

KAIPA'S PYRAMID AS A YANTRA

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One of the most interesting mental models I have come across in recent times is Prasad Kaipas use of the tetrahedron. I have been playing with it. Our consulting group took the exploration of our work processes based on the paper Application of Pyramid Building in Organisations : Aligning Strategy, process and people in organisations by Prasad Kaipas, Chris Newham and Russ Vokkmann.

As I worked with the model further, I started bringing it into my meditative practice. In one such session, I experienced the padmasana as a *mudra* (body gesture) of the tetrahedron. My *mooladhara chakra* and the two hands in a *dhyana mudra* became the base. My head was the apex and my *hridaya* (the centre of my being) the centroid. This was very powerful experience. It has triggered off an intense enquiry in me on the question “What is my reason for being?” “Who is the quintessential me?” “Have I nurtured this being or have I distorted this being through compulsions to become something?” “Are my intentions true reflections of my reason for being?” I have not got any conclusive answers to these questions. I believe that the question and the enquiry are more important than answers anyway. I am sharing in this paper the process by which I came to experience the tetrahedron as a *Yantra*.

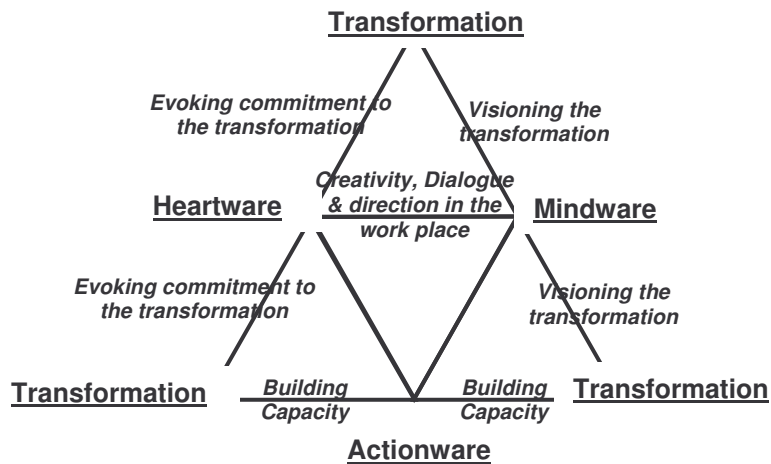
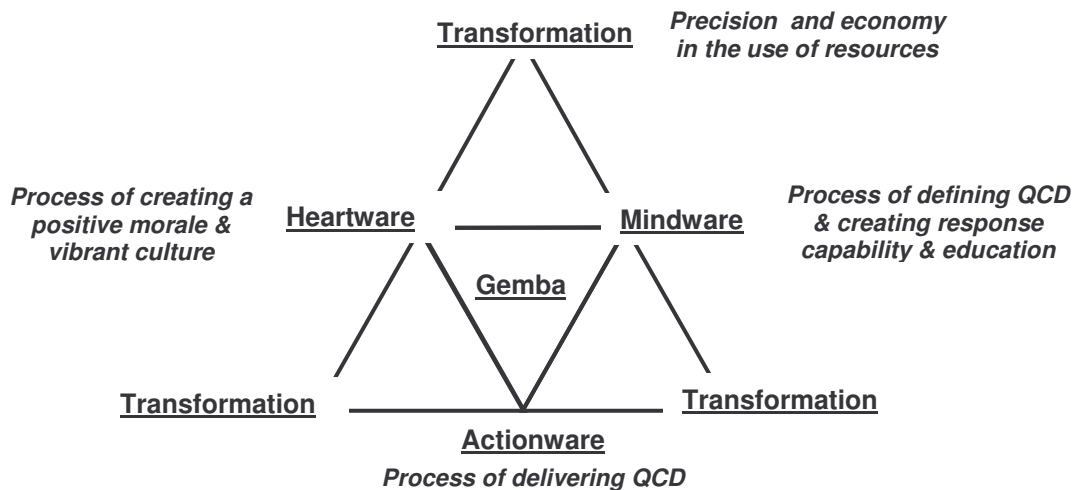
After reading Kaipas paper, our consulting group decided to use it in our yearly retreat to reflect upon ourselves. We came up with a model that fitted the different aspects of our practice. It also helped us integrate various aspects and be true to our key idea “*Aligned to the Gemba*”.

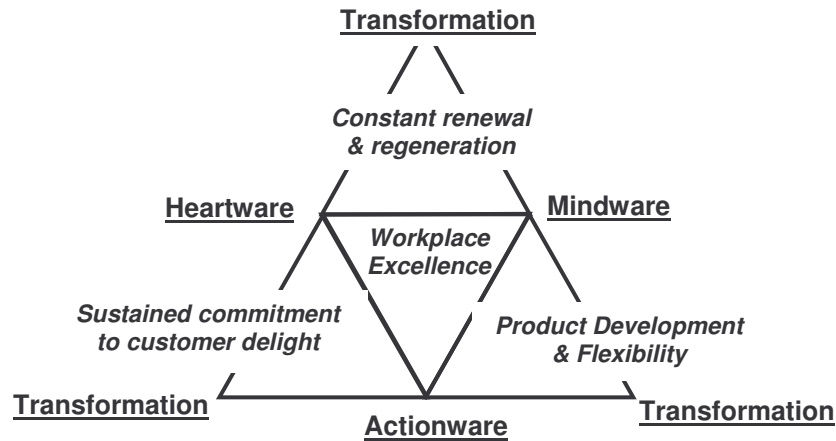
There are two great challenges that face us today. Firstly, people working together and striving for a simultaneous unfolding of personal excellence and collective excellence. Secondly, economy and precision in the use of resources. We see the challenges as human challenges that cut across all categories. Organisations large and small, voluntary groups, social action groups, large national bodies and the like. Our focus however, is to help business organisations respond to these challenges. In taking these seriously, the organisation not only stays true to its business objectives, it also exercises corporate citizenship.

When we looked at our consulting practices, we realised that while we were working primarily on the *Gemba* – the work place, our work had different facets. We were working with people directly and evoking a sense of pride, empowerment and ownership in them. Our aim is to transform the culture and make it evocative and energising. The methods we used for this have a strong systemic and task focus. This is primarily because most of us are engineers who have working in the shop floor for many years before looking at transforming the way organisations work. *This is the corner stone “Heartware”*. We were educating people, challenging existing mindsets and helping people understand the new paradigms that are emerging. Education is therefore another corner stone of our work. This is “*Mindware*”. Thirdly, we were implementing changes in the shop floor, implementing changes in system design by working with the organisations

in a fairly “hands on” manner. *This is “Actionware”*. One of the areas of focus that we missed in our early years (we are only 4 years old) is the aspect of costs and tangible measures of economic value. A cost accountant with expertise is ABC joined us and through teaming up with him, we have learned how to integrate the vital aspects of cost in our work. We go through the resource economy route so that the understanding of effectiveness and efficiency becomes visible. This we translated into *economy and the precision in the use of resources*. Our primary focus is in transforming organisations. We help organisations change their culture, the way they work and the way they measure performance.

Thus, we identified the 4 cornerstones of our work. We then used the rules outlined in Kaipas paper and derived the action words that join the corner stones and describe the outcomes. The final picture emerged like this :





After going through this exercise, I have been very excited with the whole process. Applying Piagets maxim “to play is to learn”, I have been playing with the model. What I am most excited with is the correspondence our consulting model has with some basic principles of yoga. Let me explain :

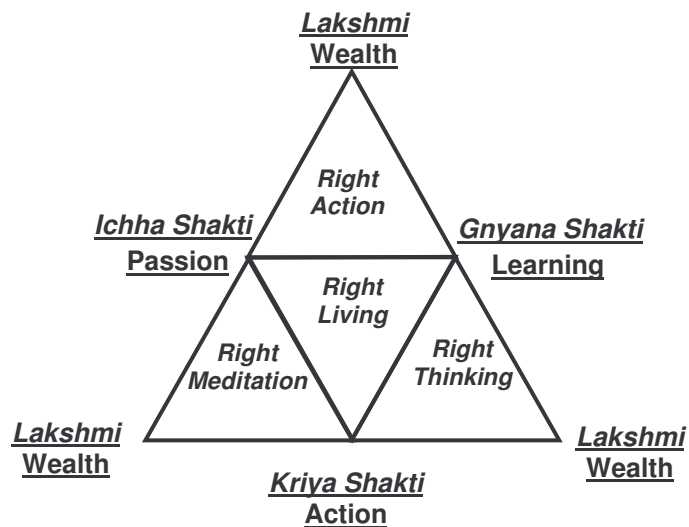
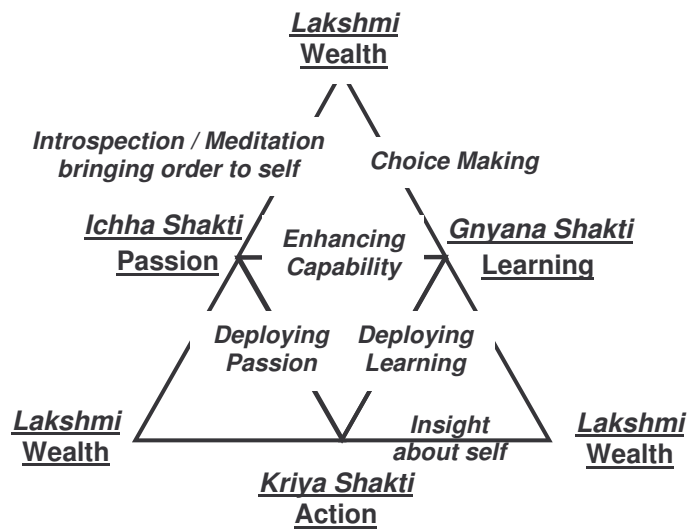
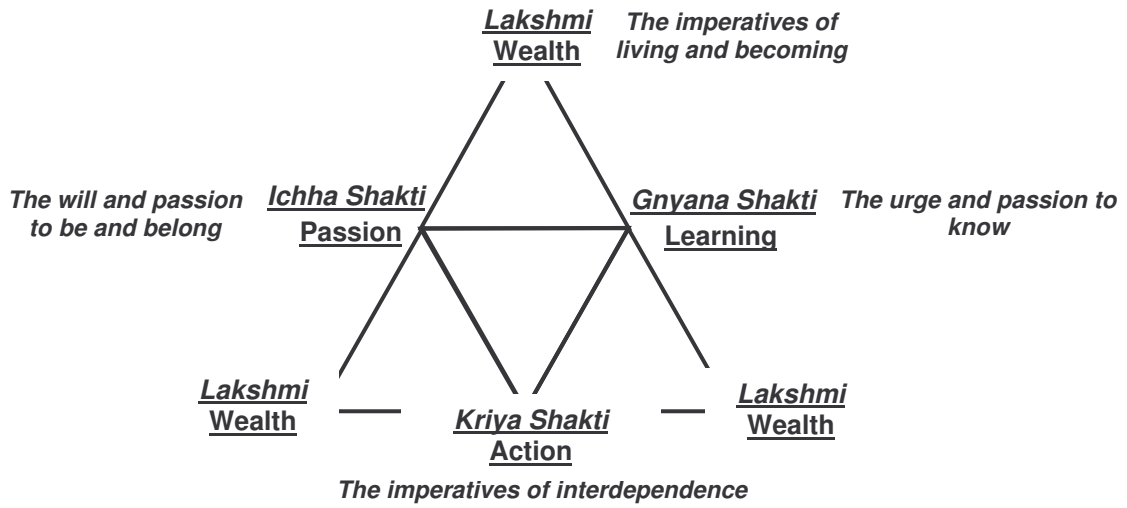
The female forms of god are considered the active, evolving, flowing aspect of the universe and the male forms are the life giving but changeless aspect. In the female forms, *Shakti*, *Lakshmi* and *Saraswathi* are different facets. *Shakti* symbolises the powerful passionate form, *Lakshmi* symbolises order and wealth (in a universal sense) and *Saraswathi* symbolises quintessential insight and learning. *Shakti* in turn, is seen as comprising of *Ichha Shakti* – the power of intent, *Gnyana Shakti* – the power of wisdom and *Kriya Shakti* – the power of action.

I discovered to my delight that the model we had come up with for our consulting work, fitted in with this conception. The 3 forms of *Shakti* had a one to one correspondence with heartware, mindware and actionware; *Ichha Shakti* is *Heartware*, *Gnyana Shakti* is *Mindware*, and *Kriya Shakti* is *Actionware*. The nature of *Lakshmi* coincided with our understanding of resource economy leading to wealth creation – order and precision in the deployment of resources. I struggle with the need to find how the idea of *Saraswathi* fits in. I had an insight! If I look at the tetrahedron as space structure and not as a solid, *Saraswathi* forms the centroid! The pyramid tetrahedron became a prism.

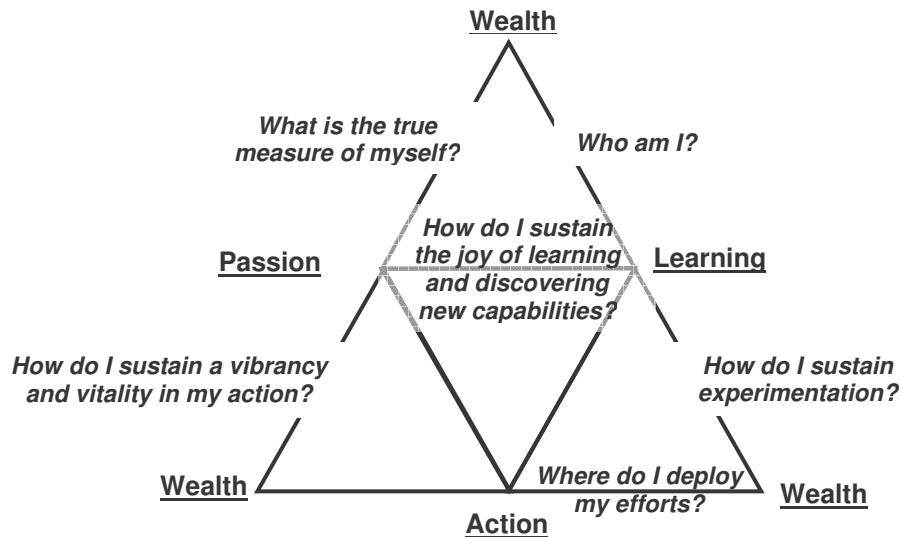
Let us take a closer look at *Saraswathi* before we return to our model. *Saraswathi* is the female aspect of *Brahma* – the creative principle. The word *Brahma* means ever growing, ever expanding. *Saraswathi* is the quintessential insight and learning necessary for growth.

We return to our model and look at the centroid as the “reason for being” and the corner stones as the tangible aspects of the intent. Growth is the reason for being. Growth in human terms means self expression and relatedness with others. *Saraswathi* is the unstoppable urge to grow. *Shakti* in her 3 aspects form the here and now unfolding of energy, *Lakshmi* the nature of order and the pattern of the unfolding.

I have then recast the tetrahedron like this :



Each edge carries an essential question about myself. If I am able to live in a way that is true to my quintessential nature, there is order and excellence in my living process. I become what I was meant to be. My passion is true, I extended my capacity to learn, I act as well as I can, I generate wealth and knowledge. In converting the edges into questions, I also realise the “other side” of the picture, the me as I am, my adequacies, limitations and potential.



I have found it extremely useful to treat this prism as a “*Yantra*” – a geometrical drawing meant for contemplation. While the questions one reflects upon can be stated in generic forms, each person must develop his own “*Yantra*” i.e, specific action words that represent the edges, specific intent for each cornerstone and specific hope for each outcome. One must keep in mind, however, that to use a *Yantra* or any device as a trigger for contemplation, one must learn the art of intense slow observation without judgement. The *Yantra* cannot be used as a framework of “shoulds”. “Shoulds” do not evoke creative healing processes within, they internalise the expectations of significant others. They act as walls, jailers and censors that distort and deform unfolding.

When the *Yantra* becomes a trigger for contemplation, one learns the art of experiencing the “*Nava rasas*” – the nine (flavours) essences of living experience. One learns the measure and balance of these feelings. They neither take on demonical proportions and derail ones growth, nor do they become emaciated and make life a drudgery. In discovering this location within, one discuss *Saraswathi*. One discovers a subtle and enduring joy of living. One experiences creativity and growth.