108 Saṃskṛta Core Concept Pointers – 26 – Saṃskāra

संस्कार

Root:
kṛ
Devanāgarī:
संस्कार
Translation:
tendencies, psychological imprint, mental impression, habitual potency; making sacred, hallowing, consecration, making ready, preparation; a sacred or sanctifying ceremony
Opposite words:
pariṇāma
Related concepts:
vāsanā, vṛtti, pratyaya, smṛti, vyutthāna, citta, karman
Appears in:
Yoga Sūtra:
Chapter 1: 18 , 50
Chapter 2: 15
Chapter 3: 9 , 10 , 18
Chapter 4: 9 , 27
Sāṃkhya Kārikā:
67

Links to Related Resources & Longer Articles:

- T Krishnamacharya Yoga Sūtra Study Quotes Collected and Collated
- TKV Desikachar Yoga Sūtra Study Quotes Collected and Collated
- Paul's Yoga Mālā – A Thread of Pearls from Patañjali's Yoga Sūtra
- Paul's Yoga Sūtra Study Keywords – Collected & Collated into Chapters
- Paul's Yoga Sūtra Study Questions – Collected & Collated into Chapters
- Finding your starting point within Āsana to set a direction and route towards a goal...
- I do feel that verses 10 and 11 Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two offer……
- Īśvara Praṇidhānā appears as a Sādhana Upāya at three unique reference points...
- Laṅghana Kriyā has two functional dimensions...
- Physiological and psychological considerations around the practitioner's starting point...
- Studying, Practicing and Learning the Tri Bandha involves Theory, Techniques and Cautions...
- TKV Desikachar talks on Śraddhā in the light of the Yoga Sūtra……

Collated Related Short Posts & Quotes:

"The Saṃskāra of Yoga prepares one for Ātma Vidyā and is open to everyone."
- T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"Yoga is a Saṃskāra in that it equips us to realise our greatest potential.
If we wish, it can prepare us for and lead us to the beatitude of the divine presence."
- T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"The ideal Dhyānam,
which becomes easier with practice,
requires certain preparations to reduce
the tendency of the mind to be distracted,
either by being jumpy and agitated, or dull and inert.
Chief among these preparations are proper diet and Prāṇāyāma."
- T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"The Veda speak eloquently of the lotus in one's heart, where Īśvara resides.
It is only when the mind is quiet, clear, and steady that we can
reach into and visualise this most intimate part of ourselves.
Yoga as a Saṃskāra leads to Yoga as a means to experience this.
The experience of Dhyānam, in this ideal sense,
eventually evolves into Samādhi – total absorption in Īśvara."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"Yoga arises from
the containment of,
our propensity to fluctuate."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"Past tendencies also determine the mind's
direction and quality of perception."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 4

"Given the at all other times in this verse,
we need to thwart the ploys of the mind to
conform to its unhelpful fluctuations by reducing:
1. The tendency of the mind to perceive in too many ways.
2. The tendency of the mind to distort what we see.
3. The tendency of the mind to fantasize.
4. The tendency of the mind to go to sleep at inappropriate moments.
5. The tendency of the mind to get lost in memory or impose memory on reality.
When these old or other tendencies take over you are not there.
So if you are not consistent with your efforts,
you will not change your state of mind.
Plus, the unhelpful aspects of the fluctuations reduce
the tendency of the mind to experience a clarity of being."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 4

"When this relationship becomes strong through repeated encounters,
a unique power develops in the mind which is linked to Jīva.
This power is Saṃskāra and from it arises memory or that aspect of understanding
where objects can be comprehended without being physically present.
Based on previous experiences of objects, Saṃskāra gives rise to understanding
and in order for this to happen, Jīva must be linked to the mind.
This ability to remember, known as Asaṃpramoṣa, stays with us for a very long time."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 11

"Trying to escape from Saṃskāra only increases their power and,
in addition, leads to the acquisition of still more Saṃskāra."
- T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 18

"In Sūtra 1.18 Patañjali introduces the notion of Saṃskāra.
What is the relationship of Saṃskāra, as introduced
in this Sūtra, to the outcome of Abhyāsa,
as discussed in the preceding Sūtra?"
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 18

"Where does Śraddhā sit in a human being?
Is it a part of the mind?
No. It is beyond the mind.
It is Śraddhā which instructs the mind.
It comes from the hidden depths of the Saṃskāra and Vāsana
to influence one's actions."
- TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 20

"The Antarāya are presented as if
a mirror reflecting one's Citta.
They function as if a subliminal playlist,
thus feeding our distractive tendencies."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 30

"The tendencies born from that experience
of knowing oppose other tendencies."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 50

"Can we unlearn as quickly as we learn?
In other words, how to cultivate and refine
the Samskara of learning to unlearn."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 50

"When even the tendency of insight
is contained, all is contained;
this is integration without seed."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 51

"The whole system functions on the strength of mind.
Mind is affected by what we eat.
'Our mind is like our food'.
Tapas is to discipline our eating habits."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 1

"In Yoga Sutra Chapter Two, the role for
Īśvara Praṇidhānā in the Kriya Yoga section, can
be as an appropriate Upāya for a Cikitsā situation.
Here, as one of a triad in the cultivation of helpful
lifestyle habits, its purpose is in reducing agitation."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 1

"This Sūtra describes the origin of Duḥkha.
Duḥkha arises because of change, greed and conditioning.
Besides the Guṇa cause inherent changes unexpectedly.
This disturbs balance and Duḥkha follows."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 15

"Good habits can be as enslaving as bad ones
and can also lead to Duḥkha."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 15

"Heyaṃ Duḥkham Anāgatam involves two things.
One is owning an acknowledgement of what has
past, in that what I said or did was out of order
and, at that moment, this was not a skilful action.
The second is anticipation of the future, in that I
need to have acquired some skills to help in creating
new Saṃskāra as potential energetic alternatives.
Both support my efforts to overcome arisings of
old Saṃskāra leading me into re-action, rather
than the intention that I have choices in action."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 16

"Pratyāhāra is not feeding the tendency of the Citta
to automatically form a positive, negative, or neutral
identification with whatever stimuli the senses present to it.
From that, we can begin to understand how their external gathering
activities stimulate our conscious and especially, unconscious choices.
From this, we can begin to understand how the impact
of this sensory knowing can lead us to travel in different directions
and trigger different levels of response, often without us being really
conscious of how deeply their input stimulates our psychic activities.
From these responses, there will be the inevitable re-actions,
again quite possibly unconscious and multilevelled,
according to our psychic history in terms of our memory,
habit patternings and deeper memory processes.

From those initial insight, we can begin to understand
and interact in how we can resist unconsciously slipping
into the trance states that can so often culminate with
the Kleśa manifesting fully in the entrancing dance of
Udārā Rāga, or Udārā Dveṣa, or Udārā Abhiniveśa,
the potent and profligate children of Avidyā."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 54

"Dhāraṇā is when we create a condition so that the mind,
going in a hundred different directions,
is directed to one point."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 1

"When Rajas and Tamas
dominate it is
Vyutthāna Saṃskāra.
When they don't
dominate it is
Nirodha Saṃskāra."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 9

"We can have two opposite Saṃskāra,
but only one can act at any one time."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 9

"Dispersion is a habit
that pulls us away from
the habit of containment."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 9

"The paradox of being in a state of distraction
is that we are actually in a state of focus.
Its just that we are focused on being turned outwards,
as in the tendency of being scattered,
as in Vyutthāna Saṃskāra,
rather than being focused on being turned inwards,
as in the tendency of being contained,
as in Nirodha Saṃskāra.
Both Saṃskāra are acquired tendencies
and thus we can cultivate a choice within our oscillations."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 9

"From meditating on the Heart,
we come to know the habits of the Mind.
From coming to know the habits of the Mind,
we come to know the Intrinsic Nature of the Mind."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 34

"The mutual aim of Yoga and Sāṃkhya is to
experience the more discerning aspects of the psyche,
rather than just the more grasping aspects of the psyche.
In the former, the tendency of the Buddhi to discern discriminately
prevails over the tendency of Ahaṃkāra to grasp indiscriminately.
In the latter, the tendency of the Ahaṃkāra to grasp indiscriminately
prevails over the tendency of the Buddhi to discern discriminately.
The former is a state known as Buddhi Sattva,
where the clarity of discernment prevails over the
indiscriminate grasping nature of the Ahaṃkāra.
The latter is a state of Buddhi Tamas,
where the discerning clarity of the Buddhi
is obscured by the grasping nature of the Ahaṃkāra.
Thus our Yoga Sādhana has but one primary Saṃkalpa,
that of the reduction of the obscuration by Tamas in the Buddhi.
This reduction of Tamas facilitates the advent of the clarity of Sattva,
as in the metaphor of the reduction of the cloud facilitates the advent of the sun."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 49

"Changes are according to
the predisposition of the
Saṃskāra of the person,
and therefore not identical,
and therefore may not be
what the source desires."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Four verse 5

"Saṃskāra is so powerful,
it can lead you to act without thinking."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Four verse 9

"But Saṃskāra can be fed by Vāsanā."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Four verse 9

"Saṃskāra always looks
to our past experiences
to determine our choices
for our future actions."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Four verse 9

"When we act unconsciously
we go back into the past."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Four verse 27

"Feelings from the past remain eternally potent ravagers,
especially pervasive within the illusion of our present and
with it a tendency to recreate an old shape from our past,
whilst we are believing it to be a new shape for our future."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Four verse 27

The safest place for the mind is in the past.
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Four verse 27

"The senses can be faster than
the mind in triggering Saṃskāra."
– TKV Desikachar on Bhagavad Gītā Chapter Three verse 41

"What does reflecting on our relationship with Manomaya reveal?
In other words what relationship do we have with our Saṃskāra or habitual patterns?"
– Taittirīya Upaniṣad Chapter Three Bhṛguvallī verse 3

"The problems we have in life come because of Saṃskāra.
We are not able to distinguish the coloured image of the mind from the real object."
– TKV Desikachar 'The Antaraṅga Sādhana, Saṃyama and Kaivalya' Religiousness in Yoga
Chapter Thirteen Page 188

"One should inquire onto one's habits.
Good or bad."
- TKV Desikachar 1978

"The mind has the characteristics that make other things possible.
To develop tendencies or Saṃskāra.
The mind can also adapt and change or Pariṇāma.
Saṃskāra is the opposite of Pariṇāma."
– TKV Desikachar on Sāṃkhya and Yoga

"Depending on what and how you feed Pariṇāma and Saṃskāra
you can have good or bad reactions.
Pariṇāma relates to perception,
Saṃskāra relates to memory ."
– TKV Desikachar on Sāṃkhya and Yoga

"When Saṃskāra takes one view and
Pariṇāma another there is friction.
Coming to Madras is Pariṇāma,
being unable to have those things you had before causes friction.
When you want those things you are used to through Saṃskāra,
then the Pariṇāma which caused this can bring Duḥkha."
– TKV Desikachar on Sāṃkhya and Yoga

"Pariṇāma is change and can be from one moment to the next.
Suppose we are listening to music we like, a Saṃskāra or tendency,
and something happens to jar the appreciation.
The change is immediate and opposite to how we were.
Thus the Saṃskāra of listening to a particular style of music
causes friction when there is change."
– TKV Desikachar on Sāṃkhya and Yoga

"There is a relationship between
Pariṇāma, Tāpa and Saṃskāra.
When you recognise this phenomena
there is something that recognises it.
That something is not part of the phenomena."
– TKV Desikachar on Sāṃkhya and Yoga

"A Yogi is one in who Pariṇāma and Saṃskāra are in harmony.
When there is no harmony there is the wrong
combination of Pariṇāma and Saṃskāra.
This is known as Avidyā or not knowing a thing as it is.
The right combination is Vidyā."
– TKV Desikachar on Sāṃkhya and Yoga

"The practice of Yoga is an attempt to influence
Saṃskāra and Pariṇāma in a positive way.
If not the practice is wrong.
Therefore Yoga is a Saṃskāra which
gradually changes from old Saṃskāra."
– TKV Desikachar on Sāṃkhya and Yoga

"These problems in our observation are related to the mixing of:
Vikalpa: Imagination is already there operating when we begin to observe. All the more that we are better and better informed about what we should see, etc.
Viparyaya: Because of the past Saṃskāra, there is a sort of perversion in observation.
Smṛti: Memory is, unfortunately, never factual.
Finally, we should never forget that all conclusions are wrong, because things change. Hence the importance of private lessons, which allow for more flexibility."
– TKV Desikachar 1981

"Āsana offers a purpose more than just physical.
Āsana offers a link of the mind to the physical.
Āsana introduces the concept of Dhyāna as a practice.
Āsana seeks to minimise the Saṃskāra
or habitual patterns which dull the mind.
In doing so it seeks to increase our sensitivity to ourselves,
what is around us and its corresponding influences,
and to what sustains us."
– TKV Desikachar

"According to Manu's authority on behaviour,
in Kālī Yuga Saṃnyāsa is not possible!
Sthiti Krama is a transition to the next stage
where you begin to accept the inevitable.
There is a great Saṃskāra of youth.
We then accept that there will be a setting of the Sun.
You eat less, reflect more, you think of God.
This is Saṃhāra Krama."
- TKV Desikachar France 1983

"Saṃyama can be on the physical, as in Hasta on the strength of an elephant.
Or Saṃyama on Saṃskāra,
an investigation of mental tendencies leading to an understanding of past traits.
Or on Grahaṇa,
going into the idea of how the senses hold objects,
what is the basis inside for sense perceptions.
This leads to Indriya Jaya.
Patañjali is giving indications that these practices are possible.
Īśvara Praṇidhāna is quoted more than once, through investigation of this idea he tells us that it
is this that makes a person aware of their true self
– Tataḥ Pratyak Cetanā Adhigamaḥ (YS Chapter One verse 29).
Sādhana can be physical, senses, mental, spiritual."
– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"Patañjali has proposed 3 approaches to verify the indications.
Tapas – Process of action
Food, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma.
You will be doing something that you will not be habitually doing.
For example one day no salt, cigarettes, Prāṇāyāma.
Tapas is from the root to create thirst.
It means to deprive.
It will tell us about ourselves.
It will reveal our Saṃskāra and Pariṇāma or changes in ourselves.
From this Tapas we will start to get an indication of our individual nature.
For example active or lazy.
Tapas indicates the the beginning of the Bheda, through the Bhāva."
– TKV Desikachar France 1983

Question to TKV Desikachar on Pariṇāma:
"Change is universal but not the same for everybody.
Pariṇāma gives life to Saṃskāra.
Saṃskāra gives stability to Pariṇāma.
So there is an order in any change.
If there is no Pariṇāma or Saṃskāra there is no Vidyā or Avidyā."
– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"We can summarise all the Bheda into three:
– Saṃskāra Bheda (division by tendencies)
– Pariṇāma Bheda (division by transformation or change)
– Avidyā Bheda (division by illusion)
They are not bad things, only different.
We need to recognise and do something so the negative differences don't take us over."
– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"We need to hold knowledge back to see something fresh."
– From study notes with TKV Desikachar England 1992

"What factors promote favourable Saṃskāra?"
- TKV Desikachar1995

"Saṃkalpa is mainly the intention to do something,
to be serious about my goal; it is something I feel I must do.
Saṃkalpa must be on both parts: student and teacher,
like when we chant 'saha nāvavatu...'.
Saṃskāra means the purification,
like cleaning a vessel before I use it for another purpose.
It's a kind of Viyoga or separation.
It concerns how I prepare for the situation.
The Saṃskāra is an effort in both directions: student and teacher.
Saṃyoga means there is a good exchange;
something begins to happen, something is given and something is received.
The best teaching has all three of these."
– TKV Desikachar speaking with his senior Western students London 1998

"The first Saṃskāra we have is faith.
So even if we react against this later, deep inside we have some faith."
- TKV Desikachar

"In Learning the Tri Bandha we engage with certain potential contraindications:
1. The Tri Bandha reduce the length and subtlety of the breath.
2. The accumulative effect when repeated should be more intense,
but often the opposite is what can actually happen.
3. In the beginning the use of the Tri Bandha can disturb the system and
create tendencies, such as for the practitioner to lose their temper.
4. The continued use of the Tri Bandha can easily
raise tensions in the neck and shoulders.
5. If the abdomen appears to be retracted strongly, but the breath
is getting shorter the practitioner is probably cheating."
- 108 Mudrā Practice Pointers

"When less Āsana time than you would like,
better to reduce the number of Āsana,
or the number of repetitions,
or the length of the stays,
rather than, reducing the length of the breath.
Or..... even considering lengthening the breath,
thus even fewer Āsana, all with a longer breath than usual.
Here the Bhāvana could be to observe the effect
of a more spacious than usual Āsana breathing
on a more cramped than usual daily mindset."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"One of the major tools in bringing or
refining the level of observation to the
subtler aspects of our body, emotions
and mental patterns is Prāṇāyāma."
– 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

Voluntary Efforts and Involuntary Effects in an Āsana Practice
"Thus, this means these effects can also apply to our
attitudes whilst working habitually in a particular Āsana.
For example, an involuntary response as a result of memory.
So we can have a blindness, in that we are unaware of the
position of the arms, legs, or body, as well as in our attitude.
Thus, we need to at least apply movements voluntarily
in our efforts to influence the qualities of the Āsana."
- 108 Yoga Planning Pointers
- The Viniyoga of Planning Principles Guidelines – Collected & Collated

The element of compromise in the body
"If you are doing the same Āsana practice,
over a long period of time,
it is not the same, because it becomes a habit.
In this, it can have a different effect to what is required.
Thus, when you design an Āsana practice for
a long period you should be very careful.
In this situation perhaps accommodate a
compromise and build in a safety factor."
- 108 Yoga Planning Pointers
- The Viniyoga of Planning Principles Guidelines – Collected & Collated

The Adaptation of the Āsana Practice
"There is also the impact of fluctuations in
the body's physical and breathing processes,
on our mental patterns and emotional flows.
Along with the opposite, namely the impact of
our mental patterns and emotional flows on
the body's physical and breathing processes."
- 108 Yoga Planning Pointers
- The Viniyoga of Planning Principles Guidelines – Collected & Collated

The Adaptation of the Āsana Practice
"Thus, there are always changes, or Pariṇāma,
in the outcome of the interactions between our
physical processes and breathing processes, and
our mental patterns within our emotional flows.
However, we can also tend towards becoming
either over-adaptable or under-adaptable, in trying
to absorb, or overcome, these changes in ourselves."
- 108 Yoga Planning Pointers
- The Viniyoga of Planning Principles Guidelines – Collected & Collated

What is the role of the practice of Āsana?
"Perhaps at this point, we need to consider
what is seen, especially these days,
as a role for the practice of Āsana.
For example:
– Physiological Limitations
– Psychological Tensions
– Recreational Pastime
– Fitness Activity
– Prepare for Prāṇāyāma
– Prepare for Chanting
– Prepare for Meditation
– Personal Ritual
– Self–Inquiry
– Something else?
Thus the roles are many...."
– 108 Yoga Planning Pointers
– The Viniyoga of Planning Principles Guidelines – Collected & Collated

"How to cultivate as
intimate a relationship
with our Yoga Practice
as with our mind's habits?"
- 108 Yoga Study Path Pointers

"What does reflecting
on our relationship
with Manomaya reveal?
In other words what
relationship do we have
with our habitual patterns?"
– 108 Yoga Study Path Pointers

"Perhaps be careful that the habits
you are re-habituating towards
are not just as blinding as the
habits you are de-habituating from."
– 108 Yoga Study Path Pointers

"The principles of Cikitsā, Rakṣaṇa and Śikṣaṇa Krama
are more applicable to the 'mindset' of a person,
rather than looking through the 'fitness' of their body."
- 108 Yoga Teaching Path Pointers