time in solitude during these 10 days than I have spent the rest of my life. I had many occasions during my long beach walks, gazing at the Suverna river sitting alone on those benches, lying on the massage table, the steam bath, sauna room, yoga/meditation/pranayama time etc. to be all alone in peace in solitude to reflect on myself, recollect the past and spend some time in quiet & peace within myself. I realized how important it is to withdraw now & then and spend some time all by yourself. It was also a period where I had no mobile phones, no laptops, no mails, no newspaper and almost cut off from the outside world. I could have accessed all of these, but I chose not to be chained by these modern day habits and gadgets.



This experience also reinforced the belief that “where there is a will, there is a way” and that I could embrace things that I had shunned before (ragi ganji, dhoti), be able to live a comfortable life without coffee, tea & milk.

This experiment (I should say) also enlightened me about Naturopathy and how Nature can be your best friend and cure many of your ailments. I didn't realize that rice, ginger, coffee could be good for your skin too.

Last but not the least, I should thank my team in Schneider Electric, my HR leaders & Business leaders who allowed me to enjoy my trip in peace and did not once disturb me. At Schneider we truly believe in work life balance and our leaders truly demonstrate and walk the talk. It's almost inconceivable that a senior leader can be out of office for 2 weeks and not be disturbed once.

People who have met me viz. my friends, my family members say that I look a lot more trimmer (my waist is almost size 32 inches - down from 34 inches and 36 inches a year back), a few years younger and on the whole a lot fitter.

I embark on a New Year 2015 with renewed energy, confidence and a feeling of being a lighter body, mind & soul after all I strongly believe in being  
**“18 till I die.....”**

