

The Importance of Supporting Śraddhā in Yoga Therapy

for

People with Anxiety Disorder

Thesis for the Yoga Therapy Program in India

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A. Introduction

Over the 12 years working as a yoga teacher in the tradition of T. Krishnamacharya people who suffered from different kinds of anxiety disorders, came to group and individual classes. Most of them found some help in doing yoga but in the first years I was not able to help them more than in a general way. I did not know what I had to address specifically to help them. Then luckily the great chance to join a training group to become a yoga therapist opened up in 2007. It created the opportunity to learn how to help people in a better way. In the following four years of intense studies an immense treasure of old and new wisdom and knowledge about yoga, it's philosophy and techniques were presented. Especially digging deeply into the philosophy of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra opened a very new perspective on the human mind to me. The concept of śraddhā was particularly intriguing to me.

Śraddhā is presented as the very foundation for a content and happy life, for self-confidence and strength and in the end for spiritual liberation. As I went deeper into this topic I recognized that this deep faith and trust was often very low in people in Western societies and also in me. With the help of my mentor, Dr. Kausthub Desikachar, I started to build up more śraddhā by decreasing my different fears. More light and joy entered my life. This process is still going on and surely will be until the end of my life. The effects of a growing śraddha are very well described in śraddhāsuktam. It is a chant from the taittirīya brahmāṇa and I want to present its translation here, as done by TKV Desikachar.

Faith! You sustain our offering
Faith! You strengthen our offering
Faith! You are the crown of our offering
Faith! Our recitation is divine
Faith! Our offering is true love
Faith! With love offering shines
Faith! Truly sharing is special
Faith! Our receiving is complete
Faith! When evil threatens
Faith destroys evil
With faith all offering is trust
Faith retains forever
Faith indeed is the true Lord
Faith like breath sustains
Faith like heart is ever calm
Faith offered is complete
Faith! We offer in the morning
Faith! We offer in the midday
Faith! Like Sun is total protection
Faith! More faith more confidence
Faith! You are true divine
Faith! Is everything everywhere
Faith! You are true mother
Faith! All efforts never fail

It describes how śraddhā is a strong anchor in life, a shield against the obstacles we have to struggle with. It carries through life and gives the strength to be truly alive.

During the last period of the yoga therapy training we had to decide on the topic of our final thesis. Different topics came to my mind until I realized that I had been constantly working on one special topic for years now, with my students and myself: śraddhā. After that realization it was obvious that I had to write this thesis about people who suffered unnaturally strong from fear and needed the strongest support in śraddhā. But every person who suffered from terrorizing fear lives his very individual tale of woe. And each person receiving help, especially in yoga therapy, has to be addressed individually. There are no general tools in yoga that might decrease fear and increase śraddhā in everyone. As unique as a person is, as unique are the tools used in every case. But all tools have to address vijñānamaya, the level of personality in the end. So I concentrated on one special case, Susanne's case (name changed), who suffered from severe panic attacks. Here is shown exemplarily how fear can be reduced and śraddhā will grow through yoga therapy and a daily yoga practice. The way how people with strong fear, like Susanne, do feel, is very well described in the following poem by Kausthub Desikachar. Furthermore it describes in its last verse the change that may happen during yoga therapy.

this thing called fear

it binds me so tight, that i can barely move,
it scares me to bits, that i feel dead even if alive,
it makes me so cold, that i can barely express,
this thing called fear, why do i hold so dear?

though repulsive of it, i let it inhabit my spirit,
though aware of its peril, i let it stay on as my guest,
though suffering from it, i can hardly turn it away,
this thing called fear, why do i hold so dear?

it invades my space, whether i like it or not,
it surfaces in my actions, whether i let it or not,
it penetrates my mind, when awake or in dream
this thing called fear, why do i hold so dear?

it builds a fortress in me, that i call my "ego"
it inhibits my growth, even if i have the potential,
it deters me from a journey, whose destination is in my heart,
this thing called fear, why do i hold so dear?

it makes me trust, the things i should doubt,
it makes me doubt, the things i must trust,
it makes me crazy, both day and night,
this thing called fear, why do i hold so dear?

as i begin to break free, from its strong binding claws,
i feel choked beyond reason, even as i excrete this toxin,
this suffering tries harder, to deter me from fight,
this thing called fear, why do i hold so dear?

when its out of my spirit, i feel like a different being,
i start to adore myself, with a smile in my face,
a liberation feeling, radiates from within my heart,
this thing called fear, i no longer hold dear.

Yoga therapy and a daily yoga practice is able, by supporting śraddhā and decreasing fear, to help the student overcome his or her old patterns of panic attacks and create new helpful ones. In addition it supports the student in a process of deep personal change into a more independent and stronger being.

B. Theory

Yoga evolved out of Saṁkhya Philosophy, which is one of the six Indian historical Philosophies called the 6 Darśanas. Their main goal is to reduce suffering and to find inner peace and freedom. All of these philosophies have a different approach to reach this goal.

Yoga includes all the philosophical ideas of Saṁkhya with the addition of a concept of a puruṣa viśeṣa, a special puruṣa, called Īśvara.

It is considered that Patanjali wrote the most authentic and fundamental text on Yoga. In his 195 sutras (YS) Patanjali shows that the main reason for our problems and our suffering is our mind. But he shows as well the mind is the tool to overcome our problems and our suffering. If the mind is calm and focused, we are able to solve our problems. This is already mentioned in the second sutra of the first chapter (I.2):

yogaḥ chitta vṛtti nirodhaḥ - Yoga is that the mind's activities envelope a chosen focus in such an intense way that this connection cannot be destructed.

From a modern point of view it can be said that "The Sutras of Patanjali" (YS) may be the oldest text on the structure and functioning of the mind. He speaks about the reasons of its dysfunction that will lead to suffering and illness. And he shows us the tools, the ways and the mind's potentials to solve the problems and heal ourselves. The approach is a holistic one that uses mind, body, breath and soul. And he considers social skills and observance of our self (aṣṭaṅga yoga). That makes Yoga a self-empowering practice that helps to maintain health and increases contentment.

The Yoga Sutras are a source of helpful information and a guideline to overcome modern psychosomatic illnesses like anxious disorder. Anxiety disorders are characterized by an uncontrollable fear or panic attacks or even terror. These are circumstances where the mind is uncontrolled and overwhelmed by emotion. The owner is helpless and extradited. This is the opposite of a calm and positive focused mind.

Everything in Yoga is about to get and maintain a calm and focused mind. So what is the most important pre-requisite to reach this goal? Patanjali named it in Sutra I.20 "śraddhā" - faith and trust.

Everyone knows that trust and fear are always a part of life. However there is no black and white, not trust or fear, it is always a mixture of both, a shade of gray, so to speak. The question is what dominates life? If trust is weak, it makes people insecure and vulnerable, people become open to fear. And if the situation of life increases the insecurity, the fear can evolve into a mental disorder such as a panic attack. To reduce fear and suffering it would be a great help for the suffering person to increase his basic trust and faith. There would be more light and the dark gray would change back into a brighter tone. Yoga as a self-empowering practice has all the tools to let this happen.

1. How does Patanjali present śraddhā?

We know already that Yoga is a path to get a calm and focused mind (YSI.2) to gain a full understanding of ourselves and the situation we are in (YSI.3). On this way of practice we need endurance in practice and detachment from our expectations (YS I.12). For this the precondition for everyone who is not naturally blessed with a clear mind is śraddhā.

In sutra I.20 to I.23 Patanjali presents how śraddhā leads the student on his way from duḥkha to sukha, from suffering to joy and acceptance.

I.20 śraddhā vīrya smṛti samādhiprajñā pūrvaka itareṣām

Let us start with the last words:

Pūrvaka itareṣām: for the others.

For the others the only way to reach samādhiprajñā (full understanding and freedom) is through śraddhā.

Śraddhā: faith, conviction, trust.

It has two important root syllables

Sri: worthy and dha: very supported, stability

So śraddhā is something that is worthy, very supporting and stable inside of us.

Śraddhā is the force that supports us through all obstacles which come along our way in life.

Vīrya: courage, vitality, confidence, strength at mental and physical level.

Śraddhā is also the source of vīrya as the provider of it. Vīrya gives us the strength and courage to make decisions and to act. Out of these experiences śraddhā itself is nourished.

Smṛti: memory; memory on mental and on body level.

The memory of experiences based on śraddhā will remind us to stay on this path. The useful saṃskāras (patterns) become stronger. They support trust and self-confidence.

When these patterns become stronger, śraddhā, vīrya and smṛti become stronger as well. Then the mind gets into a state of stability and calmness. This in turn may lead to the highest knowledge; samādhiprajñā.

Samādhiprajñā : knowledge full of light

Śraddhā is not something that is constant. According to the life situations we are in, it does change. Through that it influences us and our feelings and behaviors in different ways depending on which state śraddhā is in. Patanjali indicates this in the next two sutras.

I.21 tīvrasaṃvegānam āsanaḥ

tīvra: intense

samvegāna: very quick; samvegā: a natural flow

āsanah: arrives, reaches

When śraddhā is very intense you will arrive the goal very quickly.

What does that mean? When you are full of śraddhā time flows easily. This is because obstacles will be dissolved and the focus is not on suffering, instead the focus is on a positive goal. This focus on something positive is very important. The person is more in contact with his self. An indication is that time flows smoothly, a year seems to be like a short period. However if there is insufficient śraddhā distress will dominant and as a result time flows painfully slowly and a day could feel like a year.

However it is not only about a relative experience of time. When there is intense śraddhā there is no fear and less other obstacles which results lowers the hurdles towards the goal to reach Samadhi which can be reached easier and faster.

An important aspect is that the trust itself does not change only its intensity. But what means intense? Every human being has and keeps a basic trust and faith deep inside. Unfortunately most of the time we are not aware of it.

For instance in daily life people normally are focused on their duties, pleasures and problems. Everything that belongs to a human life and that is outside of the person himself. Our mind is occupied with thoughts, emotions and feelings. It is occupied with the things we identify with. We do not recognize the faith, which is supporting our life. The more aware we are of our faith, our basic trust, the more intense śraddhā will be. Then it will support and carry us even faster on our way. To do that we have to reduce the "clouds" which cover śraddhā. Mostly these "clouds" or obstacles are caused by or related to fear. If we reduce fear śraddhā becomes more evident and stronger.

1.22

Mṛdu: mild

Madhya: medium

Adhimātra: intense, great; the root syllables are mātra: only and adhi: inside.

Therefore intense means, we are only connecting with what is inside.

Tataḥ api: consistent with that

Viśeṣaḥ: the benefit

Consistent with the intensity of our awareness of śraddhā, we will gain a benefit ranging from fairly low to great.

Every person has faith in a different quality. Modern psychology says that the foundation of our deepest trust is built during pregnancy and in the first years of our life. Bad experiences during this time decrease our ability to trust or to have faith. So every human being starts his life with a very personal grade of faith, which she/he has a priori no say or power about.

However there is hope for everybody and a firm positive perspective: As Sri T Krishnamacharya said that in every person is a seed of faith with the potential of growing. Human beings are never in a static condition; instead changes are the only constant in life. This in itself bears the chance because of the changes in

daily life there are changes in our feelings and our behavior. There are changes in our life patterns. These will influence the intensity of our faith. Our faith can be different in every situation according whether we act from a position of fear or from a position of śraddhā. And this implies that it can grow as well from mild growth of faith to a very intense one. With every positive experience related to faith it will grow. And those are exactly the chances we can learn from. In the end our faith can increase and our access on śraddhā gets easier and more reliable.

So it should be one of our goals that śraddhā becomes stable and increases. Than it will carry us through our personal evolution. Vyasa phrases it well when he says: " śraddhā protects the student like a mother".

2. Why are these sutras so important for a therapeutic approach for anxiety issues?

The opposite of śraddhā is fear.

Fear is one of the kleśa-s. In sutra II.9 it is said that fear is deeply rooted in human nature and that it has its own force and flow. Even the wise people are not free of it. This is the fear of loosing life or in its weaker form the fear of loosing something we are identifying with. Generally speaking it is the fear of sudden change in general which is something that happens to everyone. However the fear is less strong if our trust and faith is strong. If someone is afraid he cannot let go and tries to control the situation. If the situation gets out of hands the fear becomes overwhelming and as a result the person suffers. He feels paralyzed, weak, constricted, cold and dark. This is what happens to people with anxiety disorders.

The opposite is śraddhā, which is a warm feeling and induces warm emotions. It creates the feeling of space inside of us. It connects us with the light in us. It gives the strength to find solutions to our problems and helps to overcome the related obstacles. It helps to let go of control and to accept the changes in life.

However we have to be careful because there are other sources that seem to give real strength (vīrya). These are the kleśa-s like ego (asmitā), desire (rāga), aversion (dveṣa) and fear (abhiniveśa) and the source of all kleśa-s: ignorance or wrong understanding (avidyā). II.3. How can we differentiate whether strength is based on śraddhā or on kleśa-s? The answer is that the kleśa-s will command the person. He sees only the goal offered by the kleśa and is strongly attached to it. Everything else has no big influence. Consequently the person is not free anymore and has no picture of the whole situation and scenario he is in. Instead he tries to control it and deep within he is driven by fear. He loses the awareness of everything else.

Two examples: A person identifies with her good looks because she is well liked and successful because of her physical appearance. This nourishes her confidence and she is doing a lot to keep her good look. If her appearance changes for whatever reason her confidence is undermined and fear to loose her position in life comes up. She is not strong because of śraddhā but of her identification with her body.

Another person who is very successful in business and gains a lot of power and money feels only strong because of this. He has to be the “best and most powerful person” in his life situation. He strives for money and power and is full of fear to lose it. For this he fights everyone who may be as successful as he is. And the simple reason is because they may potentially get the power he is identifying with.

In summary and in the end everyone has to make a decision, if he wants to act from a position of śraddhā or from a position of fear. This decides about being free or being a victim of our suffering, our desires and identifications, a victim to the fear to lose these identifications.

It seems to be so easy to make the right decision however most often it is not. Often we feel safe in the well-known situation of being a victim, we identify with it. In this situation we are guided by the kleśa-s and this offers a twisted kind of strength as described above. It really needs an intense faith and trust to leave this old path and to transform personally, to welcome the unknown change.

This is the mission and the challenge of Yoga Therapy to help the student to make this decision: to be no victim of fear anymore and to act from a place of śraddhā. The student’s yoga practice should help him to reduce fear and hurtful saṃskāra-s to build up śraddhā to support the student’s daily life. This is only possible if the student is able to accept himself with all his weaknesses and strength.

There are five important steps for the student to take on his path in Yoga Therapy:

1. **The decision to be no victim of fear.**
2. **To find a connection to his inner strength.**
3. **To increase śraddhā step by step by reducing fear.**
4. **To accept himself as she/he is.**
5. **To enjoy life.**

3. What are the symptoms of a lack of śraddhā in accordance with Patanjali’s Sutras?

A lack of śraddhā does not only happen to ill people, like those with anxiety issues. It happens to everyone once in a while. Because śraddhā is not constant as we heard before. This becomes evident when we have to face obstacles in life. But with people who are suffering from anxiety issues these obstacles are very strong. What are the obstacles that are able to show us this lack?

Patanjali mentioned them in Sutra I.30 and 31. These obstacles arise through minor faith and trust and they as well decrease śraddhā by clouding it. So they are able to start a self-empowering circle of leading the person into deeper duḥkha (suffer) and they disturb the mind.

These 8 obstacles (antarāyā-s) are:

1. Vyādhi: disease, disconnection from the self.
Illness or disease is not the reason for suffering itself. The way how people deal with the illness leads to it. They are filled with doubts about

their situation. Why am I suffering? Why me? They do not have the faith to conquer this illness or to accept it. Śraddhā is low. They suffer from the disease of the disease.

2. Styāna: mental dullness, phlegm
People who are mentally dull do not recognize themselves. They have no connection to their vitality. It is hard for them to act on their own behalf. Nothing keeps up their confidence. There is no consciousness about śraddhā.
3. Saṁśaya: doubt, confusion
Doubt and fear are the opposites of śraddhā. Doubt disturbs the mind and catches it in its own thoughts. There is no clarity any more. It is very difficult to make right decisions.
4. Pramāda: haste, to be in a hurry
This is the opposite of patience.
Haste comes out of fear to lose something or not to gain something. It often follows the need to control as much as possible.
And because time seems to run there is no faith that actions will evolve in the right way. There is no patience to wait how things evolve.
The other aspect of haste is the inability to experience the momentary situation of life. The mind is already ahead. Or the person is not able to allow himself to enjoy life. Then the person misses life itself. Only true experience of life with an open heart and mind makes faith and trust grow.
5. Ālasya: laziness
The person is unwilling to experience life. There is often a fear to face the needs of life. Laziness avoids to live life. Śraddhā is not fed.
6. Avirati: sensual indulgence, overuse of the senses, addiction, not concentrated but scattered by sensual influence.
The overuse of the senses is often shown in saṁskāra-s (patterns) like too much eating, alcohol, sex but also work. This pattern is sometimes used to hide from a hurting emotion deep inside. This emotion can be fear or feeling worthless or feeling not accepted or loved and others. All this emotions undermine the self-esteem and through this śraddhā.
7. Bhrāntidarśana: delusion, colored perception.
For example this can be fanaticism or prejudice. But it includes as well delusions about the person himself, like feeling worthless.
8. Alabdhabhūmikatva: lack of perseverance, being not able to sustain the level of an ability the person achieved.
Only through practice we can sustain our abilities. These get lost when the practice is interrupted. This includes the practice to sustain śraddhā.
9. Anavasthitatva: The inability to accept failure, the inability to accept the result of action.
For people with anxiety issues this may be the need of perfection. Mistakes are not allowed. They often take too much responsibility and they are overprotective. They think they have to be in this way, otherwise things get out of control. Fear is the root for this behavior.

Very often human kind is not aware of the obstacles we are confronted with. And how they disturb the human mind. For people with anxiety disorder especially

panic attack these obstacles are obvious. Their main illness is the disease of the disease. They fear the fear itself. They are full of doubt in life and their ability to fulfill their daily duties. That makes them phlegmatic or hasty. Sometimes they are unable to leave their home anymore or they try to do duties they are afraid of as fast as they can.

For example shopping in a big supermarket. It is impossible to wait in a line of the cashier because they fear that they get a new panic attack by doing "nothing". The situation of stillness is unbearable because than the fear comes to the front of the mind and they can only focus on the fear.

Some of them start to eat too much as substitute for the joy they cannot feel anymore or they may start to drink alcohol to avoid the fear. Their subjective perception is full of fear.

They lost their usual healthy way of life. This often started with an overwhelming situation they tried to control and were not able to. For example a loved person becomes ill and they are not able to help. They feel responsible for the situation but they cannot control it although they try with all their might. This does not work. So they suppress their fear of failure. There is no trust and faith. In the end the fear "hits" back in form of a panic attack.

Patanjali shows us the symptoms that are created through these obstacles in the next sutra: I.31

Duḥkha: suffering. This is the constriction in our self. The inner space is affected and leads to tightness in the heart. It restricts a free flow of everything in us, like creativity, intelligence, happy feelings, prāṇa. There is no lightness only cold and darkness. Because space (ākāśa) is affected every other element like wind, light/fire, water and earth (vāyu, jyoti/agni, āpa and bhūmi) is affected too. As a result the whole human system gets restricted and does not function freely anymore. The person feels weak.

Sukha is the opposite. It creates free space. All elements evolve according their potential. Inside there are warmth and light and a supporting structure. The person feels strong.

People with anxiety issues know this tightness in the chest area physically. Nevertheless the source of duḥkha is in the mind. Their mental expectation is fear. All their actions are based on fear and they expect fearfully fruits of fear. To avoid that they try to control, however that makes it even worse.

Daurmanasya: The mind becomes negative and goes in the opposite direction of pleasant. It becomes bitter and pessimistic.

Everything is wrong or dangerous. It can lead to depression. There is no joy anymore.

Especially people with anxiety issues loose their ability to feel joy and to see the good and simple things. They are focused on the memories of their bad experiences.

They see only the half empty part of the glass.

Aṅgamejayatva: Tremors of body parts.

The body starts shaking; the limbs are not in control. There are also internal tremors, like stress, digestion problems, sleeping problems. There is a disturbing change of the physical functions.

During acute panic attack the whole body is shaking. The breath is restricted and the heart seems to stutter. The person feels like dying. In between the attacks there is a very high stress level and high tense. It feels like a nervous vibration inside. The person has sleeping and digestion problems.

Śvāsapraśvāsa: The breath is disturbed. It is shallow and short. It is not dīrgha sūkṣma (long and smooth).

Anxiety disorders lead to a very short, shallow and hard breath. Very often the person is not able to focus on his breath because he fears he could suffocate like the feeling was during a panic attack.

It is shown that anxiety disorders and especially panic attacks are very well described through the antarāyā-s and the symptoms mentioned in sutra I.30 and 31.

4. Which method of resolution for this suffering is offered by Patanjali and the Panca Maya Model of Sāṁkhya philosophy?

The reason for all our suffering lies in our mind. It is the unfocused mind and with what it identifies which are the real reasons. Usually the mind is not clear enough to embrace the true Self. Nevertheless the only tool we have to overcome suffering is our mind.

In therapy we use the vyūha – model, the model of manifestation that leads our way. It has its foundation in Sutra II.14, 15, 17, 24 and 25 of the second chapter of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra-s.

VYŪHA – MODEL

HETU (CAUSE) leads to **HEYAM** (SYMPTOMS), through the right **UPĀYAM** (TOOLS) you reach the **HĀNAM** (GOAL – NO SUFFERING)

People in Duḥkha suffer from different symptoms and usually they want to get rid of them. With this wish they enter Yoga Therapy. How these symptoms manifest is already discussed. But it is very difficult to get rid of them without knowing the cause for the suffering. In general there is always one cause: Avidya. Avidya is the identification with something that makes us suffering and we cannot let go of it because we think it is essential for us. I.e. for people with

anxiety issues it is the identification with the fear itself. It is manifested in their mind and they focus permanently on it. But this is only the first layer of the cause. Very often there is the impression of a former experience (vāsanā), which led to the panic attacks. This experience had such a deep impact into the mind of the person that it created this pattern (saṁskāra) of panic attacks accompanied with this big fear of the fear.

After having an idea of the cause we can choose the tools to reach the goal of non-suffering. The goal of Yoga Therapy should be to help the person to become free of fear or to reduce it, so śraddhā can take over. This should lead to a more content and joyful life.

Which kind of tools offers Patanjali to change fear into śraddhā?

To make this happen something has to change in the mind. This is not an intellectual decision alone. It comes only through a way of constant practice of the right yoga tools. This practice should be done without interruption and with as much serenity as the patient is able of. (YS I.12 and following). For a person with anxiety issues it is very difficult to be patient and serene. Here is one important challenge for the teacher to motivate the student to go through the difficult phases of this way. Nevertheless the student should practice with discipline (tapas). These practice should not been done mechanically. There is always a permanent need of self-reflection (svādhyāya). Otherwise the student may not recognize the ongoing changes. The conversation with the yoga therapist during the therapeutic classes is a part of this reflection. They help both care seeker and care provider to get a view on the process. And the care provider is able to choose new tools to keep the change of the care seeker in flow. Big problems on this way are the expectations of the student and the backlashes that may come and usually do come. For people with anxiety issues the way of deep change from fear to śraddhā can be very long. Their expectation of a fast change may be disappointed instead they may have to face again panic attacks or echoes of their old experiences, because it is so difficult for them not to focus on their fear anymore. This situation of not being able to do so, they have to accept first without loosing faith into Yoga therapy. (īśvarapraṇidhāna, YS. II.1). Here again is the support of the care provider important. Often it is a repeated cycle of lessening the impact of the symptoms created by fear. Until the student is able to see the real reason for his suffering and to accept it. (Samanam and Śodanam) Then it can be changed. To make this difficult way easier it is reasonable to address first minor problems and solve them first instead of focusing on the fear directly. Once those minor problems are solved a first step has been taken. The student becomes more confident and is able to face the next bigger problems and so on. So over time the big problem of terror of the fear can be addressed and resolved gradually.

To go this way the teacher has to address the appropriate levels- maya-s of the student with appropriate tools.

How can the teacher know which kind of tools are appropriate for the student? Again Patanjali offers us a wide bunch of tools that are described as well in the following sutra-s YS. I.23, I.33 – 39 as in yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma and meditation. How can we choose out of this wide range? Which tools shall we use first? The pancamaya model of saṁkhya philosophy gives us an idea.

This pancamaya model sees the human as an entity where body and mind are deeply intertwined but for a better understanding this entity is partitioned into five layers - the panca maya-s. Each deeper layer is subtler than the one before and each layer influences the others.

They are

Annamaya, layer of the body

Prānamaya, layer of energy

Manomaya, layer of the intellectual mind

Vijñānamaya, layer of personality

Ānandamaya, layer of emotion and feelings.

7. The Multi-Dimensional Human Being : The Panca Maya Model

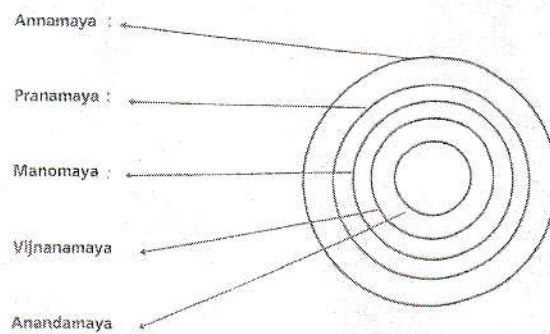


Figure 1:

All these layers are deeply connected and each has the ability to change. So if therapy initiates a change in one layer, it will always have an influence on the other layers as well.

Each layer is metaphorically shown in the picture of a bird.

Here the body represents the key element, which is led through one quality, represented in the head. It is balanced through two others qualities in the wings and gains stability through the quality in the tail.

The whole concept is presented as a model of a bird :
Presentation of the five levels in this model.

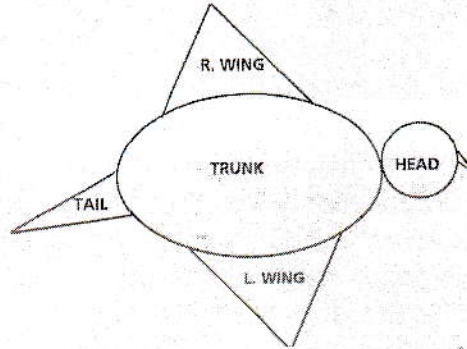


Figure 2: I The trunk, there is the key element.
II The head, it is leading.
III and IV The wings are balancing, means of action, navigation.
V The tail gives stability.

All these qualities in the different parts of the bird and on the different levels are shown in the following scheme:

	II	III	I	IV	V
Annamaya	Head	Left Wing	Trunk- Heart	Right Wing	Tail
Prānamaya	Prāna	Vyana	Ākaśa- Space	Apana	Prthvī Ūdāna
Manomaya	Yatur Veda	Ṛg Veda	Ādeśa- Ability to listen	Sāma Veda	Atharva Veda
Vijñānamaya	Śraddhā	Ṛtam	Yoga-Link	Satyam	Mahat
Ānandamaya	Priya	Moda	Ānanda- Joy	Pramoda	Brahma

Annamaya this is the body level.

Here the trunk and **the key element is our heart**, the leading element is our brain, our 10 senses, jñanindriya and karmindriya are the wings and our body structure especially pelvic and spine are the tail.

Prānamaya this is the energy level.

Here prāna is the leading energy. It nourishes everything in us. This is breath and other nourishing energies. This is digested- processed through samāna in the trunk. This is not only digestion of food it is the digestion of every thing that has

to be processed within us, like the procession of teachings, impressions, experiences and emotions. **The key element is Ākaśa – space.**

Vyana, the distributing energy and apāna, the eliminating energy are the wings. Udāna, the accumulating energy is the tail. It is also named pṛthivī – earth. It gives the stability.

Manomaya this is the intellectual level, the level through which we are learning. Learning through listening.

The key element is Ādeśa – the ability to listen.

Yatur Veda, the life sustaining knowledge is what leads. Ṛg – Veda, spiritual knowledge and Sāma Veda – cultural knowledge give the balance in our action (III and IV). Athara Veda – emergency knowledge gives the stability.

Two aspects of this level are very important. The learning process itself and the way how we memorize what we learned. What stays with the memory shapes the mind and our whole personality. It is as well what we remember as how we remember. What we understand during the learning process and what we remember is not necessarily the truth or what was real. It is a subjective image of the reality.

When we experience something on a deep level, we remember it very well. Negative experiences have very often a deeper impact and therefore they are remembered easier than the pleasant experiences.

Vijñānamaya, this is the level of personality.

The key element is Yoga – to link with something.

The leading quality is śraddhā – faith in our Self.

Ṛtam, the perception of reality and Satyam, the true communication of the perceived reality are the wings. Mahat, the important impressions and patterns are the tail of the bird.

This level is the most important level we have to work on in Yoga therapy, even if we cannot influence it directly it is possible to influence it indirectly through the other layers. Because of that we have to have a closer look on that level.

The way we process our learning and apply it is expressed in our personality. Here we are unique. On Manomaya there can be close similarities to others. But how we take this in our personality is unique. In Yoga Therapy we have to engage this domain. The student has to link with it to make change happen.

The head of the bird is śraddhā. Śraddhā is build on the connection to the Self and includes how we value ourselves. When we disempower ourselves we loose śraddhā and the contact to our personality. As a result we loose trust in others, because you cannot have faith in others, if you do not have it in yourself. Despite that we are looking for appreciation through others. But this is never satisfying. So śraddhā should be the leading quality in our personality and it is responsible for the way life expresses. It is the precondition for a content life as Patanjali said in Yoga Sutra I.20

Instead fear can be the leading quality in life. This changes the whole expression of personality and life. Fear and śraddhā are opposites, as we know already. The

Sanskrit word for fear is abhiniveśa. Its root words mean: veśa: costume, mask; niveśa: continuous costume; abhi: very intimate. This says fear is an intimate mask or costume that we continuously wear.

The moment we are afraid we wear a mask as well to the environment as to our self. Often we even do not recognize it. We do not see reality and do not live reality. Instead the mask, the costume becomes our reality and we identify with it. I.e. for people with anxiety issues the simplest things can become a challenge because these may trigger a new panic attack. This is their subjective perception of reality and for them it is the truth.

Therefore our perception – Rtam is based on the leading quality of our personality, śraddhā or fear. This is also the leading quality in our mind.

Of course this influences the way reality is communicated, Satyam. There is often a gap between communication and the subjective reality. In order to be honest there is a necessity of confidence that comes only through self-estimation. This kind of honest communication is not rude and has not the intention to hurt. Rtam and Satyam symbolize as well how we experience our own personality and how we express it to the society.

The stabilizing part of Vijñānamaya is mahat, the tail. Its content is all our patterns and their roots (saṃsakāra-s, vāsanā and svabhāva); the visible and the non-visible one. They gave personality stability but they make changes difficult. These patterns influence our behavior and processing on every level of this model, because all levels are intertwined. There are helpful, positive patterns and such that lead to suffering.

In Yoga Therapy we should support the helpful patterns and create more of them to make the others less influential. Helpful patterns for example could be being health, calmness, happiness and so on. Patterns that may lead to suffering could be disease, aggression, prejudice and so on.

These patterns are not random according to Yoga and Sāṃkhya Philosophy. They have their origin in our Vāsanā-s. These are impressions from the past that remain in us and continue to influence our saṃskāra-s. It is not possible to negate them, instead we have to accept as well our vāsanā-s as our saṃskāra-s and deal with them. This acceptance is another important part of Yoga Therapy. But even the vāsanā-s are not the deepest roots, this is our svabhāva. This is our inherent nature, our potential with which we are born. The svabhāva manifests according to the environment we grew up and live in and it influences the vāsanā-s and through this the saṃskāra-s. We should accept our svabhāva as well.

Depending on whether personality is lead by śraddhā or bhaya - fear we chose unconsciously the vāsanā-s and patterns we are mostly connected with and also which parts of our potentials we actually live and support and which parts get neglected.

I.e. if fear is the main leading quality vāsanā and saṃskāra manifest and stay, there is no change. This affects every other level as well. On manomaya flexibility and openness of the intellectual mind becomes problematic. Learning and listening to something new is difficult. Prānamaya, the energy level is influenced. Prāna is feeding the fear instead of feeding a clear mind and all body faculties. As a consequence breathing becomes difficult. Permanent exhaustion may also be there. The physiological level (annamya) is blocked and tense.

The Mahat is a very influential part of personality that dictates who we are. Naturally some people are more drawn towards light while others tend to darkness, others swing back and forth. This can have its origin already in our inherent nature, our svabhāva.

In Yoga Therapy we should replace darkness with light, and this is possible because the saṁskāra-s and vāsanā-s as part of the Mahat are not a static concept, they are dynamic, changeable. How much change can happen depends on how much the student empowers himself.

The key element of vijñānamaya is Yoga – the link. What are we mostly linked with and what should we be linked with instead? Usually we are linked with our self-identity. These are the things we identify with. Like our name, gender, the family we are part of, our job, our sports club and what we believe we are able to do or not and so on. But this is not our true nature. These are only things without constancy. Instead we should link with our true Self, the never changing entity deep inside us. This is a great challenge for everyone, because we are scared to let go identifications. Only śraddhā can carry through this challenge. How is this link done in a practical way? We have to commit to Self in form of a daily practice and stay with it, even when it starts to become uncomfortable. This commitment is the first and last thing to engage vijñānamaya.

The Self is not part of the five pancamaya-s. It belongs to the sixth level that is unchangeable, the Cinmaya. It is Cit. In Yoga Therapy it is usually not such a spiritual approach. But we can try to help the student to feel that there is something else, something deeper. Maybe the wish arises to connect with this. Then the path of therapy could change into a spiritual yoga path.

The last of five pancamaya-s is

Ānandamaya, this is the level of emotion and feelings.

Its leading quality, the head of the bird, is Priya (I). Priya is a very light emotion, the very best one. You can call it fondness or affection, love. This should be our leading emotion in life. Our emotions are based on sensations. Those we are only able to feel when we are light. Priya is also mobile, changeable and not static.

The wings are Moda and Pramoda (III and IV). Moda are the experiences of happy emotions, when we have affection for someone or something. This kind of affection is openness to someone or something. When fondness is established it changes the experiences.

Pramoda changes and feeds the memory of the experiences. This is reinforcement to our happy feelings. The joyful feeling stays with us and remains within reach by the memory, the joyful feeling can be recalled.

Brahma (V) is the source of feelings, the space where feeling spread. It is expanding space. When you feel happy and joyful you feel expanded, there is space inside the heart. Through contact with this space can expand these feelings.

The key element is Ānanda – Joy. (I)


Joy inside us is the key to the other positive feelings and it helps to connect with the Self. The root syllable of ānanda is nanda: dance. When you are dancing you are free and light. It feels like something is dancing in your heart. When you link with the light in the heart you feel joyful.

Many of our emotions are based on joy or lack of joy. To be joyful there needs to be space in the heart. This space expands. But to have it, there must be śraddhā, only then can this light feeling be experienced. So our direction should be light not darkness. If it is darkness everything is changed into the opposite. Not affection but rejection, not space but tightness in the heart, not joy but lack of it. If this happens we become numb on the emotional level. There is no śraddhā but fear. The unhealthy parts of Mahat are supported. We link to this and obtain suffering, restrictions in body and breath.

Therefore it is very crucial which focus we choose for meditation. It integrates into the self. The focus and link to it should create space and lightness. This happens through experiences. The focus must be appropriate to the student and his situation in life. (YS. I.39)

This may all sound very contrasty, like yes and no. However we have to remember that this is a model. Real life is never only black and white. It is always in shades of gray. But the more light there is the brighter becomes the gray, and in turn we do feel lighter.

What we have to focus on in this model are the links between the key elements.

Annāmaya	Heart	
		
Prānamaya	Space	creates space to go deeper, influence of energy.
		
Manomaya	Listening	how we listen depends on how focused and open the mind is.
		
Vijñānamaya	Link --- Śraddhā	Listening and learning helps to link. Not intellectual, it comes from the heart. Śraddhā is guiding.
		
Ānādamaya	Joy --- Fondness	Freedom and joy in the heart. Fondness is guiding.
changeable		

unchangeable		
Cinmaya	Cit	True Self

When we work on one level we always have to reach the key element of this level. Through the links between the different key elements we influence all the other levels as well. On the body level we can use the whole body. On the energy level we use prāna to enter it, but we have to reach the key, the space in the heart. On Manomaya we use the ability to listen, on Vijñānamaya we use its ability to be linked with every other level and on Ānandamaya we use the ability to feel joyful and light.

The Pancamaya model shows that we have an influence on every level when we influence just one of the levels because all levels are linked and influence each other.

Patanjali offers a lot of tools to influence the different maya-s. Which one should be used always depends on the specific case. Here are some examples:

To influence annamaya we use āsanās. They have to be sthira sukha .YS. II.46 - 48. As a consequence the mind is more focused and less influenced by extreme influences. The result is that fear is not so easily triggered.

To influence the prānamaya the breath has to become conscious, long and smooth. How Prānayama has to be practiced is described in YS II.49 – 52. Patanjaly describes the effect of Prānayama as a reduction of the cloud and the appearance of light. Consequently there is less darkness. The focus on the exhalation and the holding of the breath calms the mind and strengthens śraddhā as is mentioned in YS I.34.

All tools that we choose will have an influence on manomaya, because everything that we practice consciously needs an intellectual learning effort in the beginning. Of course the very important key element is the ability to listen. So if we want to focus on this a chanting practice should be the choice. Naturally this will not only influence this layer. Chanting will have a very deep influence on the vijñānamaya and on prānamaya as well, as on ānandamaya. Chanting is one of the most powerful tools we can use. Patanjali mentions it therefore as the first practical tool to use in YS I. 27-29. The depth of the influence is dependent on the regular repetition of the chant and how attentively it is done. The very first tool Patanjali mentions as a tool for meditation is to connect with Īśvara (YS I-26) and this connection should be done through chanting. This tool is a problematic tool to use in Yoga Therapy in Europe, because it is a spiritual approach. This is not useable for every student.

The practice of Yama and Niyama will always have an influence on the level of personality- Vijñānamaya and on the emotional level - Ānandamaya. Especially it will be the training of pratipakṣabhāvana. To understand how it does influence is shown by our behavior with others and it helps to understand our self. Another tool of choice will be a meditation practice. The wide range of meditation focus Patanjali presents in YS I. 33 – 39 and in the third chapter gives a helping approach for nearly every situation a person is in. And in some case a focus with a religious background is possible as well.

For example to meditate on strength (YS.I-39 and III-24) or on light (YS I-36) and the sun (YS. III-26) is very helpful for people with anxiety issues. If possible for the student it is also useful to take a focus with a spiritual background based on the religion the student believes in, YS I-26.

Which method or tool is used in therapy is always dependent on the specific and unique case. Very often it is a combination of different tools like āsanas, breathing technique, chanting, meditation, mudrā-s and nyasa-s. Advice for diet and lifestyle is also part of therapy. The main tool that is used depends on the maya, the level of the human entity, which is addressed in the actual situation of the therapy. Important is that light in a person is supported and fear is reduced. Through the focus on light and positive experiences śraddhā will be supported and will emerge and manifest more openly.

5. Relation between student and teacher – care seeker and care provider.

The relation between teacher and student is fundamental for the success in the process of Yoga and in Yoga Therapy. It is so important that Patanjali dedicated the very first Sutra to it. This is the start of any yoga way and the end. It is also called the Pratiñā Sutra: The Sutra of commitment. It describes how a person has to be who wants to be a teacher and it speaks about the qualities and duties of a student.

Atha yoga anuśāsanam

The teacher commits to teach out of his own experience and what he learned from the teachings he received from his own teacher. This is not only about intellectual learning. It is all about experience and learning from a space in the heart.

The student commits to learn from this teacher and follows him through this process of change until its end. So both have to take this relationship very seriously.

In this sutra the word atha stands for readiness. Both student and teacher have to be ready to step into this path. The student has to be ready to learn and the teacher has to be ready to teach. This teaching and learning has to be done with high awareness to every actual moment in this process.

The word atha speaks also about the intention this process is started with. This intention must be a positive one.

Anuśāsanam stands for following the teaching in an experiential way, with a teacher who can guide.

Yoga stands for the link, the relation between those two people. This relation should be a trustful one from both sides. The teacher and student have to be without prejudice and judgement and have to be openhearted and able to listen. Furthermore it is very important point that the student takes responsibility for this process. He will receive the “food” from the teacher, but he has to eat alone. The teacher can show the way but the student has to walk it.

This is the historical view on the relation between teacher and student.

The difference to Therapy is not so great.

Also here has the teacher has to experience first his own journey in yoga before he can start to teach. He should be open-hearted, not judging and able to listen. The intention of the teacher should be to create a heart to heart connection with the student. During the process this connection should be supported from both sides, teacher and student. A fundament of trust should be build, so that it will support the whole process. If this is not easily achieved in the beginning of the process, instead it is more likely that it will be very difficult or even impossible to

guide the student out of his suffering. In the end the teacher has to let go of the student and release him to his own responsibility.

The student should start this therapeutic way with a positive intention and this will proceed until he feels constantly better; then he definitely has to take the responsibility for his way. The latter is mandatory because otherwise he will never be empowered by himself and always be dependent.

C. Short Medical Description of Anxiety Disorders

In General:

Anxiety is a normal human emotion. Everyone experiences fear or worry once in a while. It is a clever trick developed by evolution to increase the chance to survive. Anxiety warns us from danger and prevents severe accidents. Science has shown that animals which are afraid enough to be careful have a better chance to survive. For humans it is called the fight or flight reflex. It decides if the fear is so strong that we want to run away or whether we have the feeling that we can control the situation and are able to fight and win. So even if it is very unpleasant to feel anxiety or fear, it helps us to survive.

Beside the evolutionary aspects of the purpose fear psychology differentiates four types of fear:

First there is the fear to loose yourself, to be dependent on others. This stands in opposition to the second kind of fear to be isolated, not being part of a social group, not feeling safe and secure.

The third fear is the fear of change, to loose what you are used to. This is in opposition to the fourth fear which is the fear to be trapped in a situation, the feeling of no change at all.

All other kinds of anxiety can be traced back to those four kinds of fear. To suffer from those fears is absolutely normal and a natural part of life. It helps to find our place in life and is a motivator for new decisions. In those cases we are able to control the fear and we are not controlled by it.

The problem starts when a person undergoes stronger anxiety than the situation requires, and this happens very often without a recognizable reason. The person is controlled by her fear and is unable to make clear decisions. Her mind is totally occupied by the fear.

Anxiety disorders can cause such strong distress that people are less able to lead a normal life.

Anxiety disorder is a serious mental illness. The worry and the fear are overwhelming and can be crippling and humiliating. Often the patient feels helpless and ashamed because there seems to be no reason for the fear. As a worst case anxiety disorder can lead to suicide.

Experts call anxiety pathological when

- It is excessive
- It happens more often over time
- The patient is unable to overcome the fear on his own
- The intensity of the fear cannot be explained by the life situation
- It causes suffering
- It delimitates the quality of life

When this disorder exists over a longer period, people become isolated and they are loosing their social contacts. There is a severe decrease in the quality of life.

Types of anxiety disorder:

Medicine differentiates in general two kinds of anxiety disorders, directed disorders or undirected disorders.

Directed anxiety disorders are for example:

- Specific phobias: like fear against height or spacious places or fear against spiders.
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD): People with OCD are plagued by constant thoughts or fears that cause them to perform certain rituals or routines, like hand washing and other.

Undirected anxiety disorders are for example:

- Panic disorder or panic attacks: People with this condition have feelings of terror that strike suddenly and repeatedly with no warning.
- Generalized anxiety disorder: This disorder involves excessive, unrealistic worry and tension, even if there is little or nothing to provoke the anxiety.

In Germany ca. 5% of the population suffer from different kinds of anxiety disorders and need medical or psychological help.

For this study we will have a closer look at panic disorders.

Panic disorders have a very severe impact on the patient's life, because the attacks strike very suddenly without any warning. The patient is at the mercy of those attacks. This leads to a second layer of fear. They are afraid of the fear.

In summary people who suffer of panic attacks show the general symptoms of anxiety issues and special symptoms that accompany panic disorder.

These are as follows:

The fear is

- excessive
- it happens more often over time
- the patient is unable to overcome the fear on his own
- the intensity of the fear can not be explained by the life situation.
- it causes suffering
- it delimitates the quality of life

Special symptoms of panic attacks are:

- surge of overwhelming panic
- feeling of losing control or going crazy
- heart palpitations or chest pain
- feeling like you're going to pass out
- trouble to breathe or choking sensation
- hyperventilation
- hot flashes or chills
- trembling or shaking
- nausea or stomach cramps
- feeling of being detached from reality

- feeling like dying
- the patient is afraid of the fear
- the patient is unable to leave home

The normal way to treat this illness is through medication, psychological treatment, relaxation practices and supporting groups.

Yoga was not used as a treatment.

This case study will show that yoga, based on the Sutra-s of Patanjali, is able to help people with panic issues.

D. Case Study

It would have been interesting to do a statistical research on a larger number of students with panic attack disorder. Unfortunately it is difficult to have a number of students sufficiently large to perform statistical studies, because there were not enough cases in the last years that have come to me. So I would like to present one exemplary case of Mrs. Susanne R. (name is changed) as a more qualitative approach on this topic.

1. Case history

Mrs. Susanne R. (41years old) came to me in June 2009.

At this time, her height is 174cm and her weight is 120kg. She is very obese. She is working part time as a shop assistant.

She is married and has a 12 years old son, who was born with a Cesarean.

Her Menstruation cycle is regular without problems even if there is a strong bleeding during the first 3 days.

Her sleep is usually well and continuous for 6 -8 hours.

She has 3 regular meals, nothing in between. Her bowel movements are fine and regular.

Her energy level is good but she feels discouraged.

Her systolic blood pressure was 200. Is now under medication 120/85

She has a slight thyroid hypofunction under medication.

There is nothing known about the medical history of her parents.

Susanne told me that one year ago she experienced two major panic attacks. Both happened in a restaurant during meal. She suffered both times from severe tachycardia and palpitation. There was blackness in front of her eyes and she had difficulties to breath. She felt extremely hot and was afraid to die.

This kind of attacks occurred repeatedly in a minor way after the first one.

Over the last year she got psychological treatment that was now close to its end.

She is currently able to do her daily duties and to go to work. But she is not able to enter supermarkets or restaurants. She is not able to be quiet and to relax and especially to enjoy something. Instead she eats a lot but feels never full and satisfied.

There is always this fear that there will be a new panic attack from which she may die. She feels afraid and helpless.

I asked her about a major event before the first panic attack. Susanne told me that her son was very ill and had to undergo a surgery. All the time she supported her son and husband as good as possible. But she suppressed her own terror to loose her son and felt out of control and helpless.

Then I asked her how she would describe her situation now, one year after the first attack. She answered, that except for her husband all people in her social environment experience her as normal and healthy. But she feels trapped and her mind is always full of fear, focused on the possibility of a new attack.

Her heart and breast area was often hurting. She felt breathless and often dizzy.

During standing and walking she felt insecure 'like walking on eggs'.

Her pulse was 90 weak and jumping, dosha was vatta.

Her expectation of this yoga therapy is to get rid of her permanent terror to get a new panic attack and to live and enjoy a normal life.

That was the situation at the beginning of Yoga Therapy.

2. Expected Therapy Process

The goal of the therapy, as was already described in the theoretical part of this thesis, is to help the student to focus on the positive aspects, the light in her life. This will help to reduce the fear and to support śraddhā. The therapy should support her confidence and reveal śraddhā. For that she has most importantly to make her mind steady and she has to take 5 major steps:

1. The decision to be no victim of fear anymore
2. To find a connection to her inner strength
3. To increase self-confidence and trust (śraddhā) by reducing fear.
4. To accept herself as she is
5. To enjoy life

This way has to be taken in small steps and every step has to be sustained before the next is taken. The planned steps –vinyasa krama- are the following:

- a. Recognition of the fear.
- b. Recognition that the fear is a problem of the mind, it is how the mind thinks, feels and expects.
- c. Acceptance that the problem is inside the mind and that this is normal, nothing crazy.
a.- c. are mostly done through dialogue with the teacher and through self-reflection.
- d. Motivation to get to more inner strength through yoga practice of āsana, prāṇāyāma and mantra.
- e. Recognition that the physiological problems are not pathological but psychosomatically.
- f. Relaxation, practice of mindfulness and to worry less or, even better, not to worry at all. Tools to gain this are the practice of asana with IBM: “intention, breath, motion”, prāṇāyāma and nyāsas.
- g. Increase trust in own body.
- h. Increase trust in own mind
- i. Increase courage to change her self and if necessary her life situation.
- j. Acceptance of own needs.
- k. Acceptance of herself.
- l. To have faith in herself.
- m. To be contend and to enjoy life.

The steps how they are presented are not the obligatory order. Sometimes steps have to be repeated, or they have to be worked on in several steps and in small amounts simultaneously. Therefore we start first to address the smaller problems. If those can be solved it will increase confidence and strength. Then we approach the next bigger problems. Through this process the person is enabled to solve the bigger problems after some time.

For Susanne the practices should start with a mostly relaxing and stabilizing practice. The goal practice could include mahā mudrā to support the stabilization of her metabolism and the grounding of her personality, śītalī with long exhale for relaxation and the mantra “śraddhāyanamah” to connect with her inner self.

3. Actual Therapy Process

1. Class in June 2009

The first class she got was langhana and focused on the apāna region (see figure 3).

It should help her to get a better feeling for her body in a well functioning condition. It should also help Susanne to focus and not to brood over the condition she is in. The practice was given to increase her contact to her breathing in a positive way and to decrease her stress level. Virabhadrāsana was given to open up her chest and to give her a feeling of strength. The work on the apāna region should help her metabolism to reduce weight.

As a kind of mental homework she should always call back her mind when it starts to worry and to terrorize her with the signal: “I am not able to do some thing, because I will get a panic attack” and similar thoughts. She should take her thoughts on a leash like a dog. Instead she should repeat the thought: “I can do that”.

After 10 days she came back to her second class.

The day before she again suffered from a panic attack. But this time she was able to handle it and not to become lost in her panic. Even after this experience of another panic attack she felt a little more confident to overcome the attacks. Also she loved doing the practice because it was a time only for her.

Nothing had really changed when she came to her third class two weeks later at the end of June.

We changed the practice over the next two classes step by step. In order too amplify the chest opening affect of Virabhadrāsana we included Dvipādapīṭham. That also should increase the strength and a feeling of confidence.

Jaṭharaparivṛtti pārśva with prolonged exhaling was given to relax and to work on the apāna area. But the biggest challenge was a bhāvana in mostly every asana. She should first imagine her next movement, than she should start the breathing and after that she should start the movement (IBM). To achieve this skill even in only a few of the āsanas she needed several months. And it needed a permanent reminder not to forget about this. But after some time she was more and more able to stay in the very moment for a short time without getting destructed or lost in brooding. Her mind became steadier during practice. As a mantra she should chant Śraddhāyanamah. She was not told the exact meaning of the mantra, only that it would support her inner strength in a general way. She was willing to trust that this might be the right mantra for her.

1. Practice June 2009

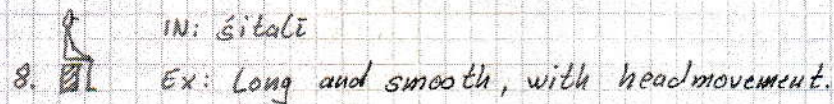
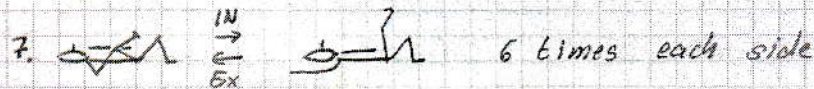
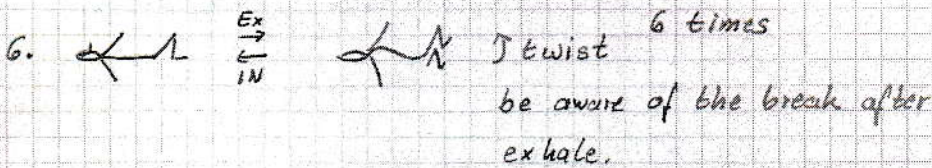
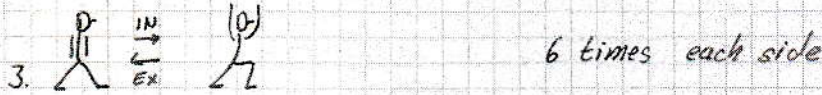
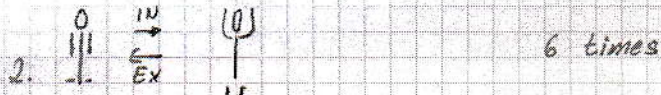


Figure 3

During relaxation she should visualize lying under a big walnut tree. This tree symbolizes shelter and strength to her.

I suggested to her to loose weight with the help of a diet with less fat and carbohydrates.

All this was done from the second to the fourth class, which was given to her at the beginning of August 2009 (Figure 4).

4. Practice August 2009



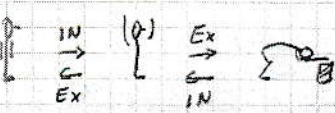

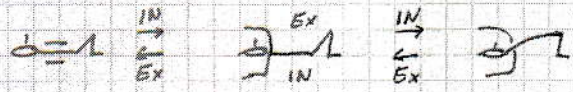


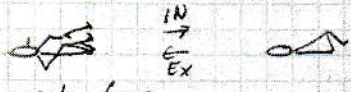


1.  chant on exhale: Śrāddhāyanamah
8 times
2.  4 times each side
stay one breath
3.  4 times
4.  IN: free
Ex: extend exhale 2", 3", 4" ... Max. 2 times
5.  6 times
6.  6 times each side
7.  IN: free
Ex: extend exhale to max. and stay for 2 breath on each side
8.  6 times
wide legs
9.  Imagine lying under a big walnut tree and connect with its strength.
10.  IN: sitali
Ex: chant "Śrāddhāyanamah"

Figure 4

At the end of these two months of practice she felt active but she still was afraid of her fear. She accepted that there was no real reason in her daily life for her fear. She was aware that it was a creation of her mind. (Step a -c, e and f of the therapy plan were reached). Now we had to sustain those steps and work on the next steps.

During her daily practice when her body relaxes and her mind becomes quiet she starts to feel very uneasy. She cannot stand this feeling. Nevertheless she felt that her daily yoga practice was helping her. (Step d of the therapy plan) Since her second class she had no panic attacks but she did not trust this "peace". At that time she finished her two years of psychotherapy.

5. Practice End of August 2009


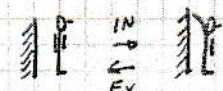



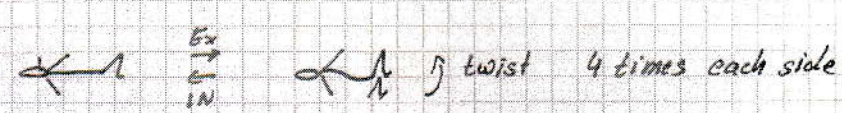



1.  ⊗: chant: sāntih sāntih sāntih 8 times
2.  4 times each side
3.  4 times each side
4. 
 - a) IN: open your hands
Ex: thump (slides along the finger(s) and flips. 2 rounds
 - b) IN: śitali
Ex: sāntih sāntih sāntih 8 times
5.  8 times
6.  twist 4 times each side
7.  8 times
8. 
 - a) concentrate on different marked parts of your body; each 3 breath.
 - b) visualize a walnut tree: "I am strong"
9. 
 - IN: śitali
 - Ex: sāntih sāntih sāntih 8 times

Figure 5

Susanne had her fifth class end of August 2009.

During the last month she suffered again three times a panic attack with very high blood pressure 170/110, pulse 103. This is now under medication, 120/80. She could handle all three attacks without getting overwhelmed by fear of death. Her pulse dosha is dominated by vatta. Nevertheless she practiced daily and felt anchored by it. She looked forward to her daily practice.

She was not able to practice her mantra Śraddhāyanamah in the right way. She twisted the words and changed the tone. She could not connect to the chanting. Her neck and shoulders were very tense.

Her mind was full of doubt and she often had internal monologues feeding her doubts.

She was missing the psychological counseling but she believed strongly in Yoga therapy and she held on to her inner mantra-s, which she is repeating during the day: "I can do that" and "one step after the next".

Again the practice was changed (Figure 5).

Her new mantra is śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ. She loves it.

Nyāsas are used as a new tool. This will help her to focus and to relax her shoulder and neck area. This practice of nyāsas should be used by her during her yoga practice as well as each time over the day when she felt that an attack was near.

Because she was so focused on her fear and all the negative aspects in her life she had to write down several positive experiences every day to make her realize that there are positive things in her life.

It is very astonishing that she has no sleeping problems.

When she came back to her sixth class in September 2009 she felt a lot better and more stable. Especially Nyāsas helped her a lot. Her blood pressure was better. She could reduce her medication and felt more stable and stronger.

Sometimes she still was afraid and got wet hands and feet. But she had no panic anymore. There were less doubts and her mind was not so filled with internal monologues. Still it was very difficult for her to relax and to be at rest.

As a completely new thing she felt a need to indulge herself in something nice. But she would not allow herself to do so and to enjoy life. She had not done this for a very long time because she felt guilty if she would enjoy herself.

At this time in her Yoga therapy she definitely wanted to change this saṃskāras that made her feel bad. She wished to learn to laugh again.

Even if there was still a lot of fear she was more stable and consciously she wanted to change. (Steps d, i and j of the therapy path were in reach)

In her seventh class in October 2009 she told me that she quitted her old job, because she felt so much pressure from her old boss. Susanne found a new part time job in a post office. This was a great challenge but she was looking forward to it.

Occasionally there were events of pain in her breast and heart. During these occasions she feared to get a heart attack and because of this she was afraid to get a panic attack. But nothing happened. In daily life she sometimes felt like walking on eggs. That made her nauseated and unsecure, she feared not to be able to fulfill her duties. After her experiences it was difficult for her to still believe that all these body symptoms were not caused by physiological problems but were caused by her thoughts, created through her mind. So her doubts came

back and her inner voice told her: "I am not able to do what I have to do". So it was very difficult for her to sustain her new strength and her believe that all her problems are caused by her mind. The evolution on her therapy path was again going down, a pattern that was repeated several times. She first gained strength and confidence and then again lost parts of it.

8. Practice November 2009



















1.  Feel the ground under your feet for 4 breath.
2.   chant: *sāntih sāntih sāntih* 8 times
3.    4 times each side
4.  IN: visualize beam of light.  Ex: bring the light to your heart. 8 times
Anjali mudra
5.  a) IN: open your hands
Ex: thump glides along the fingers and flips 2 rounds
b) IN: *sitali*
Ex: *sāntih sāntih sāntih*
6.    8 times
7.   twist 4 times each side
8.  
9.  a) concentrate on different parts of your body, each for 3 breath
b) repeat mentally: "I am happy and healthy" 8 times
10.  IN: *sitali*
Ex: *sāntih sāntih sāntih* 8 times

Figure 6

When she came back to her eighth class in November she told me about an inner experience during a service in church. She felt illuminated by an outer and an inner light and was deeply touched by it and she found new hope to overcome her problems. This experience she was keeping very near. Therefore this experience was kind of repeated in her new daily practice through a nyāsa combined with visualization. She had to open her hands in añjali mudrā to receive the light during inhale and brought it into her heart with exhale. (Figure 6)

The old Yoga practice she had done regularly and she relied on it as a source of strength. Every morning she looked forward to doing it.

As further help not to become overwhelmed by occasional body symptoms like tightness in her breast or pain in her heart she got two motivating sentences: "I am happy and healthy." This sentence she had to repeat after awakening and before going to sleep, and every time she remembers it. Also she has to use it in her practice instead of visualizing the big walnut tree.

The second sentence she had to use when she felt that the painful body symptoms were manifesting; then she had to repeat several times: "It is harmless and will pass." After that she should practice the finger nyāsas of her practice.

When she came back to her ninth class in December a lot of changes had happen. The nausea combined with this feeling like walking on eggs was nearly gone. Sometimes there was even no strong fear anymore. Instead she experiences a kind of stage fright but no panic.

She changed her whole diet with the help of a doctor. The diet is called metabolic balance. To give a stronger support to this diet jaṭhara parivṛtti is changed into jaṭhara parivṛtti pārśva.

Over the next months until May 2010 she came regularly nearly once a month. In this time the last practice was slightly revised according to her needs. Her thirteenth class in May 2010 looked like Figure 7.

The mantra Dhīrayanamah was introduced to her. I told her its meaning: "I bow to my inner strength". This should help her to increase and sustain her stability. Dvipādapiṭham and a light form of māha mudrā were given for the same reason. The main focus was still on the apāna region to support her diet and to help to digest her fearful experiences at her emotional level.

Until May she lost 29 kg, her blood pressure is back to normal. She is free of medication. The body symptoms like tightness and hurt in her breast decreased. But she could not let go of her doubts. She could not believe that there would be a time when she would be free of the fear to get a new panic attack. Nevertheless she was convinced that her body symptoms are not pathological. Two more steps on the therapy path were taken: She lost weight and she recognized and accepted the influence of her mind on the response of her body.

The biggest obstacle was still that she was not able to let go of her focus on her fearful experiences. This obstacle is supported by her inner monologues that still come and go. Her mind was swinging back and force between her feeling being a victim of her fear and her faith to overcome this condition.

Her daily life was full of different responsibilities and duties: her job, taking care of her husband and her son and especially she had to take care of her ill grandmother. Because of her packed full days she felt like a functioning machine

and was not able to experience joy in her life and to relax. She even did not dare to relax because she feared if she let go of control everything might collapse. She felt exhausted. The only time she allowed to take for herself is the time of her yoga practice.

Nevertheless she was happy about losing so much weight and felt also more relaxed and stable.

13. Practice May 2010



















1.   ⊗ chant: dhīrayanamah 8 times
2.    twist upper arm in the back 4 times each side
3.  chant ⊗  4 times
4.  IN: sitali
Ex: nyāsas like before, flip the fear away. 2 rounds
5.  8 breath on each side
6.   8 times
7.  1 breath  very slowly 8 times
8.   8 times
9.  IN: sitali
Ex: chant: dhīrayanamah 8 times each side
10.   4 times

Figure 7

After her fourteenth class in June 2010 her lifestyle obviously started to change. She met spontaneously friends and went out to restaurants without fear. She really looked forward to the family vacation. When she reflected about this she was again afraid to trust this evolution.

During her practice it was still difficult for her to be relaxed in a lying position, however it was possible once in a while.

In July and August we could not meet. She was able to sustain her condition during this time.

When she came back to her fifteenth class in September she had lost in total 34kg. Her weight had reduced to 94 kg at that time.

The fear is not gone but has definitely lessened. It was the first time she was able to communicate about her disorder with other people outside her closest family. She was longing for the experience of joy and lightness. Her focus started to change from the heavy and somber experiences to lighter ones.

However there are still episodes of pain in the heart region, but she does not care so much anymore.

The stress and responsibilities in her life had grown. She was mainly responsible for taking care of her grandmother who suffered of a growing dementia. But she likes to do it, because she loves the old lady. Nevertheless with her family and her job the situation is difficult to manage.

The practice was changed again, figure 8.

The new mantra was Śraddhāyanamaḥ and she knew the meaning this time.

The goal of the practice was to give her more strength, trust and self-confidence. Also the practice should help her to relax and allow herself to rest.

This was the situation when she came back in November 2010 for her sixteenth class.

It seemed that Susanne's emotional condition became more stable and she was more focused in her practice and in her life. She had less inner monologues. Life was not easy but she felt more stable and less fearful. She trusted her own body and mind a little more (Step g and h of the therapy path). She recognized that the doubts and fear were tricks that her own mind played with her and which lead her back into this role of a victim she had identified with. All in all it was still a swinging between a neutral, though not fully joyful life, and a life of doubts and suffering. But the non-suffering part was now predominant.

In December at her seventeenth class her whole life situation had changed.

Susanne's grandmother had to go into a home for elderly people because she needed care for 24 hours of the day. Susanne felt guilty that she could not do this herself. And she felt guilty because of the relief and the lower level of responsibility she had to carry now. She was totally out of balance and had not practiced regularly anymore.

Then she started to practice regularly again and tried to accept the new situation without feeling guilty.

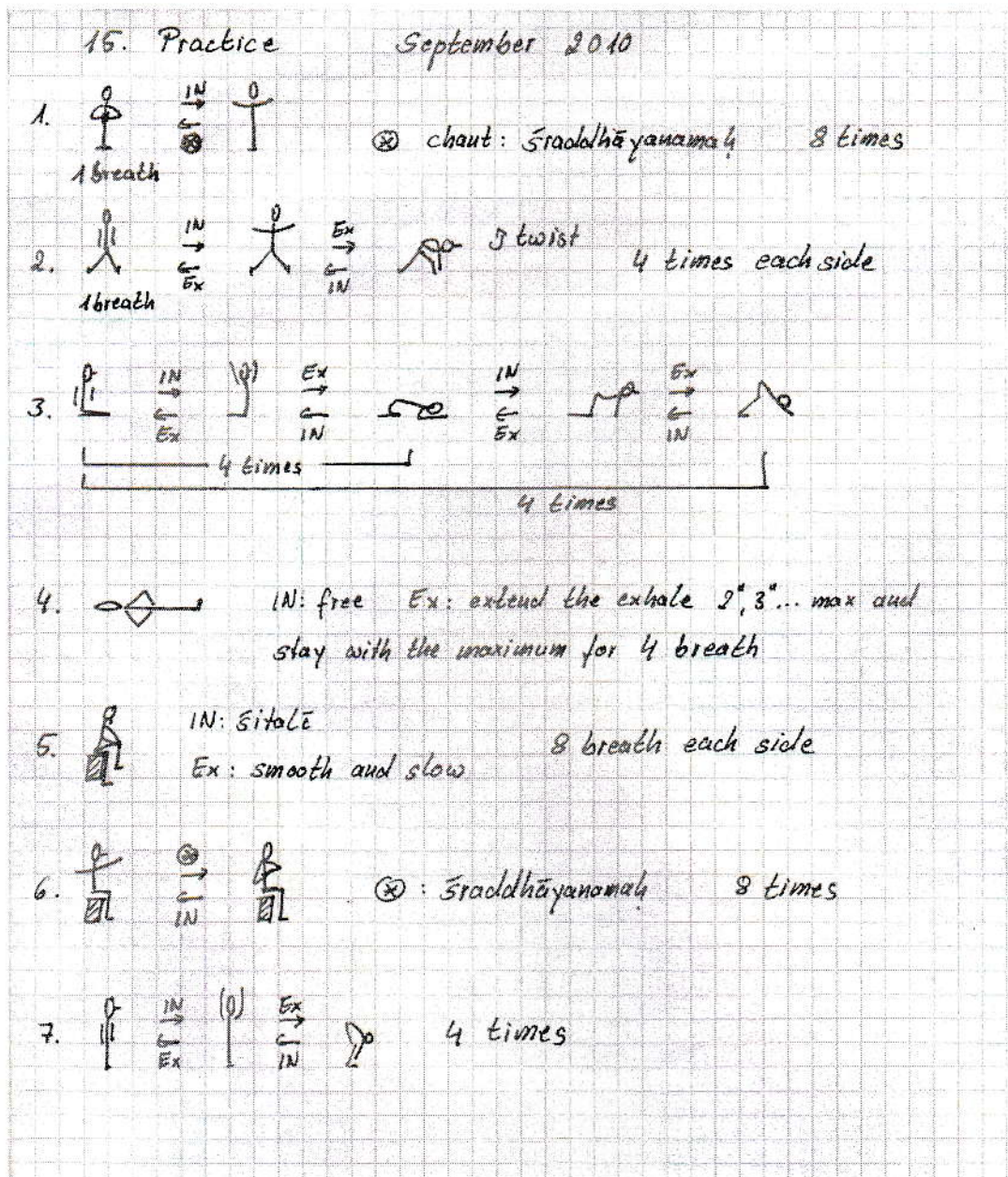


Figure 8

Next time she came in February to her eighteenth class.

Two weeks earlier her grandmother had died. Susanne was in shock and a day after the funeral she suffered again a panic attack with severe heart pain. But this time she could overcome the episode without clinging to it. Her mind was able to distance herself from the attack. She did not feel totally helpless and at the mercy of her fear. Even though it was a bad experience this was the true turning point. She got a new practice, Figure 9, to increase the trust in her and to let go of the rest of her panic fear.

Since that time her inner focus has changed. She now knows surely that she is able to handle situations of panic. She experiences herself not as a victim anymore; instead she focused more on the positive aspects in her life.

She is a yoga student until today and struggles with her daily problems including different normal fears everyone has to face once in a while. But she strongly wants to change. Her next goal is to find what she really wants and needs. It is

still new to her that she is allowed to have her own needs and fulfill them. She understands now that this will not hurt others and she must not feel guilty. She is on a very good way to accept her the way she is and to find again joy in her life.

18. Practice February 2011


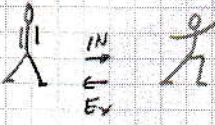






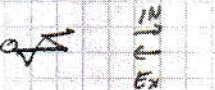

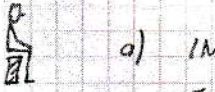
1.  $\begin{matrix} \text{IN} \\ \rightarrow \\ \leftarrow \\ \text{EX} \end{matrix}$ \otimes chant: Śradbhāyanamah 8 times
2.  $\begin{matrix} \text{IN} \\ \rightarrow \\ \leftarrow \\ \text{EX} \end{matrix}$ Feel the breaks after inhale and exhale. 4 times each side
3.  $\begin{matrix} \text{IN} \\ \rightarrow \\ \leftarrow \\ \text{EX} \end{matrix}$  $\begin{matrix} \text{EX} \\ \rightarrow \\ \leftarrow \\ \text{IN} \end{matrix}$  $\begin{matrix} \text{IN} \\ \rightarrow \\ \leftarrow \\ \text{EX} \end{matrix}$ feel the breaks. 8 times
1 breath
4.  feel the breath in your belly. 8 breath
5.  $\begin{matrix} \text{EX} \\ \rightarrow \\ \leftarrow \\ \text{IN} \end{matrix}$  5 twist 8 times each side
6.  $\begin{matrix} \text{IN} \\ \rightarrow \\ \leftarrow \\ \text{EX} \end{matrix}$  8 times
7. 
 - a) IN: open your hands
Ex: thumb glides along a finger and flips the rest of fear away. 2 rounds
 - b) IN: Sitali
Ex: Śradbhāyanamah 8 times

Figure 9

Her own commentary how Yoga helped her to overcome her panic disorder is the following:

"Yoga helped me a lot. It was a better help than psychotherapy because it supported me in my daily life. It was like an anchor. Especially the practice of nyāsas was very helpful. I could use them in nearly every situation when it was necessary.

4. Analysis of the therapy process

Susanne started her yoga therapy with three big advantages. First she really wanted to change her situation, second she had the discipline to practice regularly and third she really wanted to give yoga a chance to help her. Her biggest disadvantages were her unsteady mind, brooding and internal monologues, and that she had no feeling for her own needs, even that she had own needs at all.

In the beginning of her yoga practice she was glad to have time for herself for the first time just by doing yoga and without feeling guilty about doing it. This was a new experience and an important change. But more important was the start to discipline her mind by focusing on the reality in the very moment. Like doing an asana or chanting.

She firstly realized that her fear was created by her own thoughts and the combined emotions; the fear was created by her own mind. Over the next months this was truly accepted.

To give her the mantra śraddhāyanamah at that time was wrong. She was not prepared enough, not ready for it. So she could not connect to it.

Typical for people with panic disorder she was unable to relax and she could not stand moments of stillness. In this “calm rooms” her mind started to brood over her fear, through this her fear was growing. She had the feeling she might get caught again in this spiral of growing fear. Her mind got out of control. Therefore to help her to relax and to enjoy free moments that were not packed with activity was a major challenge.

Another challenge was to deal with the new panic attacks after finishing her Psychotherapy. Psychotherapy was a support she was depending on. When she lost this support, she had not enough confidence and trust into herself to be secure of panic attacks. Because of this her mind was kind of looking for the next attack. At that time yoga was too new to her to be a strong anchor, but it already helped.

After several months she felt mentally more stable and stronger. Especially the different nyāsas gave her a practical tool to handle her fear and to feel less helpless. They also focused her mind on something else then the fear. The daily yoga practice stabilized her mind even more and made it steadier. It was not as easily distracted by the imaginary fear as before.

Now she started to realize her own needs, like such simple things such as sitting down and enjoying a coffee or a book. She wanted to live moments without duty and that she seems to have attained. Those moments she experiences manifest her need of relaxation and calmness. And Susanne really wanted to leave behind her role as a victim. She had enough strength to change circumstances in her life and in her behavior. She got a new job and started a diet successfully.

However this evolution was not straightforward; there were always ups and downs. There were times she still was not ready to trust her own strength fully and to believe in the new peace in her mind. The old saṁskāras were still very powerful.

Her biggest problem was still her unsteady mind that got easily lost in its brooding on the fear and panic. The problem of an unsteady and undisciplined mind fitted to her need to control everything in her daily life, like the activities of

her son or taking very good care of her grandmother. It might be that this outside control gave her a feeling of inner control.

But she never lost her believe that yoga might help her to overcome her obstacles and therefore she did her practice very regularly.

When she started to bring more discipline in her personal life through her diet this created several results. First she was more aware of her body needs instead of its imagined suffering. And she started to trust her body. Second this discipline on the body level increased the discipline in her mind as well. Through this it supported the effects of the yoga practice. Third, and this is very important, she was successful on a problem she could handle. That gave her a proof of her inner strength. The fact that her mind could get out of control and could get lost in fear was still there but not so pronounced anymore. Other, new saṁskāras started to take over, a more calm and stable mind and a growing faith. But at this time it was still a fragile balance.

Over the next months the new saṁskāras of a more focused and calm mind was supported. Susanne started to focus on positive attributes in her life. Social activities were not done as a duty but she started to enjoy them. The fear retracted more and more to the background. She trusted herself more and more on mind and body level but still the deep inner trust, the support from deep within, was missing. She found a stronger connection to her inner strength and trust because of a major impact in her life. Her beloved grandmother died and Susanne again lost her inner and outside control. She suffered again a severe panic attack. But this time her mind was able to calm down shortly after and to retract her thoughts and emotions from the event. She was able to distance herself from the experience and not to identify with it. She was not helpless anymore and she found the strength to be in herself. This experience changed her life again, it first brought her out of balance and then shifted her into a new stronger position.

That was the mayor turning point. She did not feel as a victim anymore, she was aware of her inner strength and of her growing faith – śraddhā. More and more she accepted herself and her needs.

However she will always have to take good care of herself such that her mind's old patterns, to get lost in brooding on fear and suffering, will not come back.

One last step in the goals of this therapy has to be done; she wants to enjoy life and to become lighter and more content. This is her goal until today. Susanne is working on it and is supported by her daily yoga practice.

E. Commentaries on yoga therapy from students who suffered from panic attacks

During the last years several students suffering panic attacks joined my yoga group classes as well as they did take individual lessons. Some of them were so kind to send me their personal comments on the help they got through yoga therapy.

Martina's Case:

She suffered from panic attacks 1998 and the following year. Her first therapeutic approach was with Psychotherapy. She finished it in 2002. The diagnosis anxiety disorder helped already. Because of this she knew she was not crazy and had not to die from it.

She came to yoga in 2000. First she joined group classes, then after she also took individual ones.

Before her first panic attack there was a threatening, major change in her private life situation. That might have caused the attacks. During the time of yoga therapy she was able to build up a new private life and she found a new hobby that helps her to express her personality.

Her commentary about yoga's help is the following:

"I learned to become slower and more conscious. I started to recognize early the beginning of such situations that might lead to a panic attack. So I was able to react, to reduce my efforts and to counter the situation."

Martina 24.8.2011

She did not suffer any panic attacks anymore and is still a yoga student.

Gabi's Case:

Gabi joined yoga group classes in 2009, after she had individual ones.

She suffered severe panic attacks. As help she has psychotherapy until today and after some time she had to take antidepressants too. She was in a private life situation with a high level of stress. During the time of yoga therapy she was able to change this situation completely and to stop the antidepressants.

Her commentary about yoga's help is the following:

Hallo Petra,

Here some lines about my yoga experiences.

Tree years ago as I started my first Yoga group class I thought: "Oh, that is not mine". But I finished the course and thought: "not so bad". After that I started with individual classes and started doing my Yoga practice every day.

When I practiced every day I realized a recovery. Before that I was disturbed and fearful. Since doing daily yoga this has improved. I became calmer, serener and stronger.

Yoga is good for me in all circumstances. When I am not doing my practice something is missing.

Gabi 4.9.2011

Gabi is still a yoga student.

Annette's Case:

Annette came to Yoga group classes in 2003 and to individual ones in 2004. She suffered her first panic attack in September 2003. After she got psychological help and medication. Her life situation was full of duties and pressure. During the time of yoga therapy she realized the causes for her problems and started to change them radically.

Her comment on yoga's help is the following.

Yoga in Periods with Panic Attacks

In 2003, during physically and psychologically very challenging times in my life at that point, I came to Yoga-Practise with Petra Schmetz.

First I took part in group-lessons, but I soon gratefully accepted the offer of private tutoring, as this was more individually tailored to me.

Focusing on my panic attacks we adjusted my yoga program and the corresponding mantras.

In addition to my sessions with a psychologist, I found yoga to be very helpful in my personal situation. Although some of the asanas in the beginning were quite difficult for me (especially holding my breath for some seconds was very threatening to me at first), step by step I understood their meaning to my situation and the Gayatri Mantra has since then become a very special and constant Mantra in my life.

Meanwhile the Panic attacks have faded, although sometimes they pop up again, however I have learned, how to meet them, and that they are a reminder for me to better take care of myself. I still practise yoga, more or less frequently. At the moment my target-asana (as Petra has named it to me) is the Mahamudra and I am positive, that it will help me.

Annette – Samira Feb. 2012

Susanne's Case

Susanne's case we had already a very close look at. Here again her comment on Yoga's help:

"Yoga therapy and its practice helped me a lot. It was a better help than psychotherapy because it supported me in my daily life. It was like an anchor. Especially the practice of nyasas was very helpful. I could use them in nearly every situation when it was necessary.

Susanne 17.8.2011

F. Conclusions

The persons, who came to my yoga classes, suffering from panic attacks, had several patterns in common. They all lived in very stressful situations with high responsibilities. They allowed themselves no free time, and if they did, they felt guilty about it. Basically their life had been reduced to mere functioning whereas the enjoying of life had been lost completely. A key observation is that they tried to control situations as much as possible until the situations grew out of hand. They did not realize their personal problems instead they experienced themselves as a victim of the situation without a chance to make changes or to break out of it. The panic attack seems to be an unconscious attempt to break out. However during the panic attack they became even more a victim of their fear and started to identify with it. The problem then clearly gets worse. Susanne is an example for this. Generally speaking the cause of this unfortunate and bad evolution lies in the need to find acceptance by others for the sacrificing themselves and for their attempt to function perfectly in their specific and usually demanding life situation. Over and above there is a need to control situations and they unconsciously fear to be rejected. When this situation got out of hand it came to the panic breakdown.

Then they all lost the ability of self-appreciation. They were not even aware nor did they accept their own abilities and strength.

But they all had something else in common, after their terrorizing experiences they wanted to change the situation and themselves.

From the view of yoga it looked like they all suffer highly from a very unstable mind with no connection to their inner strength. There is low śraddhā, low self-assurance and no real self-awareness. Instead there is only awareness of their fear and their deficiencies. Through yoga therapy and daily practice this could be changed. We have seen this in Susanne's case and it happened similarly in the other cases mentioned.

The daily yoga practice helped to become more disciplined and calmed their minds. It also brought the new experience that it is allowed to take a personal time out without doing damage to others and without feeling guilty. It was a first step of self-acceptance. The practice also showed that times of calmness are not frightening at all. Slowly the focus was changed from the focus on fear and the necessity to function perfectly, to the realization of being able to handle and solve personal problems. They recognized their own potentials and strength. Through this the fear slowly decreased and śraddhā and self-confidence grew accordingly.

To address the increase of śraddhā directly is not easily possible because it is too subtle and on too deep a level of personality. It is easier to support śraddhā by decreasing fear and supporting personal strength and confidence. This will lead to an increase in śraddhā as well. And sometimes the student is able to realize this "new" well of strength, when she is able to handle fearful situations in a new way. The best indication of growing śraddhā is less fear and the student's decreasing dependence on the acceptance from outside and the ability to create changes in her life consciously, and mostly the student's acceptance of herself including her deficiencies.

This evolution does not happen easily and is naturally influenced by the events and occurrences in the student's life. These occurrences can as well be supporting as undermining the evolution. As for the latter the therapeutic dialogue is very important.

All the students experienced the daily yoga practice as a strong anchor in their daily life. In very practical way yoga therapy offers tools to overcome the fear and to realize a practical time-out to relax. The most important thing is, this support is always reachable and can be obtained immediately when it is needed. This in turn leads to a positive cycle during which the mind gets more focused and calmer and śraddhā with all its positive consequences in life gets further enhanced.

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Finally I want to apologize for all the mistakes I have made, especially in the writing of the Sanskrit words.

Declaration:

I declare that I have written this thesis all by myself. All references that I have used are explicitly referred to.

Rossdorf, 26.3.2012

Petra Gmeiner

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