



International Journal of Sanskrit Research

ॐ

ISSN: 2394-7519

IJSR 2024; 10(2): 141-146

© 2024 IJSR

www.anantaajournal.com

Received: 02-12-2023

Accepted: 07-01-2024

Luu Van Hieu

Ph.D Scholar, Department of
Buddhist Studies, University of
Delhi, New Delhi, India

Acquire knowledge about the practice of yoga meditation in the ancient Indian tradition

Luu Van Hieu

Abstract

Yoga meditation originated as a philosophical concept and later developed into a practical discipline within ancient Indian spiritual traditions. *Yoga* is recognized as one of the six prominent systems of thought in Indian philosophy. *Yoga* philosophy is now widely recognized as an essential component of the Hindu intellectual system. In India, *Yoga* meditation is now widely accepted and no longer considered an unfamiliar notion. Amidst the global catastrophe caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a growing relevance in utilizing natural yoga movements as a rehabilitative therapy for the resulting consequences. Furthermore, India has disseminated a robust, open-minded, and impactful culture. *Yoga* is unrestricted by age. Any activity, regardless of complexity level, can positively impact an individual's overall health and physical fitness. The desire for aesthetic appeal can be fulfilled via the regular practice of *Yoga*. The legacy of *Yoga* is a rejuvenated mindset among life's anxieties and responsibilities. When *Yoga* meditation is practised correctly and with intensity, it might lead to the union of the mind and the object. In this condition, the meditator can exercise self-control by preventing unwholesome ideas from eliciting unpleasant actions and attitudes. *Yoga* meditation facilitates the attainment of emotional equilibrium and fosters a constructive mindset. Individuals are more susceptible to both psychological and physiological harm when experiencing the pressure of a job and the temptation of worldly indulgences. *Yoga* meditation serves as a means for individuals to undergo personal transformation.

Keyword: Yoga, meditation, transformation, self-control

Introduction

The term meditation is translated from the Sanskrit term *Dhyāna*. *Dhyāna* has the root verb *dhyai* (*dhyāyati*), meaning to think of, imagine, contemplate, meditate on, and call to mind. (SE, pp.521). Meditation is translated from *Jhāyana* or *Jhāna* in Pali literature (EP, pp.327) and has the same meaning as above. For Buddhist scriptures, meditation is necessary for mental growth and purity of mind ^[1].

What is the meaning (artha) of the word *dhyāna*? Because of meditation (*dhyāna*), the practitioners are “concentrated” (*samāhita*) and capable of contemplation of the object (*upanidhyāna*). *Upanidhyai* signifies “to contemplate exactly”. The root *dhyai* is used in the sense of *upanidhyāna*.

(AK, pp.2374)

“The purpose and benefit of concentration is the knowledge and vision of things as they really are.” ^[2] (AN 2012: 1340)

The term *Yoga* has varied interpretations depending on the context. White stated that the word has over twenty distinct meanings, thereby classifying it as a polysemous word.

Corresponding Author:

Luu Van Hieu

Ph.D Scholar, Department of
Buddhist Studies, University of
Delhi, New Delhi, India

¹ AN, pp.321. The four meditations are “the training in the higher mind.” (P. *adhicittasikkha*; S. *adhicittasāṅkha*; Ch. 增上意學). AN, pp.571. The four meditations are “the factor of striving for purity of mind.” (P. *cittapārisuddhipadhāna*; S. *cittapārisuddhipradhāna*; Ch. 心淨斷).

² PTS V.3 “*Samādhi kho, ānanda, yathābhūtañāṇadassanatto yathābhūtañāṇadassanānisamso*”ti

“Yoga” has a wider range of meanings than nearly any other word in the entire Sanskrit lexicon. The act of yoking an animal, as well as the yoke itself, is called yoga. In astronomy, a conjunction of planets or stars, as well as a constellation, is called yoga. When one mixes together various substances, that, too, can be called yoga. The word yoga has also been employed to denote a device, a recipe, a method, a strategy, a charm, an incantation, fraud, a trick, an endeavor, a combination, union, an arrangement, zeal, care, diligence, industriousness, discipline, use, application, contact, a sum total, and the Work of alchemists. But this is by no means an exhaustive list. (White 2011: 2)

Yoga, with its root verb yuj, is found in the *R̥g-veda*, India's oldest scripture, with meanings such as "the act of yoking, joining, attaching, harnessing, putting to (of horses)." (SE 2011: 856) Initially understood as a yoke attached to the neck of an animal pulling a cart, the meaning was gradually expanded to include a military device. According to White, the term *Yoga* used in wartime is the opposite of *kṣema* in peacetime. (White 2011: 3)

Yoga is viewed as bondage in the Pali Canon of Buddhism, which lists four bonds in which humans are entangled [3]. *Yoga* is viewed as bondage in the Pali Canon of Buddhism, which lists four bonds in which humans are entangled. In other cases, *Yoga* is interpreted as a conscientious effort aimed at achieving what has not been accomplished in the spiritual life [4]. As a result of the bondage of burdens that cause people to suffer, the problem is that we must strive to meditate in order to achieve happiness.

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* is regarded as the first account to present a cultivate process concerned with yoga terminology, which aims to focus on the self (*ātman*) to discover the truth. According to White, the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* serves as a fulcrum for the development of *Yogasūtra* and *Bhagavad Gītā* ideas. (ibid, pp.4) Comprehending the self based on this body and contemplative thinking in a specific circumstance in the sitting posture is critical.

The *ātman* which you wish to know is hard to see being extremely subtle, lodged in the inmost recess, being concealed by the modifications of consciousness caused by worldly objects. Located in intelligence (being realised as if there lodged) and seated amidst manifold miseries. Being lodged in the inmost recess and located in intelligence, he is seated amidst miseries; (being thus seated he is hard to see) dwelling on that ancient *atman*, with a mind weaned from all external objects and concentrated on the *atman*, the intelligent man renounces joy and grief as there is neither superiority nor inferiority for the *atman*. (KU 1898: 35,36)

³ AN, pp.396 “The bond of sensuality, the bond of existence, the bond of views, and the bond of ignorance” PTS II.11 Kāmayogo, bhavayogo, ditṭhiyogo, avijjāyogo. (Ch. 一為欲著, 二為世間著, 三為見著, 四為癡著。)

⁴ AN, pp.474 “the person among these who gains internal serenity of mind but not the higher wisdom of insight into phenomena should base himself on internal serenity of mind and make an effort to gain the higher wisdom of insight into phenomena.” PTS. II.93 “puggalo lābhī hoti ajjhataṃ cetosamathassa na lābhī adhipaññādhmavipassanāya, tena, bhikkhave, puggalena ajjhataṃ cetosamathē patitṭhāya adhipaññādhmavipassanāya yogo karaṇīyo.”

It was not until the *Bhagavad Gītā* appeared that it introduced the concept of the yogi and the practice of *Yoga*. That practice is called “to control the mind and the senses.” (BhG 2017: 269).

When the yogī, by practice of yoga, disciplines his mental activities and becomes situated in transcendence – devoid of all material desires – he is said to be well established in yoga. As a lamp in a windless place does not waver, so the transcendence, whose mind is controlled, remains always steady in his meditation on the transcendent self [5]. (BhG 2017: 286, 287)

In *Yogasutra*, the definition of *Yoga* is quite clear: “yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ” [6] in which “yogaḥ: yoga; citta: the mind; vṛtti: fluctuation, state; nirodhaḥ: restraint, control” to define as follow:

Yoga is the restriction of the fluctuations of mind-stuff. The fluctuations are all exposed to attack from the hindrances and are five in number: 1. sources-of-valid-ideas; 2. misconceptions; 3. predicate-relations; 4. sleep; 5. Memory [7]. (Woods 1914: xxx)

Yoga literature

Yogasūtra

Yogasūtra is widely regarded as the work of Patañjali. However, J.H. Woods, a Harvard University professor, stated that because there are two Patanjalis, one who wrote *Yogasūtra* and the other who wrote *Mahābhāṣya*, *Patañjali's* chronology is incomplete. *Dasgupta*, however, was identified as the same author in both works. Each made their own argument. *Dasgupta* places the *Yogasūtra* between the fourth and second centuries BC. *Yogasūtra*, according to Woods, was written between the third and fourth centuries AD. (*Dasgupta*, vol.I, 1988: 212, 230; Woods 1914: xvii, xviii)

Patañjali's date can only be inferred from the content of the text itself. Unfortunately, most classical Sanskrit texts from the ancient period tend to be impossible to date with accuracy, and there are always dissenters against whatever dates become standard in academic circles. Most scholars date the text shortly after the turn of the Common Era (circa first to second century), but it has been placed as early as several centuries before that. Other than the fact that the *Yoga Sūtras* were written no later than the fifth century, the date cannot be determined with exactitude. (*Yogasūtra* 2014: 32)

Thereby, *Yogasūtra* can be considered in the period after the Buddha and before the 4th century AD. The *Yogasūtra* consists of 195 verses divided into four chapters. The first chapter, *samādhi pāda*, contains 51 verses. This chapter discusses the significance of *samādhi*, or self-discovery, in the face of complex minds. Furthermore, the chapter provides application methods that will lead to *samādhi*. The second chapter, *sādhana pāda*, contains 55 verses. Chapter two deals with the cultivation of attaining the correct view. In it, the author highlights that *Yoga* is practised in two sequences: 3

⁵ BhG 6.18, 19 “yadā viniyataṃ cittam ātmany evāvatiṣṭhate | nisṛṇḥ sarva-kāmebhyo yukta ity ucyate tadā || yathā dīpo nivāta-stho neṅgate sopamā smṛtā | yoginī yata-cittasya yuñjato yogam ātmanaḥ ||”

⁶ *Yogasūtra*, I.2, pp.74.

⁷ *Yogasūtra*, I.5-6, pp.92- 96 “vṛttayaḥ pañcatayāḥ klišṭākliṣṭāḥ || pramāṇa-viparyaya-vikalpa-nidrā-smṛtayaḥ ||

steps of preparation (mortification, self-study, devotion) and 8-part *Yoga* (ethics, keeping principles, choosing appropriate postures, attention to the breath, guarding the senses, sustaining, meditating, concentrating). The third chapter - *vibhūti pāda*, contains 56 verses. The miracles that appear to the yogi in the final three parts of the eight-part *Yoga* are described in the third chapter. Miracles are sometimes viewed as impediments to the practitioner's path to liberation. The fourth chapter, *kaivalya pāda*, contains 34 verses. This final chapter describes the practitioner's liberation process and when he or she achieves the view as it truly is. (Woods 1914: 1; *Yogasūtra* 2014: 238, 375, 484, 542)

Bodhisattvabhūmi in Yogācārabhūmiśāstra

According to some legends, the *Yogācārabhūmi* was written near *Ayodhyā*, an ancient city in Northern India on the bank of the *Ghāgharā* River, a major tributary of the holy Ganges. Like the *Ghāgharā*, a powerful river that flows from many small glacial brooks in the high Himalayas, the *Yogācārabhūmi* is a massive literary work with constantly changing currents of leitmotifs and many minor themes that flow together from diverse backgrounds. Scholars struggle to fully understand the text's meanings while keeping its entire set of ideological benchmarks in mind when dealing with such a complicated and varied piece of writing. *Yogācārabhūmi*, meaning "The Foundation for Yoga Practitioners (*yogācāra*)."
(Kragh 2013: 23)

The claim that the *Yogācārabhūmi*'s purpose was to provide a synopsis of Buddhist *Yoga* practice suggests that it is a catalogue of Buddhist philosophy divided into schools, covering the religion's complete spiritual journey but focusing mainly on meditation. *āsana* (posture) and *prāṇāyāma* (breathwork) practise that is commonly associated with the word "yoga" in contemporary English are not the focus of the *Yogācārabhūmi*. (Kragh 2013: 30)

The *Yogācārabhūmi* is a massive work due to the several portions it contains. The modern Taisho version of the Chinese translation collects all 1812 pages from the original 100 fascicles into a single hefty volume. There are 1383 double-sided pages in the Tibetan version, which is spread across six traditional *dpe cha* volumes. The text is divided into two major sections—the Basic Section and the Supplemental Section—that comprise over half of the whole. In the fourteen books that make up the Basic Part (*Maulyo Bhūmayah*), seventeen *bhūmis* are introduced and discussed. The Sanskrit word *bhūmi*, which has the literal meaning of "soil" or "ground," is also used metaphorically to refer to several "stages," "levels," or "stepping-stones" along the Buddhist path to Awakening. This may be connected to the fact that *bhūmi* is also used to describe the levels (or "floors") of a multi-story building. (Kragh 2013: 49)

Alex Wayman, who allegedly thought the *Yogācārabhūmi* was written by *Asaṅga* alone, provided a slightly more detailed but very different hypothesis for constructing the text. He inferred the following dates for the writing of *Asaṅga*'s opus by correlating each compositional step with a moment in *Asaṅga*'s life, which he estimated to be between 375 and 430. First, *Asaṅga* originally penned the *Śrāvāśabhūmi* in around 395 CE as a textbook of *Yoga*, followed by the *Samāhitā Bhūmiḥ*, which includes additional *Yoga* principles. Second, around 395–400, *Asaṅga* wrote the *Paryāya* and *Vastusaṃgrahaṇī* books of the Supplementary Section to gather information for writing about the three levels of insight derived from listening (*Śrutamayī*), understanding (*Cintāmayī*), and meditating (*bhāvanāmayī*).

This allowed him to write the *Śrutamayī*-, *Cintāmayī*-, and *Bhāvanāmayī Bhūmi Bhūmiḥ* books of the Basic Section. Third, somewhere between 400 and 410 CE, he switched to the *Mahāyāna* school and wrote the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃśāra*, a separate treatise from the *Yogācārabhūmi*. Fourth, about the year 410, *Asaṅga* authored the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* book of the Basic Section based on the framework of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃśāra*. A short time later, the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* was translated into Chinese for the first time. Fifth, around 410–420, *Asaṅga* finished the other books in the Basic section and then added a supplementary exegesis in the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī*. This anthology builds on the books of the Basic Section. It elucidates more contentious matters, such as a robust defence of the *ālayavijñāna* theory, that were glossed over or ignored elsewhere. Sixth, around 420-430, When he finished the *Yogācārabhūmi*, *Asaṅga* wrote several other works that are not included in it, such as the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* and the *Mahāyānasamgraha*. (Kragh 2013: 55)

In the 4-5th century AD, the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* is thought to have been the first translation into China^[8]. At the same time, this is the longest and most essential chapter in both the Basic Part and the treatise. The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* is a three-volume guide guiding anyone with a *Mahāyāna*'s mind to Buddhahood. Book 1 contains 18 chapters, Book 2 contains four, and Book 3 contains six chapters. (BBh 2016: xxxiv)

In these three Books are explained up to 10 problems (i. support, ii. marks, iii. factions, iv. superior attitudes, v. pleasurable states, vi. births, vii. embracing, viii stages, ix. conduct, x. preeminence) and the last chapter of Book 3 deals with "The Marks and the Secondary Signs," of the Buddha. Volume one is devoted entirely to explaining the problem 'i'. In which, chapters 1,2 state the meaning of supporting terms and mention 3 meanings (a.the *Bodhisattva*'s spiritual lineage, b. the initial development of enlightenment mind, c. all the spiritual qualities that are conducive to enlightenment.). Chapters 3-7 explain the field of 'a' with seven topics. Chapters 8-17 explain the field of 'b' with the following contents: Chapter 8 explains how to study the *Dharmata* by yourself and how to spread the true *Dharma*. Chapters 9-14 present the six *paramitas*. Chapter 15 explains how to attract believers. Chapter 16 realizes the worship of the Three Jewels, the spiritual Master, and cultivates the four immeasurable minds. Chapter 17 deals with 17 spiritual qualities and visions that must be developed. Chapter 18 explains the field of 'c'. (Ibid., xxxvi)

Chapter one of volume two deals with five qualities of 'Marks' (i. sympathy, ii. agreeable speech, iii. fortitude, iv. open-handedness, v. the ability to explain profound meanings and intents). Chapter 2 presents the four obligations of monk-*bodhisattvas* and lay-*bodhisattvas* (i., the quality of having completed one's spiritual activities well, ii. skillfulness, iii. assisting others, iv. deication). Chapter 3 describes 15 types of "superior attitude". Chapter 4 deals with 13 states of bliss, of which the first 12 are those of a *bodhisattva*, and the last is that of a Buddha. (Ibid., xxxvii)

Chapter 1 of Volume Three deals with the power of rebirth in various forms to benefit sentient beings until the final stage before attaining *Buddhahood*. Chapter 2 describes the *bodhisattva* by various methods of guiding sentient beings. Chapter 3 presents the seven *bodhisattva* stages and their correspondence to the 13 states of bliss above. Chapter 4 explains the four comprehensive types of *bodhisattvas* (i.,

⁸ Taisho 30 No.1581 菩薩地持經. Taisho 30 No.1582 菩薩善戒經.

conduct relating to perfection, ii. conduct that is conducive to enlightenment, iii. conduct relating to supernatural knowledge, iv. conduct relating to the ripening of sentient beings.). Chapter 5 deals with 112 Buddha body characteristics (i., the 32 marks of a great person, ii. the 80 secondary signs). Chapter 6 mentions 28 other characteristics of a Buddha (i., the four forms of complete purity, ii. the ten powers, iii. the four forms of intrepid confidence, iv. Three forms of closely placed recollection, v. three forms of having nothing that needs to be concealed, vi. great compassion, vii. the state of being utterly free of confusion, viii. destruction of the traces, ix. knowledge of all aspects and of what is most excellent). (Ibid., xxxviii).

Haṭhayogapradīpikā

Svātmārāma, who lived in the 15th century, synthesized Haṭhayogapradīpikā from various earlier Yoga texts. In fact, "haṭhayoga" means "yoga by means of violence" in Sanskrit.

Haṭha-yoga: A kind of forced Yoga or abstract meditation: forcing the mind to withdraw from external objects; treated of in the Haṭha-pradīpikā by Svātmārāma and performed with much self-torture, such as standing on one leg, holding up the arms, inhaling smoke with the head inverted &c. (SE 2011: 1287)

Monier-Williams has either witnessed or heard about some yogis' incredible capacity for physical abuse.

A Muhammadan traveller, whose narrative is quoted by Mr. Mill, once saw a man standing motionless with his face towards the sun. The same traveller, having occasion to revisit the same spot sixteen years afterwards, found the very same man in the very same attitude. He had gazed on the sun's disk till all sense of external vision was extinguished. A Yogi was seen not very long ago seated between four fires on a quadrangular stage. He stood on one leg gazing at the sun, while these fires were lighted at the four corners. Then placing himself upright on his head, with his feet elevated in the air, he remained for three hours in that position. He then seated himself cross-legged, and continued bearing the raging heat of the sun above his head and the fires which surrounded him, till the end of the day, occasionally adding combustibles with his own hands to increase the flames. I, myself, in the course of my travels, encountered Yogis who had kept their arms uplifted for years, or had wandered about from one place of pilgrimage to another under a perpetual Vow of silence, or had no place to lie upon but a bed of spikes. (2007: 191)

In compiling the Haṭhapradīpikā it is clear that Svātmārāma drew material from many different sources on various systems of Yoga such as Yājñavalkya's and Vasiṣṭha's Aṣṭāṅgayoga, the Amanaskayoga's Rājayoga, the Vivekamārtaṇḍa's Ṣaḍāṅgayoga, Ādināth's Khecarīvidyā, the Virūpākṣanātha's Amṛtasiddhi, and so on. He assembled it under the name of Haṭhayoga and, judging from the vast number of manuscripts of the Haṭhapradīpikā, its numerous commentaries, and the many references to it in late medieval Yoga texts, his Haṭhayoga grew in prominence and eclipsed many of the former Yogas. (Birch 2011: 548)

This work includes 389 verses divided into four chapters. The first chapter discusses the necessary atmosphere for *yoga*, the ethical duties of a *yogi*, and the *asanas*. The second chapter discusses pranayama and the *saṅkarmas*. Chapter three discusses the *mudras* and their benefits. The fourth chapter discusses meditation and *samadhi* as a personal spiritual growth journey.

Practice of Yoga meditation.

Yoga differs depending on the guidelines of each spiritual tradition. *Yogasūtra* requires one to go through eight levels of *Yoga* practice to practice *Yoga*. *Patañjali* mentions this 8-part *Yoga* in verses 28-55 of Chapter 2, verses 3, and 54 of Chapter 3. The goal of this procedure is as follows:

After the aids to yoga have been followed up, when the impurity has dwindled, there is an enlightenment of perception reaching up to the discriminative discernment. Abstentions (*yama*) and observances (*niyama*) and postures (*āsana*) and regulations-of-the-breath (*prāṇāyāma*) and withdrawal-of-the-senses (*pratyāhāra*) and fixed attention (*dhāraṇā*) and contemplation (*dhyāna*) and concentration (*samādhayah*) are the eight aids ¹⁹. (Woods 1914: 172)

In this way, *yama* and *niyama* are viewed as the principles of observation essential for the practitioner to regulate oneself on both the outer and inner levels. In the external world, practitioners must follow the five precepts of non-harming, truthfulness, non-stealing, desire cessation, and non-attachment. Regarding the inner world, practitioners must practice pure practice, feel content, practice asceticism, recite the holy scriptures, and be devoted to *Īśvara*. (Woods 1914: 178, 181) The first thing we notice in the *Haṭhayogapradīpikā* is that *Svātmārāma* is unconcerned about self-control and self-discipline in the form of *yama* and *niyama*. The order is quite different here. He states that you should cleanse your entire body, including your stomach, intestines, neurological system, and others. As a result, *śat karma* comes first, which includes *neti*, *dhauti*, *basti*, *kapalbhati*, *trataka*, and *nauli*. These are the foundational practices of *Hatha yoga*. (*Muktibodhananda* 2006: 5)

Yogasūtra does not refer to sitting posture but only to sitting steady and comfortable ¹⁰. (Woods 1914: 191)

The yogin takes a firm posture (*āsana*) and fixes his mind on any object he chooses. It is, however, preferable that he should fix it on *Īśvara*, for in that case *Īśvara* being pleased removes many of the obstacles in his path, and it becomes easier for him to attain success. (Dasgupta vol I, 1988: 271)

However, the *Haṭhayogapradīpikā* text said that "eighty-four *asanas* were taught by Shiva". (*Muktibodhananda*, 2006: 100) In which this work names some poses such as: (1) *Swastika*, (2) *Gomukh*, (3) *Vīra*, (4) *Kurma*, (5) *Kukkuṭa*, (6) *Uttāna-kūrma*, (7) *Dhanura*, (8) *Matsya*, (9) *Paśchima-tāna*, (10) *Māyūra*, (11) *Śava*, (12) *Siddha* (*Vajra*, *Mukta*, *Gupta*), (13) *Padma*, (14) *Simha*, (15) *Bhadra* (*Gorakṣa*). (verses 21-57).

⁹Yogasūtra II.28-29, pp.313, 315: yogāṅgānuṣṭhānād aśuddhi-kṣaye jñāna-dīptir-āvivekakhyāteḥ || yama-niyamāsana-prāṇāyāma-pratyāhāra-dhāraṇā-dhyānasamādhayo 'ṣṭāv aṅgāni ||

¹⁰Yogasūtra II.46, pp.357: sthira-sukham āsanam ||

The work also notes four important postures that benefit the *yogis*.

Siddhasana, padmasana, simhasana and bhadrāsana, these are the four main āsanas. (Muktibodhananda, 2006: 101)

The fourth and most vital chi is associated with the breath. The breath is an essential and marvellous aspect of Buddhism^[11]. That miracle is also mentioned in *Haṭhayogapradīpikā*^[12]. Breath control is described in the *Yogasūtra* as follows:

But this [restraint of breath] is: External or internal or suppresses in fluctuation and is regulated in place and time and number and is protracted and subtle. The fourth [restraint of the breath] transcends the external and internal object^[13]. (Woods 1914: 193, 195)

The breath is divided into inner, external, and breath-holding. Inner breath refers to the time after inhalation is complete. External breath refers to the time after exhalation. Holding your breath is coming to a complete stop after inhaling or exhaling. Every part is determined using three factors: place-*deśa*, time-*kāla*, and number-*saṅkhyā*. The extent of the out-breath is calculated from the distance the breath strikes an object outside of it (a cotton ball, etc.). The range of the in-breath is measured from the feet to the head in a sensory impression similar to an ant moving. The breath-holding range means that the breath stops in two ranges, in and out. All three ranges are time-limited, with variances in and out-breaths, and the time is measured in moments (*kṣaṇas*). The quantity is determined in *mātrās* based on how many breaths are in and out each time. Each part of the breath is deep, shallow, or moderate in constant practice. Until the leap, the breath becomes transcendental via its stretching and subtlety. (Woods 1914: 193-196).

In the Buddhist scriptures, breathing meditation is presented as follows: (1) When breathing in (or out) long, knows: 'I breath in (or out) long.'; (2) When breathing in (or out) or short, knows: 'I breath in (or out) short.'; (3) Experiencing the whole body, I will breathe in (or out); (4) Tranquilizing the bodily formation, I will breathe in (or out); (5) Experiencing rapture, I will breathe in (or out); (6) Experiencing happiness, I will breathe in (or out); (7) Experiencing the mental formation, I will breathe in (or out); (8) Tranquilizing the mental formation, I will breathe in (or out); (9) Experiencing the mind, I will breathe in (or out); (10) Gladdening the mind, I will breathe in (or out); (11) Concentrating the mind, I will breathe in (or out); (12) Liberating the mind, I will breathe in

(or out); (13) Contemplating impermanence, I will breathe in (or out); (14) Contemplating fading away, I will breathe in (or out); (15) Contemplating cessation, I will breathe in (or out); (16) Contemplating relinquishment, I will breathe in (or out). (SN 2000: 1775-1777)

According to *Haṭhayogapradīpikā*, the breath is essential since it is life, and it is via the breath that one can achieve peace of mind - *manonmanī*. (verse 3, 42) The method of breathing in the HT is divided into four stages as follows:

- (1) Close the right nostril and inhale with the left nostril to fill the abdomen.
- (2) Hold your breath.
- (3) Cover the left nose, and breathe through the right nose to flatten the abdomen.
- (4) Hold your breath.

The prolonged holding of breath in stages (2) and (4) by willpower effort is called *sahita-kumbhaka*. When the meditator is mature and does not need to be fatigued by the effort of holding his breath, which becomes natural, it is called *kevala-kumbhaka*. (verses 7-10, 73). The technique of holding the breath for *sahita-kumbhaka* has eight ways. (1) *sūrya-bheda*: This method is to practice inhaling in the right nostril and exhaling through the left nose (verse 48); (2) *ujjāyī*: closes the larynx, air oscillates from the throat to the chest (verse 51); (3) *sītākārī*: breathe slowly through the mouth, and close the teeth (verse 54); (4) *śītalī*: inhale through the mouth, and the tongue is slightly protruding from the lips (verse 57); (5) *bhastrīkā*: inhale and exhale forcefully through the nose, combined with holding the left nostril and breathing the right nostril (verse 60, 64); (6) *bhrāmarī*: inhale and breathe with a sound like the sound of a bee (verse 68); (7) *mūrchhā*: holding the breath for a long time until ecstasy (verse 69); (8) *plāvinī*: take a deep breath to fill the air (verse 70).

The fifth part of the *Yogasūtra* is known as *pratyāhāra*, which means withdrawing the senses or not allowing the senses to be impacted by their objects. (Woods 1914: 197). The sixth part of the *Yogasūtra* is known as *dhāraṇā* and is defined as follows: "Binding the mind-stuff to a place is fixed-attention."^[14] (*Ibid.*, 203). The place of focus can be the navel, the heart, the light within the head, the tip of the nose, etc. (*Ibid.*, 203). The seventh part of the *Yogasūtra* is known as *dhyāna* and is defined as follows: "Focusedness of the presented idea upon that place is contemplation."^[15] (*Ibid.*, 204). The eighth part of the *Yogasūtra* is known as *samādhi*. It is defined as follows: "This same [contemplation], shining forth [in consciousness] as the intended object and nothing more, and, as it were, emptied of itself, is concentration."^[16] (*Ibid.*, 204) According to *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, the essence of meditation is nothing more than one-pointedness in learning and meditating the *bodhisattva's* treasure. Meditation in a steady state for the use of *śamatha*, or *vipaśyanā*, or a combination of both *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*. The *bodhisattva's* cultivation of meditation focuses on three criteria:

1. To be at peace in the here and now,
2. To acquire the bodhisattva qualities that are related to the right concentration,
3. To actualize the benefits to sentient beings.

¹¹ SN, pp.1779: If anyone speaking rightly could say of anything: 'It is a noble dwelling, a divine dwelling, the Tathāgata's dwelling,' it is of concentration by mindfulness of breathing that one could rightly say this.

PTS V.11: Yañhi taṃ, bhikkhave, sammā vadamāno vadeyya: 'ariyavihāro' itipi, 'brahmavihāro' itipi, 'tathāgatavihāro' itipi. Ānāpānassatisamādhim sammā vadamāno vadeyya: 'ariyavihāro' itipi, 'brahmavihāro' itipi, 'tathāgatavihāro' itipi"ti.

¹² Muktibodhananda, pp.228: Even Brahma and other gods in heaven devote themselves to practicing pranayama because it ends the fear of death. Thus it (pranayama) must be practiced. (बरह्लादयो|अपि तरिदशाः पवनाभ्यास-तत्पराः | अभूवन्नक्त-भयात्स्मात्पवनमभ्यसेत || ३९ ||)

¹³ *Yogasūtra*, II.50-51, pp.364, 367: bāhyābhyantara-stambha-vṛttih deśa-kāla-saṅkhyābhīḥ paridṛṣṭo dīrgha-sūkṣmaḥ || bāhyābhyantara-ṣāyākṣepī caturtha ||

¹⁴ *Yogasūtra*, III.1, pp. 377: deśa-bandhaś cittasya dhāraṇā ||

¹⁵ *Yogasūtra*, III.2, pp. 379: tatra pratyayaika-tānatā dhyānam ||

¹⁶ *Yogasūtra*, III.3, pp. 382: tad evārtha-mātra-nirbhāsam svarūpa-śūnyam iva samādhiḥ ||

The cultivation of meditation needs to go through the following layers:

- Meditation related to deliberation - '*vitarka*' and reflection - '*vicāra*'
- Meditation related to joy '*prīti*.'
- Meditation related to the ease of pleasure - '*sukha*'
- Meditation related to equanimity - '*upekṣā*'

The factors of the former layer will gradually be absent in the later layers, considered the higher layer of the meditative state. (BBh 2016: 343-351)

Conclusion

Philosophical *Yoga* is a system of thinking that is based on idealism. By employing rigorous physical training techniques, one can gain control over the senses and achieve a state of harmony with the universe. *Yoga* practices can be observed in various locations, ranging from cold mountainous regions to revered sites accessible online or in the enigmatic nation of India. When meditators fully comprehend the tragic nature of the continuous cycle of rebirths, which results in an endless succession of excruciating suffering, it becomes evident that they are driven by a genuine quest for meaning in life. This rigorous practice is absent worldwide due to variations in customs, culture, and ideology. Nevertheless, the practice of *Yoga* in its contemporary manifestation, widely embraced by the general populace, mainly consists of therapeutic and physical exercises known as body *Yoga*.

Yoga is commonly associated with promoting good health and achieving a physically ideal physique. Indeed, the practice of classical yoga, as seen in texts like *Yogasūtra* or *Hathayogapradīpikā*, can only fade away with time and lie inactive among *Yogis* who lack financial belongings. The primary goals of traditional yoga can only be accomplished at that point. *Yoga* has significantly transformed people's physical well-being and fostered a sense of community engagement, marking a pivotal moment in our era.

References

1. AK = Gelong Lodro Sangpo (tr.) *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* of Vasubandhu, vol. III. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers; c2012.
2. AN = Bhikkhu Bodhi (tr.) *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*. Wisdom Publications; c2012.
3. SN = Bhikkhu Bodhi (tr.) *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*. Wisdom Publications; c2000.
4. BhG = A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Mumbai: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust; c2017.
5. EP = A.P. Buddhadatta Mahathera. *English-Pali Dictionary*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers; 1997.
6. KU = Sitarama Sastri, S. (tr.) *Katha and Prasna Upanishads and Sri Sankara's commentary*. Madras: V.C. Seshachari; c1898.
7. SE = Sir M. Monier-Williams. *A Sanskrit-English dictionary*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers; 2011.
8. Taisho = Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA). [Online] Available from: <http://www.cbeta.org/>
9. BBh = Artemus B. Engle (tr.) *The Bodhisattva path to Unsurpassed Enlightenment*. Boulder: Snow Lion; 2016.
10. Kragh, Ulrich Timme. "The Yogācārabhūmi and Its Adaptation Introductory Essay with a Summary of the Basic Section". In: Kragh, Ulrich Timme (Ed.) *The Foundation for Yoga Practitioners The Buddhist*

11. Sir M. Monier-Williams. *Buddhism connexion with Brahmanism, Hinduism and contrast with Christianity*. Delhi: Bharatiya Kala Prakashan; c2007.
12. Dasgupta, Shashibhusan. *A History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 1-5. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers; c1988.
13. Dasgupta, Shashibhusan. *Obscure Religious Cults*. Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay; c1969.
14. Birch, Jason. "The Meaning of haṭha in Early Haṭhayoga". *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. 2011;131(4):527.
15. Muktibodhananda Swami. *Hatha Yoga Pradipika Light on Hatha Yoga*. Bihar: Yoga Publications Trust; c2006.
16. White, David Gordon. "Yoga, Brief History of an Idea". In: *Yoga in Practice*. New York: Princeton University Press; c2011. p. 1-23.
17. Woods, James Haughton. *The Yoga-system of Patañjali*. Cambridge: The Harvard University Press; c1914.
18. *Yogasūtra* = F.Bryant, Edwin (2014). *The Yoga Sūtra of Patañjali*. New York: North Point Press. [Online] Available from: <https://www.pdfdrive.com/the-yoga-sutras-of-patanjali-a-new-edition-translation-and-commentary-e200350130.html>.