

## Trumperies and Tactics for the Discerning Gardener.....

I agree it is not easy to work on ourselves and we might compare it to being a bit like encountering a garden that has been left to become overgrown and entangled over years of neglect.

**Here the first stage is to look at how we might begin:**

We might begin by clearing away the old rubbish that lays all around on the surface of our lives and hampers, distracts or confuses our view of what's really underneath.

Of course this also means that we are able to discern between the nuances around what we perceive as useful to keep, what is rubbish to clear and especially what we see as precious is in reality useful, or is in fact actually dross we need to cling onto under the illusion (Avidyā) of it being essential for our journey.

According to the Yoga Sūtra we perceive what we want to perceive not what we need to perceive. In other words we filter what is in front of us through our existing world concepts and adapt or possibly corrupt the notion of change to fit our fixed view, even whilst sincerely believing it to be in the spirit of inner exploration and insightful processing.

After this process has progressed to a point where hopefully we can then see what really lies underneath the trumperies (practices or beliefs that are superficially or visually appealing but have little real value or worth) that cover the surface of our outer and inner lives, we can now see the ground that actually shapes our view of reality.

Here a spiritual friend, teacher, or personal friend unencumbered by preservation, can be very useful as a mirror held in a way we would not habitually choose, or even perhaps as a catalyst.

**Now we have the second stage to prepare:**

This is to prepare the soil to support existing seeds or receive new seeds by identifying what are the weeds to minimise in terms of unhelpful patterns, in order to help the next stage of what are the existing and new seeds to encourage in terms of helpful patterns.

**There are two aspects to this stage of the process:**

- To overcome existing unhelpful patterns
- To avoid creating new unhelpful patterns

This means turning over the soil of the past and finding what unhelpful seeds or potential weeds lurk within the motivational urges that manipulate our psychic patterns.

The word Buddhi (the word Buddha shares the same root) means to turn things over as in the traditional image of a plough in the soil. Buddha was seen as one who had done this in terms of in-depth psychology and thus knew what lay beneath the surface of the psyche (Citta).

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**The third stage is to plant:**

Now we need to plant new seeds or to encourage existing desirable seeds

**There are two aspects to this stage of the process:**

- To maintain existing helpful patterns
- To develop new helpful patterns

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### The fourth stage is to be vigilant:

For example the Yoga Sūtra tells us to be most attentive when things seem to be going well. So we need to be carefully attentive to 3 things:

- Firstly watching the new and existing seeds root and shoot
- Secondly watching that old (or new) weeds do not grow up alongside them and dominate the tender new seedlings
- Thirdly be able to discern the difference between what are actually, rather than what we believe to be, seeds and what we believe to be weeds

As gardeners know, what is or what is not a weed is a matter of opinion. It seems that anything growing where we do not want it to can be classified as a weed. So the possibility for illusion (Avidyā) based purely on personalised likes (Rāga) and dislikes (Dveṣa) still runs high.

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### The fifth stage is to bring:

Now the watchful caring to bring those tender shoots to fullness knowing that often they will need a support or trellis to see that they grow strong and upright. For example Yoga practice can be a real support, especially if we know it to be ultimately a false support.

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### The sixth stage is to harvest the fruits:

Here I am reminded of an ancient poem around Yoga quoted by Vyāsa in his commentary to the Yoga Sūtra on the concept of viniyoga in Chapter 3 verse 6:

*"Only through Yoga Yoga is known, Only through Yoga Yoga changes.  
One who is patient with their Yoga, Over a long time enjoys the fruits."*

So we must reflect on where we are with our inner garden and that is why I found the gardening metaphor quite useful as a mirror for seeing where we really are rather than where we might believe we are.

It may hopefully also offer a way of moving forward with an intelligent stage check (Vinyāsa Krama Vijñāna) for our perception of progress.

**arambanaṃ saṃśilanaṃ punaḥ punaḥ |**

**"Begin then verify, again begin then verify, again begin then verify."**

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However the Yoga Sūtra tells us that the locks are in the mind, but so are the keys. This presents a potential difficulty as can be illustrated by a story attributed to Mullah Nasrudin:

*"Mullah Nasrudin is one night looking for something next to a lamp post in the street. A friend is going by and asks what he's doing. The Mullah says, "I'm looking for my key which I lost." The friend decides to help and searches the ground under the lamp post. Half an hour later the friend asks, "Are you sure you dropped your key here?" Nasrudin replies, "Oh no I lost it outside my house by the front door." The friend screams, "Why in hell's name, are we searching here?" Nasrudin smiles and says, "This is where the light is."*

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