108 Saṃskṛta Core Concept Pointers – 7 – Dhāraṇā

Root:
dhṛ
Devanāgarī:
धारणा
Translation:
retaining, keeping back; fixation; collection or concentration of the mind; to exercise concentration; the act of holding, bearing, wearing, supporting, maintaining;
Similar words:
vidhāraṇā
Related concepts:
pratyāhāra, dhyāna, samādhi, prāṇāyāma, aṣṭāṅga, deśa, aṣṭāṅgayoga, saṃyama
Appears in:
Yoga Sūtra:
Chapter 2: 29 , 53
Chapter 3: 1
Sāṃkhya Kārikā:
32

Links to Related Resources & Longer Articles:

- Correct vibrational intonation was an important emphasis within all aspects of Mantra initiation
- One example of this depth is Krishnamacharya's lesser known work in the teaching of Mantra……
- Prāṇāyāma within Rāja Yoga and Haṭha Yoga
- The breadth, depth and potential of Desikachar's teachings on practice……
- Though there are many different aspects to formal 'home' practice……

Collated Related Short Posts & Quotes:

"The outer layer of meditative reflection,
as in Dhāraṇā, can reveal psychic symptoms,
which we might compare to the branches
of a tree, such as confused attractions,
confused aversions and the fear of loss."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verses 7-9

"In the Yoga Sūtra,
Āsana is basically something linked to Prāṇāyāma,
since Prāṇāyāma is a very important practice there,
linked to Dhāraṇā."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 46

"Prāṇāyāma leads to this. Pratyāhāra,
to see without the senses distracting or pulling the mind,
and Dhāraṇā –
To see without the mind losing itself,
because of colouring or expectations.
Dhyānam arises out of this."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 49

"As Prāṇāyāma dissolves the covering of the light,
fitness of the mind for concentration arises."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 53

"Prāṇāyāma is a key to the door of Dhāraṇā."
- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 53

"Pratyāhāra is both a Sādhana and a Siddhi.
In that, it is a Siddhi of Prāṇāyāma,
as well as a Sādhana for Dhāraṇā."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 55

"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

"Dhāraṇā -
To see without the mind losing itself,
because of colouring or expectations."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 1

"Here the word Citta is used rather than Manas.
Citta is not used in Chapter Two,
except with regard to Pratyāhāra in verse 54.
Otherwise, the term Manas is used,
as in when the mind is automatically
pulled out by external forces.
Therefore for many of us mind is Manas.
Unless there is a shift from Manas to Citta,
it is not possible to do Dhāraṇā."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 1

"If there is no Dhāraṇā,
there is no Grahaṇa or grasping.
Mind itself cannot do Dhāraṇā.
Something else is required."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 1

"Since Dhyāna cannot occur without an object of concentration,
there must be an area where you fix your mind.
So, first you have to fix or bind your mind
on a particular place, a chosen object;
this is known as Deśa Bandha.
And second, the mind should establish
a relationship with this object which
should last, at least, for a moment."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 1

"Dhāraṇā has three distinct, cyclical phases,
from a placing of awareness on the focus,
to an awareness of observation wandering,
to a re-placing of awareness on the focus."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 1

"Dhāraṇā is both a Sādhana and a Siddhi.
In that, it is a Siddhi of Pratyāhāra,
as well as a Sādhana for Dhyāna."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 1

"Dhāraṇā – a state of effortful attention.
Dhyānam – a state of effortless attention."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verses 1-2

"To hold the Citta for connective moments is Dhāraṇā.
To be held by the Citta for connective moments is Dhyānam"
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verses 1-2

"Dhāraṇā is the process of 'holding onto' the object.
Dhyānā is the process of 'linking with' the object.
Samādhi is the process of 'integration into' the object."
- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verses 1-3

"Dhyānam is the seventh Aṅga of the Aṣṭāṅga Yoga.
In order to experience Dhyānam, the sixth step,
Dhāraṇā, should have been practiced thoroughly."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 2

"Dhyānam is both a Sādhana and a Siddhi.
In that, it is a Siddhi of Dhāraṇā,
as well as a Sādhana for Samādhi."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 2

"To derive Siddhi through
Saṃyama Dhāraṇā or
Savikalpa Samādhi,
Dhyānam and Samādhi
have to be practised.
These practices should
also be practised
according to one's capacity."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 6

"Ekāgratā is compared to the sharp tip
of the steady flame of a Ghee Lamp
when not exposed to any wind.
In other words,
the mind should not move
anywhere else other than in the
direction fixed for Dhāraṇā.
Obviously the Viṣaya for Dhāraṇā
and Dhyānam should be the same.
The stronger the Dhāraṇā,
the steadier the Dhyānam."
– T Krishnamacharya on Bhagavad Gītā Chapter Six verse 19

"Dhāraṇā is when we create a condition so that the mind,
going in a hundred different directions,
is directed to one point."
– TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Eleven Page 154

"Dhāraṇā is the contact.
Dhyāna is the communication.
Further, when we become so involved in an object that our mind completely merges with it,
that is called Samādhi."
– TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Eleven Page 155

"Āsana and Prāṇāyāma can, according to the Yoga Sūtra,
create a condition where the mind is fit for Dhāraṇā."
– TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Eleven Page 156

"The fourth way the mind functions is called Ekāgratā.
Here clarity has come about
and we have direction and are able to proceed.
What we want to do is much clearer
and distractions hardly matter.
This is also called Dhāraṇā which was explained earlier.
Yoga is actually the beginning of Ekāgratā.
Yoga suggest means to create conditions that gradually
move the Kṣipta level of mind towards Ekāgratā."
– TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga 'The Way the Mind Functions and the Concept of Nirodha' Chapter Eighteen Page 251

"The Cakra are points of
concentration for the mind."
– 'Concerning the Cakra' by TKV Desikachar

"Unless there is a shift from Manas to Citta,
it is not possible to do Dhāraṇā."
– TKV Desikachar 1998
"Perhaps the best explanation of Dhyāna is given by Patañjali in the Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verses One and Two, where he states that one must first fix the question (Dhāraṇā) and then link to it (Dhyāna).
One who is not able to fix the question is not able to succeed in Dhyāna."
– TKV Desikachar Madras December 19th 1988

"To hold something exclusively for a length of time is Dhāraṇā."
– Notes from my studies of the Dhyānamālika with TKV Desikachar

"We might want to consider the notion that the
most important standing Āsana is Samasthiti.
Its role is to ensure we engage with the next Āsana
from a place of attention and aware anticipation,
and after it, return to a place of fullness and reflection.
As if we are experiencing the fullness of the aftertaste
that naturally follows the ingestion of well-cooked food.
It's learned Bhāvana is a quality of stillness within any
moment of inaction, ere to a transition to the next action."
- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

Bhāvana on Śavāsana within a Śikṣaṇa Āsana practice.
"Inherent within the application of Śavāsana
as an Āsana within a Śikṣaṇa Krama practice,
is the active cultivation of a quality of Nirodha,
or what can be described as 'witness awareness'.

As in the notion of the Cit observing the Citta.
Thus, a key to directing the attention in
Śavāsana, is to intentionally cultivate
a quality of passive observation."
- 108 Postural Practice Pointers

Bhāvana on Ujjāyī as a Dhāraṇā Deśa
"Ujjāyī is a form of Ajapā Mantra."
– 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"The 'seed' of potential for Ujjāyī as an
Ajapā Mantra abides within the 'shell' of
a Bhāvana for Ujjāyī as a Dhāraṇā Deśa.
The Deśa also needs to be supported by
utilising a locationally relevant Ādhāra,
as in this instance, the Viśuddhi Ādhāra.
Further considerations can be around the
linking of the sound of Ujjāyī to a semantic
thought-form, by adding Mano Japā Rūpa to
this Ajapā, as some do through using Haṃsa.
However, one could argue that this formation,
shifting from a non-language feeling-based
experience into a language thought-based
experience, can detract from the Bhāvana,
in that a unique Lakṣaṇa of Ujjāyī resides in
the notion of 'sounding' without language."
– 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"Dhāraṇā - a state of effortful attention.
Dhyānam - a state of effortless attention."
- 108 Dhāraṇā Practice Pointers

"Prāṇāyāma is regarded as a Tapas,
a Kriyā, which cleanses the Nāḍī,
It is a Sādhana which sharpens Agni
and helps to dissolve obstacles, thus
making the mind fit for attention."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"Furthermore, the consideration of movement
or stasis sits within a relationship to the
deeper purpose of Āsana within our journey
through the body and the breath, to the mind
and beyond, through considerations such as:

In relation to the concepts of Dhāraṇā and Dhyānam.
Dynamic is the effort to move the activities of the mind,
as well as of the body, in one direction as in Dhāraṇā.
The observations from dynamic work also allow us to see
the role or appropriateness or subtlety of static work.
Here static can be considered as the holding of the mind,
as well as of the body, in one direction as in Dhyānam.
As Dhāraṇā precedes Dhyānam in terms of directing the
activities of the mind, so dynamic work precedes static
work in terms of directing the activities of the body.
So, the quality of the attention within the mind, as well
as the body, is important in helping us to experience the
progressive interrelationship between movement and stasis."
- 108 Yoga Planning Pointers

"According to the Paramparā of
Krishnamacharya and Desikachar,
Āsana begets Mudrā,
Mudrā begets Prāṇāyāma,
Prāṇāyāma begets Pratyāhāra,
Pratyāhāra begets Dhāraṇā,
Dhāraṇā begets Dhyāna.
Of these five Upāya, only
Dhyāna is Meditation."
- 108 Yoga Study Path Pointers

"Desikachar taught me that there were eight steps
in the journey towards learning the teachings.
1. Upadeśa
– To come near to the teachings and remain
2. Śravaṇa
– To listen to the teachings with an open ear
3. Grahaṇa
– To seize hold of or grasp onto the teachings
4. Dhāraṇā
– To concentrate on memorising the teachings
5. Manana
– To carefully reflect on the teachings
6. Anuṣṭhāna
– To live with and put the teachings into practice
7. Anubhāvana
– To have some experiences from following the teachings
8. Pracāra
– To share and apply the teachings with others
In the other words the journey towards
coming near to, listening to, grasping, memorizing,
reflecting, applying, experiencing and sharing the teachings."
- 108 Teaching Path Pointers